

The Gospel

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[0:00] If you weren't here for the Sunday School Hour, let me encourage you to stop and get a CD on your way out and just to hear again how our saving Lord pursues sinners and saves.

And we're thankful that he's done that in your life, Brother Mark, and we anticipate now the good word from you. Come and preach God's word to us. Well, good morning again. I mentioned in the Sunday School Hour how we in Holland, Michigan at Harbor Church love your young people. We're indebted to your church for the eye-brightening influence in our congregation. But also I want to say to you, I love your pastor. Over the years, I've gotten to know John. I remember seeing him for the first time playing tennis back probably 1986-ish at a family conference.

And this guy who, well, he's a great athlete, but he's also a great friend. His name is Jonathan. Jonathan, who was the friend of David, I think 1 Samuel 18, when Jonathan saw David who was a rival because Jonathan was the crown prince.

But Jonathan was so selfless, he gave to David his armor, his belt, his shield, his sword, his bow. And that's the way John has been to me. Just so encouraging to me.

[1:33] Later on in 1 Samuel 23, when David was discouraged, Jonathan came out to the wilderness and met with David. It says, and Jonathan strengthened David in the Lord. And John has had that effect on me many times over the years through an email, through a telephone call, through a pastor's conference interaction.

You have brightened my eyes many times, brother. In fact, Aaron Hope was at my house just a few months ago when he told me about how privileged he feels to have been mentored by a man of this caliber here.

You are a blessed people in this church. Don't let familiarity breed contempt in you. This is a very choice servant of Christ. Hope you love him like I love him. Now let's take the word of God and open up to Jonah chapter 3.

By the way, do you have an outline? If you don't have an outline, raise your hand and somebody can get you an outline. I'd just like to have that to be in the hands of all here as we open up the word of God.

I don't have anything special for you. This is not an elegantly prepared seven-course meal just special for Bremen. This is just Holland meat and potatoes.

[2:43] This is the last sermon that I preached on Sunday night last week. And as I was driving down and just thinking, Lord, what do you want me to bring? He just directed me to bring this.

I hope it's a word in season. I'm just shooting in the dark. But the Spirit of God has his crosshairs on some heart, I assume. And may he do good work. Jonah 3.

Jonah chapter 3. We've got Hosea. And we've got Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah. Jonah chapter 3. You know the story of a fish coughed up on the shore. Now 3.1 of Jonah. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you.

So Jonah rose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was exceedingly great as a city, a three days walk. When Jonah began to go through the city, one day's walk, and he cried out and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh will be overthrown.

[3:55] Let's pray together. Our Father, we think of how you worked when Jonah spoke in a striking way. And we pray that you would work in a striking way here this morning as the word is brought.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. In Holland, we've just completed a 13-sermon exposition of the book of Jonah. And if you know the book of Jonah, Jonah was called to the Gentile Ninevites to call them to repentance so that the wrath of God might be averted from destroying them, that city

like Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.

Now the chief overarching theme of the book is, listen, God's people are solemnly called to energetically and selflessly go to doom sinners all around us and bring to them the gospel of life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ninevites needed the message that Jonah had to give. Jonah didn't want to bring the message. He hated Ninevites. They were like the modern-day terrorists of the ancient world.

The Ninevites were the ISIS of the ancient world. Jonah didn't want to bring them the gospel. They might be saved, and so he was disobeying God and ran to Tarshish, the opposite direction, instead of running to Nineveh.

[5:25] But he had the obligation to bring the saving gospel to the Ninevites. And you here in Indiana have the obligation to bring the saving gospel to the Bremenites, who are just as dangerously damned as the Ninevites of the ancient world.

Well, as Jonah was called to go to Nineveh, we are called to go to our neighbors near and far and bring them the gospel. But as I said to our people last Sunday night, there's a real danger here. And that's the possibility, even the probability that exists, that when we leave the book of Jonah, danger is we could act just like Jonah. That is, by fleeing to the Tarshish of mute silence, of not proclaiming to the Bremenites or the northern Indianites the gospel that is necessary.

We could go to the Tarshish of apathetic quietness, to a hushed hammock where we don't speak the word of God, saying little, if anything, to the doomed souls all around us.

And why might some of us here in these green pews be silent? Well, I don't think it's fundamentally apathy at the bottom of our silence, but I think in some cases it's just downright uncertainty.

[6:45] Uncertainty. When we face the pagan Ninevites or the pagan Bremenites lost souls all around us, some of us just aren't sure what it is we are to say to them.

You see, God gave Jonah the saving proclamation. His gospel message to them was eight words, yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown.

Eight words! That's a clear and a concise, easy-to-remember message. It's digested down to an easily communicated declaration or proclamation.

And that's what I want to do for you here this hour. I want to give you a proclamation. What it is you are to say.

You may say Jonah had it easier than us. He was given eight words. But we've been told, Matthew 28, Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you.

[7:47] And you sit in your green pew and you say, Oh, that he's commanded us? That's what I'm to tell the Bremenites? I mean, that's sixty-six books of the Bible. And we feel overwhelmed.

What are we supposed to say? Sometimes we're tongue-tied when we're sitting at the muffler shop. And we've got twenty minutes with the guy who's reading the sports section. How can we break into a conversation with him and tell him about the saving gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?

My desire is here to help you digest all of the word of God down to a clear, concise, encapsulated gospel that can be easily communicated, yeah, maybe even in the muffler shop or at the optometrist's office.

You see, we have a solemn obligation regarding the commission we've been given by the Lord. Jonah had the obligation to memorize his proclamation.

Yet forty days and then it will be destroyed. We have an obligation to formulate ours. And then we need to throw a lifeline to those who are drowning in trespasses and sins.

[9:01] There's a story told of a Scotsman who lived on a turbulent seacoast there in the United Kingdom. And he was out and he saw in the distance during a storm time with billows, he saw that there was a ship that had sunk and there were people who were floundering about a mile out with his binoculars, he could see them in the water.

But he was helpless because he had no means of getting to them and throwing them the lifeline. And they drowned. And the next morning they drifted up on the seashore, these dead corpses. And his resolution was, never again. Never again. So he engaged in a project, a project of securing a seaworthy rowboat, of outfitting that boat with oars and ropes and life vests so that he would be ready for any future shipwrecks to save many who were helplessly drowning.

And I want to ask you, do you have a boat? Do you have a plan about how when someone's drowning in the muffler shop or someone's drowning in the optometrist office, do you have

something to row out to their heart and throw them a lifeline so that they can be saved? Or are you merely unprepared and not able to bring them the living gospel? You have in your hands there what could be called my boat.

[10:37] It's the gospel encapsulized. This is a gospel that, oh, it's been reworked over the decades. I first put it together in going back to evangelism explosion, back in the 1970s.

I was a new Christian college student security guard at Blodgett Memorial Medical Center. And I would go around from the emergency room to a nursing station to admitting and talk to various people.

And it was my form of the gospel. Now this has changed. This gospel encapsulated you have there over the years. It's been undergoing improvement modifications ever since. And this is just the latest version that you have.

This is my boat. And listen, if you don't like my boat, that's fine. But you're solemnly obligated to have your boat. You need to have a life-saving gospel proclamation that you can communicate to people.

And I want to encourage you as you're sitting here to make sure your boat is ready to go for the near daily sightings of drowning sinners in your life who need the gospel.

[11:52] So I'm just saying to you here, like I said last Sunday night to those in Holland, I'm saying to you in Bremen, don't be a Jonah. Don't go off to a hushed hammock.

Don't go off to mute silence, Tarshish. You need to have something to say. Not 40 days and Bremen shall be destroyed. But you have a gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I want to just walk through this gospel encapsulated with you. You can take features that are good and put them under your boat if you want.

But get a boat. Have a plan. Before I go, just four preview encouragements. First, be realistic.

There's no need or expectation for you to ever make to anyone a full outline presentation.

When you're at the muffler shop, you may have just a few minutes to put a word in season here or there. Just maybe you might express a single section or make in the life of someone a surgical correction or just give a condensed version or a partial declaration.

[12:57] Be realistic. I'm not saying memorize all of this. But I'm saying look at it and use it.

Secondly, be improving. I hope some of you do have a boat of your own.

Always be searching for improvements. There's a guy who lives next door to me. I see him out the window. He's a teenager. He's just a little bit older, younger than you, John.

He's probably about 22 years old. He loves to fish. About four years ago, he got this broken down old rowboat. And every year you can see he makes improvements.

And he puts a better motor on it. He puts a swirling seed on it. He puts a little sonar on it. It's going to be for our having a fishing boat.

Didn't the Lord Jesus, Mark 1, 17, say, I will make you to be fishers of men. We ought to love to fish. When we think of the eternal destinies that are at stake.

[13:57] I know there are. I know the Indiana Hoosiers football team is pretty good this year. So are we good. But you can't focus on that. I mean, making money may be important. But what does it profit men?

Again, the whole world loses soul. This is of eternal importance. To be fishers of men. And so be improving. Also, be sacrificial.

If you're going to be saving souls, you need to be willing to work hard, sweat, maybe memorize, maybe burn a little midnight oil to burn some of this into your mind, into your memory.

If you're going to have a seaworthy boat and a safe rope of a gospel to throw out to somebody. You willing to perspire for souls that they might be saved?

I mean, the Lord Jesus was willing to perspire blood like sweat to save your soul. Greater love hath no man than this. He would lay down his life.

[14:53] He'd burn a little midnight oil for his friends. The Scotsman worked hard to get his rowboat to save souls. We should be working hard as well.

And also, be unashamed. Be unashamed. I know what I'm telling you all is it's the old, old story.

And some of you may listen to me and say, you know what?

I've heard all this before, but Paul was unashamed of that old gospel. He says in Romans 1.16, I'm not ashamed of the gospel. It's the power of God unto salvation.

It's this gospel that I'm giving you here. What's on that little paper there? It's powerful stuff. It's like that plastic explosive. You can put on that iron safe that's been rusted shut for decades.

And you can put that on the safe and you can blow open the heart that's been rusted shut in sin for years. The power of the gospel. This is potent stuff that we're bringing.

[15:58] And understand, understand you need to also be receptive. Be receptive. I want you to receive yourself and grab hold of this by faith, this saving gospel.

You say, I'm already saved. Okay. Believe in it. If it's the first time, believe in it. If it's the 10,000th and first time, because this gospel is breath of life to those who are dead in transgression and sin. You believe in it. The dead can be raised like cemetery, somebody coming up out of the grave. But it's not just the breath of life. It's also the bread of life for saints who are faint.

You come here, you're faint, you're weary, you've been, you had the snot beaten out of you this week by the world. This is like the honey from Jonathan's staff. Remember, he was fighting a good fight and he got honey, it brightened his eyes.

We live by the gospel. Yeah, the first time in the 76, I believe, but I still live by the gospel as daily bread today. So I'm not just speaking to somebody who's lost among us or even having you prepare a boat for other people.

[17:05] This is also the bread of life for you today. Take it in and have your eyes brightened. Well, come on, come on with me to this gospel encapsulized that you have in front of you there.

It's just the gospel that we would throw and declare to the lost Bremenites. Not 40 days and Bremen will be destroyed, but it is the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

Notice four main headings there. God, man, Jesus Christ, and the response. Come on, let's start with God. God is man's creator, sustainer, and judge.

And every man will give an account to him on the last day. You realize, all of us sitting here, we have a final appointment. We have a closing interview with the Lord on the last day.

And the God we're going to face is not some pal. He's the holy, holy, holy God. His character is dominated by the attribute of blazing moral purity.

[18:09] He cannot tolerate sin. You know, Isaiah, in Isaiah chapter 6, stood before the bonfire of God's raging holiness. He says, woe is me, I'm undone.

I'm unclean, a man of unclean love. And this was the holiest man in the face of the earth at this time. But he saw himself as a dry leaf, immoral, before a consuming bonfire of God's raging holiness.

We are all immoral. We are all combustible. And if we come to stand before the living, holy God, we're endangered. Habakkuk 1.13 says, Your eyes, O Lord, your eyes, O Lord, are too pure to approve of evil.

And you cannot look on wickedness with favor. Ever have a single grain of sand? John and Josie were up on the coast of Michigan, beach, sand.

One grain of sand in your eye. It just drives you crazy. You blink, you blink, you can't tolerate it. You've got to get it out. And that's the way it is with the living God whose eyes are too pure to look upon our iniquity with favor.

[19:22] We come into his presence in our unholiness. One speck of sin. He's got to get us out of the presence of his holy eyes. This is the God with whom we have to do.

But he's also just. If his standard of moral perfect purity isn't met, that's his law, he'll certainly bring punishment. God never, in a grandfatherly way, winks at sin.

It says in Exodus 34 and verse 7, He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. It's a wicked judge who disregards crimes, you know.

You think of John Wilkes Booth who many decades ago came into the balcony of a theater and took a revolver and shot Abraham Lincoln in the back of the head.

Imagine if John Wilkes Booth had come before a judge after that assassination of Lincoln and the judge looked at him and said, Well, Booth, up to this point you've been a pretty good citizen and it's only one crime that you've committed.

[20:31] I'm going to let you go. I'm going to let you walk on this one. Is that lovely? Is that lovely? When the wicked are permitted to go on? No, that's ugly.

That's grotesque if one of these guys who shoots up a public school comes before a judge and he's bludgeoned classrooms and the judge says, I'm going to let you go. You see, it's beautiful that God is a God of justice.

It says in Proverbs 17, 15, He is a God where it says, He who justifies the wicked, that is an abomination to the Lord. And it says in Psalm 11, 6, Upon the wicked God will rain snares. Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup. This is the God with whom we have a closing interview. He's exacting also the commitment of a single sin results in the just punishment of God's wrath.

You see, doing more goods than bads isn't going to cut it before the Lord. You know James 2, 10, for whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point, he has become guilty of all.

[21 : 39] Just because Booth was a good citizen for the other decades of his life and he only one time, one time, put a bullet in the man's head. You see, if it's only one sin, he's a murderer and he's damned.

Even one time, children, even one time, you know, if your mom asks you, hey, as you're laying in bed there, did you brush your teeth tonight? And you didn't. You say, yeah, I did.

One time. You're a liar. You've broken the ninth commandment. You've disowned your mother and father and you have broken the fifth commandment and that is enough. That one lie in bed is enough to damn you forever.

You may think this sounds unreasonable, but I tell you what, we worship and we will stand before a God who for one eating of a forbidden fruit.

He casts into eternal condemnation the entire race because he is a holy, holy, holy God. It says in Psalm 50, 21, you thought I was just like you.

[22 : 48] Easy with sin. He is not easy with sin. The reality is that God calls us to be pure before him and whether we have just one grain or a whole cup full of sin, sand grains on us, he requires moral perfection and being good isn't good enough.

If you do a resume for an employer and there's one typo on there, there's one typo, you say, pretty good percentage. Ah, one typo and you throw out the trash.

It's useless. And so it is when standing before God for a final interview, we need to be pure or we're doomed. So that is the God with whom we have to do.

That's what we should bring home to people when we give the gospel. Well, the second main theme is man. Okay, who are we as man?

Well, man was originally created by God and is daily sustained by God and will in the last day be judged by God. And man has a sin problem.

[23 : 54] Notice the three elements of the sin problem. First, original sin. See, Adam's sin was legally charged to the record of each and every one of Adam's children.

So the baby who pops out of the womb, we have a pregnant lady in our church who's going to give birth. When that baby pops out of the womb, that baby is born damned and hellbound.

It says in Romans 5.12, therefore just as through the one man sin entered the world, that's Adam, and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned.

You see, in Adam. Adam was the legal representative of all mankind and his disobedience made us guilty and condemned us all as enemies of God.

Representation. It's like back in World War II after Pearl Harbor, Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor. And what did Franklin Delano Roosevelt do?

[24 : 54] As our representative, as our president, he signed a declaration of war against Japan. And by that representation, he made all Americans to be at a state of war against Japan.

That's exactly what Adam did. In his eating the forbidden fruit, he signed a declaration of war. For all of his offspring, all of humanity now are born at enmity as enemies of the living God.

So, as a newborn baby, before the baby, before you as a baby, breathed and spoke and walked, you were born guilty of Adam's sin, born under the wrath of God, born hell bound.

It says in Psalm 51, 5, behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin, my mother conceived me. But in the muffler shop, the guy across the room may say, that's unfair.

This idea of representation, I don't like it. It doesn't seem to be democratic at all. Someone else representing me. Well, whether you like it or not, it is what it is.

[26 : 13] It's the truth of the word of God. Though you may think it unfair, it says in 1 Corinthians 15, 22, in Adam all die by his representation.

You see, Adam did doom us all, but also this idea of Adamic representation, that is our only hope as well.

See, don't cry foul against the idea of representation because you're crying foul against the only way of your salvation. As the first Adam doomed you, only the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, who didn't eat the forbidden fruit, he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, and he did not sin. He is our representative. As it says in 1 Corinthians 15, 22, as in Adam all die, so in Christ, all will be made alive.

So, when you're born, Mr. Man at the muffler shop, or Mr. Lady at the optometrist office, you're born with original sin, but also, secondly, there's personal sin. Personal sin.

[27 : 25] See, every soul is a bad record, not only due to the imputation, the charging to the account of Adam's sin, but also due to the imitation of our father, Adam's sin.

you come out of the womb, we begin toddling about, and we lie, and we defy our parents. You see, we second emotion of Adam's rebellion against God.

It says in Romans 3, 23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And what is sin but disobeying the law of God? 1 John 3, 4, the Ten Commandments.

We have worshipped other gods, self-idolatry. We bow down to the idol of self. We've carved our own images of God.

I think God is like, but that's not what God is like. We've taken God's name in vain. We've broken the Sabbath day. We've defied our parents. We're murderers.

[28 : 24] I've never put a bullet into the head of any other Bremenite. Yeah, but you've hated him. The Lord Jesus says if you've hated or you're angry, you've murdered in your heart.

You see, the high standards, even the grain of sin is intolerable. Thou shall not commit adultery. If you've been lusted, you've committed adultery in your heart and you're convicted by God as an adulterer.

There's no stealing. You're a thief even taking pennies out of your mom's purse, let alone taking minutes out of your employer's wage, or bearing false witness, lying, or even coveting in the idea of my thoughts, even the sonar of God's x-rays looking into my heart, even seeing my thoughts that condemn us.

It says in Isaiah 53, 6, all of us are like sheep, we've all gone astray. Each of us has chosen his own way. Or it says in Psalm 40, in verse 12, my iniquities have overtaken me.

If I'm not able to see, they're more numerous than the hairs of my head. Hairs of my head. There was a Detroit Piston basketball player a while back, Charlie Villanueva.

[29 : 43] He had a certain disease called alopecia. You know what that is? No hair. No hair in the body. Villanueva looks kind of odd, no eyebrows. In a sense, that's the way God requires us to have no sin.

Not in a strand of sin in us. But we have a problem. My iniquities have overtaken me, so I'm not able to see. They're more numerous than the hairs of my head.

Stand before a holy God. We're all personal sinners. But there's continual sin. Continual sin. Every soul has a bad heart producing more and more sin.

Our hearts, their evil deed factories. Even the motivations of our heart. Cleanup is impossible. You know, I could have, this morning, shaved my head and even shaved my eyebrows.

But I got a problem. By next week, we got the stumps of it all back. I am a hair producing creature. And so it is.

[30 : 49] We can shave off, but we are sin producing. It says in Jeremiah 17.5, the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick. Who can understand it?

I got a problem as I stand before God for my final interview. Isaiah 64.6 says, for all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment.

I said, we're an evil deed factory. You think of a factory that's supposed to produce these pure, clean, white t-shirts. But every time the quality control man looks at every t-shirt, every one of them has a smear of oil on it.

A smear of oil, because some of the machinery is always smearing the shirts with oil. That's our problem. Even our best deeds. The best deeds. I remember when I was on a honeymoon with my wife, I picked up a homeless person.

On the way to the hotel with my wife, I was so full of thanksgiving to God. What he'd done for me? My wife was happy about this. I think it was a good deed, but you know, there was even something in me.

[31 : 59] Maybe my wife will think I'm a good guy for picking up this helpless, homeless God. There's always a smear of selfish sin in everything that we do.

And God's quality of control on the last day is going to see even our best deeds are like filthy rags. Matthew 15, 19, for out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witnesses, and slanders.

The point of the matter is, Mr. Man of the muffler shop, or frankly, even soul sitting in a green pew, the Lord requires of you moral perfection when you stand before him.

But you and I both got a problem. problem is that we got a whole mountain range of sin on us. If every letter in my Bible, there are a lot of letters in there, if every letter in my Bible represented a million sins, that's kind of a good reputation of my problem standing before a holy, holy, holy God. I'm doomed. I'm condemned on death row with no help. I'm 56 years old right now and I'm almost there. You think you're young, I'm telling you, if you're 16, those next 40 years are going to go real, real fast.

[33 : 19] And before you know it, you'll be standing for the living God as man in sin, hopeless, left to yourself. But there is hope and that hope is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at that, the Lord Jesus Christ. Man is hopeless and helpless to save himself, but God sent a Savior, his Son, who is fully God and fully man.

The Lord Jesus has a sinless perfection. Look at this, Lord Jesus' life, did he perform any sin? No, the Lord Jesus was spotless.

He came as the second Adam, Hebrews 4, 15. He has been tempted in all things yet without sin. 2 Corinthians 5, 21, God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Our Lord Jesus' record and his heart were perfectly sinless, not a spot, not a grain of sin on him, the unblemished lamb of God.

[34 : 25] And let me tell you what he did. Christ came as a scapegoat to take on his back the full weight of sinner's guilt. Scapegoat, that comes from Leviticus 16, the day of atonement, when all of Israel would come before the tabernacle, and the high priest stood forward to represent the people, and they came with all of their barrels of sin they had committed throughout the year, the hundreds of thousands of Israelites, and all of their sins were poured as it were on the shoulders of the high priest, who came and represented them, and what did the high priest do?

He came to this scapegoat, and he put his hands in the scapegoat, meaning he put the mountain range of Israel's sin onto that goat, and that goat was slain.

And so all the sin, all the wrath that the nation of Israel deserved was taken up and carried by that scapegoat.

It says in Isaiah 53, 6, we all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned his own way, but the Lord caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him.

He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Listen, look, the Lord Jesus Christ was the spotless lamb of God, never sinned.

[35 : 54] The Lord Jesus Christ took us with our problem, and he took my sin, and he put my sin on the Lord Jesus on the cross, and the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross said, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Why? Because of my sin, because of the sin of his elect people, and the Lord Jesus Christ endured the wrath of God, and he drank that cup of wrath down to its last drop, so he says, it is finished.

We find in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, he says, it is finished, the cup is empty, not even a drop of wrath left for us to drink on the last day when we come for our final interview, and in his resurrection, the father says, I'm satisfied.

There's a rapper who sang a song, and one of the lines was, Jesus wrote a check with his life, but at the resurrection we all cheered, because that means the check cleared.

The father was saying, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, our sins have been paid for. Let me ask you, we who have this mountain range sin problem, where then does that leave us?

[37 : 07] He's taken all of our sins past, present, and the future, where does that leave us?

Spotless, sinless, pure, righteous, able to stand on the last day before the living God, and able to say, nothing in my hands I bring, only to thy cross I bring.

People have saved for, why should you be permitted to enter into the glories of heaven and avoid the horrors of hell? Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me.

That is the gospel, the glorious gospel in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so the response, the response is required as you look at the last point.

We need to flee from the wrath of God to come by believing in the Lord Jesus. You see, when we're made pure, we're now fit for the Holy Spirit of the Holy Spirit to come down and dwell within us. When he dwells within us, there's a renovation that takes place. There was a guy I knew back in Grand Rapids, Michigan, who bought one of these inner city houses for one dollar. And it was a dive.

[38:24] But he was a new owner, and you could see a front yard, carpets thrown out and broken windows are thrown out, the old stove is thrown out. That's what the Spirit of God does.

He's a new landlord in our lives. He throws out this pattern of sin and that ungodly habit and he does renovation work. We have different curb appeal and people walk through our lives. There's change going on in this guy's life. And so when the Spirit is there, there is faith. It believes, Ephesians 2, 8, 9, for by grace you are saved through faith, not of yourselves.

It's a gift of God, not by works, that no one should boast. God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son. Whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. I'm telling you, men at the muffler shop, I'm telling you, souls sitting in a green pew, right now, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

Take your trust off yourself. It's like I say to people, cling to the Lord Jesus, like clinging to a life preserver in a stormy sea. If you're trusting your own good works, you're clinging to a boat anchor.

[39:32] It'll take you to the bottom of the lake of fire. Put your total trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. When I was at Baptist College, I was in the library where I met my wife, and I saw out the window one afternoon some of my students falling.

They were falling off the roof backwards of the classroom building. You can't do this in 2015 with all the safety obsession. But they were engaging in a workshop of trust.

And there were ten students down saying, come on, fall, trust us, trust us, trust us. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Take full reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. And then there's the repentance piece. The repentance piece. Yeah, it's true. For by grace you've been saved through faith. It's not of yourselves.

It's a gift of God. Not a result of works that no one should boast. But, if you're the real deal, there's going to be a change. The spirit of God is in your life.

[40:33] You're going to see a moral renovation taking place in your own life. Ephesians 2.10 For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared before hand that we should therefore walk in them.

When Zacchaeus said in Luke 19 having heard Jesus' gospel, half my possessions I give to the poor. If I've defrauded any, I'll give them back four times as much.

What does Jesus say? Salvation has come to this house. Repentance is a new landlord there. See, how do you know you're a Christian? Matthew 7.

You'll know them by their deeds. That's my boat. That's the lifeline. You don't have time to give all that, but you can give pieces of it.

That's the lifeline that you throw to individuals who are in need. Jeff Thomas wrote this. He said, On his first furlough in Britain after his years of missionary work in China, Hudson Taylor spoke to a crowded meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland.

[41:40] He told them how once he stood on a dock waiting for a boat to pick them up for a journey on a river, and then a man fell into the river, but no one moved. No one batted an eyelid.

No one did a thing to rescue him. There was no stir, nothing but a casual interest in his drowning. They looked and listened to his crying for help, but they took no action at all, not one of them because of their acquaintance with death and their fatalism and their seared consciences.

The Scottish congregation was shocked hearing of this incident, and then Hudson Taylor replied it to them, You are very upset by their refusal to do anything to rescue a drowning man from physical death, but what of your indifference to the spiritual death of thousands every day around you who are drowning in a sea of God's wrath.

You need a boat, you need a lifeline, you need a gospel, you need a proclamation. Burn some midnight oil and get some facts into your head so that you can't speak a word in season.

Let me just speak a closing word in season to anyone who is here. I think of a story that's told of in the Louvre Museum in Paris.

[42:56] There was a painting that was up on the wall called Checkmate. Checkmate. It's the picture of sitting there on both sides of a chess table was a young man with a very guilty look on his face.

And there was Satan on the other side of the chess table. See, the young man had sold his soul to Satan by certain sin and Satan knew that he had him checkmated.

It's a very sad photo. A young man feeling he's damned and lost without hope in the world. Well, there were two fellows who had come to visit the Louvre and they stepped and watched.

And one was a very gifted chess player and the other was just an art lover. They looked at checkmating and were quite fascinated by the look in the eye of the enemy who was prowling and a predator over the young man and the young man's hopelessness.

The art lover walked away but the chess player kept steering for a quarter of an hour and a half an hour and an hour and he shouted, there is a move!

[44:02] He looked at the configuration of the table, there is a move! There is a move! It's not hopeless! I'm just telling you who maybe came in here today and because of what you've done and how you've gone back to your sin again and again and the enemy has convinced you it's hopeless and helpless.

In fact, you've heard this old gospel before and he's giving you the hiss and you say, this is just a fable that my mom and dad told me or these old traditional folks in these green chairs they talk about.

I'm telling you there is a move! Listen, it's what? October 25, 2015 and it's almost noon. Right now you can make a move.

You can believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. I'm not ashamed of the gospel and it's the power of God and it's the power of your salvation.

For some reason God wanted somebody to be here. Believe. Believe in the Lord. Believe today in the Lord Jesus Christ and believe tomorrow and believe until the last breath and I don't care if the enemy tells you and gives you all kinds of stuff.

[45:09] Keep believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Just like blind Bartimaeus in Mark chapter 10. He believed Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me and everybody said, oh shut up. You ever hear the devil telling you when you say, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

He says, oh just shut up. He doesn't pay attention to people like you who keep going back to their sin. You know what I do? I keep shouting out all the more, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. You know what? If I've resolved, they're going to take me and the angels are going to heave home me on judgment day and lake of fire. I'm going to go airborne still shouting, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

And my Bible tells me that that is the saving stuff. That for such people, the Lord Jesus Christ turns and says, what do you want? I want to have my eyes open.

Save me, Lord Jesus. I'm just telling you, October 25, 2015, it ain't checkmate. That's what the devil will tell you. Believe.

[46:15] Believe in the Lord Jesus that you might be saved. Let's pray together. Our Heavenly Father, we're not ashamed of the gospel.

It's the power of God unto salvation. Oh, Lord Jesus, this is explosive stuff that has been presented. We pray that your word would not return void.

In Jesus' name, amen.