

America: Over-Ripe for the Gospel, Part 3

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[0 : 0 0] of the message is America, Overripe for the Gospel, Part 3. We'd like you to please turn in your Bibles to Paul's letter to the Romans.

And we'll be in chapter 1 of Romans, and we'll be looking at verses 16 through 20 in Romans chapter 1.

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as it is written, but the righteous man shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Because that which is known about God is evident within them. For God made it evident to them.

For since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes, his eternal power, and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

[1 : 5 9] A difficult passage to contemplate and a difficult message that we have before us today, which is actually the third and the final message in the series that we have been developing about America being overripe for judgment and overripe for the gospel as a result. We claim the principle that where sin abounded, grace does much more abound. And so far as the good old U.S. of A is concerned, grace has its work cut out for it. Because sin is and has been abounding in this nation for quite some time. And we would be remiss if we did not address it. Has our nation ever been at such a place where grace is so desperately needed as right now? If the amount of evil and wickedness is that which when maxed out calls for and desperately needs the grace of God, we are here. In our last message, we related to you the story about

Jonah and Nineveh. And I'll not ask you to turn to it, but in the very first two verses, God spoke to Jonah and said, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it, for their wickedness has come up before me. And we ask the question, has come up before me?

Well, where was it before? Wasn't it always before God? The implication in the text is that Nineveh was maxed out in their wickedness and God was on the verge of doing something.

But part of the splendor and the graciousness of God is that he provides an opportunity for the recipient of judgment to mend their ways before the curtain comes down. And it is a demand for repentance. It is a demand for changed behavior. It is a demand for recognizing and acknowledging your sin. And it is the graciousness of God that extends that opportunity to us. And here, he was extending it to an entire city, a very vast city. In fact, we have reason to believe that at this time, Nineveh was called, Jonah was called to go to Nineveh. It was probably the most principal city in the entire Mediterranean basin. And God had compassion on them and is going to send the prophet, albeit a disobedient and reluctant prophet, Jonah, to warn them. And the thing that struck me the most about this, because as we read so many things in the Old Testament, and I'm thinking, for instance, of 2 Chronicles 7, 14, my people who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways. And I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. And it is very typical for believers, particularly those of the grace position, to say, but that's all Israel. And they're right. That is speaking of Israel. But so much of what is to be interpreted of one state may be applicational to another. So while it is true, undoubtedly, that God has a special affection and a special regard and a special purpose in the nation of Israel and the calling of the Jewish people, his calling Jonah to go to Nineveh certainly demonstrates that he isn't concerned only about the Jewish people. He is concerned about these pagans, these Gentiles in Nineveh, who knew nothing of Moses, knew nothing of the law, couldn't have cared less, but they were engaged in abject human wickedness, vice, sin of every description. And the Lord says, it came up before me.

So I want you, Jonah, to go to Nineveh and preach this message. They've got 40 days to turn it around. And if they don't, the hammer comes down. Well, you know the story about Jonah's reluctance. So we'll just skip all of that and say that he delivered that message. And wonder of wonders, the people responded from the king right on down. And judgment was averted. And here is a clear cut case of Gentiles having no covenant connection with Jehovah at all, but being the recipient of God's grace and God's favor and God's forgiveness because of their repentance. Is it a stretch to say that the same could be true of the U.S. of A., or France, or Great Britain, or Germany, or any other nation? I think the application is quite valid. And the principle is simple. God hates wickedness, evil, and sin. And the reason he does, oh, if only man could get this through his bonehead. The reason God hates all of these things is because he loves people. And all of these things are destructive. They are hurtful. They bring all kinds of negative repercussions and complications and pain and sorrow and aggravation all because man kicks over the traces of divine behavior and wants to go his own way. And that's part of the fallenness of human beings. And it's the world that we live in. And it's the nation that we live in.

[8 : 24] So God, out of love and out of compassion, raises up prophets and preachers and teachers to warn the people, to tell them what God expects, to tell them what the consequences are going to be.

And sometimes they heed them, as did the Ninevites. Very often, they do not. And God's judgment eventually falls. So this is what we're looking at. And in connection with this, we have come to the conclusion, and by the way, I am determined this morning that we are going to have some Q&A; so you can be prepared to inject your questions or comments or whatever because we will get there. And I'm trying to separate my material now so I'll make sure that I do get in the things that are most important.

And you be thinking about questions that you would like to ask or comments that you want to make in connection with all of this because it is a very, very needy subject. And it is one that is one that I don't relish bringing. This is not my favorite kind of material, as you can well guess. But it is necessary. And we are not called upon to preach the preaching that we would prefer, but we are called upon to preach the preaching that is most needy and that for which God has provided. And that is, I trust what we are doing.

So we talked about boldness and the necessity of being bold and proclaiming the message. And that, too, is absolutely critical because we tend to go underground with our message. And we tend to seek out those who already agree with us. And I would just ask you a question. I'm not looking for a show of hands, but maybe it would be a sobering thing for you and for me as well to reflect upon. How many unsaved friends or neighbors do you associate and frequent with?

Is it not true that in all too many cases, when people come to faith in Christ, they begin quite naturally and quite appropriately seeking out the fellowship of others who think like they do?

[10 : 53] who have come to the same appreciation of God's grace and forgiveness as we have. And we are comfortable with those people and we call it fellowship. And it is. And it's sweet. It's desirable.

It's necessary. And we should engage in all that we can. But what so often happens is we become disconnected from those who are not in the body of Christ, who do not share those sympathies or those convictions. And we are not nearly so comfortable with them. And we don't care all that much about being around them. We talk about the sweetness of Christian fellowship. And so it is.

And so often then we lose sight of those who are not in Christ. We just kind of pull back from them, ignore them. And opportunities to communicate the gospel to them are often neglected or lost altogether. So it's just something to think about. And we need to think about it too, in regard to our neighbors. All of us do.

And we need to think about it too. We in this nation We have never been here. We have never been here. And we don't know exactly how to respond to it.

Morally and socially, America has never been where she is right now. We have never had to deal with the issues that we are dealing with now in the magnitude with which they are overcoming us.

[12 : 38] Of course, you know, sin and evil has always been a part of the American community from the time of our founding. But there has been an undeniable proliferation. It is almost as if the rails have been greased. And we are sliding and slipping along faster and further than ever before.

And it is a cause for concern. Prior to my generation, I guess that would go back to the 1930s or before. There was a moral construct in place that made key elements of society that is immoral key elements of society illegal, illegal and punishable by law. Not only were they sinful, they were unlawful. But that moral construct has been upended.

What was previously under the earlier establishment clearly wrong that moral construct has become not only legal, but in the minds of many, something to be permitted or even applauded or affirmed, as stated in Romans 1, 28 through 32.

And we didn't get that far in the reading, but I want you to look at those verses, if you would, please. 28 through 32 of Romans 1. Paul said, Just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer.

Folks, that's where we are. It isn't even talking about worshiping God or going to church or anything like that. It's just talking about a simple acknowledgement.

[14 : 38] Acknowledgement. And now, instead of acknowledgement, on the part of so many in leadership positions, it is, get God out.

Get Him out. Not long ago, we had the privilege of visiting our nation's capital, and it is splendid beyond imagination.

It just makes your heart swell up with pride to be an American over the things that you see. And virtually everywhere, all over the city, on all of the monuments and everything, there is plastered.

Engraved in stone. I mean, chiseled in stone. So it's permanent. Verses and passages of scripture and things that refer to our nation's heritage and the standards under which this nation was birthed.

And now, there are those in positions of authority that are saying all of these things ought to go. They are inappropriate. And it is an effort to secularize the nation.

[15 : 44] And what is that? But what verse 28 says, They did not see fit to acknowledge God. Don't even give Him recognition. Don't give Him credit.

But we're not talking about holding services in His name or prayer meetings or anything like that. We're just talking about simple acknowledgement. They refused to acknowledge Him. But listen. No person and no nation lives in or operates out of a vacuum.

If you do not fill your life or your nation with the right things, you will fill it with the wrong things. But the point is, you will fill it. Nobody operates out of a vacuum. And when you're not giving credit to God, you're giving credit to something else.

And do you know, the Almighty just doesn't take kindly to that. For some strange reason, He thinks that just because He is the ultimate creator and sustainer of the whole universe, He has the audacity to think He ought to be acknowledged.

What do you make of that? Well, God is claiming rights to His creation. And there are those who resent it. Acknowledge Him.

[16 : 58] God gave them over to a depraved mind. You may have already done that. I don't know. I don't claim to have any special wisdom in this.

He may have already done that with the U.S. of A. Because, do you know, the greatest damage that can be done in a case like this is for God to simply walk away saying, Okay, have it your own way.

That is a consignment that this nation cannot afford. And we may already be living there. I do not know.

I'm not saying we are. But I'm not saying we aren't either. God gave them over. To a depraved mind.

We've talked about the fallenness of humanity. How that we all think and reason and exercise logic from a position of a skewed intellect.

[18 : 18] All of us. Yes, including preachers. We all have a flawed intellect. We all have faulty powers of reasoning and logic.

How else do you think we do so many dumb things? Really stupid courses of action. How many times have we said, Boy, I didn't think that through.

Why did I do that? What was I thinking of? You took your stupid pill in the morning. That's just part of being a human being.

We're all capable of that. And God in His grace and in His wisdom has provided us with the real scoop. God's vision. God's vision. God's vision. God's vision.

God's vision. God's vision. God's vision. God's vision. God's vision. God's vision. God's warning. And when we line ourselves up with the book, we get predictable results.

[19 : 16] And they are God honoring. And when we don't, we get what we've got. God's vision. And what we've got right now is a mess of gigantic proportions.

The legal community. The legal community gave great freedom to those things previously considered vices that are now claimed to be the new norm.

And you know, for some people, all it has to be is legal. And they don't care about any other implications as long as it's legal.

And that means you can't go to jail for it because it's legal. And a lot of things come under that category that didn't used to. But now they do. Abortion used to be illegal.

But it isn't anymore. Homosexuality used to be illegal. But it isn't anymore. Case rose in Texas.

[20 : 36] Went all the way to the Supreme Court. And the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the homosexual movement. And many Americans look upon it as, hey, it's just a question of liberty.

That's all. Freedom. Who are you to impose on somebody else's freedom? What gives you the right to impose your standards upon someone else? What gives you the right to tell men whom they may or may not love sexually?

What gives you the right? And the Supreme Court ruled in favor of that. And they did so because it was looked upon as an expression of human freedom.

So, God has set forth these behaviors as sinful and unacceptable.

And because they are, what is the Christian constituency called upon to do about it? Well, just hunker down.

[21 : 46] Stay in close fellowship with other Christians. Shame those who are doing those things. Shake your head and say, isn't it terrible what this world is coming to? But don't have anything to do with it.

Just pull back from it. You don't want to be contaminated with that stuff. By and large, that has been the Christian answer. But that's not the biblical answer.

The biblical answer, as we've revealed earlier, is have nothing to do with the unfruitful deeds of darkness. But rather, reprove them.

Expose them. Call them out. What gives you the right to do that? You have a mandate. And we are supposed to exercise that mandate from God, not because we want to be judgmental, not because we want to inflict our opinions and our positions and our standards upon someone else.

I don't have the energy to try to do that. I wouldn't even attempt it. But we do it because we do it, we trust, for the same reason that God has forbidden it.

[22 : 57] Love compels us to do that. Because we care about people and the destructive tendencies that people are inflicting upon themselves.

We are called upon to preach about these things. And these unfruitful deeds of darkness. What do you think they are?

They are unfruitful deeds of darkness. That means people are reluctant to do these things in the daylight, in plain sight. Why?

Because there is that element of shame and embarrassment connected with it. And we are called upon to preach against that because we love people.

Now, I don't expect those on the receiving end of our preaching to believe that. Because they just see it as so much judgmentalism and so much trying to interfere with whom they love and how they love, etc.

[23 : 57] And it's really looked upon as none of our business. And yet, if you care about people and you love people, you've got to say something.

You've got to do something. This gospel that we preach, you know the gospel is directed only to one thing. Just one thing.

And that is sin. You realize that? Listen, without sin, the gospel doesn't have any place to go.

Doesn't even have a need. And by the way, there won't be any gospel preaching in heaven. And the reason is simple. There won't be any need for it there.

There won't be any sin there. No evangelists in heaven. Billy Graham is going to be, they used to tease each other about this, you know. And Cliff Barrows used to tell Billy Graham, we get to heaven, you're going to be out of a job.

[24 : 57] But I'm still going to have my job because we're going to sing in heaven, you know. So, Cliff Barrows is going to lead the choir and all that good stuff. But seriously, folks, without the reality and the presence and the definition and the acknowledgement of sin, you don't have any need for a gospel.

Why did Jesus die? Christ died for our good deeds, right? He died for our sin. That's the corrective.

That's why we have a message to preach. But, before you can preach Christ died for your sin, you have to be able to identify what sin is.

That, too, has undergone a remarkable change. Because what used to be sin, didn't sin any longer. Now, hey, it's still sin in the book.

It's just that it isn't sin in the Supreme Court. But there is a Supreme Court over our Supreme Court. And it has already ruled.

[26 : 05] And it's still sin. It's still destructive. It's still hurtful. And it needs to be called out. But we Christians, let's face it, are really reluctant to do that.

Because we rationalize with, well, who am I that I should tell anybody? Well, you know, I'm not perfect either. Anyone who isn't perfect shouldn't cast a first stone.

And we just kind of back off because we would be uncomfortable. We would appear judgmental. And I told you. I told you in our last session. There is one standard answer that you ought to give.

Because it's the most truthful answer there is. And when you point out something and you say that that is evil, it is wrong, it is destructive, it is sinful.

And they come back. Invariably, you'll hear this from them if you ever get into. If you ever tread in these waters, you will hear this. You're being judgmental. But don't you forget, the only acceptable comeback is, I am not judging you.

[27 : 13] God has already judged. And he has made his verdict quite clear. It isn't my idea. I don't have any right to be your judge any more than a man in the moon because I'm just a human being like you.

But I know what God says. And I care about you. Even though you may think I'm just being mean and nasty.

When you care enough to confront, that's a whole different thing. Well, objective truth has been compromised.

Subjective truth has been catapulted into society as a new standard for behavior and determining right from wrong. Subjective truth and its embrace allows acceptable behavior to be determined by the individual.

If you as the individual think that such and such a thing is okay, then it's okay. And nobody else has the right to deny you that.

[28 : 30] Society is called upon to recognize this new standard and withhold judgment or censure toward those insisting on and practicing the standards of behavior previously held to be unacceptable and illegal.

This has all changed. And now what had previously been labeled immoral has in fact become legal.

And you know what the world attributes that to? Do you know what the so-called experts attribute that to? We've been enlightened. We have come of age.

We have learned to shelve and leave behind those old puritanical absolutes that made demands upon people.

And we have entered a new age. And now the word is acceptance. Affirmation.

[29 : 47] Get with the program. This is the 21st century. What are you doing? Hanging on to those old no-nos. They are passe. Get with it, man.

This is the 21st century. That's what we're met with today. Abortion.

And homosexuality. Have been the underpinnings of this cultural and moral shift. Providing a slippery slope for all other issues of morality.

Nothing so powerfully controls the parameters of human values and behavior as these two issues today. They strike at the very core of our humanity.

And what involves our most basic values. And they both have to do with sex. That's really important to understand.

[30 : 52] Something that we all have in common, don't we? All we've got to defend against that is what the Bible calls the gospel.

And we have to ask ourselves, is it adequate? Don't we need more? Don't we need more reasoned arguments? Don't we need more research about this or that?

Don't we need more experts to speak to this or that? Don't we need more experts to speak to this or that? Nope. If the gospel is what the Bible says the gospel is, it is the power of God and that is sufficient.

You don't need anything more than the power of God. But the only problem with the gospel is it has to be proclaimed.

It has to get out there. It has to have an audience. It has to be expressed. And we're not doing very well at that. I mean, when I say we, I'm just talking about Christian America.

[31 : 59] We're not doing very well. You know what we're good at? We're good at hunkering down. We're good at going underground.

We're good at being uninvolved. We're good at saying, not my job. We're good at a whole lot of things that we ought not to be good at.

And you know, this is where that subject of boldness comes in. I told you, looked it up. Didn't want to take anything for granted because the issue is too important.

Wanted to make sure the ground where I was speaking didn't want to define or misdefine a word. And this boldness thing is pretty powerful. And it means speaking plainly.

Speaking bluntly. Speaking forthrightly. So as not to be misunderstood. And let me emphasize this. That speaking should always be accompanied with gentleness but firmness.

[33 : 05] We don't have any call to go ripping into people or to be calling names or to be vindictive or nasty or rude.

We have no cause for that. And if we engage in that kind of behavior, I can assure you it will be counterproductive. If we are really motivated by love and truly by compassion, you may have to speak the gospel with some tears in your eyes.

And that's okay. Nothing wrong with that. We dare not come across as just in their eyes unloving, unkind, angry or whatever.

That is not becoming to us and it is not within our rights to be that. If we are truly motivated the way we ought to be, we will be compassionate.

You know, I was really struck by the film that we just saw recently. The name of it slips my mind. Anybody remember the name on abortion?

[34 : 13] Unplanned. Yeah, unplanned. Thank you. Thank you so much. The attitude, the attitude of those men and women who took their faithful positions outside that abortion clinic was just absolutely stunning.

I mean, that's the way Christians are supposed to conduct themselves. Not shouting in victims and not yelling out, you're a murderer and all the rest of it, you know.

But they did show a lady, the star of the thing, genuine compassion and concern. And when she came to herself, because you know what she was a subject to?

Sloppy thinking, skewed thinking, warped intellect. That's how these people arrive at these positions. We all do that. We all do that. Every one of us thinks with a skewed intellect.

And that's why we need the scriptures to set us straight in what our values and thinking ought to be. And they demonstrated the true love of Christ so that they became a magnet rather than a detractor.

[35 : 22] When that woman decided to leave the abortion clinic and that she finally had her eyes open. She knew and she could turn to those people who had been critical of what she was doing.

But they were critical with genuine love and compassion. And oh boy, did they pray. I mean, they were praying for that abortion clinic and for those people who worked in it for years before that thing got turned around.

And what a tremendous testimony. That's Christianity the way it's supposed to be displayed. And may their tribe increase. So, that's what we are to be about.

And I want to ask you some questions now. I told you last week I wanted to give you a few questions and I wanted you to be able to think about them. So, I hope you've been thinking about them during this past week.

And that is, is the gospel adequate? Is the gospel sufficient? Will it do today what it did 2,000 years ago when Paul the Apostle and others preached it?

[36 : 41] And what is to be the foundation of our worldview? This is really very important. Your worldview is the way you view your world and yourself and others.

And do we view it just through our own personal human lens? Which again, is clouded with skewed thinking?

Or are we going to view ourselves and the world and all those about us from a biblical perspective and see them as God sees them?

Because when you came to faith in Christ, probably for the first time in your life, you saw yourself. Not the way you usually see yourself. You saw yourself the way God sees you.

And that's what drives you to Christ. Because you are enlightened with that. So, when it comes to our worldview, what is to be our foundation for it?

[37 : 46] Is our worldview to be established by and as a matter of our faith? And then our politics develops out of our faith or moral belief system?

And listen, hear me well now. Hear me well. Please don't be one of those that says, well now you're talking about faith.

That's one thing. And when you're talking about politics, that's entirely something different. No, it isn't. No, it isn't. That's part of the problem. They cannot be separated.

Because politics. Politics has to do with laws and lawmaking and standards and rules and regulations.

That's politics. And somebody's expression or understanding of morality is behind every law that comes into being.

[38 : 48] And it doesn't have anything to do with Republicans or Democrats or conservatives or liberals or independents. It has everything to do with whether or not it squares with the truth of God's word.

So, this is a very, very important issue. Is our worldview, the way we view ourselves and the world, is it to be established by and as a matter of our faith?

And then out of our faith, out of those convictions and ideas and standards, then our politics develops and issues from that and we form a moral belief system.

Or, or is our worldview to be established by and as a matter of our political persuasion?

And I'd just like to see a bunch of conservatives here and a bunch of liberals or progressives as they call themselves here.

[39 : 57] Keep the two separated and then poll each group individually and determine what is their individual worldview.

I think you'd find it very, very enlightening. Where are the abortionists going to be? Hmm?

Where are the homosexual lobbyists going to be? Hmm? These are not tough questions. Think about it.

Does our faith govern our politics? Or does our politics govern our faith? Some think these can be completely separated.

That is impossible. Can't be done. Nor should it be done. And I know I've had people walk out of here saying, Oh, he's getting political. These preachers aren't supposed to be...

[40 : 58] Listen. Listen. You cannot be moral without affecting and involving politics. It is absolutely impossible. It's two sides of the same coin.

Would to God Christians understood that. Recognized that. And if they did, the country would not be in the shape that it's in right now because they would have been at the polls a long time ago casting their ballots and they would have been casting them in connection with their worldview.

Instead of having this pitiful, and I mean pitiful, 60% of those eligible to vote show up at the poll.

God help us. Pathetic. Pathetic. How many Christians aren't even registered to vote? And the reason they give is, Oh, I don't have anything to do with politics.

Man, wake up! Oh. Oh. I'm liable to get steamed here. Well, I need some of that compassion that I've been talking about.

[42 : 11] But, you know, and here's what I want you also to keep in mind. I'm going to... I'm sorry. I've already taken more time than I intended. Do you know...

Do you know we don't have to win this battle? We don't have to win it. But God help us if we don't fight it.

Do you think the Apostle Paul, when he wrote that last letter to Timothy, says, The time of my departure is at hand. And I have succeeded in converting the world.

And I'm ready to go on now. Nope. Nope. In fact, do you think for a moment that he had succeeded in converting those who were going to execute him?

Not hardly. Huh. But what he did say is, I fought a good fight. I've kept the faith. That's all God asks us to do.

[43 : 16] And I'm so glad. I'm so glad he didn't say, Marv, you go out there and you preach the word then I'm going to hold you responsible to be successful and turn things around. Boy, my shoulders aren't big enough to handle that.

Not, not any way, shape or form. But he said, just be a good soldier of Jesus Christ and fight the faith. Keep the faith and speak the word of truth and speak it in love.

Because the truth spoken without love comes across as just counterproductive and it doesn't get the job done.

And if we have love without the truth, that doesn't go anywhere either. These have to be married. We have to speak the truth in love.

And love has to be our motivation. And our motivation is not to be to win an argument or to change somebody's mind so we can put some notches on our spiritual gun that we've succeeded in thus or so.

[44 : 30] You know. Well, we've got a great message. Can't be improved upon. This message is such that when it is believed and appropriated in ways we do not understand, the Spirit of God moves into the life of that believing individual and forgives and cleanses and pardons and makes that one a new creation and gives them eternal life and gives them eternal life and does it all on the basis of God's free gift of grace.

And this gospel that we've got is called the power of God. And listen, if it isn't sufficient, if it isn't enough, then the culture is too big for God to handle.

the sin is too big for God to handle. And we don't believe that for a moment. What the gospel is suffering from is a lack of proclamation.

And you don't have to have all of your arguments in a line. You don't have to have all of the clever answers to be able to give those who oppose. You just need a willing and a loving heart that cares about people and has the truth of the gospel.

and you remember what Jesus Christ did for you when he saved you and you're just passing that on. Someone has said that sharing the gospel is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.

[46 : 08] And C.H. Spurgeon used to put it this way. There is a sense in which the gospel doesn't even need to be defended. It just needs to be proclaimed. It's just like having a lion caged up.

Let the lion out of the cage. And you don't have to defend it. He'll defend himself. He'll take care of himself. But he has to get out of the cage.

And too many Christians have this wonderful gospel all locked up inside of us and we are so grateful for it and we appreciate it so much. But listen, the gospel never came to you to stop with you.

It came to you that it might flow through you to others. Don't let it stop with you.

Let's be giving it out. And I'm not about to try to tell you how to do that. I just want you to pray and ask God for a spiritual alertness to opportunities that come across your way and the courage to take advantage of them for the sake of the gospel because you love people.

[47 : 28] Who would like to inject something or have a comment? Yes, Carolyn? I was hoping I'd get a chance to ask you this. Years ago, you gave us the Roman road and we have that and we've used it, many of us, a lot and that gives us a place to go and you're saying proclaim the gospel.

Can you produce something for us that tells us where to go in scripture to use? It's not our words. It's got to be what's in scripture and proclaiming it. But I don't know exactly where to go and there should be a pattern.

And probably, I'm not the only one, there's probably others here that would greatly appreciate that. Well, sure, sure. Well, you know, there are publications available. I'm sure we probably have some right here in-house.

And there's one that's even called The Roman Road and it deals with passages from the Book of Romans because Romans is just so comprehensive. It just includes everything and we'd be happy to make those available.

And, you know, speaking of this boldness, I remember years ago and it has been some years ago. It was John, John Arnold.

[48 : 35] It was probably, probably 55 years ago when you were just a kid. I, I remember your mother.

She, she worked at Wren's. She worked at Wren's in the basement in, in the, in the restaurant, in the Wren's tea room. And, and I worked part-time selling shoes up on the first floor at Wren's.

This was in, early 60s. And, one time I was called to fill the pulpit at Maranatha Baptist Church out on Sunset Avenue in Springfield.

And, I went there. I was, I was in my 20s. Probably 23, 24 years old, something like that. I'd only been a Christian a couple of years. And, I was filling the pulpit there at Maranatha Baptist Church and I preached on the subject of boldness.

A holy boldness that the apostles who were proclaiming the resurrection of Christ, God had given them a holy boldness and they were proclaiming this gospel of the resurrection to the Jewish authorities and establishment.

[50 : 10] And, I made the issue of the fact that the reason they were proclaiming it boldly was because, simply because, they knew what they knew. They knew what they had experienced.

They knew the certainty of the ground on which they stood. That he had risen from the dead and we saw him and our hands handled him. And, there is no way that we can be quiet about that.

And, we've got to speak out. And, sometime after that message and I was working there and went down to the tea room for lunch and, and, I didn't even know your mother's name at the time.

And, she said, I know you. I remember you. And, I said, oh really? And, she said, yes. You were at my church. And, she said, I never forget your message on holy boldness.

And, I thought, wow, really? And, you wonder sometimes whether anybody's even listening, much less remembering, you know? And, she said, I really remember that message on holy boldness and how much it really encouraged me.

[51 : 14] And, your mother was a very attractive lady, black hair, and she wore it in a bun. I remember, in a bun in the back. And, she had a white uniform on and she was serving us lunch there.

And, hard to believe this, been about 55 years ago. Wow. Okay. 60. 60.

Pardon me? Sure. Sure. I wasn't asking you to create, or to have the Roman road. Ask us where we can go in scripture for talking about the abortion issue and about homosexuality.

Not the Roman road. Oh, okay. No. Where we can go in the passages that will address those two issues. Okay. I'd be happy to do that. I don't want to take the time to do it right now.

But, but I'll have something in print and we can distribute it next week. We'll maybe make a flyer out of it and put it in your bulletin. Okay. Thank you. I will do that. Anything else? Comments or questions?

[52 : 17] Got a few minutes. Okay.

Okay. Roger. Where, biblically speaking, time-wise, Nineveh, Jonah, and all that in relation to like Abraham and, you know.

Well, for the men's class on Thursday morning, we are studying the minor prophets and we started with Jonah because chronologically, I am convinced that he was the earliest of all the prophets.

And Jonah, I would put somewhere around, let's see, somewhere around, well, I'm not going to give you a date, but I just say that he was the earliest one.

I'd have to think about that. I'll do that for next week too. But he was, he was the first of the minor prophets. You know, he's, the way they are listed in your Bible, Hosea, Joel, and Amos, and Jonah is further down the line as they're listed in your Bible.

[53 : 28] But actually, Jonah would have been the very first one, the earliest one, to preach against Nineveh. And I'll give you a more precise date on that next week.

Other thoughts? Anyone? Yeah. Roger's got a double header. I'd probably like Bill Faye's questioning, asking questions.

What's your spiritual beliefs? You know, do you have any? Mm-hmm. That leading into the gospel. Yeah. If what you believe wasn't true, would you want to know? Yeah. That's a wonderful question.

Yeah. I kind of get it out of order sometimes, but it still gives them something to think about, even if they don't make a commitment at that time. Exactly.

And what you said there is more powerful than you know. Something to think about. Because listen, no one ever came to faith in Christ without first starting to think.

[54 : 30] Christianity is a thinking faith. And all you're doing, when you give people the gospel, you are giving them something to think about.

And listen, most of them, have never heard it. They have never thought in these veins at all. It is amazing to realize that this gospel has been around 2,000 years.

And there are multitudes of people right here in the good old USA who could not even define what the word means. Gospel.

Completely clueless. If you can just make them think and think along a line that perhaps they've never thought of before.

And that Bill Faye question is excellent. And he phrased it this way. If what you now believe is not true, would you want to know it?

[55 : 34] Yeah! What kind of a moron is going to say no? Hmm? Of course. Any thinking person. If you were headed in the wrong direction, would you want to know it?

Of course you would. Of course you would. And that in and of itself can make people think. And just say something like, boy, can you believe what's going on in our world today?

Well, now, is that too tough a question to ask? Is there anything going on in our world today? No! No! Everything's just Jake. Everything's wonderful, calm, quiet. No! There is so much chaos and conflict going on in the world and in our world today it just leaves people shaking their heads.

You ever seen anything like this? No, no, no. And boy, I'll tell you what, one thing that I'm sure glad of. Yeah, what's that? I'm glad my sin has been taken care of.

Has yours? Duh! What do you mean? What do you mean? Well, I mean, my sin has been taken care of. See, I'm a sinner and my sin has been all forgiven and taken away and I've got a free, clean slate.

[56 : 54] Well, what are you talking about? How did you do that? What's that all about? There's an opening you can drive a Mack truck through and all you're doing is making them think a little bit.

Just think. What are you going to do about your sin? Most people never thought about that. They don't even know there's a remedy. And some would even say, I don't have any of those.

Well, you can give them a little enlightenment in love and Christian compassion. Someone else, Joe up here has a comment, question. Okay, Bill? Our job is we're ambassadors for Christ is we don't, like you say, have to have all the answers.

We basically infect people with truth. and I've seen it happen from people that took years that I'd meet later trying to give the gospel to and stumbling through it to tell them how Christ died and was buried and rose again.

I've seen a guy in Springfield pick his lunch up. He said, oh my, he'd leave. Years later, I met him walking through a factory and he'd come up and hug me. He said, you know, I never told you this.

[58 : 10] He said, but what you told me at a time of my life was one of the worst days I was having was a bad day. He said, it took years, but he said, you know what, I trusted what you showed me about Christ dying for my sins and had you not done that, I don't know where I'd be today.

And you know, I've had too many things like that that happened with that. We don't have to have all the words right. We just need to be able to tell people how we were saved.

Just repeat your testimony to somebody and tell them. And if you've got some things in there that need to be figured out in your head, it's going to cause you to recall those things and give you answers that we need to clarify in our own minds.

And that's why repeating our testimony of how Christ saved us and how he resurrected, it's the difference between telling people about where Chicago is and telling people about what it looked like when we went to Chicago.

God bless you. Thank you. Thank you. Joe Moore up here had a comment or a question. Joe. This will be our last one. The idea or the doctrine of the separation of church and state versus freedom of religion.

[59 : 33] There seems to have been a constant conflict between those two ideologies. And everything you mentioned, you know, a Christian at all, you can't do that.

You've got to separate from the state from the politics. The state is politics. And you just made your message indicated that they can't be separated.

No, they can't be and they're not supposed to be. We have that in our constitution. So, what do you do? Thank you. Thank you, Joe. That's one of the most frequent things that you hear, whether it's a manger crash at Christmas time or a cross for Easter time or whatever.

The big rub from so many is that's a violation of the separation between church and state. And you know, and they go so far as to say and it's unconstitutional.

And I don't know if some of these people maybe they aren't capable of being embarrassed, but you can always tell them, well, I appreciate your conviction. I appreciate your sentiments about that.

[60 : 44] But did you realize that separation of church and state is found nowhere in the constitution? It doesn't exist. And I've talked to people who would swear it does.

And I said, well, I just wish, you know, a copy of the constitution is not that hard to come by. I wish you would just look at it and when you find it where it talks about the separation of church and state and the constitution, bring it to my attention and I will give you a great big apology.

It isn't there. It isn't there. It was a term that was incorporated in a letter that had been written by Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury, Massachusetts, congregation in the church and he was making the issue, making the point that there is supposed to be in this United States a separation between the church and the state and our forefathers wanted it that way.

We want it that way and the reason we do is because the colonists were chafing under British rule and British rule was buried to the state church which was called the Church of England and the church and the government were inseparably connected and our founding father says, we don't want that.

We don't want the state and by the state I'm talking about the federal government they said, we don't want the federal government telling churches what they are to believe or how they are to be run and we don't want churches telling the federal government how the government is to be run.

[62 : 38] There's to be a separation between them and we have that. We have that. But separation of does not mean separation from.

Big difference. And this is why our founding fathers held church services in the House of Representatives. Can you get any more government than that?

But it was not with either dominating either it was just an act of accommodation because they needed the building to meet in. So they met in the House of Representatives and held a worship service there.

And you know what? There wasn't one complaint. And today all it takes is for one person to complain. And the powers that be are scared to death that they're going to be sued.

and they tave and they give whatever is required. It's a crazy world we're living in today. Like I said we have never been here before.

[63 : 45] And this is part of our problem. We're a bunch of greenhorns dealing with a situation that our nation has never faced before. And we're just trying to find our way. And sometimes by the time we come up with a good corrective and a good answer the radicals have moved on to something else and they've got another thing to come back.

It's crazy isn't it? Aren't you glad you're American? Well you know what? I still am. Because with all of its faults and flaws the good old U.S. of A.

has got more going for it than any other nation on the face of the earth. And by the grace of God we still remain a land of freedom and liberty. And sometimes we think they are at risk.

Well I trust that you will consider what has been said here. Take it to heart. You know what I want you to do more than anything else right now? Think about it. Think about it.

Because if you don't think about it one thing is for sure you won't do anything about it. It starts with thinking. Would you stand please? Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before his throne with exceeding glory to him be majesty power and dominion both now and evermore.

[65 : 09] Amen. You are dismissed.