

Perspective is Everything

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[0 : 00] I readily identify with Joe, what he said about butterflies with public speaking. I have read and heard that one of the greatest fears that the average person has, something that absolutely terrifies them, is speaking in public.

And I can also identify with that because I remember as a high school junior, in speech class, we were assigned to give a five-minute speech about any subject that we wanted to. The very thought scared me to death. So when the time came for me to give my speech, I told the speech teacher in the class, I'm not going to give any speech.

I took a tough-guy attitude as if to say, I'm not going to lower myself to give a stupid speech. All right, Mr. Wiseman, you get an F.

And that F turned out to be the deciding factor that kept me from graduating with my class, sent me off the U.S. Army as an ungraduated individual.

[1 : 29] That was back in the days when you could actually join the Army without even having a high school diploma. You can't do that now. But then you could.

So long story short, eventually I got a high school diploma from my old high school because I completed the course in the Army, the Armed Forces Educational Institution, and I got my diploma in the mail from my old high school.

And yet the idea of speaking in public was something that I never did get used to, and I still haven't. But you know what?

We were talking in the Sunday school class this morning how the cross changed everything. The cross changes people.

The cross changed the world. The cross changed me. Because of all things, after I was discharged from the Army, I'd just been saved maybe three months as a new Christian.

[2 : 33] And I was discharged in Fort Lewis, Washington, and I brought my new bride back to Springfield, Ohio, to start our new life here. And one of the services that was made available to us as GIs was we could go to this counselor in Dayton, University of Dayton, and they were proficient in determining what you were equipped and outfitted for.

And you took a long test. It took about an hour and a half to take it, all kinds of questions they asked and everything. And I filled it out, and the counselor said, okay, he says, now you come back next week, and we'll grade the test.

We'll go over and assess it and everything. And then we will be able to tell you the kind of occupation, now that you're a civilian again, we'll be able to tell you the kind of occupation that you would be best fitted for.

I thought, well, that's great. Because I wasn't sure. I didn't know. I had some leanings. But so I went back, and he went over the list and everything. And he says, and thus, and thus, and thus, and then he checked this.

And he said, and he says that it's pretty evident that you would really be successful in the field of accounting. And I said, accounting?

[3 : 48] And he said, well, he says, you're okay with numbers, and you can, and I said, I don't have any interest in accounting. I wouldn't want to sit and figure all day.

That's just not me. And he posed a couple of other possibilities. And I said, no, is that what the test showed? He says, well, that's what the test indicated. And I said, well, I haven't.

And he said, well, Mr. Wiseman, just what is it that you think you would like to do? And I said, well, actually, I was thinking of the ministry. He dropped his pen and looked at me.

And he said, oh, no, no, no, no, not, not. And I said, what, what? And he said, well, I guess I can tell from all of the answers that you've given and assessed this that that would just not work at all for

you.

And I said, well, okay, I don't know, but that's still what I'm interested in. And all I can tell you is there is no explanation for that reversal apart from the cross.

[4 : 57] It changes everything. It changed me. No one can ever have a personal experience with Jesus Christ and ever be the same.

Because those whom he saves, he changes. He has his own agenda. And I wouldn't trade it for the world because...

So what we want to talk about this morning is perspective is everything. And I have a couple of propositions that I want to share with you before we get into the text, which will be in Acts chapter four.

And as I continually assess my responsibilities with you as your pastor and the fact that...

I know I said this 10 years ago that I was in the twilight of my ministry here. So here I am. And yet, maybe this is an additional twilight of the ministry.

[6 : 04] But the thought keeps occurring to me that I want to make sure that to the extent of my ability that I leave you fully apprised of the things that are really most important.

And with some apology, that's going to necessitate a certain amount of repetition because the things that are most important are the things that need to be mentioned most frequently.

And you know that's what God has done in his word in no uncertain ways. The things that God wants to emphasize in his word are the things that you find mentioned there more often than anything else.

Because the Bible focuses on things that are really important. The book was never provided to satisfy our curiosities, of which we have many, but it was given to inform us of the things that we most need to know and understand.

And with that in mind, that's why we are kind of beating this drum, if you will, of rather simple issues in an effort to help solidify them in your mind.

[7 : 21] And so, what I'm going to start with really is nothing simple, but it is where everything begins.

And that's with the Almighty. That's with God. And we are talking about a being who is eternal. He is referred to as the uncaused first cause.

And you have heard us say over the years, and you've heard others say, that everything that exists has to have a cause.

Nothing exists without being caused. Not people, not things, not anybody. Everything that exists has a cause. And this immediately prompts the question in the eyes and minds of some, well, what was it that caused God then?

And the answer is, nothing caused God because God is the uncaused first cause. There was not a time when He was not.

[8 : 33] And when He decided to do something to change that and add something, it was called creation.

And if you can conceive, and you can't, and neither can I, a time when there was nothing, no material, no planets, no stars, no earth, no anything, nothing, absolutely nothing.

Absolutely nothing. Yet there was this being who is referred to as the uncaused first cause. And this being is not a material being.

God is not made up of stuff. God is immaterial. It's what Jesus was talking about when He addressed the woman at the well in John chapter 4.

He said, God is spirit. Well, what is that? Spirit is the absence of materiality. We are all material beings.

[9 : 41] We have flesh and blood. We sit on material chairs. We worship in a material building. Everything around us is made of matter, is made of stuff. But spirit is immateriality.

Spirit has no physical material involving it at all. We just can't conceive of that. Yet you need to know that you have an essence of that in your person.

It's called your human spirit. This is not God's Holy Spirit. This is your human spirit. Every human being has a human spirit.

It is the real you. And when you come to faith in Jesus Christ, it isn't your body that is saved. It is your spirit that is regenerated on the inside of you in a way that none of us understand.

But God has some way of reaching inside our being and actually affecting a change on the inside of us.

[10:49] This is incredible stuff. Just amazing. But this is what regeneration means. This is what Jesus called being born again.

And it happens on the inside. And none of us understands how God does that. But he does. And everyone who puts their faith and trust in Jesus Christ has an internal spirit that is regenerated or made brand new in Christ.

And that results in new interests, new desires, new goals, new agendas, new attitude, new everything. Because if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation.

Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. It's a whole new ball game. It's starting life all over again. And in addition to that, your sins are gone.

Wiped away. Completely forgiven under the finished work of Christ. And whereas you, with your physical body, continue to live in a physical world and are still able to do things you shouldn't do, yet the position that you have in God, in Christ, is absolutely perfect.

[12:12] Absolutely perfect. You don't grow in that. You can't improve in that. That cannot be changed because God did it. But in, in your own person, the life that you now live in Christ is a life that is subject to growth and maturity and development.

And that's what the scriptures mean when it talks about growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ. So we can grow in that new relationship that we have, but the forgiveness aspect and the new position that we have in Christ is fixed and it cannot change because Christ is the one who determined that.

We are the ones who determine our spiritual growth or lack thereof. So let me get back to this person of God now being immaterial. I'm going to say some things that I can't explain because I don't understand them and I suspect that you don't either.

This God subsists in three persons referred to as the Trinity. It is a triunity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Yet there are not three gods. There is but one God who subsists in these three persons and all of these persons are immaterial. We do not understand their exact makeup except to say that in their immateriality they just have no physical existence at all.

[13:48] They're Father, Son, and Spirit. Jesus is referred to as the Son of God. He's referred to as the Eternal Son of God. But you need to understand that the Father-Son relationship that exists in the Trinity is not to be compared with the Father-Son relationship in our humanity.

That would be grossly off the mark because God in His existence as a holy, uncreated being has an entirely different constitution makeup than what we have.

So please, don't try to transfer the Father-Son relationship that we have on earth to the Father-Son relationship in heaven and with the Spirit because it's entirely different.

Yet, that analogy is used because for the purposes of communication and understanding, God has to put in some kind of language or terminology that we can understand.

And we can understand a Father-Son relationship. But these three beings are co-equal and co-eternal. And they are all spirit beings.

[14:59] Jesus, before He was born in Bethlehem, didn't have a body, didn't have a physical body. He too was a spirit being.

And when it was determined that this spirit being would take upon Him flesh and become one of us, that's referred to as the incarnation.

That is the enfleshment of deity. So He who did not have a body was a spirit being, came into this world, was born as one of us with a physical body, grew up in the physical surroundings, went and died on a physical cross.

And you need to understand what we're talking about now is the centerpiece of the universe. It's no exaggeration.

That He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

[16:12] How does that happen? It happens because when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, you receive from Him a gift.

A free gift doesn't cost you a thing. You receive a free gift from Him of forgiveness and righteousness that is true only of Him and He gives it to you so you become a possessor of the very

righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Now that might be hard for you to believe but that is your station. That is your official position. God sees you and accepts you just as He does His own Son.

You have the righteousness of Christ. You did nothing to earn it. You did nothing to deserve it. It is a free gift.

It can only be received, accepted, or rejected. You must understand it is not earned, it is not deserved. Someone has said anybody who thinks they deserve to go to heaven isn't going.

[17:29] It is only for those who know they have no claim on it. That's what grace is all about. Grace is God's riches at Christ's expense.

It's given to you. This is the most incredible, amazing, well, you know we use that word all the time to express, but it isn't incredible.

You know what that would mean if it was incredible? It would mean it isn't true. But we say that all the time, don't we? Because we really want to emphasize something. And when I say this is an incredible truth, that's tantamount to saying this is the truth that you can't believe because it's incredible.

In order for it to be credible, then you can believe it. And we do that with language all the time. Have you ever heard anybody say fantastic? Do you know what that means?

Fantastic means it isn't real. Fantastic means it's a fantasy. And yet that's the exact opposite. So when I say that what we have in Christ is an incredible forgiveness, an incredible reality, what it is really is the opposite of incredible.

[18:43] It is wholly credible. It is wholly true. So we reverse the word in an effort to make it emphatic. But words do mean things.

So, while we've got this credible, incredible relationship, it is ours for eternity.

And we are going to dwell with the one who gave that to us. And the time is coming when these bodies will be redeemed as well, because they are not now.

The price was paid for the redemption of our body. But that's never been applied. that's why even though you are a believer in Christ, you're still going to die physically because the redemption that Christ accomplished and paid for when he died on that cross for every human being because God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

And the fact that he paid for the redemption of your body as well as your immaterial soul simply indicates that something is yet lacking.

[19:59] And before we go to Acts chapter 4, I want you to go for just a moment to Romans chapter 8 because you need to see this and I don't want to lose my train of thought here because it's too important.

Romans chapter 8 and it will tell us about when the job is going to be completed because right now we are all under construction.

None of us is a finished product. We are all en route to that but none of us have arrived. And Romans chapter 8 explains this in verse 20 when he says the creation was subjected to futility not of its own will but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

This means all of creation everything everything fell everything fell with those who were in charge of everything that was Adam and Eve they were given dominion over the whole earth and over all of the animals they were the boss they were in charge of everything and when Adam and Eve rejected God's authority and bought into the lie of Satan they fell and everything came crashing down with them as a result we live in a fallen world you do recognize that there are some things wrong don't you in this world bloodshed violence heartache deprivation starvation murder suicide all of these things are the product of a fallen world that's the world we live in the time is coming when that is going to change because we know verse 22 that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now what does that mean it means that all of creation all of creation is seeking to be miraculously delivered it's as if creation is a baby to be born and it is laboring it is an intense labor waiting to be born and what it's going to be born into is a whole new world a whole new redeemed world that will be the way it ought to be it hasn't been that way since

Genesis chapter 3 this is going to be what Peter talked about in Acts 3 this is going to be the times of refreshing the times of reinstatement the times of cleansing the times of purging the times of restoration that's what's coming and he says that it will be set free from slavery to corruption to the freedom of the glory of the children of God for we know that the whole creation groans and suffers

the pains of childbirth together until now and not only this but also we ourselves having the first fruits of the spirit even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons to wit the redemption of our body wow this old bag of bones is going to be traded in for a brand new model and arthritis goodbye and sciatica goodbye and goodbye to a whole host of other things we just can't imagine what that's going to be like but it will be the same kind of body that

[23 : 55] Jesus Christ had when he came out of that tomb in which he was placed a glorified body wow alright now those propositions that I was telling you about and this is just so basic and so simple but perspective is everything follow me now and while you're following go back to Acts chapter 4 while we see and hear what we see and hear what we see and hear provides information for us to process and evaluate well that's pretty simple our evaluation then produces a conclusion follow me okay our conclusion then provides something to believe or something to do or both based on our understanding or perception of it all the way we see it all is our perspective and that's a fascinating word perspective it's a wonderful word you see the words per means having to do with or in connection with and spective means the way you see things it's a word from which we get the word spectator and spectacles that we wear for seeing and it all has to do with the way you see things someone has said that's a good synonym for your world view view is something you you you arrive at by looking at something and what is being talked about here is the principal ways we have of receiving information so that we can process it is through our eyes and our ears of course we can feel with touch also and with smell we can discern things because those two are physical assets that give us information but by and large for the most part and of course there is the feeling and

I can still remember my father saying if you will not hear what I say you can feel and it worked it made a real impression on me too you know and that's that's one of those sensations but by and large for the most part the things that we perceive and the things that we hear is that which enables us to process information and reach conclusions and determine on a course of action of something to do or something to believe and to log it as a conviction or as something that we earnestly believe in and that's the difference between an opinion and a conviction a conviction is something you're ready to go to the mat for that's big stuff a conviction is something that you hold dear and we need to be people of conviction and what's the basis for well look at this

Acts chapter four fascinating fascinating passage the thing that has already preceded this and was lame from his mother's womb had not walked a day in his life and he had lived over 40 years that's a long time to be completely lame this man had never stood on two legs before or walked a day in his life and when Peter and John come into the temple for the time of prayer in the afternoon the Jewish temple this guy I'm sure all the locals knew him by name and it would be family and friends who would carry him physically there every day at the temple and plunk him down at this favorite spot because begging was all he could do and today I suppose we'd call it panhandling and sometimes it's legitimate and sometimes it's just a con you know that but back in these days and in the it's not at all considered to be a distasteful thing or a dishonorable thing especially if that's all you could do it was perfectly acceptable to earn your living as much as you could just by begging you're dependent upon the generosity and the mercy of others and that was this guy and he's not given a name by the way but he's sitting there at his choice spot he no doubt had dibs on way his cup here and he just holds his cup out and he's waiting for them to drop something in it and we look up well they look up and they see he looks up and sees

Peter and John and expects to receive something from them and Peter says silver and gold have we none but such as we have in the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and he reached down and took that man by the hand and yanked and this guy came up came right up out of his sitting position probably sitting there cross legged and a supernatural infusion of strength and vitality coursed through that man's body instantaneously you have any idea how impossible it is for someone to get out of a bed and walk if they've been bed fast for just one year we've got numerous reports how they have to go through extensive physical therapy and they have to learn to walk all over again this man is walking and leaping and jumping up and down and people are gathering the crowd is building because they know this guy he's part of the scene there they're used to seeing him there every day and now this guy is jumping up and down and he walks over and grabs

Peter gives him a big bear hug and then he goes over and grabs John gives him a big bear hug and all the people are saying whoa what is this what's going on here hey isn't that so and somebody would say well yeah no that's not him he just looks like no that's him I know him he's been there for

you've been on and on and the crowd is building and Peter sees an audience in the making and he's going to take advantage of it and he says you men of Israel why are you standing here in amazement looking at this situation as if we by our power have made this man to walk we want you to know it wasn't us it is in the name of Jesus the Messiah whom you crucified that this man stands here before you whole and you look at that man and he's just got this great big beaming smile on his face and he's looking down at his legs again and he's going like this and he's jumping and he just can't believe it but it's true now you need to understand if

[32 : 35] Jesus Christ is who he said he was that was a piece of cake for him no problem at all I mean if this is the one who said let there be light and there was light what he did in the body of this man is just child's play really I mean it was just no problem at all so how is this going to set with the local establishment well all the common people they're mesmerized by it they can't get over it they said yeah I know this is him and they're talking about it and they're jabbering and they're carrying on and they talk to the man and they ask him how did this happen how do you feel and the crowd is building and here comes the local authorities striding over in their splendid robes investigating what all is going on here and we pick up the scene for that in Acts chapter 4 Acts chapter 4 and they were speaking to the people the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the

Sadducees came upon them being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead they laid hands on them physically accosted them put them in jail until the next day for it was already evening which means the sun was setting and many of those who had heard the message believed and the number of the men came to be about 5,000 and the message is the message that Peter preached in the previous chapter chapter 3 and it came about on the next day that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem listen this is the same crowd before whom Jesus was tried and found guilty worthy of death this is the same crowd Annas the high priest was there

Caiaphas John Alexander all were the high priestly descent they placed them in the center they began to inquire by what power or in what name have you done this Peter filled with the Holy Spirit said to them rulers and elders of the people if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man as to how this man has been made well let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene whom you crucified I cannot help but wonder if Peter didn't point to that crowd whom you crucified and I can see these guys standing there with their long beards and long robes and fancy hats and everything with this big solemn look on their face and they look one to another whom you crucified and this is a very public thing by this name by this name this man stands here before you in good health he is the stone which was rejected by you the builders but which became the very corner stone which means of course the most critical strategic stone in the whole structure and there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved so now they got a real problem they are in a very dicey predicament because there's a huge crowd of people gathered there how are they going to handle this situation if this mob gets out of control it could even turn on them and they realize that so we read in verse 13 they observed the confidence of

Peter look at that they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated untrained men they were marveling and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus what a compliment huh and seeing the man who had been healed standing with them they had nothing to say in reply when they had ordered them to go aside out of the council they began to confer with one another I can just see these guys now saying well you go over here we're going to have a private meeting over here and this is none of your business and this is official business and we'll take care of it over here you stand over there and we'll discuss this matter so they get these hoi polloi together and the head honcho says how are we going to handle this what are we going to do here they realized they were really in a tight spot because they've got all of these people who are looking on and they know what has happened and

I've already told you this is one of the saddest saddest verses in all of the Bible the text says in verse 16 what shall we do with these men for the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem and we cannot deny it that would have been our first item of defense we would have denied it disowned it say it didn't happen it wasn't true but we can't do that that's taken off the table we can't use that isn't it so sad to realize that these are human beings refusing to face reality that's exactly what we've got here refuse to deal with what is they've got to concoct something alternate they've got to find some way around this god forbid that

they enter into the celebration and say this is wonderful how did this happen who did this this man is walking he could never walk before this is terrific how did it happen is there some formula did he take no no just blatant rejection of the whole thing

[39 : 35] I do think I do think that this is going to be the basis for divine condemnation on the part of a whole lot of people when the time of judgment comes and it will be based upon God's knowledge not of what they didn't know but it will be based largely on the fact that they didn't want to know they were not available to the truth don't bother me with facts my mind is made up those kind of things that's what these people are made of and we cannot deny it but we can stop it we can nip it in the bud right here because if this thing gets out of hand it's going to be big trouble so that it may not spread any further among the people let us warn them to speak no more to any man in this name and they called them over they commanded them summoned them over and they said all right here's what we've decided command them not to speak or teach at all in the name of

Jesus Peter and John answered you realize this is these are relative nobodies ignorant uneducated untrained except for the training that Jesus gave them but basically uneducated and what shall ordinary working guys these are fishermen for crying out loud they fished for a living and they sold their fish in the marketplace that's how they sustain themselves they're relative nobodies and they are the kind of people of whom Jesus was speaking when he said and the last shall be first these are among some of the last and Peter and John answered and said whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God you for we cannot we cannot stop speaking what we have seen there's the visual what we witnessed with our eyes and heard two principal ways through which information about anything gets to us and then you process the information and you reach a conclusion and sometimes the conclusion is so strong and so powerful it becomes a conviction and a conviction is a hill that you're ready to die on that's what this was and by the way it will be the hill that they will die on can it be believed to that extent absolutely there are a lot of things that are more valuable than life itself and this is one of them we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard you're trying to silence us we just cannot be silenced we know what we know and with every fiber of our being we believe it and we have got to proclaim it this is the same attitude that the apostle

Paul had when he says woe is me if I preach not the gospel I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes how can I be silent got to tell people about this someone cared enough about you to tell you someone has said that in many respects the gospel is better caught than taught and it is caught by somebody who has been infected with the gospel exposing it to someone else so that they too can be infected in a good way never thought of the gospel as being a virus a positive virus but I guess you could think of it in terms of a spiritual emotional mental virus that you would do well to come into contact with because this is everything this this gospel this good news has been around for 2000 years and I am sorry to say it is still unheard of by many and unbelieved by many and I suspect that you know as well as I there are various reasons for that some feel that it's just too good to be true and you've heard the old song about when you hear a deal on the radio or on television some advertising or something or other you know and it you you you you fall for it and you discover that it's not what you thought it was and yeah there's no free lunch it's too good to be true too true is it too good to be true I can understand people thinking that stop for a moment and consider that everything in our world virtually everything in our world works on the merit system you get what you deserve but this gospel this free gift free gift of salvation free gift of forgiveness free gift of acceptance with God comes with no strings attached other than

God wants to be believed and part of the impediment if we can think of it as an impediment is that like Paul said in Romans 14 I believe that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God and that all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved then the question arises well who calls and why would they call why would anyone call you have to have a sense of need because if you do not have a sense of need you will not call for the filling of that need that makes perfect sense so what is it that establishes the need and this is what I refer to as and I don't have any other explanation for it I refer to it as the hard part of the gospel and the hard part of the gospel is for the individual to come to grips with the reality that he has a need and he cannot meet it he has a need that he cannot fill you have any idea

[47 : 46] I'm sure some of you do what a job that does on the human ego did a job on me when I was dating that sweet young thing in 1956 and she told me about some of these scripture verses

that she read you know and she was trying in a sweet gentle way to witness of the Lord to her boyfriend and it was just like water off a duck's back and I wasn't hearing that because my thinking was I hear what she's saying you know and this religion bit and that's all I could think of was this religion thing that's okay for women how's that for a sexist pig it's okay for women and for old people you know who need a crutch to get through life but

I am a 21 year old U.S. army veteran I don't need that stuff I can make it on my own whatever is needed I can provide whatever self sufficient smug know it all attitude you know I look back on it all and I just I'm just amazed that the Lord put up with me with all that nonsense and but you know something in my heart of hearts I knew that I was as weak and as vulnerable as anybody else yeah I'm such a hot shot such a know-it-all such a tough guy that I melted and took an F in speech just so I wouldn't have to get up in front of my classmates and give a speech speech this is all male chauvinism gone to seed and it will put a lot of men in hell there's nothing on earth to compare with the human ego especially if it is a male human ego

I know where of I speak and the truth of the matter is you tough guy you're nothing like you think you are you're just a little boy fearful that has grown tall that's all will you come to grips with that it's a bitter pill to swallow we know in our heart of hearts we don't have this thing all together we're not as smart as we think we are we're not as tough as we think we are and when you come to the reality of that and get a hold of that it does do a job on your ego and this is exactly why many people just reject the gospel I don't need that stuff I can hack it I can make it on my own whatever is required

I can do I'm a can do guy and yeah yeah yeah that's a big obstacle keeps a lot of people from admitting and acknowledging that they are what they really are that ego thing can be a very damning thing and then the other thought of course is that it's too easy that to just believe is just too easy and as I've often said in defense of our Lord it is easy it's not only easy it's free and the reason the reason it's easy is because Jesus already did the hard part and all he left for you to do was put your trust your confidence your reliance your faith your trust in him to provide for you what you could never provide for yourself that too is a little humbling because it points out our deficiencies so what we're all deficient welcome to the club we're all sinners we're all a flop in more ways than one admit it deal with it when you do you put yourself in position to receive what you could never get otherwise the righteousness of Christ given to you as a gift and you know what you're doing what you're doing you're just facing reality that's all that's all you're doing you're facing reality you're just admitting that it is what it is and let me tell you something

God loves reality he is a God of reality a God of truth a God of what is and when you come to grips with your own failings that we all have your own failures that we all have your own flaws that we all have admit it you are just nothing more than another member of the human race but you're one very prized highly and loved greatly by God so that he went to the incredible extent that he did so he could have the likes of us with him forever if that isn't amazing that is there's nothing like this in the world this is this is this is everything this this is incalculable in its importance and its significance it is incalculable this is what this creator

[54 : 24] God did for his rebellious falling wayward creatures we song song song song song song song song last week why should he love me so why should my savior to Calvary go why should he love me so and the answer is we can't think of any reason why he should but he does and you know the thing that characterizes God more than anything else is love love God is love doesn't simply doesn't simply say God is loving always that too but it says God is love God is just but it doesn't say God is just it just says God seeks justice and he will provide justice but it doesn't say he is just but it says he is love that's the only attribute that is actually assigned to him

God is love and love is best defined as when you say the thing and do the thing that is in the best interests of the object of your love and that's what Jesus did that's what Calvary love is all about God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ loved us and died for us never expect to get over that and when I get to glory I still will have not gotten over it and neither will you this is just amazing this is this is what it's all about this is what everything is really all about that matters this is why what Jesus Christ did on that cross 2000 years ago is the focal point of the universe everything hinges upon that so what's your relationship to it would you pray with me please father it is with great simplicity great repetition that we've explained something something that we've tried to make clear and we know there are areas of it that we've left untouched we know there are still areas that are not understood as well as we would all like but we trust that we can all

grasp the essence of this so much so that it positions us with information that requires our assessment of it what do we make of this gospel of this good news of this sacrificial death of Jesus Christ is it just religious gobbledygook and that's it or is it the very essence the very heartbeat of the creator and sustainer of the universe who has provided us with this vital information so that we can process it and reach a conclusion and dear friend I would ask you right now what do you make of this have you processed it have you thought it through have you reached a conclusion and if you've concluded that it's true what have you done about it because a conclusion sets the stage for a decision and this is where the drama really needs to go what will you do with this one who is called

Jesus he has already gone the limit gone to great depths to the great extreme to do for you what you could not do for yourself to provide and to package a righteousness that God will accept that he extends to you as a free gift and just asks you to take it could very well be that in our audience this morning everyone who is here has already made that decision that would be a wonderful thing if true yet we have a great burden for any single individual who perhaps has never come to that and wants to and is willing to and dear friend this is your moment this is your opportunity right now if you've heard what you need to hear oh I'm sure that you've got other questions

I've been preaching this for 60 years and I still have other questions but you have heard all you need to know to make a decision if you choose to make it and I am now appealing to your will to your volition I'm asking you to make a positive decision for Jesus Christ who did for you what you could never do for yourself and he offers this free gift to you will you take it right now are you willing to say in the privacy and the quietness of your own heart right where you're sitting are you willing to say dear God there's still a lot about this that I don't understand but I understand enough to make a decision and I want to do that of my own free will

[61 : 07] I want to acknowledge my sin and that Jesus took my sin upon him paid my penalty in my place so that he could let me go free I don't deserve that neither does anyone else but it's all a demonstration of God's great love I do not want to turn my back on that love I want to receive what Jesus Christ died and paid for to provide me with a gift best as I know my heart I want to take Jesus as my savior right here and now and I'm asking open my heart Lord Jesus come into my life thank you for your salvation and your forgiveness I want to be what you want me to be and I'm looking to you for the empowerment and the enablement that I know

I don't have thank you for being such a wonderful savior thank you for that gospel in Jesus name amen dear friend if you've made that decision this morning it's really important that you tell somebody and if you want to talk with me I'm certainly more than available and I'd be happy to encourage you in any way I can and I've got some literature that you'd find very helpful so in dismissing I want to remind you that we are meeting the single seniors are meeting at Lois Lynn's place and that's going to be when is that by the way Thursday the 9th okay 1130 and there is a sign up sheet and if you're going to be there sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board and we'll just have a grand time we always have a great time when we get together and Lois's house is very accommodating she's got a beautiful backyard that is just gorgeous and I think every bird in North America is in her backyard enjoying what she provides for them so we look forward to a time of fellowship and refreshment and relaxation so if you're able and can make it I would love to have you it's very informal and very friendly and be sure to sign up on the bulletin board and picture taking is right after in the north end just make your way down and nobody is selling pictures you don't have to buy anything but just make your way down to the north end and that's where they're collecting all the evidence okay and then there will be another next week one week from today if you can't make it today so otherwise you are dismissed and thank you for your kind attention and your presence God bless you okay you you