

Missions Conference Thursday

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 September 2014

[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. Ezekiel chapter 37, in verse number 1, the Bible says, The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about.

And behold, there were very many in the open valley, and lo, they were very dry. And Andrew, before I go, I'm not going to show my video today. All right, so if you want to see my video, go to our website, Bateman'sInArgentina.com.

You can see it on the homepage there. All right, so in this text here, God brings Ezekiel to a valley full of dry bones. The Bible says He drops him out in the middle of them, causes him to pass by in verse number 2.

In verse number 3, He says, Son of man, can these bones live? And He said, I don't know, Lord. You know. You know, Lord. And He tells him to prophesy in verse 4.

He tells him exactly what to say in verse number 5, in verse number 6, in verse number 7. He says, and so I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise.

[1:06] And behold, a shaking in the bones came together, bone to bone. Then the sinews come together, and then the skin covers them. But they're still dead. And then God tells Ezekiel, prophesy unto the wind. And Ezekiel starts prophesying or preaching.

And the Bible says that, verse 10, and so I prophesied as He has commanded me. And breath came in them. They lived and stood up on their feet, an exceeding great army.

Now, the interpretation of this text here is found in verse 11 and throughout the rest of the chapter. The interpretation is the bones represent the nation of Israel. At this time, they had been scattered among the nations.

They were in a hopeless condition. And only a miracle of God could bring the nation back together again. But God has promised, this is exactly what I'm going to do. I'm going to bring the nation back together again. And they're going to live before me and serve me once again.

But in this passage, I see a great parallel between gospel ministry and missions. Notice here with me, first of all, in verse number 1 and 2, He says, He drops me off in a valley full of dry bones.

[2:09] In that I see a really great parallel with the condition of mankind, their spiritual state, their spiritually dead, spiritually cut off from God. Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1 says, And you hath He quickened, made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

At one time I was dead in my sins. I was cut off from God, had no spiritual life, had no hope, was without hope. As we went to Argentina there in last August, and as we got to see, I saw a country full of dead bones.

Went into this beautiful, largest Gothic cathedral church there in Latin America, and walked in beautiful carvings, beautiful woodwork, beautiful stonework, gorgeous building.

But it was a building of death. Emptiness. Idleness. A form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

Completely helpless to help people in their lost state. The Bible says in verse number 2, that God caused Ezekiel to pass by them round about.

[3 : 24] Now I want to ask you today, do you see, do you see the hopelessness in India that Brother Paul just mentioned? Will you see this morning the hopelessness in Argentina?

Will you see the hopelessness here in Alpharetta and come in Georgia? The people that you were meeting in the grocery stores, the people you were passing by on the streets, those are people more than likely that are cut off from God, spiritually dead, born in iniquity.

And they have no hope. What is God's answer for this spiritual death? God's answer is found in verse number 3.

He says, can these bones live? And he says, Lord, thou knowest God, you got the answer. I want to tell you this morning, God has the answer. He's the only one that has the answer.

And his answer for this spiritual deadness is in verse number 4. He says, prophesy upon these bones. In other words, prophesy means to declare, to speak God's Word.

[4 : 26] That's his answer for spiritual death. Nothing less than the proclaimed Word of God. And God's Word works.

It always works. He gave the promise here that it was going to work. He says, I will and they will. I will and they will. I'm glad God takes the initiative. In the garden, He took the initiative when Adam and Eve ran off and they were naked.

They weren't seeking God, but God came seeking them. The city of Nineveh was happy and content in their sins and wickedness, but God took the initiative and sent a man to proclaim His Word. God looked at humanity and says, I love them so much, I'm going to take the initiative and send my son to die in their stead.

God loved the world so much that Jesus on the Mount of Olives looked at His believers and followers and says, Now you guys go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

God takes initiative and God's Word works. Drop off Paul Taubi in India and see what happens. There will be the noise of bones shaking and coming together.

[5 : 31] Drop Stephen Underwood off in South Africa and see what happens. There's going to be the noise of wind coming in as people are being born again. Already this morning in Spain, two congregations are meeting.

Why? Because a man named David Velasquez stood in Spain and says, I'm here. And he proclaimed God's Word and God's Word works. It's going to work in South America. It's going to work in Africa.

It's going to work in Europe, Australia, and Asia. Wherever God's Word goes, God's Word works. And here's Ezekiel. Ezekiel says, So I prophesied as I was commanded.

And that is the question, are we being obedient? God says, Go. Are we doing as we've been commanded? Going into all the world, are we going? Are you actively participating in this ministry, in this partnership of God reconciling the world unto Himself?

God's Word works. Go with me to Colossians 1 very quickly. In Colossians 1, I kindly mentioned it briefly last night, but in verse number 3, Colossians 1-3, He says, We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have to all the saints for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.

[6 : 57] Where have you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel which is come unto you as it is in all the world and bringeth forth fruit as it doth also in you since the day ye heard of it and knew the grace of God in truth.

He says, Man, I thank God. I thank God for the things that have happened in your life. I thank God that now you have faith. I thank God. I'm hearing about the love that you have for your brethren. I thank God for the hope that you now have in heaven.

But how did they get that faith? How did that love come to them that's not natural? That is a product of the work of the Spirit of God in a believer's life.

How do they now have hope? Well, verse number 5. He says, Where have you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel? How did they have faith?

Because they heard the word of the truth of the gospel. How did they have love now? Because they heard the word of the truth of the gospel. How did they have hope now in heaven? Because at one time they heard the word of the truth of the gospel.

[8:01] And in verse number 6 he says, Which has come unto you. At one time they did not have these things because they did not have the word of the truth of the gospel.

It had to come to them. There are people right now in Argentina, they don't have faith, they don't have love, they don't have hope. Why? Because all they have is a dead religion.

All they have is idolatry. All they have is their good works and their merit. And the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, they don't have hope because they don't have the gospel.

But the gospel works. In verse number 6 he says, It's come unto you as it is into all the world. And he's not saying that all the world has the gospel, but he's saying that the gospel has come into the world.

And Paul looks over Asia Minor and he looks over Greek and he's looking and he's seeing the gospels landed in Ephesus and what's happening? Churches are being born.

[8:59] The gospel's coming to Corinth and what's happened? People have been coming up out of their graves, their spiritual graves because eternal life has come unto them. In verse number 6 he says, The gospel's coming to you and all the world and it brings forth fruit as it does also in you since the day you heard of it and knew the grace of God and truth.

Here's the thing, the gospel works wherever it goes. Wherever it goes. Amen.

Take your Bibles and turn to Matthew chapter 5 if you will. Matthew chapter 5. Brother Bateman said, Drop me off in South Africa and there will be a wind. I wasn't quite sure where he was going with that. I thought maybe he was saying that I was full of hot air.

But, Amen. Brother Jeff was just talking about seasons. And right now, here in the South, we're in a season. Our Saturdays, oftentimes, except for yesterday of course, what we do is we fire up the grill, we turn on the television, and we watch football.

Saturdays in the South, we are known for football. Now yesterday was a bad day for you guys. It was also a bad day for us, so I won't dwell on that. But, Saturdays in South Africa, they're known for something much different.

[10:16] As much as Saturdays in the South, they're known for football, Saturdays in South Africa are known for their funerals. While we were on our survey trip in June, we were able to witness one of these Saturdays.

We went to a very large cemetery just on the outskirts of the townships, and we saw that they had erected these tents, much like the old-fashioned tent revivals. And what they'll do is they'll start very early in the morning, and they'll have one funeral right after the other.

As soon as one funeral leaves, it will immediately be replaced with another one. Normally, the oldest male of the family, as soon as they have buried their loved one, he'll go and he'll spend an entire month's salary, and he'll purchase a bull or a goat.

And for the next three days, they will sacrifice and worship their ancestors, the ones that they had just buried. You see, Saturdays in South Africa are the day that the dead buried the dead.

While we were there, we were witnessing this taking place, and these two police officers approach us. Certainly, they're curious as to why three carloads of white people were there in the black township cemetery.

[11:34] And so they begin to question us, and I explain to them that I'm a preacher, and I wanted to learn about their culture and their traditions so that I could be more educated when I come to preach to them.

And this man looks at me, this police officer looks at me, and he says, I'm a Methodist, and I believe in Jesus Christ. Well, naturally, I'm very excited about this, and I'm intrigued, and so I begin to ask him questions, and for the next hour, these two police officers take our group, and they begin explaining to us about the customs and traditions of the Xhosa people.

But he tells us, he talks to us, and he tells us, and he says this, he says, our ancestral worship is okay. He said, because the truth is, is that yes, we believe in Jesus, but God is far away, and our ancestors are close.

And so if we remain faithful at these sacrifices, if we spill the blood of bulls and goats, then they, on our behalf, will go to God the Father who is far away, and they'll intercede on our behalf.

For the next hour, that conversation progressed, and I'm standing there talking to this man, and he tells me again, one on one, he says, I believe in Jesus Christ.

[12:57] But he says, as long as you understand this, this will help you when you preach to our people, our ancestral worship is okay. As long as we know that Jesus is a better high priest.

And with everything within me, I'm looking at this man, and I'm screaming on the inside, no sir, this is not okay.

It's idolatry. And Jesus is not simply a better high priest. He is the high priest. And Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

And no man cometh unto the Father, but by... At the end of that conversation, that police officer got in his vehicle, just as dead and lost in his trespasses and sins as those that were practicing the animal sacrifices there at the cemetery.

And so that brings us to Matthew chapter 5. Jesus is preaching his very first message. He's directing it towards his disciples as he sits to teach them.

[14:05] But he has the multitude in sight. He's directing his attention at them with all the others able to hear and receive and respond. And he goes through a series of blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart. He goes through this whole span. And he challenges the customs and traditions that for generation to generation that they have believed and trusted.

He is challenging the fact that the Pharisees have taught them that the way up is to be outwardly good and to wear the right clothes and to say the right things and to perform the right rituals and to give the most money outwardly and publicly.

He's challenging their traditions that if you are clean on the outside that you can merit salvation with God on the inside. He is challenging their belief that if they do all the right things outwardly that inwardly they'll be okay.

then we come to verse 11 and Jesus transitions his attention and he makes it personal for the crowd. He says blessed are ye.

[15:19] He says blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. He says remember this fellas first of all you're blessed.

how many of you went to bed hungry last night would you raise your hand? How many of you did not have a roof over your head when you woke up this morning would you raise your hand?

How many of you have never heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ would you raise your hand? Just in case you've forgotten you're blessed. You are blessed this morning.

And then he tells us he says blessed are ye when. You see the truth of the matter is that our trials our struggles the storms that we face in life it's not a matter of if they will happen it's a matter of when they will happen.

And Jesus reminds us that even in the midst of those storms that we are blessed. We are blessed this morning. And he goes on to tell us he says in verse 12 rejoice and be exceeding glad.

[16:30] In James chapter 1 and verse 2 it says my brethren count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience and let patience have her perfect work that you may be perfect and entire wanting nothing or lacking nothing.

You're blessed this morning. And the truth of the matter is that we will face hardships. The ministry church with your family it's not always going to be easy.

There are going to be seasons in our life where we'll look to the God of heaven and we will not see the fruits of the labor and we'll look to him like Isaiah and we'll say Lord how long?

How long must we labor? How long must we toll? How long must we sweat? How long Lord? But the promise of God is this that his word will not return to him void and if we abide in him that he will produce the fruit.

And from generation to generation we can create a new culture of those who have trusted Jesus Christ and instead of practicing their ancestral worship they worship the one true God of heaven who has paid the ultimate sacrifice for them.

[17:43] This morning you're blessed. He addresses our attitudes towards persecution towards hardships and he says rejoice. And then he defines our purpose in verse 13 he said ye are the salt of the earth.

You see the truth is this morning that salt is what you are. It is not what you do. Each and every day you will go to your workplace you'll interact with your workmates your friends your neighbors and you will be a living testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ye are the salt of the earth. I'm reminded of what Paul said in Philippians chapter 2 verses 5 through 10 he tells the church he says let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

The truth is is that Jesus Christ it was not a crime for him to be equal with God because he is God. In John chapter 1 in verse 1 the Bible says in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Jesus Christ is as much God as God the Holy Spirit and God the Father and he left the glories of heaven he said he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross.

[19:08] The Bible goes on to say that wherefore God has also highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

I'm so looking forward to that day where we can stand before him knowing that we've placed our faith and trust in him in this life and we can praise and exalt his name in the next.

But the truth is that there will come a day where every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. But the sad reality is that for millions and billions that have not done so in this life they will do so in the next and that very next moment will be in an awful eternal burning hell.

The truth is that hardships is not a matter of if it's a matter of when and our attitude toward it should be rejoice because remember you're blessed and you serve a purpose you are the salt of the earth.

Thank you. Let's open up our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 4 and let's read verses 17 through 20 Ephesians 4 17 through 20 and the word of God says this I say therefore and testify in the Lord that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind having the understanding darkened being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart who being past feeling have given themselves over into lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness but ye have not so learned Christ.

[21:01] When I was growing up it seems that all of my life all I've heard is that Spain is a country that is hardened to the gospel that the people in Spain don't want to have anything to do with Christ that ministry in Spain is going to be an impossible task might as well not go to Spain and I will confess that growing up that form of thinking that way of thinking affected me when I surrendered my life to be a missionary when I was 11 years old I was determined that I would go anywhere in the world except for Spain I wanted to go somewhere that was easier and I wanted to go somewhere where I would be able to see God really working that was until I read Ephesians chapter 4 and what we see here is that it isn't only Spaniards that are hardened to the gospel everyone apart from Christ is hardened to the gospel that is what we find in our text today in these verses we find a description of man's condition apart from God I want you to understand that these verses describe all of us before knowing Christ

I want to go through these verses very quickly and I want you to understand that this is a description of all of mankind all of us apart from Christ this describes us perfectly and what Paul is doing here is given a description to these believers at Ephesus of what they were before they knew Christ look what it says here this I say therefore in verse 17 and testify in the Lord that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk so he's going to describe the way that other Gentiles walk Gentiles were the people that were devoid of God separate from God they didn't know anything about God that's us by the way that's all of us before we knew Christ but this is the description that he gives he says they walk not I'm sorry walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind vanity has to do with meaninglessness has to do with emptiness you see this world is full of people that are leading empty lives they have no real purpose for their lives they get up every day and they're doing things and they may have a purpose but their purpose really doesn't mean anything because in the end whatever they're living for is going to be to no avail and that is the way people are living their lives and it says having the understanding darkened people that cannot understand the truth of God because their minds are darkened it says being alienated from the life of God that phrase there teaches us that at one point they were connected to the life of God but at some point they became alienated that's what we call in the Bible the fall man became alienated from the life of God am I just describing

Spaniards here let's keep on reading through the ignorance that is in them the Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 that those that are not saved cannot understand the scriptures is that only Spaniards or is that describing every single person in the world that does not know Christ it says in a verse it says also because of the blindness of their heart who being past feeling have given themselves over until a shivishness to work all uncleanness with greediness you see sometimes we think of people in this world that do not know Christ and we see all the sins that they commit we don't realize that that is just a symptom of the real problem which is in their heart and they get to a point where they even lose all sensitivity to their sin but that is all a result of their sinful nature now I don't know about you but as I'm reading these verses I'm getting a little depressed we're here at a missions conference and we're supposed to get a little excited but that is the condition of all of mankind so if that's the case who then can be saved it's very similar to what the disciples asked Jesus when he was referring to the rich man and how difficult it is for him to enter into the kingdom of God who then can be saved well think about that for a moment who then can be saved if that is the reality of the condition of mankind who then can be saved thank God for verse 20 look what it says in verse 20 but ye have not so learned

Christ but ye have not so learned Christ you see Paul in these verses is writing to a group of believers he is writing to a church he is writing to a group of people whose lives have been radically changed they no longer lead meaningless lives they know exactly the purpose for which they were created they no longer are darkened to the truth of God they understand God's word what is it that has caused the difference they learned Christ what is the only thing that is going to make a difference in Spain if people learn Christ what is the only thing that is going to make a difference in South Africa if people learn Christ what is the only thing that is going to make a difference in all the other countries of this world and what is the only thing that is going to make a difference in this part of the world because we hear similar things here as well that people here are hardened to the gospel and might as well not preach to them well guess what maybe it is because they haven't learned

Christ I would like to show you a picture up here if we have it hopefully this is a group of my friends in Spain and these are some men that I have been working with for quite some time now some of them are from the church in Parla and some of them are from the church in Colmenar and of course I could take a lot of time and share their testimony but the man that is to my left the furthest to my left I guess it would be your right his name is Carlos Temprano and Carlos Temprano is a dentist and I remember I met up with him for about six months and just taught him the gospel until he was saved and he just kept on asking questions and I remember when I first met him he was very depressed with his life because he had received training all of his life and he wasn't making as much money as he wished that he would be making he was very frustrated because he saw all of his other relatives that lived in the United States and they were doctors and doctors in the United States make more money than they do over there and he was frustrated and he felt that he should be doing more with his life he didn't have his own home he was just renting and he felt like he should be having his own home by now he should have more vehicles and it's amazing to see what God's doing in his life he's actually teaching the young people in my absence he has been teaching through the book of Colossians and actually he goes through

[27:33] John Pearson's brother John Pearson's offering devotionals and he went through a series on contentment and he was teaching what the Bible says about contentment what do you think made a difference in his life he learned Christ right next to him is Paco Prada and Paco Prada is a highly intelligent man but he's very shy well guess what he is leading the adult Sunday school class and teaching the word of God every week Eduardo Sedosky was a very successful businessman made a lot of money but he was frustrated with his life and so he found a website estudialabiblia.com studythebible.com the gospel website that we were able to produce there and he searched what is the true religion and that search led him to that website through that he got saved and right now he's going through a very difficult time in his life he's lost his job he doesn't have enough money to pay his rent but he's trusting in the Lord he's looking forward to us getting back because he's so excited about all the things that God's going to do you see it is possible to do the work in Spain it is possible to do the work in Alpharetta what is the thing that is going to cause the difference people must learn

Christ because when Christ enters into their lives it makes a difference I want to leave you with three truths that I hope you will remember number one all men are hardened to the gospel now when I say that I mean that nobody is out there searching after God the Bible says no man no one seeketh after God nobody is saying please give me the gospel anywhere you go if you go to Peru if you go to Argentina if you go to these countries that people say that it's really easy no they're not looking for the gospel over there they're not interested in the gospel second thing is that salvation is a miracle I hope you understand that you see it's not just a miracle in Spain it's amazing how every time somebody gets saved in Spain people say wow what a miracle well guess what when people get saved in Argentina it's a miracle when people get saved here it's a miracle no matter where you go in the world it's a miracle because if what we read about mankind is true then in order for that to change it has to be a miracle and the third thing is that only where Christ is taught our lives changed only where Christ is taught our lives changed so what do we have to do we need to go and make the gospel known and teach Christ

God bless you alright take your bibles if you would and open them with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 5 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 18 if you're here today for the first time or you are here visiting I want to thank you for coming we are in the middle of our missions conference today will be the last service this morning we've been doing this since Thursday night we are big on taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world we believe that there's only one way to go to heaven and that's through Jesus Christ we believe that all men have sinned we believe there is a real heaven and a real hell and we believe that God loves people and he wants everybody to be saved and it's our job to do everything in our power to get the gospel to the world so if you haven't filled out your faith promise card I want to challenge you to think about what you'll do over this coming year now let me just say something I've said for years we have two rules about faith promise here about all of our giving our church has two rules rule number one is there are no rules and rule number two is if anybody tells you there are any rules refer back to rule number one so no rules but I do want you to know

I do want you to know that we hope you will give and get involved the Lord wants you to give not out of necessity not because there's a great need not because there's an emotional pull but he wants you to give because you love him and you love his causes and you're doing that with a cheerful heart he loves a cheerful giver can you say amen right there yeah I want you to imagine Christmas coming up here in December and you get your kids around and you say well I have to give you kids a gift it's just not optional it's Christmas and I'm forced to so take your gifts that'll take a little bit away from the joy of giving a gift to your kid at Christmas if you do that kind of thing some of you may already be a Scrooge and not do that but if you do you probably ought to do it with a smile on your face you don't want to think about the credit card bills that are coming you also don't want to give grudgingly you don't want to say oh just take it you want to say man I'm excited I have a personal problem that Betty could tell you about my kids could tell you about and that is if I go find the gift that somebody wants

I have a real problem waiting so I will go I'll figure out what to give and I will get so excited by giving the gift and I'll walk in and I'll say Betty let's go ahead and have Christmas right now and she'll say no we can't have Christmas now we have Christmas on Christmas day she plans everything I plan nothing and so I'm like nope today's the day and she says no I want to give it's a cheerful gift and so the idea is that if you give you give because you love Jesus nobody's going to charge you nobody's after you you're giving because you really believe that people die and go to hell and Jesus makes a difference thank you for coming if you're here Thursday night we will start the book of numbers we have now finished Genesis Exodus and Leviticus we'll be in the book of numbers we've finished a lot of other books we got to skip books as we go you say when did we do Leviticus maybe before you got here but we already done Leviticus and Hebrews together a long time ago and so we're a Bible church Bible preaching church one verse right after the next verse to figure out what the Bible is saying and apply that to our lives but today this week is a big time for us as we consider our responsibility of getting the gospel around the world now I'd just like to talk to you briefly about the fact that we are ambassadors for Christ ambassadors for Christ take your Bible go with me if you would to 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verses 18 through 21 before I do that

[33:50] I need to tell you this if you're here and you're like what is ready for either and what is that who brought a who brought a lawnmower stable to the church or who brought a a barn to the church some of the guys said hey you like the barn country boy you probably feel at home but that's not why we have it here and then on this side you have an altar and then you see over there ready for either and it's above my head and they just sung that song the idea is that you would present your life to Christ and if he would have your life if he would take you if it meant dying for him you would die for him and if it meant serving him like an oxen pulling a plow you would if it meant going to the mission field which you might consider a great sacrifice you would you just say hey I want to serve God and whatever it is he wants me to do that's what I want to do I'll go to the mission field or I'll stay here the idea of ready for either is I'll be a goer or I'll be a sender which means I will go over to the mission field where I'll stay here and I'll send but together we'll get in the yoke and together we'll do all in our power to get the gospel message around the world that's what all the decorations are about and so that you can see that but look at 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 18 if you would 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 18 the Bible says saying

He says What? To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Father, I pray that you'd work in these next few minutes and help our people to understand exactly who we are, and I will give you great power and great honor and great glory. In Jesus' name, I ask all this. Amen.

Now, you've got to understand the story. Man sinned against the holy God, and man separated from that God because God's our creator. And God, from the very beginning, loved us and loved all of mankind and wants all of mankind to be saved.

[36:18] And from the very beginning story of the Bible, God is so sweet and wonderful. Adam and Eve ate the fruit and found out that they were naked. Adam and Eve didn't look for God. They didn't say, hey, let's go find God and say we're sorry. We'd like to fix things we messed up.

We'd like to straighten out the problem. Instead, they hid themselves. And instead, they tried self-help. So they covered themselves in fig leaves, and it wasn't enough. And Jesus came down in the cool of the day to walk with them. And as he came down, he said, Adam, where are you?

He knew where he was. He's God. He knows where everybody is. And Adam said, well, we're naked, and we hid ourselves. And God said, well, Adam, come here, and let me help you. And Adam stepped out, and God did not curse Adam.

He cursed the ground, and he turned to Adam, and he said, let me make you coats of skins, which is a picture of Jesus down on the cross. And he kills a lamb, and he gives him lamb skin, the lamb of Jesus, the lamb Jesus Christ.

And he covers him, and covers his neck in this, and he forgives him, and he receives him to himself again, all initiated by God. Adam didn't look. God looked. Adam didn't ask for forgiveness. God came forgiving.

[37:29] That's a picture of your beautiful God. Can you say amen? They knew they were going to die. They knew they were going to die. Adam's wife doesn't have a name yet in the story. She doesn't have a name.

But when God's talking to him, instead of cursing, he promises. And he says, Adam, I'll tell you what's going to happen. You're going to, the ground's cursed, and you're going to sweat, and it's going to be hard work now, as you're going to have to deal with rocks and thistles and briars and thorns.

But I'll tell you what, this woman who has embarrassed you, this woman who has done wrong, this woman who has brought shame to the human race, I give you a promise. Through a woman, I will allow the seed of God, the Son of God, to come to this planet.

And through a woman, that seed will come, and he will crush the head of that cursed serpent, Satan, and he will win victory. And all of a sudden, Adam knew, you want to know what just happened?

We that were supposed to die are going to live. And he turned to Eve and said, you were supposed to be the cursed one. You were supposed to be the one that was dying. We were supposed to die. But I'm going to name you Eve, mother of all living, because we're going to live.

[38:40] And from then on, every young woman that knew the Bible thought, maybe my child will be the Messiah. Maybe it will be the one that comes from God. So Eve's next child, when the baby is born, she goes, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

She thought, maybe he's the one. And by the way, when you get over to 2 Timothy, you find out that through childbirth, the woman would be saved. And what the story was, was that Eve had brought shame on the human race.

Eve is the one that ruined everything, ladies. You ruined it all. But in the New Testament, God said, I'll give woman her dignity back. I will let her be the doorway, the portal through which the Son of God will come back to earth.

And he gave women their dignity back. He saved her. He rescued her. And today, when Father's Day comes around, we're just glad we get noticed.

But Mother's Day comes around and the whole planet operates around you. From the cursed woman to the praised woman by the promise of the Savior. Is that good or not? You serve a great God.

[39:41] You mess up, but he fixes up. And so anyway, he says to us, hey, I love people. I have died. Everything man has ever done that separates him from God, Jesus took care of it on the cross of Calvary.

He died. He paid all of man's debt, every debt. And he brought salvation right nigh to us. And it's time for you. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 that God reconciled the world to himself.

The world to himself. He's done everything to get the world saved. He said, I don't even count their sins against him. That's what he said in the verse. And then he said to you and I, we're to go to them and say, man, God's done everything.

So be reconciled. Accept the gift. Trust God. Believe God. And you can be saved. We are ambassadors. And that's what it's about is we do missions.

We go with good news. I walk into Peru. And if I were walking into Spain or any other place, I'd walk in with this. I'd say, I'm here to tell you the greatest news in the world.

[40:45] The God you offended. The God you walked away from. The God that you told him, I don't want to do it your way. I want to do it my way. That God died on a cross to pay your sin debt.

That God did everything to make everything right. And it's all right. It's all paid for everybody. It's already all paid for everybody. Be reconciled.

Trust God now and be saved. That's what we're doing. That's what the ministry is about. The ministry is about not an angry God who wants everybody to go to hell.

Totally the opposite. A sweet and wonderful God who loves his creation, who went their own way. Now, you need to understand all men have sinned. But what sin is, is when you do your own thing.

See, some of you, because you're Georgians or you're from the southeast, you kind of got the idea that sin is when you do some big, bad, perverse act that's against the law.

[41:44] And you get to pick and choose what they are. You know, we think, well, murder, that's really bad. And rape, that's really bad. And pedophilia, that's really bad. But in Bible terms, sin is whenever you do your own thing, whatever that is.

Whenever you do your own thing and not the God thing. We have all gone out of the way. We've everyone turned to our own way. That's what sin is. Sin is when you do what you want.

Sin is when you, like Adam, go back there and say, hmm, I do have a problem. I'm kind of like naked here. Let me figure out how I'll fix my problem. And that's what the whole thing is about sin.

And everybody's frustrated, man. Alcohol is trying to cover it up. Drugs is trying to cover it up. Money is trying to cover it up. Big fence houses and nice cars trying to cover it up. Friends of popularity trying to cover it up.

But nothing covers it up. Only the blood of Jesus Christ shed on Calvary's tree changes people's lives. And I am an ambassador. I am an ambassador.

[42:45] I speak for the king. You are an ambassador. We speak for the king. We walk up to people and say, I got good news for you. You ain't got to do anything but believe him.

He's already done everything. You've heard the story, I'm sure, of a little kid that comes running in after church in the old country church. He runs up to the pastor and says, preacher, preacher, I want to get saved.

What can I do to get saved? And the preacher said, sorry, son, too late. Too late for you. And the kid says, too late? I can't get saved? He said, no, too late for you to do anything.

It's all been done. You can just accept the free gift. Amen. It's all done. So salvation in Christianity is not a list of rules, not a bunch of stuff you're supposed to do. True Christianity is this.

It's been done. God paid the debt. God himself paid the debt. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. So here's the great news.

[43:41] We are meeting here today not to go about and get everybody to believe an American dream. I have no desire to watch a Spaniard believe the American dream.

The American dream, I hate to say it, but it has a whole lot of problems in it. In the American dream, people may abort babies. In the American dream, people may do all kind of wicked stuff.

I'm here to talk to them about that heaven dream. I want them to know that God loves them, that God died on a cross for them, that God paid their sin. And that's what we're going to take out.

So every missionary leaves here, they're not going to make anybody Republicans or Democrats. We're not going to spread the cause of capitalism or democracy. We're going to spread the cause of the heavenly kingdom.

We're going to tell people Jesus saves. So we'll walk into Peru and we'll say, we've got good news for you. It's all been done except the free gift. We'll walk into China and say, we're not here to talk bad about communism.

[44 : 37] We're here to talk good about Jesus and salvation. And that's what our message is. Our message is to a Buddhist, not to mock him, not to make fun of who he is, but to tell him, I know you're straining and struggling to get those fig leaves on you, but Jesus paid the price and you don't have to do that.

We're going to go walk over to a guy who won't eat a cow. He's a Hindu and he won't eat a cow and he'll go hungry just about because he can't eat those cows. We'll go to him and say, all that stuff you're doing to cover up your nudity and your nakedness and your shame and your embarrassment has all been taken care of in Jesus except the free gift.

So as you give, you're not giving to spread the cause of Baptist. You're not giving to spread the cause of vision, Baptist. You're not giving to spread the cause of America.

You're not giving for that. You're giving for the cause of spreading good news. Can you imagine being the bearer of good news? Can you imagine being the guy that walks in the room and says, man, there's a lot of sickness here, but I have the answer.

And the answer is Jesus and what he did on the cross at Calvary. So that's what we're about. You and I are ambassadors. We are serving the king of kings and the God of gods.

[45 : 49] We are sharing his word. So this morning, two things and I'll be through. Number one, do you know that your sins have been forgiven? It'd be a sad thing to come to a Bible preaching, Bible believing church, to a gospel proclaiming a good news sharing church and not get the good news.

Here's the good news. If you came this morning and you wonder if anybody loves you, if you wonder if anybody cares, if you wonder if you're all alone in your nudity, all alone in your shame, you're not alone.

We care. But more than that, the God of heaven cares. Last night, during the middle of the night, my wife got a text from someone out in the Midwest. And they said, hi, miss so-and-so, if this is you, this may be my last goodbye.

It's kind of like a little suicide note text to Betty in the middle of the night. Somebody feeling alone. Somebody feeling hurt. Somebody that has nowhere to turn. And if that's you this morning, I'd just like you to know there is somewhere to turn.

And it's all done. You might say, well, what have I got to do to get things fixed? Trust nothing. Nothing. Trust Jesus. Turn from yourself.

[46 : 59] Turn from trying to put on your own garments. Turn from trying to cover up your shame and turn to Jesus and what he did on the cross at Calvary. You can be saved. How do I go about doing that?

The Bible says that all of us have sinned. You're not alone. Everybody, everywhere sin. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There's none righteous, none good, none perfect, not a one anywhere in the world.

And when you sin, the wages of sin is death. All of us are going to die physically and later spiritually. We will die and spend eternity separated from God. But Jesus paid it all.

God paid it. But God commended, God showed, God proved his own love toward us. And then he sent Christ to die for us. But God commended his love toward us and while we were yet sinners, still sinning, still doing wrong, we weren't doing right.

He came and he died. So if you're here and you're not born again, you're not saved, you don't know you go to heaven, you can today. Trust the God who sent Jesus to die.

[48:03] Trust the God who was in Jesus dying on the cross. Trust the God who loved Adam and Eve after they'd messed up and right there in the garden from the very beginning of the Bible who was saying, this whole book is going to be a story of hope and I can prove it.

Watch my first story I tell you. I've got an answer for every mess up you guys got. That's a beautiful book. That's the first thing. If you're not born again, be born again. And second, if you are saved.

If you're excited about what God has done, if you're excited about what Jesus Christ has done in your life, don't hold it to yourself. I cannot believe that we have such good news and we don't share it.

So give. Say, God, how much can I give? Let me just tell you this. Anybody in this room ought to be able to give a dollar or two a week or five dollars a week. The honest truth is any, there are a great number of us that can be given 150 to \$200 a week to missions.

You say, that sounds like a lot of money. Sounds like a lot of people with a lot of need too. \$150 a week is not that much for some of us. \$500 a week wouldn't be that much for some of us. Honestly, you could figure out what you could do.

[49:10] You could give. Church is not keeping that money. That money is being sent to get the gospel around the world. We make a difference by being massive givers to get the gospel spread to the world.

Father in heaven, I love you. I thank you for the privilege of having your word. I thank you for the privilege of sharing your word. I pray, God, that your people this morning would give. And I pray, God, that those that don't know you as their personal Savior, that today might be the day that they would trust you.

And today might be the day that they would believe you and come to salvation. And I pray, dear God, that our Christians would say, I'm here today to give and to surrender and to spend my life for others.

And I'll give you praise. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com, where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.