

Thy Face, Lord, Will I Seek

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Psalm 27:4-8

Henry T. Mahan Tape Library

Zebulon Baptist Church

6088 Zebulon Highway

Pikeville, KY 41501

Website: <http://www.sovereign-grace.com/13thstbap.htm>

Online Sermons: <http://mahan.sermonaudio.com>

Psalm 27. A Psalm of David who said in verse four, “One thing, one thing... My interest is not divided. My objective is singular, one thing, just one thing.”

Here is a man who had a great deal, who had seen a great deal, who had done quite a number of things. But it all comes down to one thing. “One thing have I desired of the Lord and that will I pursue, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may dwell in his presence, in his favor and in his love, that I might behold the glory, beauty, the delight of the Lord and that I might inquire or learn in his temple.”

And verse eight, “When thou saidst, when the Lord said, ‘You seek my face, seek you my face...’: A person’s character is revealed in his face. The glory of God is revealed in the face of Christ Jesus. “You seek my face.”

“Well, my heart said to thee, ‘They face, Lord, will I seek. I’ll do it. I’ll do it.’”

The missionary said that he had spent many years preaching to the Indians the gospel of Christ Jesus trying to get across to these savages what this thing of salvation really is, what it means to know God. And he said one night he was sitting in his tent reading the Word of God and the tent flap was raised and the chief stooped down and came in. And the chief had his prize bowl in his hand. And the missionary looked up wondering what the chief had on his mind. And the chief laid the bowl down in front of the missionary and backed off rather proud of himself and smiling. And he said to the missionary, “Chief give his bowl to Jesus.”

Well, the missionary didn’t know how he was going to handle that, but he looked at him and he said, “Chief,” he said, “The Lord Jesus doesn’t want your bowl.”

“Jesus no want my bowl? Fine bowl.”

“No, no,” he said, “He doesn’t have any use for it.”

The chief picked it up and went out the tent flap and was gone a good while.

The missionary just sat there trying to read and thinking about that incident. And he hadn't sat very long till the tent flap raised again. Here came the chief. He had his moccasins, fine, hand crafted, hand woven, deer skin moccasins, treasured. Big smile on his face. He said, as he laid them down in front of the missionary said, "Chief give his moccasins to Jesus."

The missionary said, "Chief," he said, "I don't know how to tell you this," but he said, "The Lord is not interested in your moccasins."

"Fine moccasins. My treasure, my moccasins. Me give up something. Give up my moccasins."

"I know," he said, "But what use does the Lord have for your moccasins?"

Well, he went through the same procedure. After a while he came back in this time he had his headdress all those beautiful feathers, each one meant something, a hunting trip, a victory, an election he won or something, you know. He took off that headdress and it was a strain for him, an awful strain parting with that headdress. But he laid it down in finality and backed off. He looked up at the missionary and he said, "Chief give his headdress to Jesus."

The missionary knew he was going to have to handle this carefully. That was it. That was the last thing he had, the last thing he would part with.

"Well," he said, "Chief," he said, "I admire your generosity and I know what I...I think I know what you are doing," but he said, "this is not the gospel. This is not it. I'm sorry." He said, "The Lord Jesus just does not have any interest in and use for your headdress. I'm sorry. Just take it and leave."

That's all he had. So he picked it up. He ducked out of the teepee and he was gone this time for a long time.

And the missionary sat there thinking, "Well, my ministry here is a failure. I just haven't been able to get across to these people what it is to come to Christ, what it is to know God, what it is to receive the Savior. It is a heart work and a heart submission and a heart surrender. They still don't see. They are still wrapped up in their materialism. They still want to buy their way into the favor of God. They still want to give something in exchange for God's favor or God's reward."

And he sat there dejected and broken in spirit wondering if it is time just to quit and go home when the tent flap opened again. And there he stood, no moccasins, no bowl, no headdress, big old tears on those tanned, wrinkled, weathered cheeks. And he said, "Missionary, me give meself to Jesus."

And the missionary said, "That's it, Chief. That is what I have been preaching. That is what I have been preaching. Salvation is a living union with Christ Jesus, a heart union."

And what I am preaching tonight, what I am trying to get across in this message tonight is totally contrary to today's religion. It is as foreign to today's religion and evangelism as anything can possibly be. The way I believe and the way I am thinking and the way I believe that God's Word directs our thinking is contrary to today's religion. I mean, almost all of it.

We are the product of our preaching today whether we admit it or not. What men are in religious circles is what they have heard. What men believe, whether you admit it or not, what we believe, what we believe about God and about sin and about salvation and about repentance and faith and heaven and hell, eternity and death and judgment and meeting God, what we believe about these awesome subjects is a result of what we have heard. And it has made impressions upon our minds and hearts that we are not even aware of.

Somehow the preaching of the last 100 or 150 years—I don't know where it started, maybe it started with Finney, maybe it started with Dwight L. Moody, but it was carried on by those men, Moody and Sunday and Finney and all the rest of them—has given our whole generation, this whole United States of America with its religious tradition, it has given us a false idea of the living God. We have got a wrong idea of God. We have got a whole, total false concept of the thing called sin. Most people don't have any idea whatsoever of what sin is.

And what our Lord said to the religious Pharisees of his day can be said over and over again in this day. He looked at them and pointed his finger in their faces and they were graduates of universities and seminaries and schools of theology. They were men who read the Scriptures, who prided themselves on their knowledge of the Scriptures, who kept the sabbath day, who went to the temple, to the synagogue and went through all the motions and kept the holy days and feast days. He said, "You don't know God. You just don't know God."

And my generation, when I listen to the leaders, to the leading religious voices, I listen to them and I know they don't know God. They have a god and they read from this book, but the Jewish leaders read from this book. And they were scholars and they were scribes and they were translators and they were men who were schooled in the traditions of this book. And they thought they called on the God of Abraham, Jacob and Isaac. They would not only be killed for what they believed, but they would kill for what they believed.

But he said, "You don't know God. That's the problem. You don't know God."

And the reason that I know that my generation doesn't know God, there are several reasons. Number one is this. There is no fear of God and no reverence for God before their eyes. There is no fear of God in this day. There is no reverence for God. There is no awe and reverence in the presence of God. That's what the Scripture says. They do not fear God.

In the Old Testament worship and the fear of the Lord were almost synonymous. It is said Abraham feared the Lord. This was a man who was God's friend. This was a man to whom God spake face to face as a man speaks to his friend. But he feared God. He stood before the Lord in fear and trembling.

David feared the Lord. Jacob was one who feared the Lord.

But my generation does not fear God. And the reason is they have never heard the God of the Bible. They have never heard of him and they have never heard him speak. And you know that is true. The light way in which preachers today deal with the living God, the light and frivolous way in which they approach God, the light and frivolous way in which they consider their responsibilities. The very fact that men will compromise what they know to be so when they get up to preach shows they don't fear God. They fear men, but they do not fear God.

You could take John the Baptist and throw him in prison, but he would still preach the glory of Christ. You could take the apostle Paul and put him in fetters and chains in a dungeon, but the Word of God was not bound. He said, "I will still preach what I believe." You could lock Bunyan up in a prison on a bridge, but he still is going to preach what he knows to be so.

But this present generation threatened to cut his salary and he'll cut his message. That's so. You know it is so and I know it is so.

That shows they don't fear God. They fear men. They fear the denomination. They fear the association. They fear the directors. They fear the superintendents. They fear the deacons. They fear the disapproval of other preachers. But they don't fear God almighty. They don't fear God. No fear of God.

And today my generation most everyone jokes and makes light of spiritual matters. And I get very angry about this. I don't understand. You have got enough to joke about without joking about God. Preacher jokes are the favorite jokes told today. Did you know that? And do you know why? Because people have lost all respect for preachers.

Preacher jokes, heaven jokes, hell jokes, any kind of jokes. And let me tell you what...this is true not only from the pulpit to the back row in the pews. This is not only true of the people, it is true of the preachers. Tries to be a comedian when it comes to spiritual matters. And I will tell you why, why preachers do this and why people do that. They avoid getting serious about spiritual matters lest they get in an argument. So they joke their way through.

You get a bunch of preachers together. I don't care if it is a minister association or a ministerial dinner or whether it is some kind of conference or something, there is going to be jibes and jokes and funny sayings and all kind of...do you know what they are avoiding? They are avoiding any serious discussion. One reason is because they are as empty as a gun barrel and the second reason is they don't want to get in a fuss.

They say there is two things you don't discuss in this day and that is religion and politics. Both are pretty serious. Who is in the White House is pretty serious. And who goes to hell is pretty serious I think. But we don't...we'll joke about it, but we are not going to get serious. We are not going to get serious. That means they don't know God.

A man who is not serious about a thing is not interested in it. And you approach someone in this generation—it doesn't matter whether in pulpit or pew or whatever. It's like one of our members said to me one night, the pastor came in—when he was member of another church. The pastor came to his home and he and his wife said, "We've got some questions to ask you about the Scriptures."

"Oh," he says, "Let's don't get into that tonight. Let's play some cards. I don't want to fool with that."

And this is where we have gotten to. And you know this is so. And the preachers are just adding to it every day. It keeps growing like a big mountain. It just keeps growing. It is not getting smaller. It keeps growing. That's the reason. I listen to these men around here who preach: Charlie Pain and Bob Coffee and Paul Mahan and David Eck and John Chaplain and Tom and the rest of these fellows that preach around here. I listen to their tapes and these men are saying something. They are flat saying something. They are preaching the Word of God, but they are not getting much of a hearing. These men are standing in the pulpit having prepared and studied and worked on messages and present them to people and there is a ho hum, you know, out there in these little places and a few people come and nobody hears anything.

And I'll tell you why. I'll tell you one of the reasons. There's not many lost people today. A sinner is hard to find. Did you know that? A sinner is a scarce article. I mean a real, genuine, bona fide, lost sinner is a scarce article. They are hard to find. They are hard to find. I just almost take a 10 to one bet that you wouldn't find a whole lot of real sinners in this congregation here after all we have heard. I mean real sinners. I mean candidates who are worthy of God's wrath. And if they were to discover tonight that they were lost and on the road to hell, they would put up a big argument, a big argument. They say, "Now what a minute. I'm a gracer. I believe the doctrines of grace. Whoa here. Hold it. Hold it. I go to church every Sunday, you know."

We got no defense except Christ. There is no defense. God is just when he condemns. He is clear when he charges. We have got no defence. Let every mouth be stopped. Stop it. And all the world become what? Guilty before God. That's a hard thing to find is a guilty man. And when you find one, you will find one seeking the Lord. Get out of his way because he is going to find the Lord. Don't lie to him. He will jump on you because he wants the truth.

But my generation doesn't want the truth. They love to be deceived. They love to have it so. They like deception. They feed on it and feast on it because it is their nature.

The people today make a decision. They make a decision. “Sure I’m a Christian. I made my decision. I made it years ago. I got fixed up. I have made my decision. I have made my profession. I have taken care of my religious obligation and I am going on with matters of living in this present world. I have taken care of this thing. It is back yonder. It is out of my mind, out of sight, out of mind. I’ve fixed it up with God and I am saved. Don’t try to shake my foundation.”

That’s what a dear friend of mine said, “Don’t shake my foundation.”

You can’t shake Christ. He is unshakable. Now your foundation can be shaken, but he can’t be shaken. He is a rock. He is a stone. He is a tried stone. God laid him. You didn’t lay him. God did. You can’t shake him. He is unmovable, unshakable.

“I made a decision for Jesus when I was young.”

That was a long time ago, wasn’t it.

“Well, I’m saved.”

I just grant you this, that people who have not worshipped God anywhere or any way today or this week, haven’t worshipped God any day or any way, haven’t taken down the Scriptures and read them and fallen on their knees and cried to God, men and women who haven’t made any effort whatsoever to seek the face of God this whole week will look at you and say, “Sure, I’m saved. I just drifted away.”

I have heard that so many times.

“Oh, yeah, yeah, I’m all right. I’m saved. I just, you know, got a little indifferent. I’ve gotten a little cold, gotten a little careless about my church attendance. But I’m all right. I just sort of drifted away. I have made my peace with God. Everything is all right. I am not afraid to die. I made my peace with God.”

Where is this union with Christ? Where is this heart that beats with the heart of God? Where is this father son relationship? Where is this I cry unto him and he speaks to me? Where is this? Where is this discipleship that our Lord talks about?

I didn’t say it. Christ did. He said, “If you are not willing to forsake father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife for me you can’t be my disciple. There is no place for you in my circle, no place for you. If you put your hand to the plow and look back there is no place for you. There is in religion, but not in my kingdom. There’s plenty of places for you in the pulpit. There’s places for you in the deacon’s office. There’s a place for you in the classroom. There’s a place for you in man’s religion anywhere according to your gifts and gift of gab and fluent speech and the money you give, plenty of places for you. Churches will roll out the red carpet for you just to drop in once in a while and favor them with your colossal presence. But there ain’t no room for you in my kingdom.” That’s what he said. “They ain’t no room for you.”

Christ is all and in all, but he has no part with you. You have no part in this matter. You have no part. And I think it is only fair to tell this generation that their preachers, their hirelings, they hired them, they went out and got them. They set up their schools to train them. Now you have got to be a personality and you have got to be a good speaker and you have got to be a person who can get along with people and you have got to be a pacifier and you have got to be a counselor and you have got to be all this different thing, but I will tell you what you need to be is a prophet. That's all you need to be.

But they have hired them and these preachers have pacified them and, "You are saved. You're saved. You are just a carnal Christian."

A lady wrote to us last week to get a tape. She gave an illustration about a friend of hers who had been praying for her father. Oh, I forget how many years, long time was praying for her father years and years and years. But he had no interest in the Word, isn't that correct? No interest in the Bible, no interest in God.

And not long ago she was talking to him and he said, "Oh," he said, "I'm saved." He said, "I made a profession back there when I was a young fellow. I'm saved. I'm all right."

And she told her friends. She said, "Maybe I have been praying wrong. Maybe he is saved and he is just a carnal Christian. Maybe he has just drifted."

See that? She is brainwashed. The preachers, the hirelings, the hucksters of today...nobody is lost. Nobody is under the judgment and wrath of God. Everybody, somehow is saved. Everybody somehow is going to heaven. Everybody is going to heaven.

Morris Montgomery heard me give an illustration one time. I made this statement. A funeral director in this area here said to me one time, he said, "Well," he said, "everybody is saved." He is just joking, you know. He said, "I never bury lost people." He said, "Everybody comes in here in the box and on his way to heaven. Everybody." He said, "They are all saved. That's what they say."

And Maurice thought he would give that a try so he was in a funeral recently. He told me this last week. He said, "I was in a funeral recently had two funeral directors there." And he said, "I looked at those two funeral directors," and he said, "One of them I knew real well," and I said to him, I said, "George, I have a preacher friend in Ashland, Kentucky that says a funeral director told him that he never had buried a lost man. Have you?"

The funeral director looked at him and said, "Not according to the preachers, not according to the preachers. They all get in some way. They will make a way somehow."

He said, "That's just so."

Today most people labor under the impression—now listen to me. I'm telling you the truth. I have listened to this thing and thought about it and weighed it and it scares me to death because eternity is long. Death is sure. Death is sure. I am going to die. It has dawned on me in the last few years that I am going to die. Did you know that? That has suddenly become real to me as I bury so many of my friends from this congregation, people who have been with me most of my life, people who are so close to me. And I am watching them die. And it suddenly dawned on me I am going to die and that before long.

And death is real and judgment is sure and eternity is long, long. It's too long to play with it. It is too long to take anything for granted, anything for granted. It's too long to hold on to tradition and ignore truth. It is too long to be embarrassed to seek the Lord. It's just too long and we have most people kind of laboring under the impression that God is sort of always there. Did you know that? God is always there. Do you believe that?

Why go open the door. If you are a lost man and in your darkness and in your sin you open the door, there's God. He is standing out there waiting. He never moves. He is just always out there waiting. He is still there. The preacher said he was. He's out there.

Ain't no handle on the door.

“Just checking to see if you're still there, God. I'm going to get saved one of these days.”

Do you believe that? I don't believe that. I don't believe God is standing around waiting on you to get saved. I don't believe God is standing around waiting on you to accept Jesus. I can't believe that. I don't believe you are that important. You are to you. You are to your wife because she don't want to be a widow. And you might be to the man you work for, but he could find somebody to work cheaper. But you are not that important to God. No, you are not. Your whole family ain't. God is just standing out there waiting on you to accept Jesus or get religion.

We have...this generation has God waiting on men. The Bible has men waiting on God. There's a lot of difference in that now. You find anywhere where God waits on anybody in there. But I find over and over again, “Wait on the Lord. Wait on the Lord. Wait on the Lord. Wait on the Lord.” I hear it all the time. “Wait on the Lord.”

It may be he will show mercy. That's what David said.

Was it Joab pulled out his sword? He said, “Let me kill that so and so.”

And David said, “Don't do that. It may be that the Lord will bless me because of that. Maybe, I don't know.”

Barnard got in all kind of trouble down at the park, all kind of trouble. The Baptists of this town rose up in arms. And do you know what he said? You wouldn't believe, but do you know what he said? I was there sitting on the platform, 1951, down in City Park, led

the singing for three weeks while he preached. Every night nearly he would say this. At the end of his message every night he would say this. He would say, "Now, friend, I don't know whether God will save you or not. But you better seek him. I don't know whether God will save you or not. I just don't know. I can't guarantee you God will save you. But I will guarantee you one thing, if you are saved he will do it."

And, boy, they got mad. "You ought not to say that. You ought not to say that."

Yeah, I guarantee you if a man will seek the Lord he will save him.

Can you really? Can you guarantee God will save a man? We have God pleading with men instead of men pleading with God. We preachers have made a beggar out of God almighty. We have made a beggar out of a king. He is not a beggar. One day our Lord came down from the mountain. And you follow his journey in that Word and you won't find him pleading with me. You will find men pleading with him.

You will find the Canaanite woman who comes to him and she said, "Have mercy upon me, Lord."

And he answered her not a word. And she continued to cry. And the disciples said, "Send her away. She is crying after us now."

He said, "I am only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

She said, "Lord, have mercy."

She wouldn't quit. She wouldn't leave. And he said, "It is not right to give the children's bread to dogs."

She said, "That's right, too." But she said, "I'm your dog. You are the master and dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table."

Our Lord said, "Woman, great is thy faith. I haven't found faith like that in all of Israel. Be it unto you as you desire."

We have God pleading with men instead of men pleading with God. Our Lord came down from the mountain one day and there was a leper, a scroungy, crusty, scaly leper, unclean who wore his whole body and face covered except for the eyes and he would go around hollering, "Unclean, unclean, unclean. Nobody come near me. I am unclean."

But when he saw the Lord he came and fell at his feet, crawled to his feet, lay there at his feet. And he looked up in his distress and in his living death and in his wretched condition and he said, "Lord, oh Lord, if you will, you can make me clean. You can, if you will."

You hear anybody talking about that today? I can't find any lepers to begin with. And when I do find them they are not at Christ's feet.

David Atkins preached over at Geer Shepherd's church. I listened to the tape. And he said this. He said, "It's bad. It's bad to be a sinner. But it is worse to be a sinner and not know it."

Now that's bad. And that's the shape my generation is in. It's bad to be naked. Oh, it's bad to be naked before a holy God, but it is worse to be naked and think you are clothed. That's worse. That's awful. It is bad to have the cancer of sin eating at your soul and destroying it. But it is bad, its worse to have the cancer of sin eating on your soul and think you are well. That is bad, but that is my generation.

"I'm all right. I'm all right."

Who told you you were all right? Who told you you were all right? Where did you find out you were all right?

"I made it up. Don't worry about me."

I wish you would.

Old David said it is bad to be on the road to hell. It is bad to be on the road to hell. I would hate to be on the road to hell. That's bad enough. But to be on the road to hell and think you are on the road to heaven, that's worse. That's worse, isn't it? It's bad not to know God. That's awful not to know God, to be without hope, without help, without strength, without God in this world, not to know God? That's bad. But you know what's worse? Not to know God and think you do. That is a whole lot worse. To have you an idol, that is a whole lot worse.

I tell you another thing we have in this day. We have got the impression that God is out there, just outside the door. They have got a song. He is just outside the door.

No, he is not. You are outside the door. He is not just outside the door. He is on the throne. He is the king. This is his show and he is running it. And I want to have a part of it. In it and of it. I want desperately, as Paul said, to win Christ and be found in him. I want to know God and know Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection. I am not satisfied just to have religion and say a few pretty words and do a few pretty deeds. I want to know the living God.

And I tell you there are folks sitting right here tonight and there are folks I preach to all the time and I am going to throw this your way and you think a whole lot about it. You think a whole lot about it. This is...this is commonly accepted in our day. We have men and women who have been exposed again and again and again to what we call the gospel. They have been exposed to it. They have been exposed to it through preaching, through the printed page and several other ways, through the Bible, through the witness of

friends. They have heard and been exposed to something about Jesus Christ. Maybe a great deal. Maybe a great deal. And they are not...they haven't closed with Christ. They haven't embraced Christ. They haven't expressed a saving interest in Christ. They haven't laid at his feet as a repentant believing sinner.

And yet they are confident. They are quite confident that they have got plenty of time. That's right. They are quite confident. They are quite confident that heaven waits to rejoice at their acceptance of Jesus. They are very confident. They are quite confident that though they have heard the gospel again and again and again and though they have listened to it again and again and again they still, they still are not decided for Jesus, but someday they will, someday they will. Someday this thing is going to get all straightened out and when they decide God is going to be standing right there waiting.

What does this mean? Listen. God said, "I have called and you have refused. I have stretched out my hand and you ignored it," Proverbs 1:24. "You have set at naught my counsel. You just pushed it aside and you wouldn't have my reproof. Now I will laugh at your calamity. When your calamity comes, when your trouble comes I am going to laugh at you," God says. "I am going to laugh at you. I am going to mock you when your fear comes. When fear grips your soul, when fear lays hold of you, when the death rattles in your throat and when you are facing death and the doctor says you are not going to make it," God says, "I am going to laugh at you and mock you when you really get scared. Listen, when your fear cometh as desolation and when your destruction comes as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish comes upon you, distress and anguish grips your soul, you are going to call on me..." And every preacher I know will be right there to give you assurance. "Well, he called on God. I believe he is all right, momma. Yeah, I heard him call on God. It says, 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' I heard him call on God. I heard him say, 'Lord, Lord, have mercy.'"

God said, "Though, but you are going to call on me and I am not going to answer. I will not answer." That's what God said. I know what the preacher said, but this is what God said. "I am not going to answer you. You are going to seek me. You are going to seek me, but you are not going to find me." That's what it says right there.

For why? "You hated knowledge." Why? "You didn't choose the fear of the Lord when you had your faculties and your knowledge and your understanding and your youth. You didn't fear God. You didn't choose the knowledge of God. You chose materialism. You chose business world. You chose the financial world. You chose the educational world. You chose the social world. You chose all these other...that's what you chose. You chose it and you are stuck with it. Therefore, eat the fruit of your way." There it is, verse 31. "Therefore, eat the fruit of your way. That is what you chose. You planted that tree. Eat it."

Now that just does not sound like to me that almighty God is sitting around waiting on a bunch of folks to decide whether or not they are going to let him into their hearts. I have looked through the Bible over and over again and I have asked other preachers to do this

and they have and almost invariably they will tell me, "I can't find it. What is it you are talking about?"

I'm talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, God almighty, dealing with the same fellow over and over and over and over and over and over again trying to get him to believe the gospel. I can't find that in here anywhere.

I find God coming to Zacchaeus one time. I find him passing the blind Bartimaeus one time. I find him hanging on the cross beside that their one time. I find Paul going to Lydia one time. I find him going to the Philippian jailer one time. I find the eunuch riding down and Philip getting in the chariot one time. All the... you go all the way through it. And when these people heard the gospel they said, "That's it. I'll bow down. I'll bow down."

And all of them came from different backgrounds. All of them came from different traditions and different customs. And none of them said, "Well, I just can't afford to leave the old mother church. That's where momma and grandmomma and all of them, you know, labored and worked and laid the bricks and put up the..."

No. They was faced with the Son of God. But the Son of God that's preached in this day is not worthy of much consideration. You can compare him with Grandma's church, but I'm telling you when you meet the living God, when you meet the Christ who has the demands on a man's soul, it is committal or condemnation. He said, "Today is the day of salvation. Now is the accepted time. When you hear it, you better believe it because you may not hear it again."

What does that say over there in 2 Thessalonians? Let's see if we can find it, 2 Thessalonians chapter two. You listen to this. 2 Thessalonians chapter two, there it is, right there. He said in 2 Thessalonians chapter two talking about that wicked one, Satan, antichrist, verse nine says, "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with power and signs and lying wonders, lying wonders and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish because they receive not the love of the truth."

He didn't say they didn't ever hear the truth. He said they didn't love it. They didn't love it that they might be saved. They didn't love it. They didn't embrace it. They didn't receive it with affection that they might be saved. And for this cause they didn't quit religion. God will send them strong delusions and they will believe a lie. Anything anybody tells them in the name of Jesus they believe it and they might be damned for believing that lie.

Who sent them strong delusions? God did. Why did he do that? They hated knowledge. They didn't love the truth. They wouldn't receive it. They wouldn't believe it.

Today is the day of salvation. There is no debate. There is no argument. Christ is King. God has declared it. Not a question of if you will acknowledge him as Lord. It is when will you acknowledge him? Will you do it now or will you be forced to do it?

Let me ask you four, five or six questions. Just think on these questions a little bit, just briefly. Is this thing of eternal life, is it an offer or is it a gift? Is it something God has put on a shelf and the passing world is going by with all their millions of people and God is over there waving trying to get somebody's attention saying, "Hey, here's life. Will you take it?" Is it an offer or is it a gift?

The Bible says it is a gift. The gift of God is eternal life. Even faith is a gift of God. Even the goodness of God leads men to repentance. That's a gift. And that's the reason I'm saying since it is a gift folks ought to seek the Lord. They ought to seek the Lord.

That's what David said, "One thing I desire and that will I seek after. Lord, you said, 'Seek my face.' That's what I'm in the business of doing, seeking your face."

I'm not seeking assurance. I am seeking Christ.

Here is the second question: Is salvation by chance or is it by divine choice? The Bible says it is by choice. He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Salvation is not by chance. Whether or not Christ will have a bride is not left to chance. Whether or not heaven will be populated by a people like Christ, that is not left to chance. That has all been decided and decreed by the will of the heavenly Father. And I want to be a part of it. That is what I am saying. I am going to seek it. I want to sing in that heavenly choir. There is going to be one. I want to live in that heavenly place. There is some people who are going to live there. I want to live there. There is going to be some people like Christ. I want to be one of them. And I am not going to leave it up to Christ. I am going to cry. I am going to be like Jacob. I am not going to let you go until you bless me. I am going to seek the Lord. I am going to make it my business to find out what this book says about God almighty and salvation.

And I am not going to defend the Baptists or the Methodists or I am not going to keep offending either one. They just don't make a whole lot of difference. It is Christ.

Is salvation by the will of man or by the will of God? Whose will? We are saved by somebody's will. Well, the Bible says it is by the will of God. Of his own will begat he us. We are born, born into the kingdom of God not of the will of man, not of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God. It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth. It is of God that showeth mercy. So I am going to him. I am going to seek him. I am going to camp on his doorstep until he does something for me. How about you doing that? That's what I'm saying.

Salvation is by the will of God. It is not by...I am not trying to get you to do anything for God. There's not anything you can do for God. You can't add anything to him or take anything away from him. Your going to heaven won't add anything to his glory and your going to hell won't take anything away from his mercy. No it won't. By the will of God.

Is salvation, fourthly, is salvation a one time experience? That's what everyday tells me.

“Well, I was saved back then. I got saved.”

I hope I don't have to hear that one more time that somebody got saved. We are beings saved. You didn't get saved. You might have gotten saved out of the creek from drowning, but the Bible says we have been saved, we are being saved and our salvation is nearer than when we believed. I am telling you the truth.

Salvation, is it a one time experience or is salvation a life time union?

This is the reason so many people are at liberty not to worship God. This is the reason so many people are at liberty to deny their responsibilities as believers. This is the reason so many people take liberty with the things of God because they got saved. And the preacher told them if you ever got saved you couldn't be lost. And they are counting on that. But salvation is not an isolated experience. See, repentance is not an isolated experience. Repentance is not a one time shot. Repentance is a state of being. I have repented. I am repenting and I shall repent or I have never repented.

Faith is a state of being. I am believing. If I stop believing I never believed.

I love Christ. I am loving Christ. I will love him more. If I don't love him more I never loved him. Is that right? That's what Scripture says. Whose house we are if we continue, if we continue.

And the Baptist...it started back yonder with walking to the front. That is when it started. It started with people walking to the front and settling the matter. I am settling the matter. Kind of like a transaction down here on earth and heaven is supposed to comply with that. The preacher sticks out his hand in the name of God and you shake it and that is supposed to be an agreement between you and heaven, but heaven is not in on it. Everybody that is doing anything about this is down here. And the only one really concerned about this thing is death. So the place to settle this contract or compact or agreement or testimony or profession is not down here, but up there. That's what's got to be settled between you and God.

You can't...you just can't...you and brother Tom Harding can't settle this thing now. Somehow Christ has got to be in on it. And since he is the only mediator between men and God it would be a good idea for you to let me get out of it and let him get in on it. Wouldn't it? But everybody brow beats me because I don't give an invitation. The gospel ain't no invitation. It is a command.

An altar call is not salvation. You are...I tell you. Every time you get people down here you are getting them in trouble is what you are doing. They are trying to settle heavenly matters on earth. They are trying to draw up contracts by drawing one up with a preacher. And it won't work, Bob. It just won't work. God is not in on it. And the whole shooting match—Billy Graham and Falwell and all the rest of them with their old same six and sevens. “Every head bowed, every eye closed, that is except the personal workers

who are looking around who are going to pounce on you as soon as they see your hand. Every head bowed, every eye closed. And you...God bless you. I see that hand.”

What difference does it make whether you see it or not? You are not in on this. That man needn't raise his hand in your presence or both hands or walk down the aisle. You can't do anything for him. You can't forgive his sins. You can't write his name in the book of life. You can't save him. Leave him alone. Preach the gospel to him and maybe he will look to God. Maybe he will go home and fall on his face and say, “God have mercy on me.” And he might hear from the Lord.

And I will tell you this, if and when he does you got you a rock. If and when he does you got you a believer on your hands. That's right. If and when he does you have got you a gracious, regenerated, renewed son of God that will tackle the forces of hell with you with a switch because he believes God. That's right. I just been amazed at how good a job God does when he saves sinners and how sorry a job my friends do. Their converts don't last.

Next question. Am I regenerated because I believe or do I believe because I am regenerated? Think about it now. That's what the average preacher says. You are born again when you believe. Is that right? You are born again because you believed? How did you believe before you was born? How did you see before you had eyes? How did you hear before you had ears?

Men aren't regenerated because they believe. They believe because they are regenerated by the power of God's Spirit. That is so now. I told you it is against everything anybody said. It is totally...you are...you folks that come here and listen to this, don't you tell anybody this is what you believe. They will laugh at you. But it is so. In our effort... Here is what is happening. In our effort to get people saved and on their road to heaven as quick as possible, as quickly as possible without any embarrassment. Now we don't want embarrass you, “Every head bowed and every eye closed. We don't want to embarrass anybody.”

We want it without embarrassment. We can't stand it if anybody gets under conviction. If you see a tear wipe it away effortlessly, just a quick decision. What happened? What happened to the sinner seeking the Lord? What happened to that?

Listen to the Scripture and I'll try to quit. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies and seek him with their whole heart.” That Scripture you read tonight in the other one, another Scripture there. “Than hand of the Lord is upon them that seek him. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near.”

I found several things here I'll give you just briefly in closing. Those who seek the Lord, David said, seek him in truth, truth. He said...David wrote this in Psalm 145:18. Listen to it, Psalm 145:18. “The seek the Lord in truth, in truth.”

Psalm 145 verse 18. It says here, “The Lord is nigh unto them that call upon him, to them that call upon him in truth, in truth.”

And then Jeremiah said those who seek the Lord seek him with the heart. “Ye shall seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.” That’s my objective.

And then the prophet in Chronicles said this: Those that seek the Lord seek him continually, 1 Chronicles 16:10 and 11, continually.

There are a lot of people who get religion on weekends and some on holidays and some in special services and some when they get sick and some when someone dies. But those that seek the Lord in truth seek him continually. And those that seek the Lord, Isaiah said, seek him humbly remembering the pit from which they were digged.

And David said in our test those that seek the Lord seek him with a single purpose. “One thing have I desired and that will I seek after that I may abide in the house of the Lord.”

And those that seek the Lord and find him seek him while he may be found. “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.” Isaiah 55.

And then, last of all, and certainly the most important statement of all. Those who seek the Lord intelligently seek him in Christ because our Lord Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me, in Christ.”

This is the reason the apostles preached Christ, preached Christ, preached Christ, preached Christ. Christ is the fountain of all grace. He is the source of all mercy. He is the one foundation. Christ in you, that is the hope of glory. Set your affections on Christ. Seek him.

Our Father, anoint your Word. Oh God, in this day send forth somebody to disturb us, to shake us. Men are asleep in Zion, indifferent, careless, away from the living God and know it not. We pray that you would anoint somebody’s heart and somebody’s lips in our day. Send them forth like you sent John the Baptist, Elijah of old. And do not pass us by, but like our brother said tonight, let us hear thee speak through thy Word in power to our hearts. Oh that we may win Christ and be found in him.

Lord, lead us to seek thee and in seeking thee to find thee and in finding thee to love thee and in loving thee to adore and worship thee all the days of our lives. We pray for Christ’s sake. Amen.