

# It's All About You

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[0:00] Point one. You know, guys, I can preach this whole thing. Or we could take a really large offering right now.

And I will cut it short. Because I'm a Baptist preacher. I cannot be bullied or intimidated, but I can be bought. Well, I'm going to talk to you about something. I want you to open your Bibles to Job chapter 35.

Job chapter 35. I'm not preaching about that. I just want to see if it's in your version. I'll pray for my wife. My wife is sick. She's got strep throat. She got it coming back from Columbus.

And when I texted her when I got in today, she said she's doing worse, not better. So, yeah, we'd appreciate some prayer. Job chapter 35.

And, you know, I preach on both coasts. And a few, no, I think it was last year. Last year. I was preaching in Norfolk, Virginia.

[1:04] And I think Norfolk, Virginia, it is the largest, I know it's the largest Navy base that we have. I think it may be the largest Navy base in the world. And the church I was preaching in, a lot of those guys are old E-8s, E-9s, you know, and from the Navy.

And so I had to tell them what I was going to do because it wouldn't be right not to let them know.

So I got up one night and I said this. I said, guys, look, nothing, you know, nothing personal.

But I said, tonight, there was a, at the time I was having a meeting, there was an aircraft carrier in port. And I said, tonight, I'm going down to the Navy base, down in Norfolk, and I'm going to sink the carrier.

Right there where it's tied up. And, you know, some of these guys served on a carrier, they think they're invisible, invincible. I said, how are you going to do that?

I said, I'm going to get a rowboat, and I'm going to row right up to the side of it. Now, when you're at the, like, right there where we're at the prow, the flight deck is 90 feet. That's a nine-story building.

[2:09] The flight deck is 90 feet above you. And I said, I'm going to go right up against the hull, and I'm going to slap it and sink it. Maybe I should, I preach something else.

You guys look like you don't think I could do that. All right, all right. Well, they kind of explained that I couldn't. I said, okay. I said that if I can't sink a boat, I'm going to stop a train.

I knew a guy that could do this when I was a kid. He could leap over buildings in a single bound.

And they said, how are you going to stop a train? I said, I'm going to, when a freight train's coming, top speed. I'm just going to stand out in the track, brace myself.

And when it gets right here, I'm going to stop it. You know, you guys are not receiving this very well.

And I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, Gipp, you can't sink a boat.

You can sink a rowboat by slapping it, let alone an aircraft carrier. And you're not stopping a speeding train by stopping on tracks and just stopping. All right. I will pursue that.

[3:16] But I want to show you something because I am, I have the fight on books back there. And when I talk about them, I mentioned this. When I was a kid, our country exalted heroes.

Everybody in my generation wanted to be a hero. Every guy, he wanted to save somebody from a burning building, you know, get somebody from drowning. You are looking at the guy that sank every German and Japanese ship that was left over from World War II.

I did it myself. You say, where were they? They were in a creek out in the back of my house. And all I needed was rocks. Okay. And I did it while I built a hydroelectric plant and fought Indians because back then you were allowed to fight Indians.

And if you would have taken our shirts off, we all had a blue T-shirt with a big red S right there for Sam. I hear even Superman wore one of my T-shirts.

If you get a kid today and take his shirt off, the T-shirt says, it's all about me. I mean, do we not have the all about me generation?

[4:28] I saw this little kid run around and had a little girl and she had a T-shirt on and said, let's focus on me. I thought, let's not. The whole generation is focused on themselves.

But we have gone from, because now our country exalts victims. I was preaching to the church. I don't know where it was. But this 82-year-old lady comes out and she shakes my hand and she says, I'm 82 years old.

Do you know what happened to me when I was eight years old? And I thought, lady, you're not supposed to remember what happened to you. I mean, where's a little Alzheimer's when you need it, you know?

And then I thought about this. Now, think about this. You're 82. 82. And you want to think back to your last traumatic memory and you don't stop till you're eight?

This has been a good life. I mean, her teen years must have been like, wow. And so I am not in this it's all about me generation.

[5:33] I mean, I detest it. Okay? The reason I told you that is because it's all about you. I am telling you the truth.

This is not a semantical title. It's not a semantical argument. I am telling you that it is all about you. Look what it says in Job.

Job chapter 35. It says, look unto the heavens. Verse 5. Job 35, 5. Look unto the heavens and see and behold the clouds which are higher than thou.

If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? Or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?

Or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art. And thy righteousness may profit the son of man. Let's pray.

[6:30] Father, we thank you now, God, for your goodness and your grace. Lord God, I think I speak for these people when I say what I'm about to say. We have no problem with you tonight. I don't think these folks have any problem with you tonight, God.

We don't have any problem with you because you are perfect. And we have no problem with your book because it is perfect. And Lord God, as much as we have, especially the last four years, complained about our government, our government wasn't the biggest problem we had to face. The biggest problem we faced was the person that stared back at us every morning when we looked in the bathroom mirror. God, we are the biggest problem we have. And God, I told these people that this is all about them.

And I know, I'm sure they're thinking there's some kind of a trick, but it's not. It's not. There's not a trick. So I thank you, God, that it's all about us. In Jesus Christ's name we pray. Amen. Well, like I told you, you know, if I said I'm going to sink a ship by slapping it, you know it's not going to happen, right?

If I tell you I'm going to stop a speeding train by standing on a track and grabbing it, you know that's not going to happen. It says, If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? Or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?

[7:41] Let me ask you a question. What can you do? Oh, you wouldn't. But we've got a lost world that really, really, there's some people that really hate God. Do they not? Yes, sir. What can they do to hurt him?

What can they do to hurt him? If you got mad at God, how are you going to hurt him? Like take a shotgun and shoot it up there and hope it gets far enough? There's nothing we can do.

Your sin does not hurt God. All right, let me ask you this. If you sin, let me ask you this. Does it make him less God? Like if he shines, he shines.

When we sin, he shines less. He gets diminished on his throne. His power is like down from a 10 to an 8. You understand? Guys, there is nothing we can do to hurt God.

Now, I know you wouldn't want to, but there's a lot of people that would like to. You can hurt a man. You can burn Teslas all day long. I saw a Tesla today. It wasn't on fire. It was really amazing. But

guys, it doesn't matter what you do.

[8:44] There is nothing we can do to hurt God. You say, well, you know, our sin hurts him. That's why he had the flood. Guys, you know what our sin is like? Our sin is probably more like a fly.

You know, if there's a fly in this room, you know where it's going to be? Here. The veils above means the Lord of Flies. And I can't tell you how many times, if there's a fly in the room, it's going to be right in front of the preacher.

And you're flying. I saw this guy and his fly, it landed right here. And stayed there for the whole sermon. Nobody heard a thing he said. I was preaching one time and a fly, he positioned himself right about here.

And he must have been a geometry teacher in a former life. Because he's flying a pattern like this. I'm serious, just like this?

I'm going, and so the Bible says. But guys, you know, I could key your car. My sin can hurt you. My sin can't hurt God.

[9:44] There is nothing we can do to hurt God. You know, I have to laugh, because this is one stupid thing that Christians do. They get mad at God. Now, when you hate somebody, they hate Musk, right?

So what are they doing? They're attacking his dealerships and burning his cars. When you hate somebody, you try to do them damage, correct? Okay. You take what they love and destroy it. So Christians get mad at God, and you know how they hurt him?

They take what he loves, their life, and destroy it. That is like the guy, you know, that takes a ball-peen hammer, keeps hitting himself in the head. How can you keep taking this, brother? Can you stand this anymore?

I mean, guys, you can't hurt him. All you can do with your sin, all you can do is hurt yourself. There is nothing that we can do that can hurt God. There is nothing that we can do.

You know, I think, I don't know if it happened up there at Canada, with the guy that was up there, Castro's son. But they had a bad turn, and they threw the government out.

[10:46] They threw Trudeau. Trudeau. He had to retire. Have there been some bad times for God? I mean, think about it. You know, are the Jews its chosen people?

Didn't somebody come in and like burn the whole temple down and take all the gold? You think in heaven they said, you know, I think we need to vote. We need a new God. He has failed. No, he is never threatened by the works of man.

He is not threatened by our sin. He is not threatened by acts that are against him. Oh, yes, somebody may come through here and throw a brick through your window. The lights are not going to get dim in heaven. They can hurt us.

No one, not a person. Even the devil cannot injure God. Is that not true? So there is nothing that anyone on this earth can do by accident or on purpose.

There is nothing that anybody can do to hurt God. Look what the next verse says. If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?

[11:49] Or what receiveth he of thine hand? If somebody came up here and gave you a large check, that would be pretty neat, wouldn't it? What are you going to give God that's going to finally make him rich?

I mean, doesn't he owe the cattle on a thousand hills? How can you, how can you, you know, again, looking at the political side, Trump was doing good. But it really helped when Elon Musk got in and backed him.

Do you think God is trying to get a coalition government? Do you think God is trying to get a good, a good recommendation from you? Oh, if you're on my side, I'll do a lot better. Guys, there's nothing we can do to hurt him.

Is there anything we can do to help him? I'm talking about make him more God. We can't, listen, I told you, our sin doesn't make him shine less. Our righteousness does not make him shine more. There is nothing we are, it is impossible for us to hurt him. And it is impossible for us to make him more God. I don't care what you do.

[12:54] You can do grand works for God. But if you didn't do him, he'd still be God. And if you didn't do him, he wouldn't be less God. Isn't

that true? So think about this.

Now let me ask you a question. When you die, you've been saved? Okay, when you die, where are you going? Okay. Since you've been saved, not unless you got saved like 10 minutes ago.

Since you've been saved, have you cried? Come on, have you cried? Wept? Have you been in despair?

Have you been like scared of the future? Okay, tell me if this isn't true. If you had died and God had immediately killed you.

I got saved 54 years ago. So if God would have killed me 54 years ago, I'd have been in heaven for 54 years. I wouldn't have had this. I wouldn't have had a problem here. I would have had all kinds of problems.

[13:59] I wouldn't have had a mother-in-law. My mother-in-law was in a movie. She was.

A house fell on her sister. Anyway. Okay, so let me ask you something. Since you've been saved, have you had pain? Come on, have you had physical pain?

Maybe unbearable physical pain? Tell me, I don't believe there's one person here that if you had not died five minutes after you got saved, wouldn't be better since that date to today.

Right? So here you are. You can't do anything to hurt him. You can't do anything to add to him. And the best thing that happened to us when we get saved is drop over dead immediately and not have to put up with what we put up with for all these decades.

Is that not true? So the question is, why do you leave it here? Was he mad at you? Did he say, well, I'm going to let Tony live longer because I don't like him and I want him to suffer down there.

[15:03] I don't think he did that. I would do that to you, Tony. God wouldn't do that. But you see what I'm saying? So why did he let us live? If the greatest thing, let me ask you this.

If death is heaven, why does he say, I will reward you with long life? I will reward you by keeping you out of heaven as long as I can.

Isn't that what he says? Does he not say he rewards with long life? Why does he reward us by keeping us out of a place where we don't have any more problems, any more pain, any more cures, any more grief? Why leave us here?

And he says that's a reward. Because everything you do down here, everything you do down here, gets you rewards on the other side.

If you do something for Jesus Christ, it doesn't make him more God. If you become an alcoholic after you're saved, does it make him any less God? But every second you live, as long as you live, you have one more second to do something which will have you rewards waiting on the other side.

[16:14] Isn't that true? Guys, okay. You see that walnut wall? Okay, these walls, we're going to put a measure between them.

These walls are two million years, not miles, years apart. That means you'd start at that wall, heading for that wall, it would take you two million years to get to that wall.

That means that right here, million and million meet. This is the center, correct? You know what's right in the center? Okay, right in the center is our 7,000 years. Now first, let me explain something.

I don't think there was a million years in the past. But I need a million or my string falls down. So pretend. I mean, scientists can pretend.

So right in the middle, on this scale of two million years, what do you think 7,000 years looks like? Like? And of that 7,000 years, you get what?

[17:23] 1%. Some people live longer. I'm 74, I'll be 75 next month. I figure this.

Think about it. Let's see. Every day over 70 is a free one. Right? You know what I'm hoping? I'm hoping we're getting paid time and a half. That's what I'm hoping.

But you got a million years and a million years. So that wall would be a million years in the past if there was a million years in the past. But you do believe in that wall.

That wall is a million years in the future. And you are headed for that wall. In fact, aren't you headed past it? Oh, brother. I mean, way past it. And right here is 7,000 years.

And you get 70 of them. You know what your life looks like on this scale? The edge. You know what that edge is?

[18:19] That business card is 70 years thick. If it is 100, let's just make it 100. Guys, I call that the flash of a camera.

I call that the blink of an eye. God calls that a vapor. All right, let me ask you this. So one of these days, everybody in this room, right now you're in there. Some of you are way past this. You know, some of you are way past halfway. But one of these days, we're going to get to the other side of the card. It's either going to be the Lord is going to come back and take us up corporately. And then your life is over here. Or He's going to take us one by one. We all, if you've been saved a length of time, there were people that were around that were good friends that they were saved. And now they're on the other side, correct? So one way or another, you're going to end up right here. Let me ask you something. You ever hear anybody say, well, you know, the next time around, I'm going to end up next time around. There's no next time around, right? Let me ask you something, guys.

[19:17] Isn't this, let me ask you this. Over here, when you get over here, you're going to have rewards? You're hoping for rewards? How do you get rewards over here all the way out?

When you get to heaven, are you going to be able to earn rewards? No. Does that mean that this blink of an eye, this little flash, this little vapor, is the only chance every person in this room has to put something aside for eternity?

Because every good thing you do for God doesn't add anything to Him. You say, well, I win souls. Have people gone to hell?

God became less God when they did. See what I'm saying? Guys, literally, the reason He rewards you with long life, the reason that He left you down here after you got saved, when the best thing He could have done for you, as far as suffering, as far as pain, as far as anguish, and agony, and grief, the best thing would be, get saved, die five minutes later.

Is that not true? And He didn't do that. So if He left you here, do you think He left you here? Well, if I leave them down there, they'll do something good for me, and then I'll become more God.

[20:42] No. He gets nothing. We get something for it. You know what that means? That means it's all about you. Isn't it?

It is all about you. You being down here isn't to make God more God. It is to make heaven more heaven. And if you want to go get drunk tonight and destroy your life, He's going to wring His hands over that one, isn't He?

No. The only reason every person in here did not die the moment they got saved is so that you could have that little bit of time. to prepare for way beyond that wall.

Is that not true? Guys, it really is all about you. Now, you know what's funny about that? Preachers, pastors, they get up and they tell you guys to serve the Lord, and you go, yeah, let me try to get something out of it.

It's for you, bonehead. It is for you. You know, I have to laugh. Think about this. Somebody gets down, falls down, breaks a leg.

[21:53] I mean, talking about compound. Bone sticking out the side, really busted, they're yelling, and there's a hospital three blocks away. And you say, come on, the hospital's only three blocks away, I'll take it. No. Well, your leg's broke.

I'm mad at that hospital. I said I'd never go to that hospital again. Well, that'll close the doors on it, won't it? Do you know that if you don't go, that hospital won't even know that you broke your leg, and it won't even care that you broke your leg, and it'll have all the people with broken legs and broken arms and all those people dying of COVID.

It'll have, it'll do just fine. Isn't that true? You don't always laugh about Christians. I'm going to go to that church again. I got mad at it. And you think it's going to close the doors, and they add a wing. Guys, it is all here. This is all. Every single thing, every moment, every effort. It isn't for Him. He's not becoming more God.

He's not becoming more holy. He's not becoming more powerful. He is the great God that He was before He ever spoke the universe into existence. He is absolute power, is He not? Amen. And then this God, in His benevolence, saves us.

[23:05] Let me ask you this. If you'd have gotten saved, you know, I say it this way. I'm going to ask a couple questions here. How many people here, you got saved at a young age and have been in church basically all your life?

Okay. I want you guys to know, just raise your hands. You have the best testimony in the building. That's the best testimony. That's not my testimony. I was a Roman Catholic.

I was a drunk. I was a thief. I was a street fighter. I was a Democrat. And, not asking, not asking for a detailed testimony.

But I say it this way. Some of us, I'm one of them. Some of us, God found in a ditch. Does anybody hear that God found in a ditch? Okay, now, let me ask you this. If he'd have saved you in that ditch and left you in the mess you were in, wouldn't you still be better for it?

Yeah, you'd be going to heaven. I don't know if anybody did that with me. You know, the day I got saved, I stepped out. And when I stepped out, somebody said, they said, where are you going?

[24:14] I'm going to get saved because I don't want to go to hell. Well, ask them before you pray if when you pray, when you're done, you'll be a son of God.

Do you know that when I got down on my knees, according to John chapter 8, verse 44, I was a son of the devil. You would have seen the family resemblance. I got on my knees a son of the devil.

According to John chapter 1, verse 12, but as many as received him, they gave him power to become the sons of God. I got on my knees the son of the devil. I got off my knees the son of God. But if I, I mean, I couldn't even, I didn't even know that happened.

I did not know that happened. But if somebody would have said, well, ask him if you're going to become a son of God. And if I'd have said, hey, when I do this, am I going to heaven? Yeah. Well, will I be a son of God?

Well, no. I wouldn't have said, well, let's just forget it. How about this one? Hey, ask him when you get saved if old things are passed away and old things become new.

[25:12] I didn't, I didn't come for that. I got it. But I didn't come for that. If I'd have said, well, listen, when I get saved, am I going to heaven? Yeah. Well, do I get a new life? No. So I'm not going to be a son of God and I'm not going to get in life.

No. Brother, I'd have prayed the same prayer I prayed because I went because I was on my way to hell and I didn't want to go to hell and I knew through the death, the burial, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's only son, I knew through his shed blood I would be on my way to heaven.

All the peripheries I didn't even know about. It's like this. Man, isn't this something? You remember when there were reel-to-reel tapes? Yeah.

And then they came up with cassettes and then they came up with CDs and now, isn't it funny to talk about the old days of computers? Yeah. I mean, the first computer I had didn't even have a hard drive.

It had no hard drive. In fact, it had a crank on the side. And then, I realized I had to get one with a hard drive so I got the biggest hard drive I could get so I never had to buy another computer.

[26:25] 20 megabytes. This watch has more than 20 megabytes. So, I write books.

I write books on my computer. I use a word processor. And, I have to go back to disks because this is what I did. I know you don't buy things at disks. Now, it's all MP3s and 4s and whatever.

But, when they had disks, you couldn't buy a word processing program. I'd go buy one but you couldn't buy one. So, what do you mean?

I mean, I wanted a word processing program and I could not buy a disk that had nothing but a word processing program. It's all I wanted. It's always a suite. Like, five programs.

It was a word processing program. A database. I'm married. I'm not looking for a date. A spreadsheet. I quit gambling. A how to present things. You know, it was always like five things.

[27:23] I only wanted one. I had to buy five because I wanted one. You understand? But, when I put it in my computer, it says, do you want all five of these programs?

Well, actually, no. Well, just select the one you want. If you want one, you can load one. You can download one. And if you want three, you do, oh man. You know what I did?

Boop. Checked all five. I put them all on my computer. I have programs on my computer I could probably start World War III with. You're safe? I don't even know how to open them. I don't ever use them. You say, then why'd you take them? Because they're just something about knowing you got everything you could get. The thought, listen, I don't care that they're on my computer and I'm not using them.

It would bother me if they were in the drawer over there. Knowing that they were over there and I only got one off of them five, that would eat me up. So I put all five on my computer and just let four of them lay.

[28:29] You know what I've never done? I've never talked to somebody. I've talked to some guys who had some bad lives and I'll say, you get saved? Yep, sure did. Did you get into life? Did you get into life? You know what?

I didn't download that part. Did you become a son of God? Oh, you know? I didn't do that. Did you get in on the eternal reward program? Yeah, no, no.

I just want to go. I love this, guys. I love this. Christians, sanctimonious Christians, you talk about serving God for rewards and they'll go, I don't serve God for rewards.

Really? Okay. Questions? Don't record this because it looks like I'm doing a bad thing. Number one, who instituted the eternal reward system?

God did. And you're going to say no thanks? You're going to say, I'm not that small. You're going to say, I have a better idea. I mean, think about it. God instituted the eternal reward system just for you.

[29:27] Right? Well, I don't care. I'm not going to serve God for rewards. You're a liar. I will bet you, you guys aren't like this because we don't really care.

Maybe some of you do. But you ladies, I'll bet you got five different reward systems in your purse right now. You go to this grocery store because they give you rewards.

Or you might buy gas at this place. You know, we have a, I fly Delta a lot. So I have an American Express Delta card. And every mile I fly, I get a reward.

Come on. You buy groceries. You wouldn't buy groceries if you couldn't get a reward. You wouldn't buy auto parts. You wouldn't buy gasoline. Everybody's got, come to our restaurant. There's a pizza place in Boise.

Hang on. Oh, it's not here. Crisis. They give you a card and if you get 10 of them punched, you get a free pizza. I'm at nine and now I lost the card. I hate John Calvin.

[30:33] You see what I'm saying? And you say, well, I just go for the pizza. Yeah, but I bet you get the card. Well, I mean, if I'm getting, I may as well get the, get the card punch, right?

Guys, our entire economic system is built on a reward system. Is that not true? And then you're going to tell me you're not interested in anything over here.

Say that in front of a mirror because that is the only fool on the planet that will believe what you're saying. And that probably, they probably know better than you do. So guys, think about this.

Here we are. You know, it's a Friday night. Friday night. You know what my favorite night to be in church is? Tomorrow night. I like to be in church on Saturday night. You know why? Because I know what some of you used to do on Saturday night.

If you, when you were lost, if somebody would have told you that you were going to be in church on a Saturday night, I'll bet we wouldn't even want to record your response. And I believe this. I do believe this.

[31:37] I believe some folks just showing up for a church service on a Saturday night, I'll bet that act itself is worship to God. I'll bet when, when some of you, if you come back here tomorrow night, the rest of you backslidden watching pro wrestling.

But if some of you come here tomorrow night, you will walk through these doors and God will probably give Michael and Gabriel an elbow and say, not Mike Gabriel, look at that. He used to tell jokes about my cross and now he's singing about it.

My goodness, guys. And he got nothing for it and it's all for us. I am, I am absolute, absolutely stunned and awed by this God.

Tell me this. Aren't you made out of dirt? So you know what I do? Let me ask you this. When you pray, how could you address God? Lord, God, Maker, Creator, Almighty.

What do you say? A piece of dirt. Isn't it amazing that a piece of dirt addresses its Creator as Father? And He's the one that made that.

[32:52] I don't believe anybody got saved to become a son of God. That was a perk. That was something that just came along with that. It was part of the package. Amen. Guys, this God has been nothing but good to you.

You know what I realize when I think about this God? He is absolutely merciful. What a merciful God. And He is absolutely gracious.

And I'm going to tell you something, guys. I know, you know, how you're awed by God in your life or whatever. But the older I get, I am awed by three attributes of God.

And they're not His might. And they're not His creative ability. They're not His power. You know what it is? Mercy, grace, and kindness. My goodness.

You have received the kindness of God. You have benefited from the kindness of God every single day. Is that not true? Have you not benefited from His mercy? Let me explain.

[33:53] Let me explain. I define mercy and grace. And here's how I define it. Now, I'm going to say something. And you're going to want to say amen. And just before I give you the punch, I'm going to warn you, do not say amen.

You're going to want to say amen the worst way. Don't say amen. You will be wrong. Okay? Mercy is not getting the bad you deserve.

Grace is getting good that you don't deserve. It was 1969. It's right, just about a year.

About a year, maybe a little more before I got saved. It's 1.30 in the morning. Me and four of my friends, we closed the bar. It was raining. We were all drunk. We got in this guy's Mustang. And the guy's driving.

Guy in front, he's got his wife sitting on the center of council. A buddy of mine, I'm in the back seat. He's on the left side. I'm on the right side. And the last thing I remember is this guy is airing this Mustang out in a driving raid storm on a straight country road.

[35:00] He has got this thing pedal to the metal. And when we got at the end of that straightaway, the road made a left. And we made most of a left.

But not all of the left. Okay? And I didn't know what happened. But the insurance man usually told me, he said, you guys went off the road and there was like a three-foot concrete, you know, pipe. He said, you peeled 40 feet of it like a sardine can. He said, at the end of it, you ever see those storm sewers that look like a brick chimney with a manhole cover?

That's what was the end of it. He said, you hit that and it exploded. It shattered it. He said, that started the Mustang tumbling end over end. Then it ended up side over side.

It came down on its right side. I got busted up. I got my teeth knocked down amongst other things. The guy in the front seat was half in, half out. They thought he was going to die. He might not have to live. He lived.

[36:04] All right, now do not say amen. And then please do not say amen to what I'm about to say. Maybe there's somebody here before you got saved. You were very, very sick or you were in a war situation and you almost died.

Now, don't say amen to what I'm going to say. Let me ask you a question. If I had died in that car wreck, it was a year before I got saved, I'd have gone to hell, right? Now, don't say amen to this. Here's what we say. But by the grace of God, I didn't go to hell. Nope. By the mercy of God. If I had died that night, I'd have gone to hell.

But isn't that what I deserved? So, the fact that I did not get the bad that I deserved, it was not the grace of God, it was the mercy of God. Guys, has God been merciful to you?

My, my. I mean, come on, how much bad that he, he just, he just gave you a wink. What a merciful God.

[37:08] Now, let me ask you a question. You going to heaven? Oh, you deserve it? Oh, oh, so what you're saying is that you got good that you

didn't deserve. That's why you're saved by grace.

Guys, I think about it every day. I think about, I do, I think about it every day, his mercy toward me, his grace toward me, his kindness. I, I am, I am stunned by it.

I am awed by it. And then, I tell him this, I say, God, I say, Father, I said, a purse, piece of dirt, addresses its creator, as Father.

Don't even pretend, you understand that. Don't even pretend, that that makes sense. That does not make sense. He did not have, he could have saved you, and taken you to heaven, and you didn't have to be a son of God.

He didn't have to make you a son of God. So, he takes a dirt ball, and puts it in the family. What a God. What a kind God. Guys, if, if we start with, with, with your pastor, and go through here, and say, tell us how you got saved.

[38:21] Now, I know you, you trusted Christ, but I'm talking about the circumstances. Do you understand? The circumstances would be different problems. Yes, sir. And then, next Friday, we meet again, and we say, okay, start here, and, tell us how you got saved.

Oh, okay, okay. And, we basically hear, you know, a repeat. And then, the next Friday, we meet again, and say, oh, hey, listen, tonight, I think what we'll do is, let's tell everybody how we got saved.

I mean, at some point, wouldn't you say, did you record last week? Because, you got saved, and that is a blessing, but, you couldn't tell somebody that every week.

I mean, they would say, I'm so glad you got saved. Will you please shut up? But, how about this? Tell us, don't tell us next week how you got saved. Tell us what God did for you, in just the last seven days.

And, every seven days, would that testimony not change? And, you don't deserve it. I don't deserve it. You know what I pray, before I come up to preach?

[39:31] I ask God this. I said, God, don't choose to not enter the service tonight, because I'm the one that's preaching. Because, I know me better than anybody in this room.

And, if God said, Gip, you're preaching, I'm not showing up, because you're preaching. I would understand that. And, when I asked him, I said, I say, don't shortchange the people, because I'm the guy that's preaching.

What a merciful God. And, what a gracious God. And, what a bunch of dirt balls we are. Right? I mean, a bunch of dirt balls, trying to, trying to live, holy for this God.

And, if we manage to do it, he gets nothing. Right? And, if we don't do it, he doesn't get nothing. But, I want to tell you this, might be somebody in this room, and, I know this, I'm not, I'm not saying this as a doctrine, I just say this as I kind of tongue in cheek.

But, I think some Christians, for the, for the first thousand years in heaven, they're going to walk bent over, at the waist. And, every time they see somebody, they're going to say, please kick me, because I was so stupid, because I had one chance.

[40:51] God gave me, he could have killed me, when I got saved, he gave me one chance. I'll tell you about it, I'll, I'll just go. I, I, I teach, I teach preachers, and, the pastors will understand this.

They will understand it, I don't know the why of this. But, what I teach them is, that in a, in every pastor, at least, one fourth, of their ministry, is to people, that never have been, and never will come, to their church.

They'll never step inside, they'll call, maybe, maybe one of you, will say, preacher, my cousin, my lost cousin, or my, my saved cousin, who goes to a church across town, you know, we've got a car wreck, would you go by the hospital?

And he'll go visit him, because he's never going to darken the door, this church. About one fourth, of the ministry of a preacher, at least one fourth, people that will never step foot, inside his church.

And I pastored in upstate New York, for five years, I got out on good behavior, and, I don't know who this, I don't know what the connection was, this guy's name, this guy's name was Mel Allen.

Now, I'm in my 30s, okay, so this guy's 52, so he's old. And, Mel Allen, he was somebody's cousin, brother, neighbor, I don't know what it was, he had a stroke.

[42:08] And, it wasn't looking good, and they said, would you go by, and visit Mel Allen? And I said, yeah, yeah, I sure will. And Mel wasn't paralyzed, but he couldn't speak.

He was trying to give his wife, the same stroke. Anyway, if we could bottle that. Anyway, so I go in, now, I'm going to be honest with you, I don't think he was overly excited about, me being there, a preacher.

Well, he could have asked me to leave, and, and since he didn't, I witnessed to him. And, this went on for about two weeks, and over that two weeks, he, he was getting his voice back, but he was, rallying, he was getting better, you understand?

And so, he's in this hospital bed, and by two weeks, he wasn't hostile, when I walked through the door. Now, now, we used to have a men's prayer meeting, seven o'clock on Saturday, every Saturday, and to give us something to pray about, at six o'clock, we'd have a football game.

And it was a tackle football game, and we just had fun, brother, we just, so we'd all wear blue jeans, and sweatshirts, and come home, bleeding, and torn shirts, and grass stains, you know, so, I go to church one Saturday night, we have a football game, we have the men's prayer meeting, I get in my car to go home, and God says, go see Mel Allen.

[43:35] Now, let me explain something, for some folks, their work clothes, maybe it's a blue collar, says, Joe here, and a Ford dealer here, you know what I'm, you are looking, I am wearing my work clothes, these are my work clothes, and I have no problem with it, you know, I hate, I hate ties, I'll shut up, and tie the tie, but I told the Lord, I said, Lord, I said, I can't go, I don't have my work clothes on, now think about it guys, you're going into a hospital, with grass stains, and torn clothes, they'd have thought, I was a contemporary Christian, and it wasn't, honestly, it was not that, I did not want to go visit Mel Allen, I didn't want to go, like that, and I said, Lord, I said, look at me, and now I'm doing that, I have my work clothes on, I said, I got blue jeans, with grass stains, and my elbows, my shirt's torn, he said, go see Mel Allen, I, I offered, to make, the ultimate sacrifice, I said,

Lord, I will go tomorrow morning, after morning service, before I eat, right there, right, what more can a Baptist do, God said, go see Mel Allen, okay, I figured, he was going to throw me out, in the hospital, I can't believe I got in, I really can't, I can't believe, I'm surprised, he didn't hose me down, with antiseptic, or something, so I go in, to see Mel Allen, and, and I'd given him, the gospel several times, I had not tried, to lead him to Christ, because you know, you deal with somebody, long term, and you can tell, Holy Spirit's not telling you, that yet, and I'm talking to him, that night, God said, ask him, if once you get saved, I said Mel, would you like, trust Christ, your personal Savior, so now he can't, he can't say it, so I, I said, you know, and you know, we went through the thing, and I led him in prayer, Lord have mercy on me, a sinner, and gave him time, you know, to say it to the Lord, I explained, saying it to the Lord, I'm telling you brother, this guy, it was like somebody across the room, put a spotlight on his face, he was beaming, he got,

Mel Allen got saved, so I go home, and I told my wife, I said, babe, Mel Allen got saved tonight, Saturday night, she said, that's great, I said, look, if anybody calls, don't tell him, anybody from the church, our church had been praying for this guy for two weeks, I said, I want to be able to tell him, tomorrow morning, they all have been praying, I want to tell him, Mel Allen got saved, and so, I go to church the next morning, I step in a door, and one of my deacons says, you hear about Mel Allen?

I said, how did you know? He said, well, I said, how did you know? I said, I just led him to Christ last night at 830, I said, how did you know?

I didn't tell anybody, Kathy didn't tell anybody, Mel Allen didn't tell anybody, he goes, I didn't, he died this morning at 630, Mel Allen, has never, he has never shed, the desperate tears, that some of you have shed, he has never felt, the physical pain, he has never felt, the emotional pain, he has never had the turmoil, he has never had the depression, he has never had the frustration, he has never had the discouragement, do you understand, you know what you've gone through, since you got saved?

[46:55] He has never experienced any of that, he didn't make it 12 hours, stepped in the presence of God, ain't that great? And aren't you glad, it

wasn't you? Do you understand, how gracious this God was?

That he saved you, and said, I will bless you, come on, think about that concept, you're so, I love you so much, I'm going to keep you out of heaven, as long as I can. Oh, I'm so happy with you, I appreciate you so much, that I'm going to keep you down there, where you have migraine headaches more, longer.

See what I'm saying? I want you there for your hip surgery. No, he left us live, because he knows, that someday we get to the other side of this card, and we're going to be out there, not a million, but we're going to go out, we're going to go farther, than the national debt.

Is that not true? And everything that you have, from here on, is what you earned, right there, that little, that little, right there, because it is all, about you, he will not be more God, when you get there, and if you choose to go home tonight, never come back to church, he will not be less God, we can't take from him, Job says, sin, you're not going to hurt him, be righteous, you're not going to add anything to him, it is all about us, what a gracious, and merciful God, I'd like you to stand, with your heads bowed, if God had saved you, and done nothing more for you, you'd still have plenty of reason, to sing all the things, you sang tonight, is that not true, but like I said, I don't know anybody he did that with, everybody I ever talked to, that got saved, whether they knew it at the time or not, also become a son of God, everybody that I ever talked to, that got saved, whether they knew it or not, old things were passed away, and old things became new, everybody that I've ever talked to, that got saved, whether they understood it, got enrolled, in eternal reward system, and we have a generation, in this country, and they think it's all about them, but really people, this entire thing, every second of your life, since you got saved, has been all about you, so I'm going to have a word of prayer, and maybe you just need to come up, and talk to the Lord, and say, hey Lord, thanks you didn't treat me like Mel Allen,

I'm glad Mel Allen saved, I really am, but man, I'm glad you let me down here, where I could do something, don't pray God kill me, don't pray that, guys I'm dealing with a guy right now, this guy is in so much pain, I cannot tell you, I cannot tell you, I talked him out of suicide, the last two phone calls, and if I heard that he killed himself tomorrow, I wouldn't say it's right, but I would say I understand why, horrible pain, you know what you ought to say, God I've cried a lot here, I've wept here, I've been fearful here, I've been sick here, I've had pain here, thanks, thanks for all of it, because you left me here, so that when I get on the other side, of that business card, I got something for eternity, not a million years, eternity, guys we've got it good, Father thank you God, thank you, thank you for everything, that is a plus, after salvation, everything beyond salvation, these folks are probably like me God, they came to you, because they were gone to hell, didn't want to go to hell, and they knew if they, took Jesus Christ, their personal savior, they go to heaven, that was my sole motivation,

[50:47] I didn't know about the, all the peripheries God, I didn't know about the package deal, and some of these folks didn't either, and some of them, when they get on the other side, they will thank you, in spite of the pain, in spite of the tears, in spite of the discouragement, they will thank you, that you left them here, so they could have more, on the other side, I pray for these people, I ask you God, let them do something, let them put out some tracks, let them, let them, let them sow some seed here, that they will reap eternally for, maybe somebody, just needs to thank you God, that you actually made it, all about us, in Jesus name, with your heads bowed, your eyes closed, the piano continues, some folks have come, to talk to the Lord, if you need to come, this is the time,