

A Call to the Unconverted

Sunday, January 18th, 1987

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

I want you to open your Bible this morning to the book of Isaiah. I’m going to be reading a verse of Scripture from the first chapter of Isaiah, verse 18. I call this message: “A CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED.”

I want you to listen very carefully; I’m going to be just as plain as I can possibly be in this message today in speaking on, “A Call to the Unconverted.”

The Lord speaks in Isaiah 1:18 and says, *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool.”*

I realize that there are people listening to this program who know the living God and who know the Lord Jesus Christ whom the Father sent. Our Master said, *“This is eternal life that they might know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”*

I am sure that there are people listening to me today who can say with David, *“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.”* Or, who can say with Job; *“I know that my Redeemer liveth.”* Or, who can say with the apostle Paul, *“I am not ashamed; I know who I have believed. I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.”*

So, I’m certain, that many of you out there listening to me can say very strongly and very sincerely, “I know the Saviour; I know the Lord.”

I’m sure that there are people listening to me today who do know the living Lord, who do know the Lord Jesus Christ but you are plagued with doubts and fears. You are just not certain of your interest in Christ Jesus.

You are not alone! Some of the great preachers and some of the great believers of past days were also plagued with these doubts and fears. In fact, the man who wrote the song Amazing Grace, John Newton, also wrote this hymn:

Tis a point I long to know,
And often it gives me anxious thought,

Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I His or am I not?

Newton had a lot to say about this. Even the great John Owen had a lot to say about doubts and fears in his own experience.

So, I believe that there are people listening to me who do know Christ and who believe on Christ and love the Word of God. Some have assurance of salvation but are also plagued with fears and doubts. Do I have a saving interest in Christ?

Then, I am certain that there are people listening to this program today who think that they know Christ. There are those who have made a religious profession, joined the church, been baptized like Simon Magus, Alexander, Demas and Judas.

They have a profession of religion and they have a profession of faith. Like the Pharisees of old, in reality, they have no saving interest in Christ. In reality, they have no true peace and joy in their heart. They say that they know Christ but they really don't know Him. They have a profession of religion but not a saving interest in our Master.

I want to speak to you. There are people listening to me who do not know the Lord and they know that they do not know the Lord. They do not know Christ and they know that they are strangers to His grace.

But, perhaps you have an interest; perhaps you are open to the Word of God, perhaps you are open to the preaching of the Gospel. I believe that I have something to say to you. I have a great desire in my heart to be a blessing to all of you who know Christ and can say, "*The Lord is my Shepherd; I'm redeemed.*"

Will you listen to this message? Listen carefully to it. You, who know Christ and you are plagued with doubts and fears, listen to the message. You who have a profession of religion but no peace, who have a profession of religion with no rest, who have no saving interest in Christ, listen.

You who have no knowledge of Christ and you know you have no knowledge of Christ but have some interest in the preaching of the Gospel, you listen to this message: "A Special Call to the Unconverted."

Here is something that we must establish first of all: The reason that I say that we must establish it is simply because it is not being preached today. Most preachers today are

preaching a helpless god, a god who wants to do something and just can't seem to get the job done.

They are preaching a God who is sitting up there in heaven far off from His creation and really not involved at all in what is going on down here on the earth. It is as if God has to have something done for Him in order that we can have something done for us.

I want to establish four things first of all: This has to be established and stated loud and clear; What is God's grand design in the redemption of a sinner? That is the purpose that must first be served.

It is not us that must first be served. It is not you that first must be served or me. It is God's glory that first must be served. We have to give an eye, an ear, and an interest to the glory of God because there is something that God is going to do.

This is God's universe, not yours and mine. This is God's world and this is God's redemptive plan. This is God's salvation and it doesn't matter a great deal what happens to you or me. God is going to be glorified and that is what I am saying.

I know that all of us live in a little selfish circle. We are always asking, "What is in it for me; where am I going, heaven or hell?" Whether you go to heaven or hell, it is not going to change God. He is still going to be God.

He was God before you came on the scene. He will be God when you leave the scene. We don't add anything to Him or take anything from Him seeing He is God. Do you see what I am saying? He is independent of the creature. "*In Him we live and move and have our being.*" He doesn't live and move and have His being in us. So, these things must be established first of all.

In Isaiah 45:23, our Lord God says this; "*I have sworn by Myself; the Word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness and shall not be returned.*" He is saying that He is going to do four things. If you are interested in this thing at all, get your Bible and look up Isaiah 45:23 and let me show you something here.

He says, "*I have sworn by Myself; I can swear by no greater. The Word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness*" (and truth and is not going to return until it accomplishes that whereunto I sent it).

What are these four things? This is God's grand design in redemption and I have to find my part in this. I have to find my interest in this. I have to find out if I fit in this. This is what God says first of all:

He says, *"I have sworn by Myself that unto Me shall every knee bow and every tongue shall swear unto Me."* That is repeated in the New Testament, in Philippians 2: verses 8 through 11. He talks about Christ humbling Himself and *"becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*

"Wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess, in heaven, in earth and under the earth that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

That is what I am saying, that is God's first and foremost design in redemption. He says, *"I've sworn it; (I've declared it); it will not return to Me. I've sworn by Myself that every knee is going to bow."*

God has sworn from all eternity that Jesus Christ must reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords with sovereign, eternal dominion, over all creatures, over all creation and over all things. *"He died that He might be Lord of the dead and the living."*

So, really, the question is not will you bow to Christ? The question is when will you bow to Christ? Will you bow now in the day of grace or will you bow in judgment?"

He said, *"I have sworn by Myself (and I will not take it back) that every knee in heaven, earth, and hell is going to bow to the Lord Jesus Christ that in all things He might have the preeminence."* You settle that fact first of all! That is true!

Second: Isaiah 45:24 says, *"Men shall say only in the Lord have I righteousness and strength."* In other words, the Lord God says this; *"I have sworn this,"* (I will not take it back that all spiritual blessings are in Jesus Christ).

Our spiritual blessings are not of the Law by our own righteousness. I do not have a righteousness in myself. It is not in my deeds or my works that I have righteousness. My righteousness is only in the Lord. That is what men are going to say, *"Only in the Lord am I accepted."*

My friend; I don't apologize for being quite radical here. I don't apologize for being quite narrow and uncompromising in this regard; the apostle Paul wasn't, he said, *"If any*

man preach any other Gospel than that Gospel which I have preached; let him be accursed."

The Apostles kept saying, *"Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ Jesus. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."* Our Master said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me. There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Of God are you in Christ Jesus who has made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption."*

God said; *"I have sworn it; (I've declared it); it has gone out of My mouth in righteousness and won't return."* Only in the Lord have I righteousness, holiness, strength and beauty. That's just it and that is where it is found!

Third: Look at verse 24 again and He says this; *"I've sworn this, even to Him shall all men come and all who have been incensed against Him, (that is, all of His enemies), will come to Him in shame."* They shall be ashamed.

You can interpret those words two ways, first of all: Believers come to Christ ashamed. Oh yes, but we come in grace. We come confessing our sins. We come in grace but we come grieving over our iniquities. We come like the Publican crying, *"Lord be merciful to me a sinner."* We were His enemies.

"God commended His love toward us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." We were reconciled to God when we were yet enemies. So, we are going to come to Him, we who were once His enemies are now His friends, we come to Him ashamed that we have ever been His enemies.

But, then again, in judgment, all the rest will come before Him ashamed. *"They are going to cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them, hide them from the face of Him that sits upon the throne."*

Here is what we are saying, *"All things are naked and open unto Him with whom we have to do."* You might say, "I just wash my hands of Jesus Christ; I will be like Pilate of old; I will just wash my hands."

You won't wash your hands of Christ. All men have to do with Him in grace or judgment. He said, *"All His enemies shall come before Him. Unto Him shall all men come and they shall be ashamed."*

Fourth: What God has sworn to do, He said in verse 25, *“In the Lord all Israel shall be justified and shall glory.”* Some say, “Is that the Jewish race?” No sir, it is spiritual Israel. Paul deals with this in Romans 9; he says, *“They are not all Israel who are of Israel; they are not all Israel because they are Abraham’s seed.”*

“In Isaac shalt thy seed be called.” You see; there is spiritual Israel in Mount Zion and they are made up of every believer of every generation of every age, of every day, who ever came to the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. So, *“All Israel shall be saved.”*

“All Israel” are the sheep of God and the elect of God. The Scripture says, *“For whom He foreknew; He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. In whom He predestinate He called and whom He called He justified and whom He justified He glorified.”*

Our Lord Jesus said, *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. I came down from heaven, not to do my will but the will of Him that sent me and this is my Father’s will that of all which he hath given me I will lose nothing.”*

He won’t lose a hoof or a hair. That is what Moses said to Pharaoh, *“Not a hoof shall be left behind. Of all that the Father giveth me, I will lose nothing and will raise it up at the last day.”*

So, do what you will and say what you will. You can believe what you will but God still says, *“I have sworn by myself: And the Word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness that unto me every knee will bow and every tongue shall confess.”* Only in Christ shall we find righteousness and acceptance.

All men shall one day come before Christ. They are going to *“Kiss the Son.”* They are going to bow to the Son. They are going to do business with the Son in grace or in judgment. *“All Israel shall be saved.”*

You might say that you would like to have a part in that. All right, will you listen here in Isaiah 1:18? There is a gracious, merciful call extended to all who will hear. I read it to you a moment ago, *“Come now, saith the Lord and let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be like wool.”*

Now, here are four questions:

Who is called (who is Christ calling)?
Who is calling (who is doing the calling)?
What are we called unto?
When are we called?

Let's break it down and look at these four parts. Here is the first question: Who is Christ calling? The Scripture says, "*Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet; though your sins be red like crimson.*"

I don't mean to constantly harp on the sinfulness of human nature. My friend; it is the most certain and most true statement that men and women will not seek mercy. I can show that men and women will not seek mercy. They will not seek mercy and grace until they are thoroughly and completely convinced of their need of mercy and their need of grace.

A man will never sue for mercy unless he is a sinner. "*The well do not need a physician,*" that is what Christ said. When the Pharisees saw Him go down and eat with Publicans and sinners, they questioned the disciples. They said, "*Why does your Master eat with Publicans and sinners?*"

This is what our Lord replied to them, "*Because the well do not need a doctor.*" You don't see well people going to a doctor. You don't see righteous people seeking the Saviour. You don't see well people going to a doctor; it is not the well that needs healing it is the sick. Christ said, "*I came not to call the righteous, (the good, the moral) I came to call sinners to repentance.*"

My friends; the Lord God revealed His glory to Moses. Moses prayed, "*Show me your glory.*" God said, "*Here is My glory; I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.*"

He said in Exodus 34. "*I declare unto you the name of the Lord. I keep mercy for thousands. I forgive sin and iniquity.*" That is His glory and that is His mercy. That is the very program, purpose and plan of God, to show mercy.

Not only that, but the "*Lord Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*" Paul describing the coming of our Lord into the world said, "*He came to save sinners of whom I am the chief.*"

The angel told Joseph that Mary would bear the Messiah, the Son of God. He said, "*Thou shalt call His name Jesus, (Saviour), for He shall save His people from their sins.*" That is why He came into the world.

Then, there is the Holy Spirit. He is sent into the world to do what? The Holy Spirit is sent into the world to convict men of sin, of righteousness and judgment and to reveal Christ to the sinner's heart.

God has commissioned His servants to go into the highways and hedges and call the halt, the blind, the lame and those kinds of folks to come "*for the table is spread.*"

My friends, if you go back to chapter 1 of Isaiah, you will find in the first 15 or 16 verses descriptions of those who the Lord called. He says in verse 2: "*They are rebels.*" He called on heaven and earth to witness His complaint. He said, "*I have brought up children and they have rebelled against Me.*"

They are ungrateful. He said, "*The ox knows his owner; the ass knows his master's crib but my people do not even consider.*" They are not only rebels and ungrateful but He says in verse 4, "*They are laden with iniquity; (they are totally depraved) from the soul of their feet to the top of their heads. There is no soundness in them, nothing but wounds, bruises and putrefying sores.*"

Not only that, He said; "They are religious. They are rebels, ungrateful, loaded with sin, depraved totally. *Their whole head is sick; their whole heart is faint.*" Oh, they are religious. They offer prayers. They go through the ceremonies. They do all of these things. They won't eat meat on Friday but they will steal it on Saturday.

My friends; listen to me, God calls the guilty to grace. God calls the miserable to mercy. That is the very first thing that we must learn. If a man comes to Christ he will come to Christ because he needs Him. He has nothing to bring and nothing to give:

"In my hands no price I bring
Simply to the cross of Christ I cling."

He says, "*Come now; let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet.*" I am talking about any sinner. You might say, "I have gone too far." No man has gone too far. You might think that you have sinned too much; no man can sin too much. You might think that your soul is too black; now sir; there is no soul too black.

Our Lord gets great glory from saving great sinners. Let me tell you this, your sins will never keep you from Christ; your righteousness will and your goodness will. So, just fall on your face before the Lord and sue for mercy because He called sinners.

All right, who called? Who is this doing the calling? *“Come now, let us reason together saith the Lord.”* It is not the voice of a man who invites you. It is not the voice of a church or denomination, it is the Lord.

He said in verse 2, *“The Lord hath spoken.”* In verse 4, He says, *“The Holy One of Israel has spoken.”* In verse 9, *“The Lord of Hosts has spoken.”* In verse 18, *“Come now, saith the Lord.”* What a gracious, merciful call from the Lord of Hosts who made heaven and earth, from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from the God of heaven *“who delights to show mercy.”*

He calls us to a conference. What is the conference about? The conference is about sin. It is not to determine if we have sin but to determine what we are going to do about it. Are you going to keep on bearing them until you meet God in the judgment or are you going to turn them over to Him? Your sins have to be paid for, either by us or by Christ. *“He is the friend of sinners. Our Lord delights to show mercy.”*

He went down into Samaria and saved a fallen woman. He went down into Jericho and saved old Zacchaeus. He went down into the land of the Gadarenes and brought out a wild demoniac. He went to the cross and saved the thief. The Scripture says, *“He is able to save to the uttermost them who come to God by Him.”*

“He is able to keep us from falling. He is able to present us faultless before His throne with exceeding joy.” He is able to one day *“raise our vile bodies and make them like His own glorious body.”* Who is calling? The only one who can do you any good, the only one who can do me any good.

He is the source of mercy, the fountain of mercy, the King of Glory, the only sufficient Saviour. He is the one who came to the earth to save. He went to the cross to save and *“ascended to the right hand of the Father where He intercedes for sinners.”* If you are a sinner, you have no reason not to come to Christ because He invites you.

To what are we called? He says, *“Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson”* (means to be double-dyed; they will be dyed so deeply that it will never come out.)

There is one thing that will take out the stain of sin and that is the blood of Christ. He said, *“Though your sins be as scarlet; I will make them as white as the snow. Though they be red like crimson, they will be like wool.”*

One old writer said, “My sinner friend”:

“Let not conscience make you linger
Nor a fitness fondly dream,
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.”

In Hebrews 10, it says; *“This man Jesus Christ, by one offering hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”* Think of the word *“perfected.”* Think of these two words, *“perfected, forever.”* *“This man by one offering, (the offering of His body on the tree, the shedding of His blood), “hath perfected.”*

He hath cleansed so thoroughly that even God can’t see our sins. He hath cleansed so thoroughly that even God can find no fault with us. *“He hath perfected forever.”* I’m not talking about for six months, or not as long as I can hold out, or not as long as I can remain faithful; *“He is faithful.”* I’m not faithful, but He is. *“He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”*

God says, *“Their sins and iniquity will I remember no more; therefore, having a great High Priest over the House of God, let us come boldly.”* We have a perfect sacrifice and a perfect Redeemer and a perfect Mediator, and though we in ourselves are the most imperfect, in Him there is no sin.

In Christ we are totally justified. In Christ we are accepted and have a perfect standing. In Christ we have an inheritance.

Let me tell you this and I warn you; if you try to add anything to the blood of Christ, to the work of Christ, to His sufficient sacrifice of Christ, you will incur the wrath of God like you can’t believe.

Our God is a jealous God and that jealousy extends most of all to the way we approach Him. He says, *“I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me.”* My friend; I say that as emphatically and as clearly as I can.

Come sinner, come and welcome. Don't you bring anything. Come sinner, come naked, come fallen, and come broken just as you are. Don't you bring anything, come without one plea, that His blood was shed for you.

“Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Him whose blood can cleanse each spot.

Just as I am, poor, wretched blind,
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
All I need in Christ to find.”

That is it. That is the Gospel. It is a free gift. You don't pay for a gift. You don't have to pay a penny or a token. It is a free gift and it is purchased by Christ, given by Christ and it is all in Christ.

Now, when are we to come? Well, Felix said to Paul; *“You go your way; I have heard you. When I have a more convenient season we will get together and talk this thing over.”* Two years passed and he hadn't called. Now, 2,000 years have passed and he still hasn't called.

When will He come? The Scripture says here, *“Come now.”* That word is not in there to fill in space. *“Come now, now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation.”* I'm not pressuring anyone. Time is pressuring you; I am not pressuring you.

Time is so precious to you and it is almost gone, especially for some of you out there. God says, *“Come now, today is the day of salvation. Come now, saith the Lord; let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet; I will make them as white as snow.”*

God doesn't command you to do anything tomorrow. Almighty God doesn't have to tell people to do anything tomorrow; He tells them to do it right now while they have the time. He tells them to do it while they have the faculties, the understanding, the knowledge and the ability.

He said this, *“If you be willing you will eat the good of the land. Thy people shall be willing in the day of His power.”* In verse 20, it says; *“If you refuse and rebel you will be devoured with the sword.”*

That is clear cut! *“I have sworn,”* He said. *“Every knee will bow.”* Only in Christ shall men have righteousness. *“I have sworn,”* everybody is going to do business with My Son.” *“I have sworn, I am going to save all Israel.”*

“If you will be willing you will eat the good of the land with them. If you rebel you will be cut off with the sword.”