

Watchman On the Wall

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[0:00] Your Bibles to Ezekiel chapter 33. Ezekiel 33 in our scripture reading for tonight will be verses 1 through 11.

! And blows the trumpet to warn the people, then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head. Since he heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning, his blood will be on his own head. If he had taken warning, he would have saved himself. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people, and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin.

But I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood. Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. So hear the word I speak and give them warning from me.

When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you will surely die, and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood.

[1:34] But if you do warn the wicked man to turn from his ways, and he does not do so, he will die for his sins, but you will have saved yourself.

Son of man, say to the house of Israel, this is what you are saying. Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them.

How then can we live? Say to them, as surely as I live, declares the sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

But rather, they turn from their ways and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways. Why will you die, O house of Israel? Let's hear the word preached.

Thank you for coming back out. And I know it's to honor the Lord on the Lord's Day, and to worship at his holy hill, and to grow in grace, and love each other as a community and family of faith.

[2:40] Thank you again for having us. Thank you to the Heenies for putting up with us in their house. Thank you to those who have fed us so wonderfully and cared for us just so generously, and thank you very much.

Tuesday's going to be an election. Have you thought about that? Yeah, interesting situation. John Newton, who wrote Amazing Grace and many other hymns, born in 1725 and died in 1807, he said this, There's one political maxim which comforts me.

The Lord reigns. The Lord reigns. We don't know what he's doing, but he's doing it.

You can be sure of that. And whatever we see on this ground, earthly level, as frustrating and even despairing as it might be at times, we keep in, thank you, brother, for the first hymn, On the Sovereignty of God.

And Tom Wells wrote that song, and he had, when I was coordinator, he had us to his missions conference every year, and he wrote a number of songs, but I remember singing that a number of times through the years, and always just really loved that hymn.

[4:14] But it really is true. It's when we let our theology really take hold of our perspective in life, and even with this election, whatever it may mean to the future of our country, the Lord reigns.

We're okay. And it's going to be okay. It's all going to work out. And I take comfort in that. Can you? I say, can you? Okay.

Just wondering. I want to bring you this message. I've mentioned before this idea of the watchman on the wall and being accountable for those that, in God's providence, are in our lives, that we should faithfully warn them of the wrath to come and the answer and the hope that's in Jesus Christ. In fact, John Stott wrote a book called Our Guilty Silence. I hardly need to read the book. That communicates a whole lot.

But I think it's something that we really ought to look squarely in the eye from the Word of God and put in perspective with all of the Scripture.

[5:42] So here we go. Ezekiel 33, if you can make your way back there, if you're not there. I just finished going through Ezekiel in my own devotions.

And I came to this chapter, and I was using a commentary to go through it by Derek Thomas. He used to be in Wales with Jeffrey Thomas, a fellow pastor, and then he became a Presbyterian, of all things.

My wife says, friends don't let friends become Presbyterians. If you're a Presbyterian tonight here, you'd probably say the same thing about Baptists.

But Derek is an incredible man of God. And serving the Lord faithfully for many years. But he wrote this commentary that I just ate up and loved and edified my soul so much.

And I came across chapter 33 and said, Man, I really want to preach a sermon on this sometime. And then I have this opportunity. So this is some of the fruits of my meditations there in my devotional time in Ezekiel 33.

[6:58] The previous eight chapters, If you want to just kind of flip over in Ezekiel from chapters 25 to 32, you'll see probably those subheadings where God's judgment is going to fall on various nations.

25 to 32. As you just scan those, you'll see that if your Bible has those kind of subtitles within the text. So then we come to chapter 33.

And for these next five chapters, 33 to 37, it's prophesying the fall of Jerusalem and Judah to the Babylonians.

It's coming. I'm warning you. God's judgment is going to fall upon this idolatrous, adulterous nation. It's coming. So that makes chapter 33 pretty important. It's the pivotal. It pivots from God's declaration of coming judgment upon all the nations to becoming very specific about Israel, the chosen earthly nation of God, in chapter 33 through chapter 37.

[8:18] But there's the difference between his predicting judgment, declaring the judgment of God upon Jerusalem as opposed to all the other nations. There's no hope for all the other nations.

But in chapters 33 to 37, it's also filled with hope and comfort and assurance to those that, among those, the nation that God has chosen to declare his word and to send his prophets.

And chapter 33, like chapter 18, and we're going to go back to chapter 18, but you don't need to go there now, but both of them talk about how that all of us are responsible for our actions before God and responsible for the consequences that come.

In chapter 18, it states repeatedly what verse that I even quoted this morning, the soul that sins, it shall die. You sin, you die.

You take of that fruit, of that tree, you'll die. You sin against God, you'll die.

[9:31] And that's said repeatedly in chapter 18. And there's no blaming God, and there's no blaming anyone else for the guilt that we create for ourselves. So we are responsible for our own lives before God, whether we bow to him and receive him and honor him and obey him and love him and worship him, or whether we, in rebellion, say, no, I will not have that man to rule over me, referring to Jesus, and I will not bow the knee to Jehovah, and you'll face the consequences.

And we also are given the responsibility to warn lost sinners of this coming wrath, of their sin and of the consequences of their sin.

We are responsible as God's people. As we come to a text like this, and we're going to go back to chapter 3 in a moment, but we'll see there that this theme of having a watchman on the wall, it was God's wisdom and kindness to give them such an understanding.

When you build a wall around the city, and it's now, that's very important in terms of defending your city against enemies that come against you.

But on that wall, you want to have city watchmen. City watchmen were placed there, chosen and instituted to be there, and they watch. They're like shepherds who watch their flocks, watch for animals, watch for enemies, watch for anything that may hurt them in any way, to guard over them.

[11:16] That's why a pastor is not only a pastor-shepherd, and he's not only an elder, but he's a bishop. A bishop is an overseer.

He watches over the flock. That's the job of a shepherd, watchman, bishop. In other words, watchmen were positioned on the wall to provide guard duty.

They were to survey the countryside. Keep watching the countryside. Keep watching and see what might come through those trees, what might be coming across those fields and those hills. Watch. And they were equipped with a trumpet to blow when a warning was needed. If danger is threatening, you got a trumpet.

You see danger coming. Blow that trumpet for the sake of the safety of the people inside the city. The people inside the city needed time to get to a place of safety.

[12:31] They needed time to get their weapons ready. They needed time. And their lives, their very lives, were dependent upon the watchman's vigilance and his swift actions.

But the people were, not only the watchman's responsible, but the people were responsible to take heed to the warnings of the watchman. Now, if he did his job, as we read here in 33, if he did his job and blew the trumpet of warning concerning the danger to come, if they did not care enough to respond to that warning, they would be overrun and they would die.

And if they would be massacred by the sword, they could not blame the watchman if the watchman did his job. And this text is saying that Ezekiel, notice in verse 1, the word of the Lord, Yahweh came to Ezekiel and he says, Son of man, he goes on to say, you're a watchman.

See that in verse 7. I've made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Ezekiel knew the Babylonians were coming and that the coming of the Nebuchadnezzar's army would be the judgment of God upon them.

Now, Ezekiel would be eventually carried away and he would be off in Babylon with the captive Israelites and you had Daniel at the same time carried off and he's in the palace dealing with the kings.

[14:19] You had Ezekiel among the people. Daniel with the royalty, Ezekiel with the people. And he continued to do his job, but there he was in Jerusalem.

He was a preacher who was to warn them about this oncoming destruction that was coming down on them for their sins. Ezekiel was called of God to this very work, to be a watchman of warning.

Now, let's go back to chapter 3. Chapter 3, and I'll read and I'm reading off my notes from the English Standard Version so it's going to be a bit different than if you're using the NIV.

Chapter 3, verse 17 through 21 where he says, the first time, Son of man, I've made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me.

If I say to the wicked, you shall surely die and you give him no warning nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way in order to save his life.

[15:42] Not only to obey God, but you're concerned to save this man's life. If you don't do it, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

But if you warn the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity.

He's responsible for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die because you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin and his righteous deeds that he's done shall not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand.

But if you warn the righteous person not to sin and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning and you have delivered your soul.

Well, you say, okay, well that sounds rather Old Testament. Well, let's look at the New Testament and see how Paul the Apostle spoke of the same spiritual reality and the responsibility in his own gospel ministry.

[17:07] Will you turn to the book of Acts and chapter 18? Acts in chapter 18 and verse 5.

When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself. Love that word devoted.

Boy, he just stubbornly, steadfastly gave himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest. What a symbolic action. And he said to them, your blood beyond your own heads.

I am clear. I am innocent of my responsibility. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles. Paul's obviously drawing that picture of responsibility from Ezekiel with regard to who's responsible for your perishing and the blood that you will let.

In Paul's case, I could say, I've been faithful in preaching the gospel to you and I'm free. I'm clear. I'm innocent of your blood.

[18:47] It's on your heads all the way. Well, Paul not only said it there, but notice in chapter 20 of Acts, and verse 25, Acts 20, 25, now I know that none of you among whom I've gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again.

Therefore, I declare to you today. It's almost like an incredible climax to this powerful exhortation that he gives to the Ephesian elders.

I understand your, Pastor John, is just about to embark into that text. I'm not going to see anymore and you're not going to see me anymore.

Therefore, I declare to you today that I'm innocent of the blood of all men. For, I have not hesitated to proclaim to you, to preach, to proclaim to you the whole counsel, the whole will of God.

interesting, we see the Apostle Paul taking that same thing that God brought to Ezekiel many years before and saying, applying it in his own case.

[20:07] I've been faithful, so I'm innocent, having declared to you the whole counsel of God. In both cases, Paul could say this with confidence.

I'm innocent. I've done my job. I've warned you. Now, Paul could not witness to every person in the world. Those that he was responsible to speak to were certainly of a limited number.

He was just one man in the entire known world and Roman Empire. He wasn't responsible for those that others in Christ's church were responsible for.

But he indicated that he did have a responsibility for those that God brought into his life and across his path. And I faithfully warned about this.

What does he base that on? And what do we, if we would take this very concept and employ it in our thinking and perspective about being evangelist?

[21:19] And of being witnesses? And of having the responsibility slash privilege of bringing the light and love of Jesus, the hope of the gospel to people for your sake here in Bremen, my sake in Atlanta, or to the nations around the world?

Well, let's go to 2 Corinthians 5. There's something that we can draw from this text, 2 Corinthians 5. And I suppose many of you, if I begin quoting, therefore, if any man be in Christ, you could probably join me and say, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things become new. 2 Corinthians 5.17. But notice 5.18 to the end of that chapter, 2 Corinthians 5.18, all this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us.

[22:33] How does the NIV say there in verse 18, he gave us the ministry of reconciliation? He committed to us. And how about in the next verse where it says, he entrusted to us the message of reconciliation?

How does that express? Okay, so it's the same in verse 18, he gave us the ministry of reconciliation and then in verse 19, he committed to us the message of reconciliation.

That's the same type of thing that you find in 1 Timothy 3, toward the end of the chapter where it talks about he has deposited within his church his truth all about Jesus Christ.

Well, it's like you take your money to the bank and you deposit and you're entrusting your money to that institution to hold it, to guard it, to keep it, and even to enlarge upon it with interest, you don't want him to lose it.

You don't want him to be responsible with it so that you lose it. And that's the idea here. God has given to us this ministry of reconciliation.

[24:03] He's entrusted or committed to us this ministry and so therefore, verse 20, we are, present tense, ambassadors for Christ.

We are those who go on the behalf of the king as an ambassador. We carry the king's message and we do as we're told. We go where we're told and we speak to whom we're told as ambassadors for Christ.

And what we say is that God, as he's making his appeal through us to sinners, and here's what God is saying as he's using us as a conduit to bring his voice to lost people in this world, he's saying through us, we implore you, we plead with you, we beg of you, on the behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

I think you're going to find that same spirit in Ezekiel where he pleads with these that are going to face certain destruction.

When he says, turn ye, turn ye, why will you die? You don't have to die. But I'm telling you, you need to turn before you perish.

[25 : 42] And we say, be reconciled to God. And that's our message to the world, be reconciled to God. Lay down your rebellion, turn from your sin, and bow yourself to the king of heaven.

That's what ambassador to the king would say, he's coming, coming. And he's drawn his sword, he's pulled back his bow, and if you have not repented, you are going to face swift and certain judgment.

Be reconciled to God. And then he says, verse 21, even what we quoted this morning, about the cross. For our sake, he made him.

God made his son to be sin for us. He who never sinned, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. We've got to take the gospel of the cross and speak to sinners of their only hope of redemption.

We have this responsibility. Paul had that responsibility. Now, we can't be responsible to talk to every person in Illinois or Indiana or even Bremen.

[26 : 56] But we must develop a conscience toward those within the reasonable sphere of our lives and embrace our responsibility to warn them of what's coming.

It's coming. And there's such a thing as being accountable for another's blood.

And I don't know what form or shape that will take, what that looks like. Can't begin to tell you about that, but if Paul had not been faithful, you've got to ask yourself, how would he become accountable for the blood of those that he did not warn?

God's judgment. We cannot fail to be a witness of the danger of God's judgment that's coming and of the one and only soul saving rescue that's available that's in Jesus Christ alone.

our guilty silence. Well, let's let that kind of percolate a little bit.

[28 : 17] I'd like to attack a few tangential issues surrounding this question. If unconditional election and absolute predestination are true, and you as a church believe they are, hope you know that, if they are true, if God is sovereign in saving a definite number of mankind kind, the number of which can neither increase or decrease, but he will save them definitely and others not, then two questions.

Well, how could either then the messenger or the sinner be responsible for this neglect? On the sinner's part, the neglect of hearing the warning and responding because he doesn't respond, or the messenger who fails to blow the trumpet, and it doesn't matter either way, anyway, because they're not going to respond if they're not God's elect.

That's the first question. The second is, how could God feel this emotion of grief or displeasure at the death of the wicked?

If he's so decreed in eternity, he will save some specific, a definite number of specific sinners. How is it that he could have this grief or displeasure in seeing the death of the wicked and warning of it? well, the first one I'd like to just speak to. If unconditional election and absolute predestination are true, number one, how could either the sinner or the messenger be responsible for their neglect?

[30 : 21] The answer is I'm not real sure, but I just know it's true. I know that God is absolutely sovereign over whom he saves.

He's sovereign over whom he, who repents, who he grants the gift of repentance to, who is saved from his judgment.

That expression sovereign Lord is used in Ezekiel 217 times. He's the sovereign Lord. And every, every life, the days of their lives and the end of their course is determined by God in eternity.

He's the sovereign Lord. And there is a remnant whom God has chosen to save and they shall be without a doubt, they shall be saved.

For whom God did for love, he predestined and whom he predestined those he called and whom he called, those he justified and whom he justified, those he glorified.

[31 : 31] We have absolute certainty that God will save his people from their sins. He will not fail. And the Son of God, when he died upon Calvary in the place of those he represented, he will not be frustrated.

And the sovereign spirit, when he is the wind blows and he brings new birth into the hearts of some, he will not be controlled. He will effectually call without fail and bring every single one of his people

to glory.

Well, how can these folks who are not God's elect be responsible for the blast of the trumpet, the warning of certain danger and of eternal condemnation?

They are. Jesus said, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Jesus said, for God so loved this world that he gave his only, one and only, only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him, you shall not perish, but you'll have everlasting life.

You've got to believe, and if you don't believe, you'll perish. You're responsible to believe, you're responsible to repent, and if you will repent, and if you will believe, you'll be saved.

[33:07] That choice is put before you, and you must make the right choice, or you'll die. it is a mystery.

How God has revealed in his word what appears to be seeming opposites. In our minds, they're contradictions. God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, how do they match?

We can't understand them to be true. they're like twin rails on the train tracks, and they don't seem to come together until we see them coming together in heaven.

There they go. But they will come together in heaven because they come together in Christ. B.B. Warfield said it this way, and this is all one sentence by the way, no means are left unused to drive home the fact that God's gracious election of Israel is an absolutely sovereign one, founded solely on his unmerited love and looking to nothing ultimately but the gratification of his own holy and loving impulses, and the manifestation of his grace through the formation of a heritage for himself out of a mass of sinful men.

[34:52] God, in other words, by his grace and by his own sovereign pleasure, for reasons known only unto him, he will save a people.

He will have a formation of a heritage for himself out of a mass of sinful men by means of whom his saving mercy should advance to the whole world.

He will save a people and by those people he'll cause his mercy to advance to spread throughout the whole earth. Derek Thomas said it this way, God longs for something that will not happen. that God sometimes expresses a desire for the fulfillment of certain things that he has not decreed in his inscrutable will to come to pass.

John Murray, taught at Westminster in those glory days, said this means that there is a will to the realization of what he has not willed in decree, a pleasure toward that which he has not been pleased to decree.

[36:08] This is indeed mysterious, and why he's not brought to pass in the exercise of his omnipotent power and grace, what is his ardent pleasure, lies hid in the sovereign counsel of his will.

And then John Calvin asked this question, then why do any perish if God desires that they be saved? He replies, no mention is made here of the decree of God, talking about Ezekiel 33 and these whole principles that we see laid out.

He's saying no mention is made here of the decree of God by which the wicked are doomed to their own ruin, but only of his loving kindness as it is made known to us in the gospel.

There God stretches out his hand to all alike. That's Calvin. God stretches out his hand to all alike. And that's our calling.

To stretch out our hands in Christ as ministers of reconciliation, as ambassadors for the Son of God to stretch out our hands all day long.

[37:32] But he only grasped those in such a way as to lead them to himself, whom he has chosen before the foundation of the world.

We can't sort these things out. God will save some. He will not fail.

But he calls us to speak to all and leave none out. That's the best I can do with that tonight.

The second question about if unconditional election and absolute predestination are true, how could God feel this emotion of grief or displeasure at the death of the wicked? And I believe God is genuinely grieved when sinners destroy themselves.

After all, they're made in his image. And that's really the chief rationale for why if you kill somebody, you need to be killed. Because when you murder somebody, you are attacking the very image of God.

[38:47] God, there's value and dignity in every single person. And who knows that better than the creator God, who fashioned every one of those people's lives with his incredible wisdom and

creativity and stamped upon them dignity in that divine design.

notice in chapter 33 of Ezekiel verses 10 and 11. Again from ESV 33, 10, and 11.

And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, you have said, surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us and we rot away because of them.

What do you have? Okay, wasting away? ESV's a little more graphic. They're saying, our sins are upon us and we rot away because of them.

How then can we live? Say to them, Ezekiel, say to them, son of man, say to them, watchman, say to them, as I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.

[40:17] That's my pleasure, that the wicked turn, not die, but live. That's my heart. That's my pleasure. And then he goes on to plead, turn back, turn back.

I like the King James, turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways. For why will you die?

Think about it. Take time to ponder it. What are you trying to save your life for? Jesus said if you try to save your life you'll lose it. Do you realize what's hanging in the balance?

Is it really worth it? to chase your independence and your sufficiency and your pleasure and your popularity? Is it anywhere rational to be chasing that when your soul is at stake?

Turn back, turn back from your evil ways for why will you die, O house of Israel? What we have here is an insight into the very heart of God.

[41:31] And he speaks of displeasure. And he uses such expressions of tender mercy.

And look at this piteous reasoning with a lost person who's on the path to certain destruction. There's pleading going on here.

Like Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5, we implore you the stakes could not be any more serious.

And if you end up in hell, it's not God's fault. And it's not God's heart.

And Derek Thomas says that the translation that we have misses something of the force of the original, which could be rendered, quote, taking pleasure in.

[42:39] Do I take pleasure in? Question mark. Three exclamation points. The answer is emphatic. I do not by any means desire the death of the wicked person.

Salvation is the universal desire of our sovereign God for all sinners. sinners. This repeats the longing of God for sinners' salvation, just like we find in Ezekiel 18.

We haven't been there yet. Let's go to Ezekiel 18. Ezekiel 18. I'm going to ask somebody.

Would you stand and read with a nice, strong, loud voice? Ezekiel 18, 19 to 22. Got somebody who would do that for me?

Don't be shy. Come on. Okay, brother. Yet you ask, why does the son not share the guilt of his father?

[44:05] Since the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live. The soul who sins is the one who will die.

The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness righteous will be present in him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.

Okay, do you read through 22? Yeah, 21, 22. But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed, and keeps all my decrees, and does what is just and right, he will surely live.

He will not die. None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered against him. Because of the righteous things he has done, he will live. And verse 23.

Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? Rather, am I not pleased when they turn their way and live? am I not pleased when they turn and live?

[45:15] When they die, just know it doesn't please me. But when they turn and live, it does.

Can I get somebody else to read from verse 27 through 32? Who else do I got here that would read for me? Okay, brother.

Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed, and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had true, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

Yet the house of Israel says, the way of the Lord is not just, therefore I will judge you, the house of Israel, everyone according to his way declares the Lord God.

You can't and turn from all your transgressions less than equally through your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new

spirit.

[46:33] I believe God is expressing genuine grief, genuine emotion of grief and displeasure sadness.

We've seen him say this in chapter 33 and we see him say this twice here in chapter 18. And when we look at Jesus, the eternal son of God, he displayed it when he wept over Jerusalem.

Luke 19, 41, and he went and drew near it and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace, but now they're hidden from your eyes.

For the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground and your children within you and they will not leave one stone upon another in you because you did not know the time of your visitation.

Sounds very familiar, doesn't it? And in Matthew 23, 37, and following, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those that are sent to it, how often I would have gathered you together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings and you would not.

[48:19] You're not willing. And here's the weeping Lord Jesus Christ. Are these desires and this grief only human desires and grief of that of the man Christ Jesus and not of those of God the Father?

The answer I believe is no. These are the genuine pathos of the sovereign of heaven the one whom Jesus came to make known to exegate the Father.

And what you see in Jesus you see in God the Father. An expression of what God is essentially like.

You see the same thing in Paul. And you remember in chapter eight he brings out election and predestination so powerfully. And then he begins chapter nine and he's saying I just I just got to tell you I've got this constant agony and anguish in my soul.

It's killing me. I can't get past it. It's gnawing at me and it never goes away. What's wrong Paul?

Paul will he says here's all my brethren according to the flesh all my countrymen my fellow Jews they wear the same clothes I wear and they speak the same language we shop the same stores our kids learn the same things and they're going to go to hell and it's killing me.

[50:04] just after he comes off the end of Romans eight with the certainty and the assurance that God will not fail to work out his purposes and save whom he has foreloved.

And then goes on in chapter nine which is probably how many of you came to really understand the sovereignty of God in saving his elect his people without failure. But then he starts Romans 10 verse one.

He says brethren you in Rome brethren my heart's desire and my prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.

You've got to say Paul which is it? There's a whole bunch that are not elected those elected will certainly hear the message and repent and believe but all the others are not.

that's not that's it's just not going to happen. But the grace of God has such elements in the chemistry within the soul which leads him to have this soul agony as he looks out at his brethren their children their parents and they're going to they're destroying their souls eternally and then he pleads in prayer oh God my heart's desire and my constant prayer to God for Israel not praying against God's mysterious and eternal decrees not holding God accountable or suggesting that he's unfair or he's stingy with his grace but on one level he takes comfort in the mystery and the wonder and the certainty of God's sovereignty and as he's preaching the gospel though he's getting beat up and rejected and stoned and thrown out of the city and hated among men he takes comfort that God is going to work out all his purposes just right but he can't help but look on a human level and see those that we go to school with that we work beside and live near to shop same places and not have be moved and think about their eternal condition and think about how their soul is going to be ruined and just to have the opportunity to plead with them do you realize what you're doing you're on a course you've gone through this wide gate and this you're going down this broad way and it's going to lead you to certain destruction and I'm imploring you to think about it

[53:05] I'm imploring you to think through what's going to happen to your soul what God has revealed and that there is a very small compressed gate and there is a narrow way and that's the way to life if you don't choose it you're going to die if you do choose it you will know God and be reconciled to him and you'll save yourself how are these emotions of God consistent with his

immutability that he never changes I don't have begin to have a clue he doesn't ever change he does express these emotions of joy and sorrow how is it how is it that when someone's converted that heaven erupts in joy and would we not see a smile on our father's face to see the prodigal come home but when he's he's looking at those that are ruining their their eternal souls and choosing destruction is he still smiling he says no I have no pleasure at all at all in the death of the wicked

God desires the repentance of all men and you can say that to anybody you witness to God desires that you repent and there's a love the love of God that's so broad it'll take you and a million other sinners right now into his arms and be saved in fact God yearns for their salvation applications for them number one don't be fooled into thinking God is too gracious or merciful to destroy sinners he will J.C.

Ryle said it this way everywhere in the scripture it's a leading principle that man can lose his own soul that he if he is and if he's lost at last it will be his own fault and his blood will be on his own head the same inspired Bible which reveals the doctrine of election is the Bible which contains the word why will you die O house of Israel you will not come to me that you may have life this is the condemnation that light has come into the world and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil the Bible never says that sinners miss heaven because they were not elect but because they neglect the great salvation and because they will not repent and believe the gospel the last judgment will abundantly prove that it is not the lack of God's election so much as laziness the love of sin unbelief and unwillingness to come to

Christ which ruins souls that are lost let the responsibility fall upon men the soul that sins it will die and he calls us to repent today for why will you die and young people if you're here tonight and you've been raised in a Christian home and your parents and pastors have pled with you to be serious about the state of your soul let you hear it again from another voice be serious about your eternal soul your soul is eternal and you carry it around with you and every day you live without repenting of your sin and running whole heartedly to Jesus Christ for salvation you're playing Russian roulette with your soul and at some point that gun is going to go off and you die you may make another day another week another year even ten or!

But if you don't repent you will die and you don't get to blame God's sovereignty or the doctrine of election you don't get to blame anybody but yourself when you die secondly don't be fooled into thinking God is too cold and calculated that he does that he doesn't love all men Thank you.