

The Grace of Christ

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[0:00] I'm glad you all are here.

We're going to talk tonight. You know, we've been talking about false teachers, false prophets. It's all been kind of negative, but Paul's advising Timothy. Tonight we're going to talk about the great grace of God. Paul's going to get a little positive with his son in the faith. Next time we're going to, next week we're going to talk about fighting the good fight.

And then the week after I'm hoping to prevail on the pastor to take that block because we're going to talk about women being submissive in the church. And I thought that'd be better for him to, he has more experience with that than I do and I thought it would be good for you to take that block. Thank you. Maybe we can have a joint meeting that night. Yeah, we can do that. As long as they clean up. I don't care. We'll let these two young men teach it.

Or Levi. Yeah, we'll throw them under the bus. Well, we're going to be in, again in the first chapter, 1 Timothy, beginning in chapter, verse 12, 12 to 17.

[1:33] Let me read this. I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has strengthened me because he considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.

Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was more than abundant with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.

It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners among whom I am foremost of all.

Yet for this reason I found mercy so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate his perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in him for eternal life.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.

Amen. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news of the Bible.

[2:51] And the good news of the gospel is that it has the power to transform lives. History is replete with examples of seemingly unreachable people being reached with the good news.

One of Dr. MacArthur's favorite examples of a dramatic conversion was a South African named Afrikaner. I'm sure that was probably the name given him by the English.

But he was a member of a very warlike tribe which are still around down there. I've always loved this name, the Hottentots. This man was so violent that the governor of Cape Town put a big reward on his head, offered a large reward and they put on there dead or alive.

They didn't care. Well, into this scene entered someone that probably most, maybe all of us have never heard of. Robert Moffat.

He was not a bounty hunter. He was a hunter for souls. He was a young Scottish missionary. And one day you ought to do a study on the men that Scotland produced.

[4:18] My wife's ancestral home. Some of mine as well. He believed that God had called him to preach the gospel to the Hottentots.

And so he went there seeking them. And the first person converted under the ministry of Moffat was Afrikaner, the violent chief.

And this today still stands as a remarkable testimony to the saving grace of God. Closer to home and one that you undoubtedly have heard of, we have Billy Sunday.

He was a hard-drinking, hard-fighting, professional baseball player. One day he's walking down the street in Chicago, had a number of his teammates with him, and they came upon a young guy that was a street preacher.

And he's preaching the gospel. And Billy Sunday stopped and told his fellow baseball players, he's watched this. And he stopped there to make fun of him.

[5:25] But all of a sudden he was gripped by his words. He began listening to what he was saying. And his heart was overwhelmed with the truth of the gospel.

The Holy Spirit was at work. He received Christ as his Lord and Savior and devoted his life to serving the Lord.

He was a great evangelist. He was a neat guy. He would do revivals in a church and he would do baseball stuff. He would slide in the home plate up on the platform.

He'd slide. He'd hit a ball. One of my favorite Billy Sunday stories, he had a heckler one day. He was preaching. And he would preach a little bit and this guy on the front row would say, I don't believe that.

Billy kind of looked at him and then he went on and preached and God said, I don't believe that. Well, finally, Billy Sunday had enough. He said, what's your problem? He said, I don't believe this book. I don't believe anything in this book.

[6:29] He said, if I could prove one verse to you, just one, would you shut up and let me preach? He said, if you can prove one, I'll shut up. Billy Sunday, who was a good-sized man, athlete, goes down on the front row and he takes his fingers and puts them like that and he twists as hard as he can.

And I mean, this guy starts bleeding. And Billy Sunday goes up and I think it's a proverb. It says, if the noses tweak, the blood will flow.

And he read that proverb to him and the guy shut up. That was Billy Sunday. I wish we had time to tell the stories of the great converts, the ones that probably were given up on, you know, that that'll never happen to this guy.

Martin Luther was a Roman Catholic monk when God saved him. I tell people this and most people, it goes over their head, but we're basically here as a product of Martin Luther that God used.

Really, father of the Reformation. Not the only father, but instrumental in the Reformation. John Newton was a former slave trader who came to know the Lord.

[7:53] To this day, we sing his hymn, Amazing Grace. Chuck Colson, more contemporary, just died recently, went to prison under the Nixon White House debacle.

Or is it debacle? Watergate. And when he was getting out of prison, someone said, what are you going to do? And he said, I'm going to dedicate my life to prison ministry.

And they all laughed and said, no, you won't. You'll do that for a month or two or six months or a year. And then you'll write a few books, become a millionaire, and go, you know, on the speaking tour. Chuck Colson, and I actually was in the room with him.

I didn't meet him, but I was, well, there were 1,200 of us in the room. And Chuck Colson devoted his life to prison ministry, an impossible convert.

I knew an FBI agent once, had hair and was thin, named Tom Holland, impossible convert, but the Lord believed otherwise.

[8:56] In the Bible, we have many unbelievable conversions. we have the maniac of the Gadarenes. We have the most despised tax collector and traitor to his people by the name of Matthew or Levi.

We had blind Bartimaeus and he had a companion also that was blind. They were both radically saved. The adulterous Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar, radically saved.

Zacchaeus, we could probably sing that song. I remember that. The Roman centurion at the crucifixion, Cornelius, the Ethiopian eunuch, and the Philippian jailer.

And I'm scratching the surface. there were many others. But the most remarkable conversion in the Bible was a man named Saul of Tarsus.

And we're studying that on Sunday morning in here, the book of Acts. What a conversion. He was the bitter enemy of the cause of Christ.

[10:29] He described himself as the great persecutor of the church and the foremost of sinners. Yet God would use this man to become the greatest evangelist, the greatest theologian, and I guess we could say the greatest church planner in the history of the world.

He wrote the blueprint for the church, for how we are to live out our lives. And what made the difference in Saul of Tarsus?

Well, the difference was the gospel of Christ, the good news of Christ. And Paul never lost the wonder of God converting someone like himself.

The remainder of his life, and he comments on this in a number of his 13 books, the remainder of his life, he viewed himself as the supreme example of God's saving grace.

And I have a feeling if you were here tonight and there was someone here that's not saved, Paul would say, if he me, he could save you. I think Paul would say that. Paul is the spiritual father of Timothy, which makes Timothy the spiritual son of Paul.

[11 : 59] And Paul spends a lot of time warning Timothy and guiding Timothy on how to deal with false prophets.

And I'll tell you, fellas, if you read the New Testament closely, the letters of the apostles, there was a lot of time spent dealing with false prophets, false teachers, false leaders in the church.

Jude, Peter, John, Paul, there's just a lot of that goes on. Paul deals so heavily presenting the false gospel, the false gospel, that tonight he's going to give his testimony concerning the true gospel.

It's like I've saturated Timothy with the false gospel. Let me give him a little ray of light here because there is a true gospel out here. And by doing so, he's going to contrast the true gospel with the emptiness of the false gospel.

gospel. And he's going to reveal to Timothy six elements of true grace. These six are the source of grace, the need for grace, the power of grace, the extent of grace, the purpose of grace, and the response to grace.

[13 : 30] And I'll say two things. If anyone thinks that's original with me, come see me. Secondly, we could spend easily, easily a month on each one of those.

And we're not going to. We're not going to spend the night. And the first thing we're going to look at is the source of grace. Verse 12, I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has strengthened me because he considered me faithful, putting me into service.

grace. Amazing verse of scripture. Now there are myriads of definitions of this biblical term grace. We probably have some of them memorized. But for our purposes tonight, I think John MacArthur's definition seems appropriate. Grace is God's loving forgiveness forgiveness by which he grants exemption from judgment and the promise of temporal and eternal blessing to guilty and condemned sinners freely without any worthiness on their part and based on nothing they have done or failed to do.

That's an amazing definition. Tremendous definition. And that's at variance with the majority of the world, majority of the church today. Well, God looked down and saw me praying to receive him so he chose me.

[15 : 07] Or, you know, well, I did this, this, this, this, and this. I'm part of the doo-doo crowd. This is why Paul directs his thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord.

Christ is the source of grace. Paul pulls in Timothy by referring to Jesus not as his Lord, his Paul's Lord, but our Lord.

He pulls us in, guys. The Holy Spirit is writing this. He pulls us in, you know, 2,000 years later, 10,000 miles away. Our Lord.

And the Bible affirms repeatedly that Jesus is the source of grace. John 1, 17, for the law was given by Moses.

Grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. Romans 3, 24, we were justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption, which is in Christ Jesus.

[16 : 16] Paul knew about the grace that so permeated his life because he knew from where he had come. He knew how far he had come.

1 Corinthians chapter 15 starting in verse 9, for I am the least of the apostles who am not fit to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God.

but by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace toward me did not prove vain but I labored even more that all of them yet not I but the grace of God was with me.

The grace of God was in him. To the church at Ephesus and that's where Timothy is at, Paul wrote these words, to me the very least of all the saints this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ.

Paul understood where he had come from and he understood the grace of God. Paul repeatedly acknowledges the grace given him to preach the gospel.

[17 : 44] He was a preacher of grace, he was a preacher by grace. His source of grace was the Lord himself and it was poured out on the apostle Paul, poured out, starting on the road to Damascus, poured out on him and it was poured out in four aspects and Paul was grateful for all

these and we should be as well and we won't be able to develop these in any length.

Paul was grateful for God's electing grace. What did Paul do to get himself saved? Well, he was walking to Damascus to kill Christians basically. He's going to arrest them and put them in prison and they're going to die.

He was a product of electing grace. If you're saved, you're a product of electing grace. He had enabling grace. He had entrusting grace and he had employing grace.

We'll develop those a little bit. Paul was never puffed up about the grace lavished upon him. Never was.

Never was proud. He sought no honor for himself. I mean, I'd have been, you know, wanting the honor.

[19:05] I always remember Marty gets, a name you've probably heard. We've met Marty a couple times. Marty is a messianic Jew, believes in Christ, wonderful singer, songwriter, and when he has a concert, he always maneuvers it where he doesn't get applause.

It's pretty amazing. He comes out and he's talking on the microphone when he comes out so people kind of hush. and he takes off his shoes because he's in the presence of the Lord and he does all the music and then he says, this is my last song and he does it and he says, now let's brother, sons, I want you to pray.

And when that guy's through praying, he's gone because he doesn't want the accolades for himself. He wants all the credit to go to the Lord. Paul sought no honor for himself.

It was sufficient for Paul to know him Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being conformed to his death.

Philippians 3.10 Paul understood his source of grace. He also understood his need for grace. His need for grace.

[20:23] He says in the first part of verse 13, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.

And if you've studied the life of Paul, he was. He was all those things. Now, Paul, like all of us, needed grace. I had a discussion with a young man one time and he said, I asked him, what are you striving for?

He said, I want the justice of God. I said, my friend, you don't want God's justice. Trust me when I say this. You do not want God's justice.

You want mercy. You want grace. Paul needed grace. Grace was vivid in his mind again because he knew from whence he had come.

He knew how far he had come. great sinners need great grace. In fact, we could say great sinners need greater grace.

[21:36] Prior to the Damascus road, Paul had spoken great evil about the true God even when he thought he was serving the true God.

And I've said this before and I believe this. I can't prove it. I think Paul was on the fast track to be the high priest. I think he was being groomed. He was learned.

He studied under Gamaliel, the great teacher of Israel. And I think he would have been high priest someday. He was on that track. And God stopped him cold in his tracks.

He had blasphemed God. He had led others to blaspheme God. And his attacks, though directed at the church, were ultimately against the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we talk about this often at Voice of the Martyrs. God's love. But this is one reason we talk about on the road to Damascus. When Paul's laying on the ground blind, he saw this great light and he's blinded.

[22:53] And someone's speaking to him from heaven. He says, Who are you, Lord? And Jesus answered him and said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

whom you are persecuting. Well, was he persecuting Jesus? Jesus was at the right hand of the Father. Jesus is in the throne room.

Jesus is in heaven. He's ascended. Well, the answer is yes. He was persecuting Jesus because when you persecute the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, you are persecuting Jesus.

Jonathan, we had lunch today and we were talking. I don't know which one of us said it, but, you know, when you attack the church, the true church, you're attacking the apple of God's eye.

You're attacking the bride for whom Christ died. Can you imagine someone coming into your home and cursing out your wife and acting like they're going to hit or something?

[23:56] I'd dot two I's, maybe with a Glock, you know. James, you wouldn't let someone come in your home and do that to your wife. If you had one, you wouldn't do it.

None of us would. Well, the church is the bride of Christ. And the bride, you know, don't go after the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ for whom he died and for whom he is preparing a banquet and she's going to be spotless before him.

Church is very, very important to the Lord Jesus. because of pride, Paul had violated all of the commandments in the Decalogue, in the Ten Commandments.

He didn't know it, but he had. As a blasphemer, because he had condemned the Lord Jesus Christ, the God in human flesh, second person of the Trinity, as a blasphemer, he had violated the first half of the Ten Commandments which speak of man's relationship to God.

Read those tonight. Verse five are your relationship to your maker. As a persecutor and violent aggressor against the church, he had violated the second half of the Ten Commandments which speak to man's relationship to man.

[25:30] And you go through those and that's how they fit. That's how they fit. Paul was a ferocious attacker of the church.

His goal was to stamp out Christianity. We understand that, right? He didn't want it relegated to some second class status. He had already had second class status. It was a baby.

His goal was to wipe it off the face of the earth. And he concluded the best way to do that was to kill the members, to kill them.

He entered homes and he carted away new converts to certain death or imprisonment. I'm often asked, you know, someone will come in and say this, this, this.

I want you to go out to that house and go in there. And I said, wait a minute. We have a thing called the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. I can't go in there unless I have a warrant. I have to have enough.

[26:30] You know, you just can't go into somebody's own. Paul didn't have a Fourth Amendment obligation. He kicked doors down. He went in and he seized everyone and cast them into prison.

Ferocious attacker. he was the instigator of the martyrdom of Stephen. And you know, I actually hold, I think he had greater responsibility because he was egging them on.

And he said, no, pick up this rock, it's bigger. And let me hold your coat because you'll have more force when you're throwing. He instigated that crowd. And I'll tell you another thing, and I'll throw this in for free because it's an axe, but he never forgot Stephen's manner of death.

I mean, the words he was saying, it not only emboldened Paul, but it haunted him his whole life. We'll talk about that maybe in a little bit. Given Paul's past, it is no surprise that the early church was very cautious and slow to accept him as a legitimate believer.

He scared them to death. I mean, if Saddam Hussein comes forward to join Sunday, first of all, I'd be amazed because he's dead, but secondly, we would probably say, well, I don't know.

[27:57] I don't know. They were very cautious. They took their time, and Barnabas was really the one that got him into some of the churches. They'd say to Barnabas, you know who this guy is?

Well, yeah. even Ananias, you know, that he went to the house of Ananias and said, Lord, do you know who this guy is? He didn't want to deal with him. He didn't want to deal with him either.

But they were very cautious to accept him as a legitimate believer. And yet all of that, you know, we preach the sovereignty of God.

all of that, even the attitude of the people God used to keep Paul humble and to maintain an attitude grateful for the grace that he had received.

You know, if you're ever going to be puffed up, Paul probably just made brilliant theologian, brilliant mind. The king ever said, Paul, I think your brilliance is driving you crazy.

[29:05] You know, he was in good stead because the family of Jesus thought he had gone crazy. They went to pick him up one day. Also, the power of grace.

Second part of verse 13, and yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief. He was shown mercy. Man, there's power in mercy.

Paul had a great need for grace, the same need we have. God's grace was sufficient, and its power was greater than even Paul's need.

Great grace, powerful grace. Paul lived out, Romans 5, 20, where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. Paul was shown mercy in spite of who he was and in spite of what he had done.

And you know, that's one of the miracles of inspired scripture. We wouldn't have invented Apostle Paul if we were writing a fictional account. Oh, he murdered all these people and he was stamped on church, but now he's the head spokesman.

[30 : 19] We wouldn't come up with that. We would never come up with that. Paul was shown mercy. All of us could give that testimony. If you're one with Christ, and I trust you are, why would you hang around me?

Listen to my words, but Paul was shown mercy. We, too, were shown mercy. I'm told that the Greek language for shown mercy can be rendered, I was mercied.

I really like that. Paul said, I was mercied. Wow, I'm going to get robbed to make me a bumper sticker. I was mercied. That would be a good one. Paul's wretchedness, and he called himself a wretch.

Remember that? Romans 7, what a wretched man am I? Paul's wretchedness was met with God's compassion.

And God's compassion won. It always will. Grace removes guilt.

[31 : 26] guilt. Through grace we can stand before a holy God without spot or blemish. Mercy is linked to grace but different.

Mercy takes away the misery we feel toward our sins. Mercy always accompanies saving grace. grace. You can't have one without the other. It's always there. And I want to speak to you this evening about the measure of grace. Verse 14.

And the grace of our Lord was more than abundant with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. In our passage this evening, this is the only time we're actually going to see the word grace in scripture.

It's in verse 14. He's talking about grace but he only uses the word one time. The concept of grace is found throughout this letter in all of Paul's writings.

[32 : 33] All of them. We see the concept of abundant grace and then Paul talks about more abundant grace. Adding grace upon grace.

It's an amazing concept when you try to measure it. It's abundant grace. It's more than abundant grace. That's how God described it. God the Spirit. That is a grace that surpasses understanding. Surpasses our ability to know. And it surpasses our ability to deal fully and finally in our own minds. God doesn't work there. God's But he deals with all of our sins. All of them with grace and mercy. I have my Arminian friends that tell me, well, you know, no, there's still some sins out there that I can commit.

Folks, you've got to be before the Father spotless. You've got to be spotless. And the way you can do it, he's got to deal with all your sins.

[33 : 42] You don't enter into God's presence unless you are without blemish, without stain of blemish. The bride, we're part of the bride here, will be without spot or blemish.

There's no sin more powerful than Christ's ability to deal with it in forgiveness, grace, and mercy. No sin out there.

When people say, what about sin of rejection? And people that leave, they went out from us because they weren't one of us. If they'd been one of us, they would have remained with us. By going out, they proved they were not one of us.

1 John 2 19. You need to memorize that one. We might call what Paul was talking about here, super abundant grace.

More abundant, super abundant grace. When we have super abundant grace, we have the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.

[34 : 42] grace. Now, remember that saving faith is never a meritorious work. Don't sit there, thank you, God, that I'm not like other men and that I was able to appropriate grace.

It is always a gift. It's talked about the gift of God's grace, a free gift. gift. It is electing grace that gives us the ability to believe.

Prior to that, the Bible says we were dead in trespasses and sins. You ever think about that word dead? What does that mean? Dead is the inability to do anything.

Can't do anything if you're dead. Let's go out Sunday morning. Let's not meet in Sunday school.

Let's go out to Memorial Park and preach to every grave and see who gets saved.

No one will. Why? Because they're dead. And dead means they don't have the ability to do anything. This type of faith that Paul's talking about is continuing faith.

[35 : 51] That's the measure. It continues. He who continues to the end shall be saved. Salvation is not the gift for continuing.

Continuing is the evidence that salvation is real. That's a deep, deep thought. Sure. Salvation is not the gift for continuing.

We don't get salvation. We're not saved because we continue. We continue because we're saved. What about the purpose of grace? Verses 15 and 16.

It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. How much acceptance does it deserve? Full. That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Does that make anybody in here happy? And then Paul says, among whom I am foremost of all, yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate his perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in him for eternal life.

[37 : 04] Marvelous. Marvelous. The purpose of grace. Paul makes a very strong statement there. He is telling us something that is trustworthy and therefore should be accepted by all who read it.

I mean, let's face it, if it's trustworthy, we should accept it, right? He then presents the gospel of Jesus Christ in nine English words, if I counted right.

Eight words in the Greek language. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. That's the gospel.

people say, oh, I wish I could witness, but the gospel is just kind of above me. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

That passage is rich with information about the anointed one of God who came into the world of humanity as savior of sinners.

[38 : 08] sinners. He left his heavenly home where he'd been next to the father for eternity, took upon himself human flesh, and pitched his tent with us in the literal language.

He dwelt among us. He came to seek and save the lost. And Paul, of course, saw himself as the foremost of sinners sinners that had ever lived, and that was absolutely true until I came along.

There should be, if you got a right translation, a little footnote back there to Tom Holland. Paul, like me, found mercy in the grace of God. That was God's purpose.

The purpose of grace that we find mercy in the grace of God. Well, getting close to the end. What about the response to grace?

The response to grace. How do we respond to the grace of God? Listen to how Paul did. He cries out in a doxology of praise.

[39 : 25] If you go dry in your prayer life, just write this in the front of your Bible. Now to the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.

Amen. Verse 17. He closes out this portion of scripture with a doxology. He speaks of our king who is eternal.

Literally, he is the god of the ages. That's what that literally says in Greek. Christ is god of the ages. To the Jews, there were only two ages.

The present age, the one they were living in, there's a present age and there's an age to come. That's how they saw things. But this Jesus is immortal.

He lives in eternity, past, present, future. He is imperishable. He is incorruptible. He will never know decay. Even when they put him in a tomb, he resurrected on day three so the holy one would not experience decay.

[40 : 43] That was in the Psalms. He will never know death again. People kind of sometimes visualize Jesus coming back as a baby in a manger. That's over. He's coming back on a horse of war with a double edged sword to do combat to those who have violated his bride and raped his nation Israel.

That's the Christ that's coming back. Let me catch up here. He suffers no loss of strength or ability to accomplish what he sets out to accomplish.

You know, don't picture Christ as sitting in a cloud in a throne room and impassive. I'm going to tell you something. He's holding the entire universe together. And if he stopped that for one second, it would disintegrate.

He holds your very breath in his hands. You can't take another breath without the grace of God. He holds gravity on this planet so we keep our feet on the ground. He created air pressure so our lungs would take in oxygen.

Try to kill yourself by holding your breath. I had a cousin who used to get his way with his parents by holding his breath. And they give in to him. He made a mistake one time. He spent a weekend with his grandfather.

[42:06] And he said, I'm going to hold my breath if you don't do such. He said, go ahead. When you're through, I'm going to spank you. He held it as long as he could. And he breathed a wham! Something that's never happened to your boys, I'm sure.

Right, Levi? He suffers no loss of strength or his ability to accomplish. God is invisible, but he can be known through his self-revelation of himself.

He can be known. The fact that he is the only God is taught throughout scripture. Throughout scripture. As such, he is worthy of all honor and glory forever and ever.

And Paul closes out with amen. So be it. Or let it be said. Let it be done. He closes out with a hearty amen.

There is a false gospel. And it is prevalent in our day. My goodness, it's prevalent in our day. False gospels are taught by false teachers and false preachers.

[43:18] That's what they do. There is a true gospel taught by true teachers and true preachers. We hear here on Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night.

By the way, this is a good place to be on Wednesday night. We participate in the true gospel through the grace of God bestowed upon his people.

And I'm going to close with this tonight. That grace is available to the chief of sinners, Paul and Tom Holland, the very worst of sinners who come to Christ in humble faith and repentance.

Perhaps a better way of being drawn to Christ by the Father in humble faith and repentance. And we still preach and teach grace because it's still available to a darkening world and a dying world.

I'm going to tell you guys, there's people out there that are going to be saved. And we need to witness to them, witness to every creature. Spurgeon said witness to every creature.

[44:33] When one of them gets saved, you know that's that guy belongs to God.