

But God

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Ephesians 2:4

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I told my Sunday school class this morning that I was dedicating this day—this morning at least, I don't know what we will hear tonight—but I am dedicating this morning, the Sunday school and this morning worship hour to a clear cut, positive, plain declaration of how sinners are saved, how God can be merciful and yet just at the same time, how God can be just and justifier.

I want you to listen to me. I am going to be very deliberate, going very slowly. I am going to point out these things that are the result of 35 years of looking into God's Word and making an effort to preach the gospel of the grace of God for the glory of God and for the good of the hearer. And I say unto you that the greatest battle in which you will ever be engaged and the greatest enemy that you face both now and the rest of your life is self righteousness. Your sins will never keep you from Christ contrary to what you may think. There is no man, no woman, who has ever committed as in that will keep him from Christ. Now, your righteousness will.

Do you understand what I am saying? I don't know whether you do or not, but it is so.

Brother Scott says that's all there are to it. Your sins, no man, woman here, boy or girl ever committed a sin that could keep him from Christ because Christ came to save sinners. Isn't that what he said? Paul said, "of whom I am the chief." And your sins won't keep you from Christ. But I will tell you what will. He said, "I came not to call the righteous." Your righteousness will. He said, "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and one a publican. And the Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'I have done this. I have done that. I have done something else. I haven't done this. I haven't done that. I have never done something else.'" And our Lord pronounced judgment upon him. His righteousness kept him, Paul, from Christ.

He said there was a publican, a wretched sinner who would not even come up to the front, who would not lift up holy hands, much less his eyes, to heaven. But he smote on his breast and he said, "Oh, God, be merciful to me the sinner." And God justified him. His sins did not keep him from Christ.

And I say this to you very candidly. I hope if you don't understand it you will at least before you have to stand before God. Your sins will not trouble you at the judgment. I

don't care what some preacher said. They will not. There is no judgment to them who are in Christ. Do you know what will trouble you at the judgment? Your righteousness.

“Lord, I thank you that I preached in your name and cast out devils in your name and did many wonderful works.”

“Depart from me. I never knew you.”

There is no judgment. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ, no judgment, no condemnation. Your sins will never trouble you at the judgment. Your righteousness will. You better hope that you don't come there with one rag of self righteousness on you. I had rather be charged at the judgment bar of God with being a murderer. I would rather charge with being anything than a self righteous man because God says murderers are going into heaven. Thieves are going into heaven. Adulterers are going into heaven even like Paul, Saul of Tarsus, those who blasphemed God, are going into heaven. But the self righteous will never enter the kingdom of God.

And I'll tell you this. Your sins will not keep you out of heaven. Your sins will not keep you out of heaven, but your self righteousness will. So I say your greatest, my greatest enemy, my greatest enemy is not my sins. I can bring them to Christ. I can lay them at the cross. My greatest enemy, my greatest battle is to fight this terrible, terrible monster, this false monster, this counterfeit, this imitator, self righteousness and keep it subdued and keep it down. It will keep me from Christ.

Now, in Ephesians two, I want you to look at something here. And Paul paints such a black, dark picture of our race. I don't believe you could paint a darker picture than he painted here. But now listen. I don't think he painted it any darker than it is or it should be painted.

Do you know what Isaiah said? Before I read Ephesians let me just quote Isaiah. He said, “We all...we all are as an unclean thing, an unclean thing. We all...all of us do fade as the leaves.” Now we...that's especially applicable right now. You look out there and they are wrinkling and withered and lifeless and fallen. And they are nothing but nuisances. My yard is just full of nuisance leaves. I am going to rake them up and what? Burn them. We all fade as the leaf. And he said, “Even our righteousnesses are filthy rags and our iniquities, like the wind, have driven us away from God.” Now, that is us. That is the best man who ever lived. That is a description of man in his best state because man in his best state is vanity.

And he says here, “And you,” Ephesians 2:1, “And you,” that's us, “Who were...who were dead...dead in trespasses...” What's trespasses? Have you ever been on a hunting trip and you are hunting quail or squirrel or rabbit or deer or something and you came up to a farm and there is a fence around it and there is a sign that says, “No trespassing.” That means you are not to walk on that ground. That is forbidden ground.

Do you know what we are? We are trespassers.

God said, "Thou shalt not."

We said, "We'll do it anyhow."

God said, "Thou shalt not." God said, "No trespassing."

But we ignored God sign. We ignored God's warning. We walked where we are not supposed to walk. We walked on forbidden ground. We are trespassers and we are dead in our trespasses and our sins. Sin slew us. Sin destroyed us. Sin brought all the misery that you are going through, all the misery you will ever go through, all the misery you feel in your soul. Sin is responsible for that. You are dead in your trespasses and sins.

Now, just hold Ephesians two and let me show you something here in Romans chapter three. And I said this to my class this morning. Brethren, please remember. I am not talking about your condition in my eyes. I am not talking about my condition in your eyes. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about our nature and condition in God's sight. That is what we are talking about. And in Romans chapter three it says in verse 19—now listen to this—"Now we know that what things soever the law sayeth," this is God's holy law, "it sayeth to them who are under the law, who are under God's law." And everybody in God's kingdom is under God's law. Everybody in God's universe is under God's law. "That every mouth may be stopped." Let's stop our boasting and bragging. Let's stop our self exaltation. Let's stop all this arrogance and haughtiness that comes from our minds. "That every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty." Two words that are so important here and they are not "become guilty," but the two words are "before God." Now that is where we stand before God.

You are not judged by me and shouldn't be. But we are guilty before God. Now, look at the next line. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall...." or deeds or religion or works of religion or righteousness, "there shall no flesh be justified," three words here that are most important: "In his sight."

Now, one other verse. Turn to Luke if you will, chapter 16. And this...I want you to understand. This is what I am talking about. When I say men are corrupt and an unclean thing and fade as the leaf and our righteousnesses are filthy rags and the wind has driven us away, I am not talking about as we look on one another because I complement you for your kindness. I complement you for your graciousness as a man doing what you can as a human being. But I am talking about in his site. I am talking about before God. God is infinitely holy, infinitely. The law of God does not command me to love God only. It commands me to love God with all my heart, mind, soul and strength. The law of God doesn't command me to love you only. It commands me to love you like I love myself. The law of God does not demand that I live a good life, but that I live a perfect life, not only outwardly, but inwardly, not only before men, but before God. That is what we are talking about. In his sight we haven't done it.

In Luke 16:15 he said to them, he said to these Pharisees, to these religious people, these

good and moral folks. He said unto them, verse 15, Luke 16, “You are they which justify yourself before men.” That is not where this business is done, before men. But God looks on your heart. God knows your heart. “And that which is highly esteemed and highly recognized and highly praised and highly thought of before men is abomination in God’s sight.”

Now, go back to our text. He says, “You are dead in trespasses and sin and you walk...” this is our course of life. We walk. This is our tenor of life. This is the den of our will. We walk progressively. We walk. We continue, “according to the course of this world.” We walk the way of the world. “All we like sheep have gone astray.” What way is that? We have turned everyone to his own way. We have walked our way. That is the course of this world. And we walked also according to the leadership, according to the influence of the prince of the power of the air, the devil. That is who motivated us. We weren’t motivated by God. We were motivated by the devil.

And I am talking about he said that same spirit that right now works in that thief in the penitentiary was a spirit that worked in you. That same spirit that now works in all children of hell and children of wrath and children of disobedience, is the power unto which you and I were motivated before we met Christ because among whom also these children of disobedience, these children of evil and corruption, we all had our behavior in times past...what was our behavior? Fulfilling the lust. The word “lust” is desire, to desire after, to pant after, to have ambitions for. And it covers every area of our being. The lust of our flesh covers materialism, passions, ambitions, pride, all the popularity. We had our conversation, our behavior in the lust of our flesh. We cared more for the body than we did the soul. And we fulfilled these desires of the flesh and of the mind.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones said this. “What we haven’t done, we have thought.”

You see, we talk about the lust of the flesh. And some of us say, “Well, I haven’t done this and I haven’t done that.”

Wait a minute. What we haven’t done, we have thought. It has gone through our minds. And Martyn Lloyd Jones went on to say this. “And the lust of our minds and the evil of our minds, the desires of our minds are even more evil than the lust of our flesh for our flesh is restrained. Our flesh is restrained. But the lust of the mind is unrestrained.”

See, nobody can see it. We don’t do certain things because people see it. We don’t say certain things because people hear it, but you can’t see what I think. And you can’t hear what I think. Therefore I feel quit comfortable. And nothing is holy to the imagination. Nothing is sacred to the imagination. The imagination has free vent, unrestrained. And that is what God looks upon.

“You have heard it said,” Christ said, “by them of old times, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ But I say unto you, ‘He that thinketh hard or calls his brother a fool is guilty of murder already.’” He thought it. He thought it. And he was guilty before God.

“You have heard it said, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery.’ But I say unto you, ‘To lust in your hearts, to look with desire is to be guilty already.’” The lust of the mind. Nothing is sacred in the mind, nothing escapes the cesspool of our thoughts. What we haven’t done we have thought. And God almighty is not constrained to looking on our deeds. God looks on our hearts.

Oh, shame, shame, shame. We ought to feel the shame of our thoughts, our imagination. And we were by nature...what a picture? But no blacker than it ought to be painted. We were by nature, by birth, children of wrath.

What does that mean? Two points. We vented our wrath on God. We vented our wrath against God. We will not have him reign over us. And not only were we angry against God and our natural minds enmity against God, but we also were under God’s wrath. “He that believeth not on the Son the wrath of God abideth on him.” “God hateth the workers of iniquity.”

God is angry with the wicked every day.

And here are three words here that did not escape my notice as I was studying this passage. We had our behavior in the lust of our flesh: materialism, the body, the flesh. We had our behavior in the vilest imaginations of our mind. Oh the cesspool that we carry around with us inside that nobody sees, that we keep covered up with the veneer of religion and a smile and the secrecy of our own thoughts and words. And we were by nature the children of wrath; these three words, even as others. Even as the angels who fell and God committed to hell. That same wrath was upon us. Even as the citizens of the flood who were destroyed by God’s wrath, even as Sodom and Gomorrha.

You say, “I am higher than them.”

Not in God’s sight. Even as others. Children of wrath even as others. I know. I regret what is going on today and we are going that direction of Sodom and Gomorrha in this nation. But I tell you...I tell you this and without sounding like putting any approval on anything, I detest it and deplore it and all that. But I am saying, let’s don’t be guilty of self righteousness now. Let’s don’t...God’s wrath is upon everybody out of Christ whether he be a pervert or a Pharisee. That’s right. Because a man is a homosexual and so forth doesn’t make God any more angry with him than with you outside of Christ. Don’t be too high and mighty. Isn’t that right?

That is the thing that troubles me. We can get in our little smug religious cocoons and start talking about abortion and homosexuality and communism and all this and act like that we are somebody in God’s sight. We are not somebody. We are nobodies. And God’s judgment and wrath is upon every son of Adam whatever his particular sin is, whatever his particular direction is.

Even as others. Do you see that word? Even as others. Even as those who crucified the Son of God.

Well, I want you to see a verse over here in Romans chapter three, in Romans the third chapter. Look here at Romans three, verse 10. There is none righteous. "There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth. There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way. They are all together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no not one, no not one."

Down here in verse 22, the last line. "For there is no difference. There is no difference."

"Preacher, how can you say that?"

I didn't say it. God said it. There is no difference. There is no difference. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Whether you are Jew or Gentile, old or young, whether you were brought up in a Christian home or in a pagan home. There is no difference. There is no difference. All have sinned. That is what it is saying here. You who were dead in your trespasses, dead in your sins, you who walked your own way according to the course of this world, you who were under the influence and power of Satan, you who had your behavior...if not in the expressions of your flesh, at least you, like a sweet morsel upon your tongue, you rolled over the thoughts of the mind, imaginations of the mind and took delight in the evil of the mind thinking you are protected from the eyes of men, but not from the eyes of God. And we were by nature children of wrath even as others. There is no difference.

Verse four. "But God, but God." I'd like to scream that over the airwaves. I would like to stand on TV and preach it over a national hook up, but God. Paint that picture as vile and dirty as...as repulsive.

Last week were in a Bible conference down in Crossville, Tennessee. And the pastor has a farm and he has some cows and cattle and he has some pigs. And I got there a little late on Tuesday and Bob and Becky were already there with Kerry Grace and she was out there cavorting around on that farm having a biggest time. And she saw me and she came running to me. She said, "I want to take you to the pig pen and let you see the pigs. But poppa you are going to have to hold your nose."

Oh, I tell you. I would love to take you to the pig pen this morning. I would love to show you human nature. I wish I could show you my nature and yours as God sees it. But you would have to hold your nose. You would have to hold your nose.

But God. I tell you. Nothing I could do...But God.

Something he can do. Nothing I wanted to do. I was satisfied in that hog wallow. I was satisfied in my darkness.

"Don't talk to me about heaven and holiness. I like what I am."

I know you do. But God can do something about it and God wills to do something about it.

But God.

Do you want a summary of my theology? There it is right there. There it is. Men are dead in sin, dead in trespasses, guilty before God, unable to rise, unwilling to come to God. That is what we are, unwilling.

Can the leopard change his spots? No, sir. Can the Ethiopian change his skin? No, sir. Can we do good that are accustomed to doing evil? No, sir. But God. That is my theology, but God.

You want the good news in a nutshell? You want the glad tidings in a nut shell? Here it is right here. You can preach law all you want to. You will only make men more lawless. You can preach works and ceremony. You can drench the people with what they must do and that is not good news. The good news is this. "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing."

But God.

"In the flesh no man can please God."

But God.

"You were without hope, without Christ, without help in this world."

But God. That's the difference. But God. It is not but I saw the light. You can't see the light if you don't have eyes.

"But I heard a still small voice."

You were deaf, but God gave you ears. But God.

You want the hope of a sinner? My sins not only were great, they are great. My sins in the sight of God are so black, so filthy, so deserving of God's wrath, but God...but God...but God commended his love toward me in that while I was yet a sinner. That is it. That is the hope of a sinner. But God commended his love for us.

One day our Lord Jesus Christ, talking to his disciples and one of the, Peter, he was awful braggadocios, awful impulsive. I see myself in him so much. And he turned to the Lord and he said, "These other fellows may deny you, but I would die for you."

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "Peter, this night the cock won't crow before you deny me three times." And then he said to him, "Satan hath desired thee to sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for you."

But God. That is my hope. That is my theology. That is the good news. You want the remedy for ruin? You want the remedy for ruin?

Turn to Acts 13, chapter 13, verse 26. You want the remedy for ruin? Acts chapter 13. Let me show you. Here is the good news. Here is the remedy for ruin. "Men and brethren," the apostle stood one day to preach. Acts 13:26, "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, whosoever among you feareth God. To you is the word of this remedy, this salvation sent." Here it is. They that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers because they knew him not nor yet the voices of the prophets which were read every day, every sabbath day. They have fulfilled these words in condemning Jesus Christ. They didn't know him. But they fulfilled the very words that they read with their very mouths, the words concerning him. And though they found no cause of death in him they desired Pilate that he should be slain. They took the Lord Jesus Christ and ran through a mock trial, brought false witnesses against him, took him down to the soldiers hall and they mistreated him and tormented him, shed his blood, took him out yonder between two thieves and nailed him to a cross and spit in his face and stood back and laughed at him while he died.

And verse 29 said when they had fulfilled all this that was written, dead, they took him down from the tree and laid him in the sepulchre. And the old Pharisees went back to the temple and wiped the blood off their hands and washed their white linen garments of religion and sat down so pleased. They were through with that man Jesus Christ. No longer would he bother them. No longer would he disserve them. He was laying in a grave. He was dead. They saw him die and they watched the people as they took him down from the tomb and wrapped him in the sheet. And they went over there and they watched them as they put him in the grave. And they said, "Put a stone in front of that grave and put the seal of the Roman government on it and station the soldiers outside."

When all that was done they went back to worship the Lord on the sabbath day and to go through their ceremonies. They were through with this trouble maker. They were through with this prophet. They were through with this man Jesus Christ. And the disciples sneaked up to an upper room somewhere and sat around and wept and cried and were so broken hearted and so sorry for their leader was dead. Their master was buried. It was all over. And they spent a lonely Saturday.

Verse 30...but God. That's it. You can't read in there any of the efforts of a human being. There is nobody took a vote. There is nobody organized a movement. There is nobody who petitioned heaven. There is nobody who contributed anything. It was quiet. He was in the grave. Even the angels stood around and watched. Everything was silent.

Is it over? Looks that way.

But God raised him from the dead. That is my theology. You can accuse me of being a Calvinist, a fatalist, a hard shell or whatever. I don't care. An antinomian...Spurgeon

said, "I don't mind being called an antinomian. I don't want to be one. But I don't mind people calling me that." There is my theology. But God.

And you can trace that theme through the whole word of God. Almighty God created this world and he said it was good. He created it beautiful and perfect. That is what that book says. And he put a man in here and a woman in holiness and righteousness without sin in a perfect garden to rule over it, have dominion over it, to multiply and replenish the earth, to live in happiness and holiness and beauty and all these things. And Satan came and brought sin. And that man and woman rebelled against God and fell and darkness and disease and death descended upon God's perfect world and everything was over, over. As far as any angels concerned, as far as men are concerned, as far as any hope is concerned it is over. The world and the human race is plunged into impossible inability. It is over.

But God. See that? He said, "I will send the woman's seed. And he'll bruise his heel, but he will wipe you out, Satan." And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

But God.

God looked down from heaven it said in Genesis 6:5. Follow that through the Word. "And every imagination of man's heart was evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man." He said, "I will destroy man off the face of the earth. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

But God had a man, chose a man, brought forth a man who built an ark.

Israel was down there in Egypt in bondage and slavery under the heel of the Egyptians. They had no possible strength, no possible way, no leaders, no nothing, not one weapon. Even the children under such an age had been wiped out. They were weak and wounded and had been there 400 years. They were in slavery. Their nation was perished. They had nothing, no hope of deliverance.

But God.

Israel stood one day at the Red Sea. The deep, uncrossable Red Sea. The mountains rising on each side and Pharaoh's well equipped, well armed chariots of war bearing down upon them. And they said, "Moses, you have brought us out here to die."

But God opened the sea.

Follow it through the Word of God. Jonah in the whale's belly. He said that, "Iron bars were around me forever and the sea weed wrapped around my head and it was hellish darkness and I cried unto the Lord." And God almighty delivered him.

But God.

That's it. That's our theology.

Back to Ephesians two. That is the hope of the sinner. That is the remedy for ruin.
That's it.

I want you to see three things and I'll quit, four things. In verse four, "But God..." But God what? "Is rich in mercy."

Now, my friends, listen to me. Our guilt is higher than the mountain and our guilt is deeper than the sea. But our God is richer in mercy than you are in guilt. And God...listen to me...is more ready to forgive than you are to receive it. Can you believe that? That's so. He delights to show mercy. He delights.

The Mary Magdalenas knew it. The woman at the well knew it. Saul of Tarsus knew it. Do you?

Let's stop extending our sins beyond the mercy of God. The mercy of God is infinitely beyond the greatest sinner that ever lived. That's right, infinitely.

Come humble sinner in whose heart a thousand thoughts revolve. Come with your sin and your guilt oppressed and make this last resolve. I'll go to Jesus though my sin hath like a mountain rose, I know his courts. I'll enter in whatever may oppose. I can but perish if I go. I am resolved to try for if I stay away I know I shall forever die.

But God.

Here you are. Oh, what a terrible plight, what a terrible condition in his sight, before God.

But God is rich, rich, rich in mercy. You can't exhaust his mercy. His mercy is far beyond your greatest sin. I delight. Honestly, I delight to speak to a man or a woman who is a sinner. I delight to minister to them. I delight to tell them the good news. My Lord is rich, rich.

You say rich in gold and silver.

In mercy.

You say he is rich in cattle on a thousand hills. He is rich in worlds and stars and moons.

Rich in mercy. These other things are nothing compared to his mercy, mercy, mercy. What is mercy? It is God not giving me what I do deserve, but rather giving me what I don't deserve.

Read on. "For his great love. He is rich in mercy and his great love wherewith he loved us." You want to see the hatred of men for the living God? See them as they take his

Son in their hands, their dirty, filthy, sinful hands of wrath and nail him to a tree and spit on him, spit on him and stand back and mock him as he agonizes and suffers. And then when he asks for water give him vinegar and gall to drink. And then to see God in his infinite love save some of those very people who nailed his Son to the cross.

Oh, rich in love. His great indescribable love.

The song writer said, "Could we with ink the oceans fill and were the skies of parchment made and every stalk, every twig on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade, to write the love of God above would drain that ocean dry," just to write it, just to tell about it, much less experience it. It would drain that ocean dry. "Nor could the scroll contain the whole though stretched from sky to sky. Oh love of God."

Preach it. Where is it? It is in Christ. Our error is not in preaching the love of God. Our error is in misplacing, Mike, the love of God. It is in Christ, David. You can't shun Christ and drink of God's love. You will drink of God's wrath. The cup of his indignation full up without any mixture, without any softening. Just straight, he'll take it straight. You will drink the wrath of God poured out straight. You can't even drink that West Virginia moonshine straight let alone God's wrath. Straight, without mixture, without mixture.

Read on. "But God who is rich and mercy for his great love even, even, even when we were dead, even when we were dead in our sins hath quickened us together." You know, we lay in a self dug grave, a grave of corruption and evil, dead for all eternity, dead unto all that was holy, dead, unable to rise.

But God. But God quickened us with Christ.

Now, he quickened me by his Spirit. And he quickens me, some day, from the dead, from the grave. But, my friend, he already has quickened me with Christ back yonder when he raised Christ from the dead. That's right. I know I can't explain this. I am not going to try to. I can't comprehend God. If I could I would be God. But when almighty God raised Jesus Christ from the dead he quickened with Christ every believer. That's what Scripture says. He quickened us with Christ.

And that's not all. And he raised us up together with Christ. I am so identified with Christ I cannot be separated from him. I am so identified with Christ in God's eternal covenant, in God's purpose in Christ's work, every believer, that when Christ died I died. When Christ was buried I was buried. When Christ arose God quickened me with Christ. And when Christ ascended I was raised together with him. That is not all. And watch it. And he made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in Christ Jesus. That is the good news.

Turn to 1 Samuel. The other night we heard that blessed preacher to the Indians brother Tim James preach from this. We were all lifted so high, so high. It was just Friday night down in Tennessee. Hannah's prayer, 1 Samuel two, verse six. "The Lord killeth and

maketh alive. He killeth and maketh alive.” He is talking about his people here. He slew them with the Word, with the Law. But he made them alive with Christ. He brought them down to the grave, but he will bring them up. He made them poor.

Oh, we have nothing, are nothing, know nothing, but he makes us rich. He brings us low and lifts us up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust. That is where he found us. He lifts the beggar from the dung hill. He lifts him and sets him among princes and makes him inherit the throne of glory.

I have already entered into my inheritance. In Christ I have. “For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s. He hath set the world upon them.”

But God. This is the good news of the gospel. Are you helpless, hopeless? Are you without hope? Are you at your wits end? Are you at the end of the rope, brother Barnard used to say, and just hanging on to the threads, about to perish into the pit of hell? Good news. But God. But God.

I want to close with one passage of Scripture, Matthew 19 if you will turn there with me. And this is the greatest hope that a preacher can possibly give to a congregation of sinners which we are whether we know it or not, whether we admit it or not. God knows it. It is Matthew 19, verse 26, when the disciples, when Jesus beheld them and said...when his disciples heard it, verse 25, “They were exceedingly amazed and they said, ‘Well, who then can be saved? If this is our condition, if this is our nature, if this is our state, then who can be saved?’”

Verse 26. “And Jesus beheld them and said unto them, ‘With men it is impossible.’” Don’t tell me anything to do. I can’t do it. Don’t tell me to walk an aisle or shake your hand and I will meet you in the Promised Land. Don’t tell me the waters of baptism is all I need. Don’t tell me that. With men it is impossible. We will lie where we are.

But God. But with God your salvation is possible. Yours. That’s right, Paul, yours, Clarence, Jim, Russell, right on down the line. Your salvation.

“Who, me?”

Yeah.

“You mean me?”

Yeah, that’s right. You, Bill, Richard, Geno. Me. It is possible

But God.

Is that clear enough? Now that is where it is.

You say, “What would you do?”

I tell you what I'd do. I would look to him with whom it is possible. That is what I would do. I would quit running around here asking different people what do you think and what do you think and what do you think and what does he preach and what does he preach, what does he preach, what do you say what should I do? Is there something...?

Why don't you just say, "Lord, let your blood be propitiation for me on the mercy seat?" Why don't you cast yourself on the mercy of God? That is where a sinner is going to have to be found if he is found in mercy, is at God's feet.

But God.

Our Father, we pray this morning in the name of Christ our Lord. We pray for ourselves. This is our condition and our state. We have seen ourselves again. We see it more every day, our inability and wretchedness, impossibility of ever doing anything in the flesh acceptable in your sight. How unclean, fade as the leaf, our righteousness, filthy rags. The wind has driven us away. Our only hope is in these two words: But God.

Will you be pleased to show mercy? Will you be pleased to create in me a clean heart and a right Spirit? Will you be pleased to regard me in Christ? Will you be pleased to look upon the blood that Christ shed, that blood which is on the mercy seat not of the tabernacle made with hands, but in your very presence and regard me in Christ?

My Father, I am not worried about my sins. I am worried about this awful monster of self-righteousness that lives in every one of us that would whisper in our ears, "Grace is not enough. Grace is not sufficient. Christ is not enough. The blood is not sufficient. You have got to do this. You have got to do that. Look to yourself. Look to your heart. Look to your own hope. Look to your works. Do the best you can."

Lord, look upon me in Christ and all my friends. Receive us for Christ's sake. We are nothing. We have nothing. We know nothing. We can do nothing. We are less than nothing. We are unclean things. But Christ is clean. He is perfect. He is holy. He is your Son. We pray for Christ's sake. Receive us. Amen.