

Man's Biggest Problem

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[0 : 00] He said, therefore, a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. And he called his ten servants and delivered them ten pounds and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

I'm not preaching about this parable of the pounds today. I'm drawing something from it. Go down, down to verse 26. For I say unto you that unto every one which hath shall be given.

And from him that hath not, even that he hath, shall be taken away from him. But those enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.

Now what are you talking about? Look back at verse 14. His citizens hated him and sent a message after him saying, we will not have this man to reign over us.

That's my subject today. And I call my sermon man's basic problem. Problem. You be praying now as we give you the message God has given us.

[1 : 17] And I also pray for Sue. She's singing to her little girl for the last time just before I preach. Father, please bless now as we attempt to give your message to your people.

Obviously, we're a little weak, especially in voice. So we need your help today for that reason. But we need your spiritual help moreover. And trust, Lord, that spiritual things will transpire.

We don't come here just to perform. We don't come here just to be seen. We come here in the name of the Lord to meet with God. Been saved all my life, I guess.

My mom was a wonderful Christian. Does that get you saved, Jeremy, if you're in the womb of a Christian mother? Afraid not, huh?

Tell everybody I've been going to church since nine months before I was born. I was raised in it. Large family on both sides.

[2 : 22] Mother had 15 brothers and sisters. Daddy had 12, 13. My dad was the youngest. When I came along, I was one of the last of all those cousins.

And look as I may or might, in any direction, I couldn't see a lost person. All my uncles and aunts were Christians, good Christians.

All the cousins I knew were good boys and good girls and good Christians. I couldn't go soul winning in my own family. There wasn't anybody to win. I grew up like that.

Grew up in a good church. Wonderful Sunday school teachers. To this day, I still fondly remember my very first Sunday school teacher when I was just old enough to remember.

What a heritage. What a testimony. I couldn't understand it when I got out into the world and started meeting the public and finding out that not everybody was like the people that I'd grown up around.

[3 : 37] When I got to witnessing the public and I couldn't understand it when I got to witnessing the people. I couldn't understand it that they would be hostile to me. They didn't want to hear it. It's been a long time since those days.

And I'm still shocked at how many people say no to the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm still shocked at how hard it is to get somebody to sit down and let us say, Friend, there's a hell and I know how to miss it.

And there's a heaven and I know how to gain it. And I would love to be able to tell you what I know. It's hard to get people to let you do that.

And for all these years, I've wondered, why is it so hard? Dear God, why do men just want to burn in hell forever? There's a prospect of eternal life in heaven with no pain, no sorrow, no death, nothing at all distasteful.

Is that not appealing to people? You see, I don't know what it feels like to be 40 years old and not saved, not in church. I don't know how that feels.

[4 : 55] Some of you do. Maybe you understand that feeling. I never could, never could. I can't understand why churches are empty and stadiums are full.

When you can go to church free, but it's not free to get into those stadiums. Never understood why the gospel and Jesus and God are not more popular.

Why will a man discuss anything with you? The weather and politics and cars and tractors and anything else. Until you bring up, may I ask you a question?

Do you know if you died today, you'd go to heaven? And immediately they turn you off. Their countenance changes. They want nothing more to do with you.

And you're like a leopard to them. How many times has the dear God, what is this thing? What is this thing?

[6 : 00] Well, the scripture I read you explains it. Explains it. These were citizens of a lord in a kingdom.

This nobleman. And it says they hated him. What did he do to them? Listen carefully. What did he do to them? There's no indication at all that he wasn't a good nobleman.

And taking good care of them. Why did they hate him? There's a statement there that says, We will not have this man to reign over us.

Chris, that's your problem. Took you a while to get it right, didn't it? That was your problem. Do you know what mankind's basic problem is?

He doesn't want anybody telling him what to do. He wants nobody with authority over him. That's why they hated him.

[7 : 13] Because he had authority over them. He could say, Go and come and yes and no. And they said, We're not going to have him reign over us. My mind goes back to that time on a Tuesday night when I knocked on the door and their family had been visiting our church.

and actually joined our church. They quit coming. And I was knocking on their door on Tuesday night.

And the man came to the door and he said, Let me tell you, answer your question before you ever ask it. I want to go to church, but I don't want somebody standing in a pulpit telling me how to live.

And when you preached about how I'm to raise my children, that was the last straw. Nobody tells me what to do in my home. And I won't ever be back.

And I said, Sir, you're making a great mistake. You've got five children. And you see what you're telling them about the preaching of the word of God and about preachers.

[8 : 25] He said, You heard me. I'll never be back. On Thursday. That was Tuesday. On Thursday.

And nobody knows why. He was driving a highway between two of our towns down there in South Arkansas. And the tracks show that there are no black marks on the pavement.

And there's a long, wide, shallow ditch. And there's just the way that the wheels dug up the dirt. But no brakes. That car went as straight.

There was a fence row and one big double pine tree. Two big trees growing out of the same trunk. And there was a fence row and one big tree.

And that car went just as straight for that tree as a bird could fly to its nest. And it looked like he never touched the brake. The man was about 40 years old.

[9 : 26] Perfect help. Went through the windshield. I got the call. And I went to the hospital 35 miles away. Found him in his room.

All bandaged up. Talked to the doctor a moment. And I said, sir, he won't be able to talk to you. Because it cut his tongue out of his head when he went through that windshield.

And he said, I sewed it back together and put it back in. But I don't know if he'll ever be able to speak. And he said, as a matter of fact, I don't think he's going to make it. He took that tongue and he lashed a man of God that was trying to help him.

And God took that tongue out of his head. I tried to talk to him and he kept motioning. I finally understood that he wanted to whisper something to me.

And I leaned down as close to his mouth as my ear could get. And he had to repeat himself two or three times. And finally I picked up what he said. He said, Pastor, I'm sorry.

[10 : 39] I'm sorry and God's killed me. Will you please take care of my family? I didn't know what I was going to do with five more kids.

What would you say, Chad? Yeah, I'll do my best to take care of your family. We put that man in the ground.

I'll run my own life.

I'll not have any preacher in the pulpit telling me what I can and cannot do. I'll not have this man reign over me. I remember the Christmases when we took care of the Christmas presents for his kids.

I remember when his oldest daughter got grown and wanted to go to Highland College and become a Christian school teacher. We sent her there, took care of it. I remember when she'd call me.

[11 : 45] I was the only daddy she had. How many times I've counseled her through school. She called on that last day when they were being interviewed. She said, Pastor, there's a man here named Jim Vineyard.

And I just interviewed with him. He wants me to teach out in Oklahoma City. Do you think that'd be a good place? And I said, Diane, that'd be a great place. For many, many decades, she taught first grade for Jim Vineyard.

Her daddy said, I'll not have this man reign over me. You know, that's why hell's filling up today.

You know, that's why the Bible says broad is the way. Leads to destruction. Many better there be that go in there at. Because narrow is the way. Straight's the gate that leads to life.

And few there be that find it. You know why that's true? Because man's basic problem is, I'm not going to have this man rule over me. That's it.

[12 : 53] That's our problem. That's what we're facing, folks. That's why child rearing is so important. Because they learn what authority is at a young age. That's why all of my family were saved.

Because all their parents were saved. They raised them right. That's why in my generation way back there, lost kids were better than saved kids are today because they knew what authority was.

What respect was. That's why where I came from, people could get saved pretty easy. Because they didn't mind this man reigning over them. They'd had a daddy to reign over them.

That's why it's so hard today. Because we have two or three generations that have grown up with no authority figure. Kids do what they want to. I remember reading an authority not long ago.

And he said, America changed when she became a child-centered society instead of a parent-centered society. There was a day when the parents were the center of the home.

[13 : 55] And now the child is the center of the home. We don't know how to raise kids anymore. We're raising generations of people that say, nobody's ever told me what to do, and I'm not starting now.

I don't want this man to reign over me. We have people come to church, and Brother Griffin and I tell it like it is. They may come once or twice, but when we start telling folks what God wants them to be and do, they don't come back.

That's man's basic problem, ladies and gentlemen. Finally get somebody to come to church, actually get convicted of the sermon.

As soon as we say amen, he's out of here with his pants on fire. Because he doesn't want anybody telling him what he has to do. That's why it's so popular.

The good outweighs the bad. Everybody goes to heaven. Jeez, God would not send anybody. He's too good. It's my way, and my way is right, and don't you tell me another way.

[15 : 09] And that's man's basic problem. Well, over 90% of human beings that come on this earth probably go to hell. Isn't that a sad thing to have to say?

I've got three points. Let me hurry. It's been man's basic problem since the very beginning. You know what was wrong with Adam and Eve? God told them not to do something.

That's right. God says, thou shalt not. God. And Eve said, I'll show you. I'll do it. Plunged all of us into sin, didn't it?

Always been that way. Their oldest son's name was Cain. God said, somehow, it's not in the Bible, but evidently he taught that a blood sacrifice was necessary.

Cain said, I'm not going to do what, I am a farmer. I'm going to bring some good fruits from my ground. And if God doesn't like that, he can lump it. God didn't like that.

[16 : 16] And his brother was pleasing to God with his offering. Cain wasn't. And he rose up and killed him. First boy ever born on earth was a murderer because he didn't want anybody telling him what to do.

You kids back there, you come every Sunday and we're so glad you're here. You're a great part of this church. But you're in a generation that doesn't like people telling you what to do.

You better be real careful because the devil can grab you by the throat and lead you along his path so easily because it's in us.

It's in all of us. This pride we have. I'll do what I want to do. Israel's first king was Saul when God rejected his ideas and said, I'm going to put David in your place.

He spent the rest of his life trying to kill David. You're not going to tell me what to do. You're not going to replace me. I'm my own authority. It's always been that way.

[17 : 26] When Elijah, at God's command, took charge of the weather, Ahab and Jezebel hunted him like a mad dog. Nobody's going to rule over us.

They couldn't get to God but they could get to his man. God said over and over, I sent my prophets. I rose up early and sent them over and over and over and you persecuted and killed them.

Because they were telling you what I said, thou shalt and thou shalt not. Israel lost her nation for thousands of years because they didn't want anybody telling them what to do and not have this man rule over us.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego dared to obey God as their authority instead of Nebuchadnezzar. What did he do? He threw him in the fiery furnace, didn't he?

What did he do to Daniel when Daniel wouldn't let him be his authority? Well, that king, a different king, that king threw him to the lions. I'm on authority.

[18 : 34] You're not going to tell me that there's another god, a king, over me. Haman was so full of himself that when one Jew wouldn't bow down to him and recognize his supreme authority, he set out to kill every Jew that there.

Man has always been this way. Up and down the Bible, up and down history, you find it. Nero heard that Paul was preaching about another king and he cut Paul's head off.

Herod heard that the wise men came to find another king and he killed all the babies two years old under in that old area. We're not going to have anybody else rule over us.

That's your problem. You like a church and a religion that you can control. You like a cafeteria religion.

Not careful, Jeremy. You'll start picking and choosing. How many times in 55 years have I been told, well, Pastor, I just don't agree with that.

[19 : 44] How many times have I answered, show me in the Bible where I missed it. Well, I don't know about that, but I don't agree with what you said.

Your problem is you don't want this man to rule over you. You'd be a better Christian if you would let this man rule over you. You'd be a happier person if you'd let this man rule over you.

You'd be more fulfilled, more peaceful. Your whole family would be better if you'd let this man rule over you.

The greatest thing I ever did in my life was to find the master and say, thy will, not mine. I wish everybody could do that.

I don't even do it perfectly. John the Baptist dared to tell a man he's not supposed to marry a woman that cut his head off. And you know the problem Paul had, my goodness.

[20 : 48] Jesus is the king represented by this nobleman in our scripture text and they hated him. Why? Because he wants to reign over us.

And you know that generation finally killed the Lord too. Crucify him. Crucify him. We don't want him to rule over us.

That's the problem today in Dubuque, Iowa. That's the problem today in many of our homes. We're pretty good Christians. We'll take it, some of it, leave some of it.

We'll decide ourselves what we want. We're not going to let him rule over us. It's not going to turn out good. It's not going to turn out good.

So number one has always been true. Number two, it's true today. Men will not tolerate old-fashioned in your face. preaching anymore.

[21 : 48] So most parsons have wimped out. Got bigger crowds that way and they're more popular that way. I don't think you have to be mean as the devil all the time.

I've been proud of Brother Griffin. Been watching all of his messages and told my wife, I said, Brother Scott's getting soft. He's preaching too sweet.

No, he's learning that a balance is necessary in the ministry. One fellow this morning said, Pastor, I'm glad to see you back. I'm tired of Brother Griffin skinning me so much.

A friend, I've heard all his sermons and he hadn't been skinning like he sometimes can. We don't want to do that all the time. But God said, give them warning from me, lift up your voice like a trumpet.

Tell my people their sins. You need to find you a church where at least the fellow's not afraid of you. Not afraid to tell you what's right and what's wrong.

[22 : 53] You got one. There are lots of them, thank God. The preacher says, well, if I call men to repent to the Holy God, they won't like me.

Oh, really? If you're in the ministry to be liked, you're in the wrong place. Reverend, what about the God that called you?

How does he feel about it? J. Harold Smith and John R. Rice both give the testimony that somebody walked up to them and said, I'm going to blow your head off.

And each of them had the same answer and didn't even know the other one had it. But both of them looked at that fellow and said, you can't scare me with heaven. Fearless.

You've got to be that way to be in the ministry because you're not going to be liked. Jack Howell was my mentor for many years. Brother Penn's pastor for many years.

[23 : 58] Had a bulletproof pulpit. He said, he said, he said on several occasions, I'm probably the most hated preacher in the country.

Yet he was one of the gentlest and kindest and most generous. He represented one who wanted to rule over. And people couldn't get to God so they get to his representative.

I'm going to have this man rule over me. Why else is there such hostility to the gospel and to preachers and Christians? Soul winners. Why else is there?

Because mankind has down in here, I'm going to do my thing. I'm going to do it like I want to do it and you're not going to stop me. That's what's mandatory. If you don't kneel before a holy God and humble yourself like a little child and say, oh God, I'm wicked and I'm no good and I deserve nothing, please have mercy on me.

You don't do that, you'll never know him. And most people won't do that. Jesus said, if they hated me, they'll hate you.

[25 : 12] That's why some of the evangelists in recent decades have said they think they're preaching to as many as 75%, 80%. One man said 90% of unsaved church members.

God have mercy on us. Bible describes us in Romans 3 and it ends with this statement. There's no fear of God before their eyes. I don't know why I'm preaching this.

I think you're a fine group of people. I really do. One of the finest groups I've ever had a chance to work with. But I'm still preaching it and somebody here is not giving God his due.

Somebody here is running his own life. somebody here is saying in so many words, I'll let you know if I need you. I'll make my own decision.

Dangerous way to be a Christian. It's not going to end well. This man needs to rule over us. Well, make me feel good, preacher, don't mess with my sin.

[26 : 24] That's none of your business. I've heard that. It's true today and it will be true in the end time.

Number three. One day soon, Jesus is going to come back and the most unbelievable chaos going to break out on this earth you've ever heard about. You read about the seven years of tribulation in your Bible and several times in there with all going on that was going on.

I mean, the third of the trees burning up and third of the water bloody and people dying and demons coming out of hell and stinging people and all kinds of terrible things.

Two or three times it says men yet, yet would not repent. Saying as much as I will not have this.

I don't care what happens. He's not going to tell me what to do. Be careful, human being. That'll be your problem. Careful. I've been reading a book that Brother Chris is writing.

[27 : 39] I'm his proofreader. And he used me as an illustration in one of his chapters. He told about how I grew up in a preacher's home and saw how my dad was treated and I was an introvert and sort of timid and liked to have people like me and didn't like controversy and I didn't want to be a preacher.

I had a first-hand account of how people treated preachers and I didn't want to be that. So I grew up with my own idea.

I'm going to be an engineer. I like math and science and that's what I'm going to be. So I set out to do that. Got out of high school.

Went to state college in engineering. Went two years. Was going to transfer to the university. Main university in my state to get my degree there.

Sent the money in. Got accepted. Got a student loan. Paid down on a room. Had everything ready. The summer before my junior year. I had two more years and I would be an engineer and that would be my profession.

[28 : 59] I even knew which company I'd probably worked for. For in those days they were hiring every electrical engineering major out of the University of Arkansas and that was Texas Instruments in Dallas, Texas.

My roommate Dan Nipper went on got his degree went to Texas Instruments and probably retired there. That's probably where my life would have been.

My choice. I didn't want him ruling over me. I wouldn't run my own life. But that August before I went on to Fayetteville to finish up I don't know why I did it.

One night I was praying and I said by the way Lord is it okay what I'm doing? I really haven't asked you but since I'm already halfway there is it okay with you that I become an engineer?

I wish I hadn't asked him. Chris tells this story in his book and God said no it's not okay and I said sir it's about time you asked me get your sorry carcass out of the engineering college and go to a Bible college.

[30 : 36] Why haven't you asked me before I saved you a lot of heartache and a lot of money? And I said yes sir. I'm so glad I did.

I said yes sir. I remember saying goodbye to all my buddies as they went on to Fayetteville. In fact from south Arkansas on the Fayetteville Conway is right in the middle and those guys came by to see me on their way.

And we all had a big meal together. Hugged each other and I said goodbye to all my buddies. And they all said Larry we don't understand what you're doing but we trust you and we believe it's the best thing for you and they were trying to be good to me.

I still miss them. Still miss them. But I went on to that campus and first day or so I saw this tall red haired beautiful girl.

More importantly she saw me. what she saw in me I don't know. But that's another story isn't it?

[31 : 58] My wife had been led to that Bible college. My future took a great turn for the better on that August evening thing.

And Lisa think about it. What if I'd been an engineer in Dallas? Married some heathen down there. Where would you be?

God knew he needed you playing that piano right there. So he got us together didn't he? we have a picture of our family at home a collage and up above it it says because two people fell in love.

And I pray for that 25 to 30 people every single day and I think that would have not been mine had I chosen my own way.

you would not have been my friend. I would not enjoy the blessings that I've enjoyed as a preacher. I cannot imagine losing what I've had.

[33 : 15] But I stopped saying I'll take care of it Lord and I'll call you if I need you. And I said okay whatever you say doesn't make sense.

I'm half of an engineer. What's half of an engineer going to do? I'm so glad I did.

May I give you a personal piece of advice? Let him rule over you. Let him rule over you. Greatest day of your life is when you get on your face and say Lord from today on you're the boss.

I'm receiving you not as just Savior but as Savior and Lord. From now on whatever you say. King Jesus is going to set up his throne after that seven years.

And I used to have a different I think an erroneous idea of the thousand year reign. I thought everybody would just be in la-la land.

[34 : 28] Wow look at this. Peace and plenty. The swords were beaten into plowshares and we learned war no more and the lame man shall leap like a heart and the tongue of the dumb shall sing and oh my goodness what a beautiful wonderful I mean fishing on the on the on the streams and sound like an idyllic situation to me.

And then I read Brother Penn he shall rule them with a rod of iron. With a rod of iron. Why does he have to do that Chris? I mean even in that thousand years they don't want him reigning over us even though the situation is perfect they're still human beings descendants of people on this earth.

They still don't want him ruling even in a perfect situation because they let the devil out at the end of that thing and he went out to see if there's anybody that wanted to rebel against Jesus.

King Jesus. And he found so many people who hated Jesus and didn't want him ruling that he said they were as the sand of the sea. at the end of a thousand years of perfection most of the people who had been ruled with a rod of iron and not allowed to be rebellious when they got a chance it just broke out into hatred.

That's what you're living with that kind of a heart that kind of a flesh that kind of an anti-God sentiment watch out you better let him rule over you.

[36 : 17] The happiest most fulfilled people have always been and always will be those who let him rule over them. Thank you.