

Seeking the Lord

Sunday, January 3rd, 1988

Psalm 27:4-8

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD. Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.”

I hope that you are led of God to listen carefully to the message that I will be bringing today. I am going to be speaking on the subject: “SEEKING THE LORD.” I feel led of the Spirit of God to say some very plain, clear, and candid things to you about present day preaching and the present day evangelism. I want you to listen carefully. I really wish that I had the whole nation for an audience today. I wish everyone would at least hear and consider the things that I am about to say.

I have taken my text found in Psalm 27 verses 4 and 8. In verse 4 of Psalm 27, David says; *“One thing have I desired of the Lord and that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple.”*

In verse 8, David said; *“Lord, when Thou saidst seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee; Thy face Lord, I will seek.”* He is saying, “I seek Thy face, Thy glory and Thy fellowship, I will seek.”

We are the product of the preaching of which we have heard. My generation is the product of the preaching, which they have heard over the past several years. What men believe in churches today is the result of what they hear from the pulpit. I have contended all along that the problem of religion today is not in the pew; it is in the pulpit.

The preaching of the past 100 years, and especially the last ten or twelve years has given our generation a false conception of God, a false idea of salvation, a false hope and a false refuge. It is just as it was in the day of Isaiah the prophet when they cried, *“Peace, peace and there was no peace.”*

I know, and most of you know, that the character and the true glory of God are not being preached today. The character, the attributes and the true glory of the living God does not sound forth from the average pulpit.

There is no fear of God before the eyes of men today. There is no reverence for God. We call God everything from, "The man upstairs, to somebody up there." We call Him, "The good Lord." We have all of these names for Jehovah God.

What Christ said to the Pharisees of old can be said to my generation, as He looked them square in the eyes and said, "*You do not know Me nor My Father.*" David wrote in Psalm 50 as he was speaking for God, "*Thou thoughtest that I was all together such a one as Thyself.*"

Today, the holiness of God is not preached. If anybody talks about holiness, they talk about their own holiness or the holiness of men and the church. Nobody today preaches the holiness of God, the essential, immaculate, infinite holiness of God.

Isaiah saw it and wrote of it in Isaiah 6, he said, "*I saw the Lord high and lifted up; His train filled the temple, and the seraphims cried; Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.*" He cried, "*I am cut off; I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips.*" Isaiah saw the Holiness of God.

Then, the Sovereignty of God is not preached. We hear of a very weak God, a frustrated God, and a defeated God. We hear of a God who wants to do things, and men will not let Him. We hear of a God who wills to do things, and men defeat His purpose. They have a God who has plans, but they are not carried out. They also have a God who does all that He can do and cannot do anything more. That is not the God of the Bible!

They asked David, "*Where is your God?*" He said, "*Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He pleased, whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, earth and the seas and in all deep places.*"

He said, "*I am the Lord; none can stay My hand or say unto Me, what doest Thou?*" He said, "*I have spoken it; I will bring it to pass. I purposed it; I will do it.*"

In Daniel 4, we read that when Nebuchadnezzar the heathen king, came to his senses he said, "*I extol, and I magnify the most High God who rules in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and giveth it to whomsoever He will.*" We do not hear about that God today.

We do not hear about the justice of God. Do you know what God said in Exodus 34? He said, *“I will be no means clear the guilty.”* Paul said, *“The soul that sinneth shall surely die.”* James said, *“Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”* God is just, righteous and holy. He will do what He will and He will punish sin. A Holy God must deal in justice with sin.

Then, the true love of God is not preached. We hear so much about the love of God but it is not presented as it is presented in the Word of God. Listen to John 3: 35 and 36, *“The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands and He that believeth on the Son hath life and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

God’s wrath and God’s love does not abide at the same time on the same people. God is not that fickle or two-faced. If God loves a man, He loves him in Christ. If God is angry with the wicked, He is angry with him out of Christ.

There was only one place during the flood where the love of God was manifested or demonstrated and that was in and upon the ark. The rest of the people were under the judgment of God.

There is only one place where the love of God will be demonstrated at the Great White Throne Judgment, and that is in Christ. Out of Christ, our God is a consuming fire. So, God’s love is in Christ.

Romans 8:39 says that, *“Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* You see; Christ’s righteousness, sacrifice and sin offering enables God to love us. He loves us in Christ.

The true love of God is not being preached. Our preaching has left off these essential facts of the holiness of God. The Bible is called the, *“Holy Bible.”* His angels are called, *“the holy angels.”* His Word is called, *“the holy Word.”* His temple is called, *“the Holy Temple.”* His people are a *“holy people.”* The Tabernacle is the *“Holy of Holies and the Holy place.”*

God is holy, unapproachably holy. There is only one way a sinner can approach God, and that is in Christ the High Priest; He is too holy for us to even look upon Him.

The truth about sin is not preached today. People talk about sin. Every time I hear a preacher talking about sin, he goes to drunkenness, abortion, homosexuality, murder, and

robbery. These things are sin, but they are the results of what men are inwardly. The problem is not outward, the problem is inward.

You see; sin is a nature. These things are the product of sin and the results of sin; sin is a principle in the heart. *“Sin entered this world by one man.”* This is what the Scripture says; *“By one man sin entered this world and death by sins, so death passed upon all men, for then all have sinned.”*

Sin is imputed to us by our father Adam; *“in Adam all die. By one man’s disobedience we were made sinners.”* That is imputation.

Sin is imparted to all men in conception. David said, *“In sin my mother conceived me.”* David was not saying that the act of conceiving children is a sin; he is saying the child conceived is conceived in sin. A sinful father produces a sinful seed, and a sinful mother produces a sinful child. We have the nature of sin imparted to us within. People lie because they are liars inside.

When a man steals something, that does not make him a thief; he is a thief before he stole, or he would not have stolen. I am saying, what we do outwardly, is because of what we are inward.

The Pharisees found fault with our Lord, because He did not wash His hands before He ate. That was a religious ritual and a religious ceremony that they went through before they ate. He ignored their religious ceremony and ritual and ate. They said, *“You can’t eat with unwashed hands.”*

He said, *“It is not what a man puts in his mouth that defiles him, it is what comes out of his heart. Out of the heart proceeds murders, evil thoughts, adulteries, blasphemies and theft.”* This is a heart condition; do you see that?

Again, He said, *“You have heard it said by them of old time; you shall not kill. I say unto you to hate in your heart is to be guilty already of murder.”*

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.” To think in your heart, to lust in your heart, to desire in your heart is already to commit adultery. We are what we are inward, and what we do outward, is nothing in the world but results of what we are inward. Sin is a nature and it is a principle of evil in the heart that contaminates every infant born into the world.

You do not have to teach your children to lie; they are born knowing how to lie. You have to teach them to do good. Why do you think that we have so many anti-alcohol

campaigns, anti-drug campaigns, anti-homosexuality campaigns, anti this, that and the other?

Our children are susceptible to those things. Why is that? The reason is because of what they are on the inside. If we do not guide them, correct them, discipline them, and keep them, you know where they will go.

Why is that? They are motivated from within, and that is the reason that Christ said to Nicodemus; *“You must be born again.”* You have to have a new nature. You cannot stop this flood of sin or put away this tidal wave of sin, by turning over a new leaf; it will just get dirty on the other side.

We need a new nature, a new heart, and a new spirit. We need regeneration from above, the nature of God. *“Man at his best state is altogether vanity. There is none good; no not one. There is none righteous; there is none that understandeth: there is none that seeketh after God.”*

“Even our righteousnesses are filthy rags.” You cannot put any confidence in the flesh because of the problem in the heart. Our hearts are stony hearts and deceitful hearts. Jeremiah said, *“The heart is desperately wicked; it is deceitful above all things; who can know it?”* This is not being preached.

We are out here with a mop, trying to mop up all the problems that we have. We need to turn the faucet off, and the faucet is in the heart. Only God can do that; only God can give a man a new heart. He said, *“I will take the stony heart out and give you a heart of flesh.”*

Then, there is the truth about Jesus Christ; it is not preached. I heard a man last night preach almost an hour, and he did not tell the truth about Jesus Christ. He kept telling people to come to Christ and to believe and trust Christ.

The preacher did not tell about who He is, didn't tell what He did, didn't tell why He did it, and didn't tell where He is now. He never mentioned His cross, substitution, justification or the righteousness of Christ.

Jesus Christ didn't live and die on this earth as a reformer. Jesus Christ didn't live and die on this earth as an example. Jesus Christ didn't live and die on this earth as an effort on the part of God to get you to live right, or for you to pity Him, feel sorry for Him or to accept Him.

Christ came into the world on a mission. He came into the world to perform a task. He came into the world to do a work. That is what He said, *“I have finished the work you gave Me to do.”*

What were the first words Jesus Christ spoke in the Bible? He was around 11 or 12 years of age. What were the first words that He spoke that were recorded in the Bible? They found Him in the temple disputing between the lawyers, the doctors, and the Pharisees. His mother and stepfather, Joseph and Mary said, *“we have been worried about you son.”* He said, *“Whist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?”*

He had some business here on earth. God the Father gave Him a work to do. The angel announced it at His birth; the angel said to Joseph, *“call His name Jesus; He shall save His people from their sins.”* That is His name, Joshua, Jesus, Saviour, God my Saviour; *“He will save His people from their sins.”*

Who is this Jesus Christ? You can’t preach Christ, if you don’t tell who He is. The Bible says that He is the very God of very God. *“In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God; the Word was God and without Him was not anything made that was made. The Word was made flesh, (Jesus Christ), and dwelt among us.”*

God said in Hebrews 1, *“Thy throne O God is forever.”* This was said without apology, without hesitation, without myths and words. This is what I am saying to you; that the man Jesus born in Bethlehem of the virgin Mary, raised in Nazareth in a carpenter’s shop and walked this earth, is none other than God Almighty clothed in human flesh; *“He tabernacled among us.”* That is right; He is God Almighty.

His death means nothing if He is not God. If He is not God, He is a liar. He said, *“I and My Father are one.”* If He is not God, He is not anyone’s Saviour. He is God Almighty, God in human flesh, Immanuel, God with us.

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son and thou shalt call His name Immanuel; (God with us). His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father the Prince of Peace and the government will be on His shoulders.” That is who He is!

What did He do? He came into this world in human flesh as a representative. There are two Adams. There is the first Adam, and there is the second Adam. There is the first Adam, *“The first man is of the earth, earthy. The second Adam is the Lord from heaven.* In Adam, we die; in Christ, the second Adam, we are made alive.

They are representatives and they are federal heads. In one, we die and in one, we live. *“As we have borne the image of the earth, earthy, we bear the image of the heavenly.”* That is who Christ is and that is what He did.

Christ came here on this earth in human flesh and He obeyed perfectly every jot and tittle of God’s Holy Law. He never sinned in word, thought or deed. *“He knew no sin, did no sin, had no sin. He was perfect without spot or blemish.”*

He went to the cross of Calvary and He died under the guilt, filth and weight of our sins. He obeyed the Law that we might have a perfect standing before the Law, a perfect holiness and a perfect righteousness in God’s sight.

God said, *“I will in no wise clear the guilty.”* God will punish sin. He punished our sins in Christ. Therefore, this is why He died; Jesus Christ obeyed the Law under God and He died on the cross under the wrath of God.

He didn’t die on the cross to get people to feel sorry for Him. He doesn’t need our pity. He turned to those who followed Him on the way to the cross and said; *“Don’t weep for Me; weep for yourselves and for your children.”* He doesn’t need our pity. Don’t weep over the cure, weep over the cause. Don’t weep over the remedy, weep over the disease.

Christ is King, we are the beggars. He came here to accomplish a purpose. He died that God may be just and justify us, that God may be true to His Law and release us from the bondage of the Law. Because Christ died in our place, God must be true to His justice and set the guilty free.

Where is He now? Where is Jesus Christ now? Someone might say, “Is He up in heaven looking over the banisters of heaven and hoping that someone will let Him have His way or seeing if someone will let Him do His work? Is He up in heaven working that wonderful plan for them so that He can heal them? Oh no!

The Scripture says that, *“He is seated. He sat down.”* None of the Old Testament priests ever sat down. He finished His work; *“By one offering He perfected forever them that are sanctified and He sat down at the right hand of God expecting till his enemies be made His footstool.”* That is what God’s Word says, *“He sat down.”*

He is not walking the floor and He is not anxious. *“He shall not fail. All that the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me, and He that cometh to Me; I shall in no wise cast out.”*

“This is the will of My Father which sent Me; that of everyone which He hath given Me; I will lose nothing, but will raise it up at the last day.”

I’m going to ask you a question; is eternal life a gift or an offer? The Bible says that it is a gift. *“The gift of God is eternal life. God hath given us eternal life and this life is in His Son.”*

Is salvation by chance, or by choice? Is there a question as to whether or not heaven will be populated? Are there going to be some vacant chairs up there? Are there going to be some reservations that won’t be kept? Are there going to be some sheep that won’t be found? Are there going to be some sons who won’t be redeemed? Is salvation by chance or choice?

Christ said that it was by choice; He said, *“You didn’t choose Me; I have chosen you.”* We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. That is what the Word says. I know that preachers shy away from it, and run away from it. Preachers won’t preach it. Paul did, and our Lord did. The Apostle Peter preached it and every true preacher in the past preached it. Up until the last several years, preachers preached the God of election.

Is salvation by the will of man, or by the will of God? You think about that! What does the Bible say? The Bible says, *“Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth.”* The Bible says, *“It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”*

The Bible says in John 1:13, *“As many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on His name which were born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but they were born of God.”* That is what the Bible says!

Our Lord said this to the Pharisees and to the religious people; *“You will not come to Me that you might have life.”* Salvation is by the will of God. It is God that willed it, it is not man.

We have a will, but our will is in bondage to sin. Our will is in slavery to sin. Our will is a fallen will. Our will, will do only what our nature permits it to do. He says, *“His people shall be willing in the day of His power.”*

Willing to do what? They will be willing to repent, willing to believe, willing to bow to Christ, willing to receive Christ, *“In the day of His power.”* He makes us willing.

Here is another question, am I regenerated because I believe? Is regeneration the results of belief or do I believe because I am regenerated? Am I regenerated because I see, or do I see because I am regenerated? I see, because I have life. I believe, because I am regenerated.

Where do you read that in the Bible? You can read it in Acts 13:48. Paul turned to the Gentiles and *“As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.”* Christ said, *“My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me. I give them eternal life and another shepherd they won’t follow.”*

It is not just what preachers are saying, but it is what they are leaving out. They are leaving out the holiness of God; they are leaving out the truth about sin. They are leaving out the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

They are leaving out questions that Job asked over, and over again; *“How can man be Just with God? How can man be clean in the sight of God? How can God be Just and Justify?”* Who is our Great High Priest? What did He do?

Most people today labor under the impression that God has done all that He can do. They think that God is kind of waiting over there in the wings somewhere, hoping that we will let Him finish what He has started. People think that maybe He is knocking on our door, and that we will let Him in.

Can you imagine the Holy, Eternal, Almighty, Sovereign, King of King and Lord of Lords, standing outside the door of a beggar knocking? He never knocked on a door before. He never knocked on Jericho’s walls.

We have God waiting on men, instead of men waiting on God. We have God pleading with men to let Him show mercy. All the way through the Bible, I find sinners pleading with God to show them mercy.

The thief on the cross cried for mercy. The leper said, *“Lord, if you will; you can make me clean.”* The Canaanite woman said, *“Lord; have mercy upon me.”* The Word of God says, *“The Son quickeneth whom He will.”* The Son said, *“No man can come to Me, except My Father which sent Me draw him.”* Almighty God’s hand is not short that He cannot save. His ear is not heavy that He cannot hear. He said, *“I will do with My own what I will.”*

We have compromised the very character of God Almighty. Most people today are laughing up their sleeves at all the preachers and religion, the entertainers and laughing at all the religious business. They are making fun of eternal and spiritual matters. We have a weak God and a strong man, and that is backwards!

I want you to listen to this, in our efforts we are trying to make man religious. In the efforts of preachers today, we are trying to make men moral and to get them saved and ready for Armageddon or whatever.

We are trying to get them saved without embarrassment, saved without commitment. Preachers have invented what they call the "altar call." By a quick journey down to the front of a tent, building, football stadium or a church, after a quick jaunt down front, you can make your decision, pray a short memorized prayer and they pronounce you, "saved."

What I want to know is this; what happened to conviction, conversion and repentance? I want to know what happened to a living union with Jesus Christ who said, "*I am the Vine and you are the branches; I am the Head and you are the body.*" Where is that?

What I want to know is what happened to the new creature in Christ Jesus? "*If any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature.*" Do they make them new creatures by coming down to the front?

What happened to these Disciples of Christ? They were sold out for Christ. They left all and followed Christ. What happened to that Scripture that says, "*He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me? He that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. He that taketh not up his cross and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me.*"

What happened to those Scriptures? What happened to the preaching of those Scriptures? What happened to the business of seeking the Lord? "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God. Seek the Lord with all thine heart; call upon Him while He is near.*"

Not all of these Scriptures sound like an emotional altar call to have people flocking to a preacher to pray a routine prayer. They sound to me that salvation is a miracle from heaven, that salvation is a work of God in the heart for a sinner that makes him a new creature.

We have to start preaching the Word of God or our generation is lost.

