

Philip Bassham Summit

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Take your Bibles and go to Psalm 74. I love that song. They don't do a lot of singing in Thailand. You go to the temple, they don't sing.

If they did sing, though, they would sing, no hallelujah, just all I have is Buddha. And that's not quite as happy.

Psalm 74, verse number 20. I guess I should start my timer so I don't preach on it. The Bible says, Have respect unto the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.

Did you ever read one of those verses and you come up with a really good sermon and then you realize what it's actually saying? And you're like, man, that messes everything up. This was one of those verses. First of all, it's like, have respect unto the covenant.

[1 : 15] Like, yeah, we should respect our salvation. We should really be thankful for it. That's not what it's saying. This is the psalmist all through the chapter lamenting and crying out to God and praying and pleading with him to please remember his promises unto them.

Because everything is going bad. It's all going terrible. And he's pleading to God and saying, God, please remember what you promised to us. Do you remember all those promises you said to us about all those great things you're going to do in Israel?

Please have respect unto that and do something. Because look at this world. Look around this country. Look around what's happening all around here. Remember, the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.

And so he laments and he sees around what's going for. And he pleads for two reasons. What God has promised to do. So he knew God's promises that he's pleading because of it.

And secondly, the condition of the world around him. And we, the same way, we plead for God to save. We plead and we sit around and we ask God in missions conferences and in church and in times like these.

[2 : 33] We plead for God to save. We want him to do something mighty around the world. We want him to use us in our feeble efforts. We want him to send forth laborers.

We want him to do all these things. And it's not because of any kind of covenant of works. We can't just plead, God, we're so good. We've done so well.

Please come and reward us for that. No, only thing we can plead on is grace. That is the only basis we have of asking God for anything. God, we don't deserve it.

The world doesn't deserve it. But would you please do something? And he will. And we want it all to come to pass. You ever read Revelation?

You ever read the whole story? Like it ends on a pretty high note. It is pretty great. And we're like, yes, even so come Lord Jesus.

[3 : 28] And we want all of that to happen. And the good part is that we can be sure that it is gonna come to pass. It will happen.

It is sure. It is steadfast. Because God is true. And he cannot lie. And he is faithful. And we can be sure. Because he was slain before the foundation of the world.

This is God's plan from a long time ago. And it's his promise about what's gonna happen. And we're just sitting here in the middle and waiting and saying, what's the deal?

Please, God, make it happen. Save us. But he's the one who said it. He's the one who sealed it with his blood. And the psalmist and us, we could plead because of our sinfulness and say, God, take this temptation away from me.

I'm tired of being such an idiot. I'm tired of not doing right. But he didn't plead because of that. We could plead because of problems in our life and our need for his help.

[4 : 34] But he doesn't plead for that here. He pleads because of the cruelty and the violence that he sees in the dark places of the earth. And that's the paradox of the Christian life.

We have this. We have such joy. We have this deep rooted hope within us that God has saved us. It's settled. It's finished.

It's complete. It's over. And we have a great hope in front of us that we've read Revelation. Hopefully. We've read Revelation. We know it's we're going out on a high note and we will reign with him forever and ever.

Amen. And so we have this great joy. But in the same place, we are burdened because of the dark places of the earth still lie in waste. Sin reigns around the world.

I could tell you about Thailand more than any other place. But all throughout the Bible, we hear the testimony of those that have seen all throughout the Old Testament, especially we we hear the testimony of people who've grown up in a really a culture.

[5 : 42] A lot like Thailand would be or India or something like that. Well, there's idolatry all around them, people worshiping other gods, people bowing down to and believing just strange things and making sacrifices of their children and all this crazy stuff.

And then we see over and over and over again what their testimony is, that there is no one like him. There is nobody like our God.

They see everything around them to see what everybody else worships, what everybody else does. And they conclude there is nobody like him. And we conclude the same thing in Thailand.

Like I said, I could tell you about that. And they are full of superstition. Just from people that we have met and people that we have, you know, we're in language school.

So you sit across the desk from somebody and you just talk to them for hours and hours and hours on end. And you're you're not talking all that great, like your language is great. But you talk for like hundreds of hours.

[6 : 45] And so you learn all about this person sitting across the table from you. And they learn all about you. And one of our language school teachers, her name is Ali. And she she told it's it's funny in a way.

But, you know, she's telling me she's always tired. She's always trying to lose weight. And she always has all these things she's trying to get accomplished. And she came in one day at school and she was like, man, I feel really good today.

I'm like, good. Do you exercise or something? She's like, no. Last night I was at home and normally I'm taking care of my mom. And normally what I do is we go to bed around seven and I'll go upstairs and she'll sleep down here or something like that.

And she's like, but last night what we did is she went to sleep upstairs and I went to sleep downstairs. And I went and washed my hands at like 715 and it all went really good.

I feel really good today. So tomorrow I'm going to do that again. And you laugh at that. But that is really like that is this. You ever heard of feng shui?

- [7 : 56] It is a thing where like you just arrange it and it like directs the spiritual powers into the right thing. And that and so they really believe that way. And there's this superstition.
- There was this person that jumped from a condo to commit suicide there in Bangkok just the other week. And there was tons of people showing up and wanted to know how old this person was and what floor they jumped from.
- Because they wanted to take those numbers and go play the lottery. 99% of Thai people, they will go to a fortune teller.
- And that fortune teller will tell them any kind of combination of any kind of thing that they want to come up with about why their life is not going as good as they hope it would.
- Or what they can do to make it a little better. So you'll have people, they'll come in one day with a wildest haircut. Like a girl to just shave her hair. Like, oh, the ma dude told me the doctor, the seeking doctor, the fortune teller.
- [8 : 54] He told me I need to do this because my hair was messing things up. Or they told me yellow is a bad color for me, so I need to start wearing purple. Or I need, what was another one?
- They, like, I need to change my name. You'll find, it is so hard to learn Thai people's names. You know why? First of all, because they sound really weird.
- And secondly, they have a given name. And then they have a nickname. And then if their life isn't going right, they will change their name completely. And they will, and they do that all the time because the doctor, the fortune teller is like, man, your life is bad.
- It must be your name. You need to get rid of that name. And so they will go and they will ditch the name and they will legally change their name. And they will come in and they're like, maybe this will work. And you see this happening all the time.
- They pass by the spirit houses and they will, you say, well, they, do they have one spirit? They're Buddhists, right? 95% Buddhists. So all these spirit houses have Buddha in the middle of them, right? No.
- [9 : 54] It is, there's, there's Krishna. There's about five or six different spirits. It's like ones that you would recognize, but then there's a spirit in every house and spirit in their car and a spirit in their business and a spirit for their, their locate.
- There's just any kind of thing you can come up with. They will worship it because it's this spiritistic, animistic kind of culture. And they are, they have this fear of everything.
- And, um, they run in fear their whole life, just scared. Something's going to come out and get them. And if they don't make it happy, if they don't give it some red fancy that day, it's going to come and get them.
- It's going to haunt them at night. They're going to see visions at night. And it's just going to be scary. There's, there's scary movies are the funniest thing in the world. They are just, they're just so dumb.
- And it's all, it's so predictable. And it's always going to be this girl dressed like, like a vampire kind of, and she's going to have a white sheet and she's going to go, ah, and there's going to be a light that shines. And they're going to, they flip out because they, this stuff happens to them in their visions.
- [11 : 01] And that is, that is reality to them. And they are, they are terrified of these spirits. And I'm like, are you serious? They're like, you're, you're American scary movies. They're nothing. All of them, they're just a bunch of chainsaws and acts.
- That's not realistic. Nothing. That never really happens. But, but this Buddhism, I mean, Buddha's whole idea, the whole, you go to Buddha and you ask him, what should I do?

I got all kinds of stuff going on. Basically, Buddha's philosophy is, um, just ignore it. It didn't really happen. You shouldn't care about it anyway. You're not supposed to be attached to the things of this world.

If it's something's happening to you, it's because of karma. Something you did in the past life, just work, just don't worry about it. Just, mm. And about 3,000 lifetimes, you'll get over it.

You'll pay off that payment and you'll end up at the other end. There's nothing you can do about it because you do, you get, like karma is direct cause-effect relationship. If you're experiencing something bad in your life, it is because of something you did.

[12 : 06] You just gotta pay it off. There's no hope in it. And so he tells you basically to ignore it, accept the consequences. Life is suffering. Like, principle number, you go to Buddha school, principle number one, life is suffering.

Isn't that exciting? So, just accept it. Move on. Don't let it affect you. But I'm glad that our, I'm glad Jesus isn't like that.

There's a big difference between Buddha and Jesus. Here's what Buddha says. Well, bear and grin it. Just hope it doesn't happen again.

Sorry that happened. It's your fault. Jesus, he left his throne in glory. And he came all the way down.

Not because he had to. Not because he did anything wrong. Not because it was his price to pay. But it was our price to pay. And he came down. He said, you got a problem? Put it on me.

[13 : 11] And I will die in your place. And that is good news. That they have never heard. And we sit back and we say, God, please, why don't they know about that?

This world is full of the dark. The dark place of this world is full of the habitations of cruelty. You laugh at those stories. But they, the faith that they have in those spirits.

And the faith that they have in those superstitions. And all the things they have. That creates all kinds of ridiculous things that they will do. And they will just, they're just shooting themselves in the foot all day long.

Every day. And it is heartbreaking. The gospel is old news to us. But for the dark places of the earth, it is the most wonderful news that they have never heard.

A God that has more than just good advice. Never heard of such a thing. A God that knows the worst about us, but loves us the most. And a God that comes down from his throne in heaven to love us and save us.

[14 : 15] There is nobody like our God. Our first time telling the gospel to somebody. I'm not sure it came out right.

But it was still awesome. Like it is, it is like, um, even now when I'm speaking Thai and I'm hearing Thai and I'm understanding Thai, I'm like, how in the world is this possible?

How, how am I doing this? Did I just say something? I'm like, it is so weird. But we, like the first time, the first person we shared the gospel with in Thai was, uh, our nanny who helped, who watched our kids while we were off at language school.

And so we've been working on it for a long time. And we, we sit down and at the table, we're like explaining to her the gospel. We got to start in Genesis. We got to start at the very beginning of the story. Cause they, I mean, they have no idea.

They've never heard it before. And we get to it. We talk about how, how Jesus is our savior. And there, and she was like, savior. Like, what is, what is that?

[15 : 23] And, and she means, she's like, so you mean savior? You mean like he helps you in your life? And I'm like, no, he, he saves you. Like he rescues you.

He does it all. And you don't have to worry about it anymore. He just rescues you. She's like, really? Like it just, it doesn't compute in their heads.

Like it just, just blows their mind. And so when we, when we tell her the gospel, you could just see the, when she, when it finally clicked with her, what we were actually saying about a God who loves her and just saves her.

And she's like, so all that, all that nirvana and all that, all that karma that's built up in my life, all that just goes away. And she's just amazed. And her eyes just widen.

And she's like, she started crying. She's like, I've never heard of such a God. And we explained to her the gospel. And I was talking to somebody else.

[16 : 19] And I explained to them the gospel. And I got through the whole story, like the whole Bible. I got through the whole story. And she's, and I, I did a good job. This was a couple months later. I did a good job explaining that one.

And, and like, I was like, so you're like ready to get saved, right? And they're like, uh, but what about the spirits? That's her question about anything. Like, I was like, I just made a lot of sense.

Why are you after us spirits? I wasn't even talking about that. It's like, what about the spirits? And I was like, oh, well, it just gets better. He casts them out and he makes them flee because our God is Lord.

And he is in charge of all of it. And it is just, there's nobody like our God. And if we're just going to stick strictly to this text and talk about the violence and cruelty, there's plenty of evidence of that in Thailand.

While we were standing, uh, one day we were shopping for like a \$5 mattress. And, um, we saw across the street, there's this guy just, just yelling at his wife or girlfriend or something.

[17 : 25] And he just started beating her. Because they don't know anything. They don't, he didn't know he's supposed to love her like Christ loved the church. Men like Thailand leads the world in adultery.

And men are cheating on their wives like, no, you would not believe it. It is just expected Thai women just like, yeah, I'm going to get married and he's going to cheat on me. Because they don't know.

They don't know about God's faithfulness. They don't know that they're supposed to be faithful. There's a total lack of discipline in their children. And they just yell and everyone's on and smack them upside the head.

But they're, I mean, they do not tell their kids no. They don't know that they're supposed to raise their kids in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. So just like this psalmist, let's call upon God to enlighten the dark nations of the earth and rescue his people.

That the poor and needy may praise his name. God, send forth laborers into your harvest. That should be our plea. God, send forth laborers into your harvest.

[18 : 35] I see what's happening around the world. Or maybe we don't. We say, God, please send forth laborers into your harvest. God, open the eyes of the blind. I'm not even asking you to be a missionary.

I'm just asking you to beg God. It's something he told you to do anyway. But so we have permission. And we know, but we can plead to God and say, God, please send the gospel around the world.

Please open eyes. Please let your word have free course among the nations. So what's the solution? What's a Christian to do? The only solution is take the promises of God into the dark places.

The problem with the psalmist is lamenting is like all these promises are not in the dark places. We don't see the connection. We don't see how it's happening. And so what the solution is, you take the promises to the dark places so they know what God said.

Because the promises that we plead on are that God saves. And he rescues. And Jesus has died. And he's taken their place. And they can be saved.

[19 : 35] But they do not know that. We know the promises of God. He will save those who call upon him. We know that he will redeem. We know that he will rescue.

We know that he will forgive. We know that he will justify. We know that he sanctifies. But they don't know that. They do not know that there is nobody like our God.

Because there's no other God like our God. So every God they know is a cruel and mean God. So pray that the knowledge of his covenant will spread around the world.

That many would come to know him, love him, and worship him. Because when you know him, you love him, and you worship him. And you fall down on his feet in amazement. And you say, I've never heard of such a God.

Read two verses with me and we'll be done. Psalm 74:20. It says, have respect unto the covenant. For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.

[20 : 43] And then Psalm 86:8. Read it out loud with me. One, two, three. Among the gods, there is none like you, Lord.

No deeds can compare with you. Did I say? That's the wrong version. I really ruined my sermon. I don't know where I got that. Okay, bye. Bye. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

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Thanks.