

The Difficult Sayings of Jesus #9

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[0 : 00] Come back please to Matthew, to the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6, and we will start our consideration with verse 7.

And today, this particular difficult saying of Jesus is in actuality not a problem at all for all too many Christians.

In reality, it's a problem only for those of the dispensational bent. And I say that with considerable sadness because this is one of the problems that has been besetting the Christian community for a long, long time.

Forgiving in order to be forgiven should be a difficult saying for everybody. But it isn't.

But probably even the majority of Christendom would say, forgiving in order to be forgiven sounds like a very reasonable thing to me.

[1 : 25] There's no problem to them. My contention is, it ought to be. It ought to be a great problem to them. In connection with that, begin with me if you would, with Matthew chapter 6 and verse 7.

And we are going to read what is probably, what is probably the most famous, well-known portion of Scripture in all of the New Testament throughout the whole Christian community.

Verse 6 says, verse 7. Well, let's start with verse 6. But when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do. Meaningless repetition simply means exactly what it says.

It means to pray the same thing over and over and over again. So it almost becomes rote, automatic. You just spew it out without even thinking about the words.

[2 : 38] Now, it is truly remarkable that right on the heels of this prohibition that our Lord has given about don't do this, the vast majority of the Christian community is committed to doing that very thing.

You know as well as I do, there are multitudes of churches throughout our land who would not dare conduct a worship service and not include what they call the Lord's Prayer.

It would almost be as, to them it would be like a slap in the face of God not to include the Lord's Prayer. It is just so automatic in so many settings. And in verse 7, do not use meaningless repetitions as the Gentiles do.

Therefore, do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Pray then in this way. And I don't want to be just super critical, but I must tell you that what follows here that our Lord is giving is not a prayer that is to just be uttered repeatedly day in and day out.

It is a model prayer that He is offering for the disciples. And I am not now going to dissect it, but we will later.

- [4 : 07] And now I simply want to incorporate this passage into our overall message because it does deal with the issue of forgiveness. And we will explain the ramifications about the Lord's Prayer at a later session.
- But Jesus is saying, these are the kind of items that you ought to include when you address God. First of all, recognize that He is your Father and that He is in heaven and that His name is holy and it is to be hallowed.
- All of these are theological principles, if you will, about the nature and character of God. And there is the inclusion for the coming of the kingdom, which of course was on the mind and heart of every Jew in that day.
- And it is a prayer for the kingdom to come. And it also includes, in verse 12, a request that we be forgiven our debts as, or in the same way that, we also have forgiven our debtors.
- And there injected in that statement, I think, is the obvious principle that the forgiveness that we enjoy from God will be commensurate with the forgiveness that we extend to others.
- [5 : 31] And the idea is, as you have forgiven, so you will be forgiven. So do a good job of forgiving, so you will receive good benefits from forgiveness.
- Do you not see a condition imposed here? Isn't it obvious? And it becomes even more clear.
- If you will look at verse 14. For if, and that's a big little two-letter word. It's a contingency word. It's a condition word.
- If you forgive men for your transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
- Now that isn't too complicated to understand. That's pretty straightforward. It is laced with conditionality. It all hinges on the if.
- [6 : 36] But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.
- Now if this is not a clear case of forgiving in order to be forgiven, I don't know what is. And there are many who would look at this, even many, sad to say, not just Christians, but even many evangelicals would look at this and say, so, what's the problem?
- Seems perfectly logical to me. If you are unwilling to forgive somebody who has wronged you, why should God forgive you?
- And he won't. So you take care of what you need to do by forgiving those who have wronged you, and then God, in turn, will forgive you.
- But if you don't, he won't. Am I reading something into this, or is it really that clear?
- [7 : 57] I think it is. You would have to be a couple of bricks shy of a load not to see that, really. It's pretty obvious, I think.
- And as I've said, many would not have a problem with this at all, because they are committed committed to the principle of human effort effort and human works.
- That must be in place before you can receive the favor and blessing of God. you just better mind your P's and Q's, or you will not enjoy God's favor.
- And this passage is saying, if you have something between you and a brother that you're holding a grudge, and you are not willing to forgive him for it, or her for it, don't expect God to forgive you.
- Do you understand the implication of what it means to have on your record a sin, a single sin that God has not forgiven you for?
- [9 : 10] Do you realize the implications of that? Without him, how lost I would be. And without his forgiveness for everything, how lost would you be?

Now, when I say that this is a problem for dispensationalists, but it's not a problem for those who aren't of a dispensational, then I hope you're going to be able to see what I'm driving at, because the distinction is really significant, and its consequences of it are tremendous.

this is not a problem to most people, even to most who profess to know Christ, because they look at it this way, if you won't forgive someone, you don't deserve for God to forgive you.

So don't expect him to. And then the implications of that is if you have a sin that God has not forgiven, you're in bigger trouble than you can imagine. And let me show you now why, even though this is not a problem for a great many non-dispensationalists and how they solve it, I want you to understand why it is a big problem for those of us who are of a dispensational persuasion.

And we need to go to Ephesians chapter 4, first of all. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 31, a very familiar passage.

[10 : 48] Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you along with all malice and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Now, there isn't a hint of any kind of conditionality being imposed here. The implication in this passage, as Paul writes to the Ephesians, is that the forgiveness that these Ephesians have received from God in Christ has already taken place.

there is, I think, a real distinction to be made when it comes to the forgiveness of sin for the believer and I'm not sure that I can clearly explain this, but I will do the best that I can.

And that is when one puts their faith in Jesus Christ for the salvation of their soul, you are given, for lack of a better term, a blanket of forgiveness that is all-encompassing that includes every sin you have committed or will commit in the future.

The whole slate is erased. Everything against you is blotted out. The forgiveness is full, complete, intact, entire, far-reaching.

[12 : 53] It encompasses every evil thought and deed that you have committed. And for that, you have received a blanket kind of forgiveness.

On what basis? On the basis of the finished work of Christ and nothing else. The work of Christ and the righteousness that Christ achieved through his sacrificial death is put to your account.

And because of that, you stand so far above any lack, any error, any conviction, any wrong, any anything.

It is just gloriously all wiped away. And you stand before him uncondemned and complete in Christ.

All transgressions forgiven. Everything is gone. Now, this doesn't mean that you don't sin. It doesn't mean that you can't do ugly things as a Christian.

[14 : 09] doesn't erase your potential for doing wrong. Your humanity as it is in Adam is still very much with you.

But you enjoy a position, a status of absolute perfection in Christ. God has nothing against you because Jesus paid it all.

all. And your trust is in him. So, his righteousness becomes your righteousness by imputation. You did not deserve it, you cannot earn it, and you cannot pay for it.

It is all a gift of grace. And it just completely wipes the slate clean. you stand before him uncondemned.

That's glorious. There is no greater need that we have as human beings than the forgiveness of the maker. No greater need than any human being has.

[15 : 17] This is a greater need than the air you breathe and the water you drink. This is a greater need than that. And that blanket of forgiveness encompasses everything.

Everything. If it does not, then Jesus Christ left something unfinished. And that's an abhorrent thought.

When he said, it is finished, and he cried out from that cross, it really was finished.

the great transaction was done. And those who are identified as being in Christ because of an act of their will, they put their faith and trust in Christ as their substitutionary Savior, God puts that blanket of forgiveness and the righteousness of Christ over them.

And you can still be a great A stinker who doesn't act right and doesn't think right. because you are saved by grace not on the basis of thinking right and acting right.

[16 : 29] And I know some think this is a very dangerous doctrine and it gives people the license to behave in a nasty fashion. Well, if you really understand grace, it doesn't do that at all because grace has an accompanying love love.

That is to serve as a blanket as well as the forgiveness blanket and this love of God is shed abroad in our hearts and it does not provide in any way, shape, or form a license for sin or bad activity.

One thing it does do, it does provide a new sensitivity to sin and wrongful behavior that should allow for us to correct it.

Now this is what we enjoy in Christ. This is your position. It's perfect. There's nothing that can be added to it because what Christ did is perfect and there is nothing that can be taken away from it.

You are secure in him. And while we're in Ephesians, come over a couple of books to Colossians, another familiar passage. Colossians 1 and verse 13.

[17 : 49] And remember, Paul is writing to a congregation of former pagans. These are people who were polytheists, who worshipped many gods.

Pagan, debauched, depraved behavior, and yet they responded to the gospel of the grace of God when Paul was there and preached it. And he says in verse 13, by way of reminding them of their past, and when you were dead, you were spiritually dead, separated from God, in your transgressions, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive.

alive. That is the contrast of the dead in the first part of the verse. He made you spiritually alive together with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.

sins. And yes, he has forgiven you for sins and transgressions that you haven't even committed yet.

Now, I realize that's a difficult concept for us to understand, but be reminded that when Jesus Christ died for your sin, all of your sins were future then, weren't they?

[19 : 12] having canceled out the certificate of death consisting of decrees against us, and which was hostile to us, and he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

That just really smacks of finality, and I'm so glad it does. And over, if you will, while we're here still in the same book, look at chapter 2.

I'm sorry. chapter 1 and verse 13. Colossians chapter 1 and verse 13. He delivered us, past tense, from the domain of darkness, this is spiritual darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Which ones? How many? All of them? Yeah. All of them. That's the blanket I was telling you about.

And it doesn't mean that we cannot now sin, and that that does not disturb our fellowship with the Lord, because it does, and it should.

[20 : 35] God. But it does not change nor diminish your relationship to him. You are a child of God, and you remain a child of God.

Someone says, but what if you do something really rotten, and you don't deserve to remain a child of God? Well, you never did deserve to become a child of God. what if I do something that I deserve getting kicked out for?

Well, you never did anything that you deserve getting included for. It was all on the basis of grace. It was all on the basis of you not deserving it, but getting it anyway.

That's what makes it amazing. That's why it's called good news. God has something for you that you don't have coming. You don't deserve it.

You have no claim upon it, and God has no obligation to give it. Where do you think good news got its name? Good news. This is it.

[21 : 38] And this is what we are privileged to preach. But do you know? It is very frequently not well received. Because the good news is perceived by many to be, well, in the watchword of a lot of scam artists and things that go on today, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

It probably isn't true. May I tell you this is a happy exception. It does sound too good to be true. But it is true, nonetheless.

And it's true because there isn't a scam artist behind this. There is the eternal infinite God who cannot lie. that is behind this.

And as I've said, this passage in Colossians and the passage that we read in Ephesians ought to create a real problem for you if you are of the dispensational bent.

And the problem that it ought to create is because what Jesus himself said in Matthew and also in Luke and you'll find it in Mark also makes a very clear indisputable case that forgiveness is conditioned upon you forgiving others.

[23 : 03] Why doesn't Paul say something about that? Or something like that? Or why doesn't he reinforce that? But he doesn't. He takes an entirely different tack.

what gives him the right to do that? Who does he think he is? Not attaching conditions to the forgiveness.

Christ attached conditions. Who does Paul think he is? And you know, sad to say, this is precisely the way many in the Christian community look at it.

they say, well, there certainly is a contradiction there. There's no question about that. Jesus said, you won't be forgiven if you don't forgive.

And Paul says, God's got this big blanket of forgiveness, and he's forgiven you all transgressions in Christ. He doesn't say anything about God.

[24 : 06] Now, when you trust Christ as your Savior, before you make that decision, you've got to recount, is there anybody in the past that you haven't forgiven for anything?

Because he won't hear you, he won't forgive you if you don't forgive them. My problem is I wouldn't even be able to remember them all. Because I've been around a long time. And I can accumulate quite a list over a long period of time.

I see a real problem here. Do you know how this is solved by most? Sad to say again.

They say, well, Jesus said you have to forgive in order to be forgiven. And Paul just lumps all of these things together and says, all transgressions are forgiven and they're all gone and the slate is clean in Christ.

And their response is, now Jesus, you better listen to. Because he is the authority. But this stuff that Paul said, that's just Paul's opinion.

[25 : 17] And when it comes to Jesus or Paul, I'm going to go with Jesus. Because after all, that's like really getting it from the horse's mouth and Paul is just Paul.

You know, he says radical things like that. Forgiven all transgressions. No stipulations, no conditions, just blanket forgiveness.

What gives him the right to say that? Well, what gives him the right to say that is that event that transpired outside the city of Jerusalem 2,000 years ago on that deserted old hill when those three crosses were placed there and the Savior was put in the middle and he died for our sins.

What Jesus was talking about was right on track for a covenant people living under the law of Moses, seeking to function and operate under the old covenant that is precisely what was described and proscribed.

And it was very legal in its approach. It was do, do, do. We will see this in major proportions when we examine the Sermon on the Mount in more detail.

[26 : 45] But it is do, do, do all the way through. But once that transaction took place on the cross and Christ died for the sins of the world, and that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, when that occurred, that great singular event that split all of human history, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, that ushered in a whole new thing.

And that is that under which Paul is speaking and addressing the people at Colossae and Ephesians. It is post-calvary information.

What Christ was talking about was pre-calvary information. The difference is incredible. So which one is right?

They're both right. Nobody's wrong. The terrible, terribly deficient way that so many in the Christian community answer that is, well, what Jesus said you can take to the bank, but what Paul said and the others, do you know what their basic problem is?

they've got a very deficient, flawed understanding of the inspiration of Scripture. That's where the problem is. And let me tell you, this is the major problem for all of Christendom today, and it has been for the last hundred and twenty years.

[28 : 16] It is the authority of Scripture. Scripture. And when we talk about the Word of God being inspired verbally, we mean it is word for word inspired by God.

That does not mean that he dictated words to the writer as an executive would dictate a letter to a secretary, but it does mean that God utilized the personality, the vocabulary, the background, the temperament of the individual in what was written.

So you get a different stylistic writing in John's Gospel than you do in Luke's. And Amos is different from Obadiah. And Moses and what he wrote is different from Nehemiah, because they incorporate their idiosyncrasies and God drew upon them.

So you've got many writers of Scripture, but one author. God could have just taken the whole Bible, have written the whole thing himself with the finger of God and just dropped it out of heaven.

Plop! Here it is. God wrote the whole thing personally. He could have done that. So why did he do it the way he did? He did it to give a human element to the whole process, because it was a message for humans to humans.

[29 : 53] And God deemed it to be by humans, although it originated with him. And what this means, bottom line is, no part of Scripture is more the Word of God than another part, and no part is less the Word of God than another part.

If something is inspired of God, it is inspired of God, period. It can't be more inspired or less inspired. This is the problem that plagues Christendom.

It is the authority of Scripture. How many times have I told you over the years, the issue is authority. Always has been, always will be. Where did that start? It started in Genesis 3.

It has God said, He didn't really mean that, did He? The thing that plagues Christendom today is the same thing that plagued Eve in the garden.

She was more enamored with what someone else said than she was with what God said. Nothing has changed.

[31 : 09] we are more enamored with what this scholar says, with what this scientist says, with what this Ph.D.

says, with what this gaggle of intellects has said. We pay more attention to that and give that more shift than we do with what God says.

And when you do that, you're sunk. You're gone. Katie, bar the door. This is where we are. This is where Christendom is. We are facing issues today.

Major denominations are split and splintered over the homosexual issue, the ordination of gays.

But let me tell you something. Their problems started decades ago. This is just the fruit. This is just the predictable outcome of the position they have taken with the authority and inspiration of scripture way back when.

[32 : 16] So that they will take the words of Jesus and put them up here and take the words of Paul or of Nehemiah or of Ezra and put them down here.

They are less important. That's complete nonsense. You must understand all the words of scripture are all the words of God and they all come with the same authority.

Paul when he wrote his epistles didn't give us his take on issues his opinion he gave us God's word revealed through him and it was incorporated as did everybody else who was a writer of scripture.

It is all inspired of God. What Paul wrote is just as much the word of God as John 3.16.

If you don't understand that you will pit scripture against scripture and hold them at different levels and consider one more authoritative all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine reprove correction instruction all of it all of it it is not more the word of God than this and it's confusing because as I read the word of God there are parts of it that's a lot more interesting to me than other parts so there is a tendency to elevate that and depreciate this because this doesn't say anything to me now this I get a blessing out of this but this over here what is this I mean what is the blessing in recounting the dimensions of the temple I mean Ezekiel spends like eight chapters talking about the dimensions of the millennial temple who gives a rat who cares

[34 : 33] I can't read that and get any blessing out of that so as far as I'm concerned in my natural human approach I would just assume that not even be in the Bible that's just taking up space what good does that do that doesn't lead anybody to Christ there's no comfort or assurance in that is or how long it is and there is a natural tendency to discount this stuff if it isn't a blessing to me it can't be from God can it every word of that book bears the imprometer of God and it is there for our edification and the time is coming when we will understand the significance of portions of the word that now just escape us so we tend to think that those portions that they are more inspiring if they are more inspiring then they are more inspired no they're not no they're not if it is inspired it can't possibly be more inspired or less inspired inspired means

God breathes into the word it's the same principle as you talking it's the principle with me talking now as I talk as I talk I am breathing while I'm talking I am inhaling and exhaling and when the scriptures are referred to as being God breathed it means that it is God speaking the words utilizing human personality stylistic differences vocabulary and all the rest of it and that gives the Bible a human dimension and in the same way he apparently pursued the same goal in the incarnation of Jesus Christ God didn't have to come down here in the flesh he could have come down as the father he could have come down to do business that way but what did he do

God was in Christ incarnated in human flesh what's the point in that what's the purpose of that how better to communicate and connect with those creatures than to become one of them identify with them look like them that's precisely what he did so there is a human element in the scriptures even though it comes with divine authority and there is a human element in the incarnation even though in his humanity he was God in the flesh fabulous fabulous concept we are to have a comprehensive view of biblical inspiration and they do not and let me tell you something when you do not see all of scripture as inspired of God you can come up with all of this nonsensical stuff all of this baloney about

Sodom and Gomorrah well their big sin was God judged them because they were inhospitable you don't even know where to begin with people like that inhospitable that's like God judged the whole world brought the flood upon the earth and Noah and his family were the only survivors and the only reason he did it is because the people who were destroyed lacked social graces that was the only reason well that's nonsense the word says what it means and it means what it says and when we are referring to content in the gospels that is on the other side of the cross that really needs to be taken into consideration and our Lord said in the example that we gave from the gospel if a brother sins against you forgive him and if he repents what forgive him and there there's the condition again if he repents forgive him repentance is a word that really needs to be reactivated in the

Christian community because it's completely lost sight of and yet I suggest let me put it this way in this dispensation where we are now repentance will not save anybody but you cannot be saved without it and what I mean by that is this and I'm going to change things here so bear with me we're not talking about the forgiveness thing now but the forgiveness that connects with it or the repentance that connects with it when when the gospel is proclaimed we want to present it in a positive light and this insistence on presenting the gospel and the claims of

[40 : 16] Christ in a purely positive light I am satisfied has led to a lot of phony decisions in the body of Christ that did not result in regeneration at all it only makes the person think that they are saved because they made some kind of a decision and what I'm talking about is this the gospel contains bad news and good news I've talked about the hard part of the gospel and the easy part the hard part is coming to grips with the reality of your own personal failure and sin that is a huge hurdle for people to get over because we all have egos that we want to protect and this is the difficult part of the gospel this is the hard part this is the negative part of the gospel so there is a tendency on the part of some to completely omit it and we present the gospel this way you know what

God has a wonderful plan for your life he wants to fill your life with joy and happiness and prosperity and forgiveness and all of these wonderful things and all you have to do is put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and you get all of these blessings and benefits well that sure sounds like a good deal and do you know something people do that people do that by the droves and they do so because that's what they want blessing benefit good things working out of a wonderful plan for my life that God has this is all positive and this is all good good and you know something it's all true but it is a truncated gospel it is only a partial gospel what's partial about it all you've done is present the good part you've left out the hard part the good part deals with this so so why should you put your faith and trust in

Christ well it's so I can have all of these good things all of these blessings and benefit all of the goodies that God has to give that's so I can get those things no it isn't the reason you should put your faith and trust in Christ is because of the bad news the bad news is you're a sinner you're lost you're undone you can't help yourself you are ruined is there anybody that likes to communicate that to someone well I sure don't it's the equivalent of telling people you know you're not okay the way you are you are seriously lacking you don't have what it takes that's the way this is translated it comes across as just a big put down truth of the matter is it is a put down it is we don't want to do it ungraciously and unkindly we don't want to do it without compassion but listen this is the truth of the matter you cannot embrace the gospel just for the goodies that

God has to offer and make a genuine decision when you do not see and understand Christ died for your sin your sin that's what he died for that's why you need to trust him the good things that come from having done that are incidental compared to that what you really need is forgiveness but you cannot have forgiveness if you will not admit there is something for which you need to be forgiven and that is your sin like I said that's the hard part of the gospel and let me tell you something this is not only the them to receive this is the hard part for us to tell how do you go about in a nice genteel diplomatic way telling somebody that they are a sinful being rotten to the core and there's no way they can gain

God's approval in and of themselves because the vast majority of them think just like you thought before you came to Christ I know I'm not all I ought to be and I know I need to clean up my act about certain things and I need to drop off certain habits bad habits and I may not be acceptable to God the way I am now but I can be I can be if I work at it and I'll do that and this just cuts the legs out from under that and what it does is it causes a person to have a need for changing their mind that's what repentance is and for many it is a quantum leap to come all the way from being what they think they are to seeing themselves as they really are before

[46 : 14] God it is a real wake up call and once they see the contrast you know what happens usually when they get the picture they are offended they are offended what are you saying I'm not a nice person you saying I'm not as good as you are you saying that I have to believe what you believe or I can't go to heaven so that's the way it comes across but unless you understand your real need you have no basis for repenting and once you see yourself as you really are then you need to change your mind this is what I used to think about myself Marv you you are not the best guy in the world but you are certainly not the worst either you have got a shot you are in there with the great majority and you will probably fare just as well as any of them you have to change your mind about that you have to stop thinking that way you have to see yourself as

God sees you undone lost unworthy under judgment under condemnation and deservedly so and when you see that you say wow is that true I don't I don't I don't think I like that I don't I don't I don't want anything to do with this Christianity business if that's the way they're going to see people I see people as well nice I mean at least most people good acceptable not perfect but good enough well you've got to change your mind about that unless you see yourself like God sees you you have no basis for changing your mind but if you do then it becomes an enlightenment issue and folks this is what preaching the gospel is all about it's to give people information that provides them with a rationale for changing their mind and when you preach the gospel you give out the information and it sets up a conflict in many people's minds and they say

I don't know I've ever heard that before and I don't particularly appreciate it but upon repeated hearings the spirit of God can begin to work and wear them down and finally they come to the place where they can say well I guess that's right I guess that's true I really am pretty bad off aren't I I really am lacking aren't I I really don't have any hope do I do you know what that is that's repentance that's all it is changing your mind it's not making vows it's not rehabilitating yourself it's not getting clean it's not making resolutions it is changing your mind reversing yourself and you know you can do that you can repent of your sin and still not be saved and the reason is because coming to a honest conviction of who and what you are apart from

Christ is one thing and you can change your mind about that but unless you take that positive deliberate step of saying and I take Christ as my only hope and my savior that completes the cycle you can repent without believing and it's to no avail you can believe without repenting and it's to no avail and I want to close with two passages two verses of scripture and I'd like you to turn first of all to Acts chapter 17 Acts chapter 17 and verse 30 therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance

God is now what were the times of ignorance they were on the other side of the cross old testament times the times of ignorance but now what is now Paul is saying now is on this side of the cross when Paul wrote this death burial and resurrection of Christ had already taken place but God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent and here's why they should because he has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom he has appointed having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead and when they heard of the resurrection of the dead here's the predictable response some began to sneer ridicule make fun others said we shall hear you again concerning this so Paul went out from their midst and he continued on there and then in Acts chapter 26 back near the end of the book

[52 : 01] Acts 26 and 19 consequently King Agrippa Paul said as he gives his testimony to the king I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea and even to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God performing deeds appropriate to repentance because that's what repentance and salvation results in it not only results in a changed destiny but it results in changed behavior because once Christ comes in and occupies the life the individual is a new creation in Christ old things have passed away all things have become new we have every reason to look for different behavior from a believer than there is in the life of a non-believer would you stand with me please father the burden of our heart this morning hour is that someone may be here unforgiven because they have never made that decision they have never really seen themselves as you see them they do not describe themselves as you describe them but we pray that any who may have come to some degree of enlightenment this morning may be willing to agree with you as to their description and change their mind acknowledge and admit that apart from Jesus

Christ whom you gave for their salvation they are utterly lost undeserving undone unjustified and coming to that conclusion may they then in a positive way say I want to embrace my only solution I want to receive Christ as my savior because he died for me and I desperately need his life and his forgiveness and I want that right now would you make that your decision this morning and if you do have the courage to tell somebody about it or see me after the service I'd be delighted to talk with you give you some literature that will help you with your new decision father we bless you for the truth that you have provided we pray that you will take that which has been from your spirit and sanctify it to our hearts and minds anything that may have been uttered from human viewpoint or of the flesh we pray it will pass away and come to naught thank you for this great revelation that in

Christ we are fully freely forgiven forever amen