

# Look Out!

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Date: 29 April 2018

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[ 0 : 00 ] Music. Philippians chapter 3 and beginning in verse 1.

! It says, Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. Look out for the dogs. Look out for the evildoers.

Look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God in glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more. However, circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

[ 1 : 23 ] For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection of the dead.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? In 1886, Robert Louis Stevenson's book, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, was published.

And I'm sure that many of you have either read the book or you're certainly familiar with the fictional character. He's appeared in many other stories. He's appeared in many other movies.

This character is still being used in our modern society to describe a person who lives a double life. Usually the person has a squeaky clean image.

There's somebody who few people would suspect of committing any kind of acts of immorality. Think of Tiger Woods back in 2013.

[ 2 : 50 ] If you'll remember, he possessed one of the most squeaky clean images that there was. If you had a product, Tiger Woods was the guy that you wanted to endorse it. By all accounts, he appeared to be a family man, a loving husband and father.

And then we found out that he was a serial adulterer. And all these other reports came out and surfaced and they exposed the truth that this wholesome family man was a serial cheater.

And it became a huge story because it was so shocking. People couldn't believe it. They couldn't put the two together. Dr. Jekyll, if you remember in the story, he believes that his good nature is being held back by his bad nature.

He thinks, man, I could do so much more. I could achieve so many things. I could achieve all of my greatest goals if I just didn't have to deal with this bad nature inside of me.

And so if you remember the story, he creates this potion that separates the two. Dr. Jekyll by day is who he is and he's no longer tainted by the bad nature and he's able to do all these amazing, wonderful things.

[ 4 : 04 ] He's able to achieve all the things that he never thought possible. But the cost of that is at night, he's got to turn into Mr. Hyde and give in to all of his most vilest desires.

And he does that. And the story says that Dr. Jekyll is afraid of Mr. Hyde.

He lives in fear of Mr. Hyde. He can't believe that the things that Mr. Hyde did were actually things that were lurking in his heart and in his mind. And he hated who that person was.

And he hated what that person did. And so, in a sense, Dr. Jekyll realizes his need to clamp down on this evil nature. And so, in a sense, he gets religion.

And he decides, I'm going to do good things. I'm going to give my money. I'm going to give my time to different charities. I'm going to do good to make up for the bad. the bad things that Mr. Hyde did. [ 5 : 08 ] And that's exactly what he did. He gave charitably. He gave his time. He got awards. He got prestige for being this wonderful man in the eyes of society. And the story says that one day as Dr. Jekyll is sitting on a park bench, he's thinking about all these wonderful things that he's done.

You know, I'm the most charitable. I've given the most. I've done all these wonderfully good deeds. And then he looks down after giving himself all of this praise and to his shock and to his horror, he's turned back into Mr. Hyde.

Why is that? Because all of those great, all those wonderful things that he had done gave him a sense of self-righteousness.

and to his horror, he became Mr. Hyde without having to take that potion. So eventually, what he does is the only thing that he can do is he ends his own life.

It's an interesting story because Stevenson was not a Christian, but he grew up in Scotland in a Presbyterian home. And so you get this feeling as you read this book that he's got a sense of the sin nature.

[ 6 : 30 ] He knows how evil it is. And how what men like to do, sometimes I'd say the worst person in the church, the person that, if the devil had a preference, would be a Pharisee in the pew than an irreligious person living out in society.

Because that person could do more damage to the church of Jesus Christ than that person outside of the church who could care nothing for Christ in the gospel. They're so full of themselves.

They're trying to earn their salvation. And they're like Mr. Hyde's running amok in the church of Jesus Christ.

If you remember in Matthew 23, Jesus exposes this very truth about the Pharisees, about how self-righteous they were. This encounter that Jesus had with the Pharisees reminds me of a boxing match.

You ever see the fight that Muhammad Ali had with George Foreman, the famous rope-a-dope match? And there Muhammad Ali is just laying on the ropes and he's letting Foreman pound him and pound him but nothing's really connecting with him.

[ 7 : 36 ] But it looks like he's losing but none of Foreman's powerful shots are landing. And that's what I think about when I read about this encounter of Jesus and the Pharisees with Matthew in Matthew 23.

It's like those Pharisees are Foreman and they're trying to catch Jesus. They're trying to catch him in a lie. They're trying to show to the people that he's not really who he says that he is. He's not really genuine.

We can catch him in a lie. We've got to get rid of this guy. And then finally in Matthew 23 it's like Jesus when Muhammad Ali comes out. You know, enough, I've worn this guy out and boom, he just starts landing left and right and has Foreman on his heels and eventually knocks the guy out.

And what Jesus is doing there in Matthew 23 is pronouncing six woes against the Pharisees if you remember. Woe are you for this? Woe are you for that? And what he's doing is he's exposing these guys as the hypocrites that they truly are.

He's got them backpedaling and he's revealing to them that these people are self-righteous men. They think that their good works will save them.

[ 8 : 38 ] They think that they're quote unquote good people because they obey the law. But let me tell you that these guys are spiritually dead men.

And woe to them because they continue in this way they will live eternally apart from God in hell. And he lets them have it.

Here in Philippians chapter 3 verses 1 through 11 Paul is writing about this same thing. He speaks of his own Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde experience.

He says I myself was a Pharisee and he testifies that he at one time was the most self-righteous of all of those self-righteous men. After his conversion if you remember he realized that all those things that he entrusted in to make him righteous to bring him nearer to God and bring him salvation were actually driving him further away.

He was further away from God because of his attempts to save himself. And ironically as he was converted on the road to Damascus as Jesus appeared to him on his way to persecuting and arresting Christians if you remember he was blinded.

[ 10 : 01 ] And what's ironic is that this man who was a blind guide leading the blind encountered Jesus he was blinded momentarily but as a result of that he could see.

And God used him in extraordinary ways to lead his church onward. In verses 1 through 3 Paul issues a command to the Philippians to be on the lookout for such people.

People like this. Be on your guard. Look out. It's a command that we must continue to follow in the church today for still there are those who occupy again places in the pews who are avoiding Jesus as Savior by placing their faith in their own ability to obey all the rules.

They are modern day Pharisees. They've got all the good works piled up high they don't drink they don't chew and they don't go with girls and guys that do.

You heard that before? This is who they are. However they are filled with self righteousness which produces within them a sense of superiority over others.

[ 11 : 23 ] They are cruel they are miserable people because they are constantly having to compare themselves to other people and because they are secretly doubting that they are ever going to be as good as they think they have to be to earn God's grace to earn their salvation.

salvation. The bad news is that true and perfect righteousness is not possible for man to attain on his own. The standard is simply too high but the good news is that true righteousness is possible for mankind but only through the cleansing of sin by Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. You see we have no ability to achieve righteousness in and of ourselves by ourselves but Christians possess the righteousness of Christ because as the word says God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

On the cross Jesus exchanged our sin for his perfect righteousness so that we can one day stand before God and he will not see our sin but he will see the righteousness of his son Jesus.

This is the point that Paul is trying to make in this passage but my concern is that we don't believe or understand just how serious of a warning this is.

[ 13 : 04 ] I was tempted when I was taking notes over this sermon to just go right over this verse. I failed to realize just how much of a warning this is that we must pay heed to not just for them back then but for the church of Christ today.

And again I'll tell you I believe that the devil prefers Pharisees to irreligious people and again especially so because they're in the church because they are capable like none other of inflicting the most damage to the church of Jesus Christ.

So why should you listen? Why should you heed this warning? Well for a couple of reasons. First if you are self-righteous that you would realize that you aren't saved.

You are just a dead person and you're just as dead as your sins excuse me for trying to keep the law. You must be found in him not having a righteousness of your own as the word says that comes from the law but that which comes through faith in Christ the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

So first of all if this is you if you think you're saved because of who you are because of your ability to follow the rules then if that's what you're hoping for for salvation you're not saved.

[ 14 : 28 ] It doesn't work that way. And you'll see more of why that is as we go along. Secondly it's this to guard your heart and to protect our church from falling into this and being deceived into believing that salvation is based upon works and not solely and only upon the grace of God.

Born again believers who don't pay heed to this warning are capable of slipping into legalism and wasting valuable time here on earth doing things that don't produce fruit that lasts for the kingdom of God.

Don't waste your time on self righteousness. So now that we know why we should heed this warning we need to learn how. And we find that out by asking what should we be on the lookout for. What do we need to be looking out for? And in these verses the Apostle Paul teaches us how to identify self-righteous false teachers and how to distinguish true believers from them and we will get into that part next week.

But today we're going to focus on how to identify self-righteous false teachers. How can we identify self-righteous false teachers? Well, in verse 2 Paul tells the church three times that we must look out for them.

[ 16 : 05 ] Three times he says this. Look out, look out, look out. And there in the Greek he's using the word blepo and it means to be where? Be warned. Look out for these guys.

It's also in the imperative form which means that this isn't just a suggestion. Hey, you know, just maybe be kind of looking out for some guys like this.

You know, they may come, I don't know. No, he's saying look out. Beware. Be on your guard. They will come and you must be able to identify them so that they don't infiltrate and cause all kind of damage.

He is commanding us. We are being commanded by the word of God to be on the lookout for this. So we must take it seriously. You know, I think of, I think of, you know, the amber alerts that get issued.

Or you'll watch the news and the police will send out a description of a vehicle or a person that they're looking for and they tell you, hey, here's all the things. They're driving this car, this make, this year, they're armed and dangerous, or they have this person with them.

[17:11] They give us all of this information so that we can identify them, so that we can report back to the authorities, so that they can handle this bad guy. And that the law can step in and do what it needs to do.

And so in the same way, we need to be looking out by paying attention to the things that Paul gives us so that we can identify who these people are and protect ourselves and protect our church and protect the truth of God's word.

So the first thing we see here is that self-righteous teachers don't practice what they preach. How can we identify them? Well, they don't practice what they preach. And Paul says there, look out for the dogs.

Now, you might be thinking, I like dogs. I'm a dog person. I am a dog person. I have two dogs in my home, and you know, if we didn't have two cats already and children, I'd have more dogs.

Because I like dogs. I think dogs are awesome. But these are not the kind of dogs dogs that you would want to keep as a pet. Again, in the Greek, there are two different words that are used to describe dogs.

[18:28] And there is a word for a dog that you would use or that you would keep as a pet. And then there's another word. And this is kouan. And this is what Paul is using when he's describing these false teachers.

This is not a dog you would want to keep as a pet. These were dogs back in ancient times. They would roam together in packs. And they would come through the town. They would eat scraps. They would eat disgusting things.

It's kind of like the dog if you left a pie on your windowsill, they'd come and they'd snatch it. That kind of dog. Not only that, but they would sometimes attack people and little children.

This was not the kind of dog that you would welcome into your house. This was not the kind of dog that you would feel comfortable with sending in the backyard with your kids. These were scavengers. These were dogs that were diseased.

These were dogs that would attack people even. They're not harmless little pets. These animals were so despised in this world that the word again, kuan, was used as a derogatory term.

[19:34] In biblical times, Jews commonly used it in reference to Gentiles. You see, they called the Gentiles kuan. They're dogs. Because of the references to circumcision in this passage, we know that these false teachers were what the early church called Judaizers.

This word comes from a Greek word meaning to live according to Jewish custom. That's who these guys were. They balked at the idea of God's salvation being offered freely to those who believe.

They reasoned that such a tremendous gift from such a holy God must require some kind of a payment. And so they thought they could earn it. They thought they could earn salvation.

They thought they could earn grace. But again, what they didn't understand is that if a person adds any kind of condition to grace, then grace is no longer grace.

If it's not freely given, then it's not grace. So a Judaizer taught that in order for a Christian to truly be right with God, in order for them truly to be made righteous, they must conform to the Mosaic law.

[20:52] And circumcision was especially promoted as being necessary for that salvation. This was a big issue in this early church.

And it led to, if you remember, the Jerusalem council, where Paul went and made the case that in Christ there was no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile, for God had purified the hearts of the Gentiles by faith.

And we see again over and over in God's word that justification is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and that's it. there's nothing more that can be added to it.

Look at Galatians 2:21 with me. There Paul says, I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Those who insist that they can earn salvation by their own efforts, undermine the foundation of Christianity, and they render the death of Christ unnecessary.

[22:15] What did Christ die for? If it's up to us to earn our own salvation, it had no purpose, as Paul says. So amazingly here, Paul, a Jew himself, takes this term that the Judaizers loved to use to describe Gentiles, and he throws it back at them.

He flips it back at them. here's what would happen. Paul would come to a city, and he would preach in the Jewish synagogue, and go through the town sharing the gospel, and eventually he would establish a church of believers.

And our vision statement as a church is based upon his method. We go like him. We're engaging. We're reaching out. We're not opening the doors and expecting people to come in.

We are going to them. We're engaging. And when we go to them, we're enlightening them. What? With the gospel, with the word of God, and then we're encouraging them. In two senses. One, you can do this, right?

We're here to support you to bear your burdens. And two, encouraging them, don't slip back into those old ways. Don't live like the world. Don't be conformed to that. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

[23:32] And we're equipping them so that they go out into their city, that they do the same, engaging and making disciples. Once he left, the Judaizers would come in.

Once Paul would leave an area, these Judaizers would come into the church. And they would undermine all that he had been preaching about justification by faith. In fact, the book of Galatians was written by Paul to counter this very thing that the Judaizers had been doing in the churches there.

trying to revert them back, trying to tell them that you can't be a Christian unless you become a Jew first. Unless you're circumcised first. So we see Paul uses this term kuan and it's fitting to describe who these Judaizers were.

Are dogs unclean and filthy? Then he's saying so are these guys. Are dogs vicious and dangerous? Yes. So are these guys.

when it came down to it, they didn't practice what they preached. They claimed to be spiritually clean, but like Jesus told them, called them out for in Matthew 23, he said, your whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.

[25:00] ultimately you can identify who they are because they don't, again, they don't practice what they preach. The requirement of the law is that it is obeyed completely all the time in every instance from birth to death.

The law was never meant to save us, but to show us the desperate situation that we are in as a result of our sin and point us to our need of a savior.

They don't practice what they preach because they can't practice what they preach. They can't fulfill what the law requires because they're sinful men.

And they will stumble, and they will fall. It's impossible to be saved in that way. So we know who they are because they don't practice what they preach because they can't practice what they preach.

Secondly, we see that self-righteous teachers produce bad fruit. And there again in verse 2, Paul says, look out for the evil doers, or some of your translations might say evil workers.

[26:09] And again, here is what is ironic about the deeds that these self-righteous teachers perform. On the outside, externally, their rituals and their ceremonies appear to be done for God.

And they see themselves as doing it for good. They think that what they're doing is pleasing God. But in reality, all the pomp and circumstance of their good works is selfishly motivated.

They're not really doing it for God. They're doing it truly for themselves. The Bible says that only believers controlled by the Spirit can do genuine good works.

Only believers can do genuine good works that aren't motivated deep down by a selfish desire.

Look at Ephesians 2:10. For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which

God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

2 Timothy 2.21. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

[ 27 : 26 ] Titus 2.11-14 again supports this truth. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Unbelievers can do bad things for bad reasons. They can also do good things, but ultimately they are motivated again by selfishness. They aren't doing good things because their motivation is for God's glory.

They can't. They don't want God. They don't love God. They don't desire God. I was on Facebook recently as I was preparing for this message and there was a mom and she made a post about her son who had received some academic awards from his school and they were going to have an award ceremony for him.

And so she's writing this post and she's kind of talking about the conversation that they had. She wanted him to go. And he didn't want to go. And he said, I don't want to go because the basketball game is on and he didn't really care that much for the award, right?

In his eyes, I'm just doing what I'm supposed to be doing, making good grades. And so she writes in her post, you know, well, we're going, she told him, we're going because we're going to celebrate you.

[ 29 : 14 ] We're going to celebrate you. We're going to celebrate your achievement and I want a picture, right? And so I was reading that and I was thinking, you know, one, I would probably do the same.

I probably will do this. If our kids get academic degrees or awards, it will be because of Danny, not because of me, right? And I will rejoice and I will say we're going. But as I read that, I thought, you know, was your desire really to celebrate your son?

Because if you wanted to celebrate him truly, you would have let him do what he wanted to do, which was to stay home and to watch that game. But really, what I think was happening, which happens a lot on Facebook, is this mom wanted to justify herself by impressing her friends, her family, even her frenemies, right?

Her enemies who, you know, she's fake friends with, so that she could justify herself and say, hey, look, look at my kid. I'm a good parent.

We're a good family. We're successful. You should want to be like us. And isn't that a lot of times what Facebook really is? It's just people who are trying to justify themselves.

[ 30 : 37 ] And if we really were the type of people who we claim that we are on Facebook, I mean, goodness gracious, if you believe that the people on Facebook are really the people that they claim to be by the pictures that they send, then I have a bridge in Brooklyn that I want to sell to you, right?

Come to me afterwards. But it's all seeking justification from others. So here's where we need to be on the lookout. Is our worship for God or is it for us?

God, why are you here this morning? What did you come for? What's your reason for being here? Why are we doing things like engage? What's the purpose of going out and doing those kinds of events and putting in so much work to do it? Why are we going to the lighthouse and feeding people there?

Why are we going out to the prison and leading them in worship once a month? Why are we going to places like the Hope Clinic? Why are we doing any of this stuff? There's a temptation that we need to be aware of.

[ 31 : 51 ] Because if we're not careful, we could look at all these things that we're doing and start to get a little boastful. Look at our church. church, you know, we're out there.

We're doing this stuff. Where's your church? You're not doing it. Nose up in the air, we're better than you. We're doing more than you are.

Or you could do it even yourself individually. You know, I'm giving my time, I'm doing these things, but other people in my church aren't. I'm better than them.

You've got to be careful. You must pay heed to the warning. Because if we don't watch out, we can develop that same kind of self-righteous attitude that we must be aware of.

Again, no doubt it feels great to serve the Lord. There is nothing like serving the Lord from a pure heart. But you can't serve God with pure motives and desires if you haven't been born again.

[ 32 : 58 ] Eventually, your good works will be exposed by the bad fruit that it produces. In Matthew 7, 15 through 20, Jesus speaks about this very thing.

Beware of the false teachers who come to you in sheep's clothing inwardly. They are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?

So does every healthy tree that bears good fruit. So does every healthy tree that bears good fruit. But the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, you will recognize them by their fruits. So here's the application on this point for us as a church.

Are we making disciples? Are we engaging for the purpose that we can go out there and post on Facebook and say, hey, look, we're successful. We're doing what a church should be doing.

[ 34 : 02 ] But when we're going out, are we actually talking to people? Are we actually sharing the gospel with them? Are they actually coming to faith in Jesus Christ? Are we engaging them truly?

Are the people in our church growing? Are they really deepening in their understanding of God's word? Are they better able to apply it to their lives? Are they being enlightened?

Are they being encouraged? Are the people in our church being equipped so that they can go out and make disciples? That's what we're about here.

But if we don't watch out, all these things that we're doing, we can brag about, we can boast about, it'll be self-righteous talk, and God won't be blessed by any of it.

Thirdly, self-righteous teachers base their salvation on works, not grace. They base their salvation on works, not grace. And there he says, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

[ 35 : 09 ] And here is Paul's strongest indictment against these Judaizers. mutilators. The other two descriptions were bad. But this one, no pun intended, cut straight to the heart of their self-righteous worship.

What does Paul mean when he says mutilators of the flesh? Well, he's talking about circumcision. If you remember, the Jewish people believed that circumcision was essential for salvation.

In fact, there was a legend that they had that Abraham waited outside of the gates of hell to make sure, checking men to make sure that none of the circumcised were going to hell, that they were going to heaven, right?

What a terrible job that would be. Who would want to do that? It was so important to them. It was who they are. It was what defined them. Circumcision was so important to them that they even referred to themselves as the circumcision.

And they referred to those who were on the outside, who weren't a part of their group as the uncircumcision. the Dallas Cowboys tragically call themselves America's team.

[ 36 : 23 ] And I know that there's some Cowboys fans in here. I'm an American, and the Dallas Cowboys are not my team, right? And so I say, amen. I heard one.

And so I say, well, if the Dallas Cowboys are America's team, then the Kansas City Chiefs are God's team. Amen? Amen? Okay.

If they're God's team, they would win the Super Bowl, which never happens. And the Patriots, who are there a lot, I have a feeling God's not happy with what happens there either. But going back to what we're talking about, why do I bring that up?

Because this is the attitude that the Jews had, right? We're on God's team. We're God's team. We are the ones whom God loves.

We're the ones who are special. And if you're not on our team, then you're on the losing team. And here's what's the problem with that is, yes, they were God's chosen people and occupy a very special place in the history of the world.

[ 37 : 26 ] But God had a specific purpose for them. Do you remember what it was? Be a light to the Gentiles. Be a light to the Gentiles. And ultimately, yeah, he sent his son through the Jews who was that light to the Gentiles, but they had a job to be a light to those who are on the outside to let them know about the one true God.

But you know what they did instead of that? They hated the Gentiles. They hated them. Called to be a light to them, but instead said, you know what? You're not us.

You're not a part of us. You're not like us. We hate you. But by this time, though, circumcision had been commanded by God, and there was reasons for that, right?

Because it was symbolic. And I don't have to get into details, but you know that that's a painful operation, and it's symbolic of just how deep man's sin is, that it's passed on to the next generation. And so it must be cut off, and the blood was shared, and that's symbolic of our need of a Savior, of saving. But by this time, it had become just a ritual that did not have the intended significance that it once had.

[ 38 : 51 ] That's exactly what Paul gets after in Romans 2, verses 25 through 29, where he says, for circumcision is indeed of value if you obey the law. But if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.

So if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you, but you who have the written code and circumcision, but break the law.

For no one is a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical, but a Jew is one who is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.

His praise is not from man, but from God. And so what do we get from that? Well, no ritual, no circumcision, not baptism, not communion, or any of those other things transform the heart.

Those things can't save anybody. None of those things can impart salvation. All of these things are symbols, and they're meaningless unless they reflect a heart that has been transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 40 : 15 ] Religion operates on this principle. principle. I obey, therefore I am accepted by God. But the operating principle of the gospel is this.

I am accepted by God through what Christ has done for me, therefore I obey. I do good works not to earn salvation.

I do works because I'm saved. You understand that? Because I have been transformed. Two people can occupy the same pew in church.

They both pray. They both tithe. They both are loyal to their family and to their church. They both live morally upright lives.

However, they may be doing those very same things based on two radically different motivations. One's obedience is motivated by works-based salvation.

[ 41 : 23 ] I'll do these things, God, to put you in my debt. You owe me. Look at what I've done. One, you owe me that salvation.

The other, their obedience is motivated by the salvation, by gratitude for the blessing that they've already received because of Christ and because of what he's accomplished through his sinful life, his atoning death, and his victorious resurrection.

I want to share this quote with you from Timothy Keller. The founders of every other major religion essentially came as teachers, not as saviors.

They came to say, do this and you will find the divine. But Jesus came essentially as a savior rather than a teacher, although he was that as well.

Jesus says, I am divine, come to you to do what you could not do for yourself. And so the Christian message is that we are saved not by our record, but by Christ's record.

[ 42 : 38 ] Don't ever forget that. And we must be on the lookout for that very thing. And if you're here this morning and you're realizing, you know what?

I've claimed to be saved, but now I realize that maybe I'm not. Because I've been doing good stuff, thinking that I'm earning God's salvation.

You realize that you're a self-righteous person. And I'm here to tell you what God's word says very clearly. That's not the way it works.

A person is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. And that's it. Also, you might be one of those people who is saved.

But you slip into that legalistic pattern. Man, grace is an amazing thing. That's why we sing amazing grace. Because it often sounds too good to be true, right?

[ 43 : 52 ] I've got to do something. Or you think, you know what? I want this, Lord. I need this. I've got to earn your love. I've got to earn this gift. So I'm going to do these good things so that you'll put

me in your debt.

Or you could be tempted, again, like we said, look, look, Lord. Look at all the things that we're doing as a church. Why aren't you bringing in all the people? It doesn't work that way.

Grace alone and faith alone through Christ alone. Because only He could live the perfect, sinless life that the law required. None of us could.

All of us fall short of the glory of God. But only He could do it. And He did it. Obedient, then, to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Why? For our sins. For the sins of His people. And there on the cross, an amazing exchange took place.

[ 44 : 57 ] Our sins. God took those and put them on Him. And He took His righteousness and placed it on us. And on the third day, Christ rose from the dead as proof that He is the Son of God.

As proof that He truly has atoned for our sins. God sees you. And so when you place your faith in Christ, God sees you not as a sinner, as an enemy, but as an adopted son or daughter, an heir to His kingdom.

He sees somebody who's righteous. Thank you.