

The First Word of the Gospel

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[0:00] Well, let me give you just a little heads up on where I'm going for the next several weeks.

! Next Sunday we'll be back in 1 Peter. We're not going to be there today. We'll be back in 1 Peter for one Sunday and then on the Sundays leading up to Easter, I'm going to preach a series of messages entitled, Discovering the Real Jesus.

And so I would encourage you that those messages, of course, will be informative, instructive from God's Word, will teach us from His Word about Jesus, but also they will be evangelistic.

And so I would encourage you, God's people, to invite lost people to the church, to be a part of the worship service, and to be here, to be present for the preaching of God's Word as we lead up to Easter.

Again, discovering the real Jesus. Now He's the one you know. I'm not going to give you some new information about Jesus you don't already know, but lead you through the Bible into some texts that help us to understand better just exactly who He is and what He has done and why He did it and so forth.

[1:40] So that's the heads up, but this morning you're going to be in Matthew chapter 19. And so if you want to find that, I would appreciate that. And again, we'll be in 1 Peter next Sunday.

And there is a reason why I've skipped it today, postponed it. There's a reason and I'm not going to tell you. So just, no. I want to bring this message out of Matthew chapter 19 and verse 16.

And I'm going to read it here in a moment, but I want to give you somewhat of an introduction.

Actually, a very lengthy introduction. Then we'll read the text, okay? I want you to think about this.

A few years ago, George Gallup, and I think we all are familiar with that name, the pollster, asked Americans the following question.

Very interesting question, I think. The result's even more interesting or intriguing. The question went like this. Would you say that you have been born again or have had a born again experience that is a turning point in your life when you committed yourself to Christ?

[2:58] It's an interesting question, isn't it? Did you know that a yes answer was given by 52% of those polled?

52% of those polled, age 18 and older, didn't go below 18. 52% said, yes, I've been born again.

And so then, naturally, the conclusion that I think we could come to would be just mathematically that over half of Americans profess to be born again.

I mean, using that terminology. More than half. Approximately, somewhere just over 80 million Americans profess to have had a born again experience with Jesus Christ.

And understanding the depth of the question, 80 million Americans profess or say that they have committed themselves to Christ.

[4:13] To be followers of Christ. Now, that sounds pretty great, doesn't it? Over half. But now, if that's true, then let me ask you something.

Why is it that our nation's morality is continuing on its downward spiral? And in recent years, it's kind of taken a fast track, that direction.

I mean, if better than half are true followers of Christ. Then why? Why is the spiritual condition of our nation such as it is?

And really, I think it's even worse than we think. Because we're kind of shielded and kind of in our little environment. When it's difficult for us to really comprehend the depth of sin and immorality of our nation.

Well, let's bring it a little bit closer to home. Why, then? If better than 50% of American citizens are born again followers of Christ, then why are our churches not growing?

[5:31] Why are they not growing? You say, well, there are a lot of churches that are growing. Well, yeah, they're having some growth in some definition of the word.

Primarily what it is, churches are swapping members. There are members that are transferring from other churches. And so there are some churches, for varying reasons, that are growing.

And some certainly are growing in a bonafide way. I'm not suggesting that there aren't any churches where the hand of God is not moving and blessing through seeing people come to Christ. By and large, they're not in this country. In fact, many of them are in decline. I mean, let's just face up to the fact. It's true. Many are declining.

And an alarming number are closing their doors. And I mean, even among Southern Baptists. Even in our own beloved denomination, there are churches closing their doors.

[6:37] And some are just about that close to doing the same. And just as soon as a few more members die, it's going to all be over for them. As far as being a church.

Recognizable church. So, how can this be? If 52% of Americans claim to be born again Christians, followers of Christ, bona fide followers of Christ.

If 80 some odd million Americans are, quote, Christian. I mean, that's the conclusion I think we're to arrive at after a poll such as this, if you believe polls.

And, you know, we're kind of mixed on that. But if we just take the poll at its word. And we have that many who are better than half professing to be followers of Christ. Then, where's the disconnect there?

Well, someone asked George Gallup about that. And this was his answer. He said, apparently there's a huge gap between. A huge gap between mere belief.

[7:42] And real conviction in practice. The gap between those two. Well, I'd say he's accurate about that. He just didn't go far enough.

The problem is, according to Gallup. There's this huge gap between mere belief and real conviction. But I would say to you this morning that there is a gap between mere belief and real conversion.

There's the gap. There's the problem. And what I'm saying is that many of those 80 million plus Americans who profess to be followers of Christ are not.

They're not. Even many of those who are members of a church like ours. Who profess to be born again.

Even possess some measure of assurance in their life. And yet, in reality, they're not saved. Not truly Christian.

[8:56] They've never really been saved. They think they are. They say they are. Many of them hope they are. But they're not. They're not.

And why? What's missing? What's missing that makes their profession false? What's missing that not only makes their profession false, but now has given them some measure of assurance?

Some false assurance. What's missing? Well, it is the one thing, I believe, that is missing in a lot of the preaching today. In a lot of the so-called evangelism today.

There's some good evangelism going on. Some genuine evangelism. Certainly some genuine preaching going on. But I mean on, according to the big picture. It's the one thing that's missing. It's missing in, I think, even a lot of personal witnessing. Personal evangelism. It's the one thing, I believe, that is missing in most people's conversion testimony.

[10:19] So-called. And it's the one thing, more importantly, more to the point, that a lot of people, most people, are not willing to do.

And the one thing that Satan does not want people to do. Now think about it. What is the reason? Among reasons, apart from the reasons of God's own sovereignty and His own work of salvation, but from our perspective, what is the reason our churches are filling up with lost people?

It's happening. And why Billy Graham. I have a great respect for Billy Graham. Why he would be compelled to say in his life that he believes 75% of those on the church rolls are not really saved. It's an appalling number. What's missing? The answer? I believe the answer is the first word of the gospel.

[11:44] The answer is the first word of the gospel. The first word of the gospel is missing. Now what do you mean by that, pastor? Well, it was the first word, first recorded word, out of the mouth of John the Baptist when he began to preach.

It was the first word. It was the first word, recorded word, out of the mouth of Jesus when he began his public preaching ministry. It was the first word out of the mouths of the disciples.

The first word of exhortation out of the mouth of Peter at Pentecost after he preached that great sermon. It was the first word out of the mouth of Paul when he began his preaching ministry. Do you know what it is? The first word? Matthew 3.1 Don't turn to it. Matthew 3.1 says this. In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[12:51] Matthew 4.17 From that time Jesus began to preach. That is the time of his temptation. From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And after Jesus charged his disciples and sent them out on their kind of first missionary journey, missionary trip, preaching assignments, he gave them instructions, sent them out, and the Bible says in Mark chapter 6 and verse 12, And they went out and preached that men should...

Bet you can't guess what the word is. Repent. Luke 24.47 Jesus parting words of encouragement and instruction to his disciples before Jesus would ascend up to the right hand of the throne of God. He said, the Bible says, And that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in his name among all nations. Now, did the apostles do what Jesus taught them to do?

Well, on the day of Pentecost, Peter preached that great sermon, that mighty sermon. And when the people asked the apostle Peter, what shall we do? What did he say?

[14:19] He said, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ. In Acts chapter 3 verse 19, Peter's second great sermon, he said, Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

And what did the apostle Paul preach? Well, you know, don't you? In Acts chapter 26 and verse 19, Paul's kind of reflecting back over his preaching ministry, over his ministry.

And this is what he said as he kind of summed it all up. He said, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but showed first unto them at Damascus and at Jerusalem and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles that they should repent, repent and turn to God and do works worthy of repentance.

And Paul repeats this message throughout his epistles, as does Peter, affirming this message in his epistles. And the word occurs ten times in the book of Revelation.

And in all of the New Testament, the word repent appears more than fifty times. And I guess it's important. It must be important.

[15:46] And yet, not only is it missing in the gospel as it is presented by many in our world today, not only is it missing in a good many of those people who claim to be born again, missing in their testimony, missing in their conversion, but also there are more and more in our day that have come to the conclusion that the doctrine of repentance should not even be a part of the gospel message.

That it should just be only believe. And so we have an easy-believe-ism gospel that's being proclaimed in our world today that does not make any demand to repent of sin and self, and says only believe.

I think about Paul in Acts chapter 17, and he's preaching to a bunch of pagans. And his gospel approach is somewhat different than maybe he would give and did give to those who had some kind of framework for Christianity.

And he began with God and creation, and he moved forward and finally came to the point where he said, and this God demands that you repent.

Repent. You see, you cannot leave repentance out of the gospel message. In fact, I would say to you that there is no true faith without repentance. That faith and repentance, or repentance and faith, are inseparable.

[17:22] You cannot, listen, you cannot, just think of this reasonably, you cannot turn to Jesus without turning from sin any more than you could go to Tulsa without leaving Bartlesville.

You cannot do it. You see, repentance is not an addition to saving faith. It is part of saving faith. They go together. Two sides of the same coin. And Jesus said twice in the 13th chapter of Luke, I tell you, no, except you repent, you will all perish, likewise perish.

Now, there may be some here this morning who are feeling a little uncomfortable about this right now. It may be. Because what I said was missing in many a person's so-called profession of faith is missing in yours as well.

Could be. Some of you seated right out here. I don't know. And Satan, I would say to you, Satan does not want you to know that.

[18:37] Satan would work as hard as he can and do everything he can to keep you from knowing that.

Because Satan does not, not only does he want a defeated church and a weak church, not only does Satan desire to water down the gospel, hence making it meaningless, but Satan wants you to go to hell, quite frankly.

Let me give you a good definition or working definition of repentance. Repentance is a heart attitude, decision, that says to God, God, everything I now know to be sin.

And everything you will show me in the future to be sin, I am willing right now to give it all, all of it up for your sake and follow you.

I think that's a pretty good working definition. Now, Matthew 19 and verse 16 is a case study on the very thing that I am speaking of here, though, I will admit to you right now.

[20:23] The word repent does not even appear in the text. But the idea is there. Let me read the text and then we'll just kind of move through some of it.

Now, behold, one came and said to him, that is to Jesus, good teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?

So he said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good, but one, that is God. I believe Jesus is saying, I'm God, but that's a sermon for another day.

But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments. That's his first answer to the question.

And he said to him, which ones?

And Jesus said, you know, you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, honor your father and mother, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Well, the young man said to him, all these things I have kept from my youth, what do I still lack?

[21:33] Jesus said to him, if you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow me.

And when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

And Jesus said to his disciples, assuredly I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

And again I say to you, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, who then can be saved?

But Jesus looked at them and said to them, with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. All possible.

Now, at first glance, you just kind of kind of take in the story, kind of picture this whole scene. And especially as you ponder how Jesus answered this man's question, at first glance, this, what quite frankly seems a little strange.

[22:49] I mean, do you sense that? That this is, this is kind of strange, kind of different. You know, just think about it. What did Jesus say to this man?

How did he answer his question? And add to that how you might have answered his question. And what you might have done.

And I have asked myself this question as a pastor. Who's had interviews with men like, like, like Jesus did with this young, rich ruler, you know, and have responded to similar kinds of questions. And, and I think about that, how I would respond and what I would do and what Jesus did. And it, it seems a little different to me.

But, understand that when Jesus would talk to someone, the first thing we need to understand is, when Jesus talked to somebody, he always got right to the heart of the trouble.

[23:58] Didn't he? And the reason he could do that is because, well, he's God. He knew. He understood. He could get right to the point. In fact, he could dig right deep and, and, and put, you know, hit the, the nail right on the head with every person.

And he'd never made a mistake in that. Never misconstrued. Was never deceived. He knew the hearts and intents and motivations. And so, the problem with this rich young ruler was sin.

And Jesus knew that and went right to the heart of it. His problem was sin and it's always sin, isn't it? It really is. I mean, listen, when a person is confronted with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, there will be acceptance, a response of acceptance or rejection based upon that person's willingness or unwillingness to turn, to forsake sin and self and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

the problem is sin. And Jesus knew that when he responded to this man's question. Knew the heart of the matter.

Now I want you to think for a moment about this whole scene here. Here's a man who's come to Jesus. A man who appeared to be ready.

[25 : 25] Wouldn't you say? He sure appeared to be ready. I mean, ready to get saved. I mean, he looked like a hot prospect. At least as I read the text, you know, that's what he looks like to me.

He's ripe and ready and add to that he's eager. He's come to Jesus. There's no way this man's going to get away without receiving eternal life.

Right? Well, he did leave without it. Why?

Well, because Jesus set up a seemingly insurmountable barrier for this man. At least it seemed that way. And instead of just signing this man up right away, Jesus laid out some terms to which this man was unwilling to submit.

In a sense, Jesus chased him off. I mean, just an observation of this whole scene. It looks like he chased him off.

[26 : 37] I mean, what kind of evangelism is that? I say respectfully, Jesus, what kind of evangelism is that? Jesus didn't mention faith, didn't mention grace, didn't mention any of the facts of redemption.

He flunked, would have flunked evangelism 101 at any seminary. Most seminaries. He failed to get a closure. Just use some of the vernacular of evangelists today.

Failed to get a closure. Failed to draw the net. He failed to sign this man up. What's the matter here? Well, you know, of course, we can't judge Jesus' methods.

All of our methods stand in judgment before him. So, then what went wrong with this rich young ruler? Well, let's just look at it for a minute. Kind of some implications here that we ought to consider and it'll lead us to the real problem here.

What was really missing? Number one, just think about this. This rich young ruler, he came and he wanted the right things. Didn't he?

[27 : 45] What did he want? Eternal life, verse 16 tells us. That's the right thing to want. He wanted eternal life.

He came seeking eternal life. He knew what he wanted. He knew what he needed. He knew he didn't have it. And so, it's a good thing to desire eternal life. Jesus himself said, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

That's what you ought to seek. He was seeking the right thing. He came for the right thing. And so, he wanted the right thing. He really did want it, but he left without it. Why? Well, notice the second thing.

He came in the right spirit. He came in the right spirit. Yes, he did. He wasn't prideful.

He wasn't haughty about it. He wasn't presumptuous about it. I mean, there are a lot of people who know they need to be saved. They know they need eternal life, but they don't have this man's humble spirit.

[28 : 49] But I want you to just notice. You can't notice it from Matthew because Matthew doesn't bring this out. But in Mark chapter 10 and verse 17, we have a parallel account of this same story.

We're not turned to it, but let me just tell you what Mark informs us and reveals to us about the spirit in which this man came. He says, number one, he came running, so he was eager.

He came publicly, not like Nicodemus who came at night under the cover of secrecy. He came publicly, and in front of all of these people here, and I don't know how many were there, this Jewish man, young, rich, no doubt a leader.

He comes and he just kind of blurts it out. He says, what good thing must I do that I might have eternal life? In fact, Mark also tells us that he knelt at Jesus' feet.

Now isn't that interesting? He came and knelt, bent his knees at Jesus. Now picture this.

[30 : 02] Here he is. He's a leader, no doubt, among his circle of people, his community, a leader. He's a spiritual man in the sense of a very religious man.

I mean, he did claim that he had kept all the commandments from his youth up. This was a very pious, very religious acting man. And he was young, and he was rich, and he was educated, no doubt.

I think we can assume that, very well educated. And to add to that, he was humble. He was a humble man. What an opportunity. I mean, listen, this is a can't miss convert for the church.

You can't miss this guy. Just think what he could do for the church, for the cause of Christ. Think about it. I mean, he could give his testimony, not only in his church, but travel around with maybe some well-known evangelist, and he would have as a part of his team the testimony of a rich young ruler.

Just think what he could do. And he's educated. He could write a book. He could write books. Christian books that could appear on the shelves at Lifeway, and other Christian bookstores. [31 : 29] And, you know, think of the influence that way. And he could certainly give a lot of money. Let's not forget that. He was a wealthy man. And just think what his tithe would mean to the local church.

I know I'm kind of spoofing some of these things. But what I'm trying to have us realize that no pastor or very few seemingly pastors and evangelists today would miss this opportunity to get this guy in their church.

church. But Jesus did. Jesus did. Why? Well, notice not only did he want the right thing and come in the right spirit, but third, we would all have to agree he came to the right person.

Didn't he? I mean, he came to Jesus. He didn't come to some pastor. He didn't respond to the ministry of some evangelist.

He came to the very source of eternal life itself. He came to Jesus himself. You see, you know, we might be tempted to say, well, you know, pastor, I can see how, you know, some people might get involved in a false religion and then have some kind of false assurance of their eternity, eternal life, whatever they may call it.

[33 : 24] I can see how maybe some people would get involved with one of these other denominations out here that are not really teaching the Bible and not really believing correct doctrine.

I can see how that could happen. But he couldn't come to a Baptist church. He couldn't come to our church and be a member of our church for years and not be truly born again.

I mean, we preach the Bible. We believe the Bible and we preach Jesus. So it couldn't happen here. Well, this man came to Jesus himself.

He came to Jesus himself and yet he went away unsaved. How could that happen? I mean, he came for the right reason, he came in the right spirit, he came to the right person, and listen, he asked the right question.

I think he did, really. Verse 16 says, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? That's what he asked. I tell you, that's a fair question.

[34 : 44] Don't try to analyze it too much and say, well, you know, that certainly works. Don't analyze the question. It is a fair question, all right, as far as it goes.

And, by the way, there were others who asked similar questions. The multitudes in John 6, 28, asked Jesus a similar question.

They asked, what shall we do that we may work the works of God? In Acts chapter 2, the crowd said to Peter, after he preached that mighty sermon there, they asked him, what shall we do?

In Philippians, the Philippian, or in Acts, the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas, what must I do to be saved?

And I suggest to you that it's the right question. And yet, he went away unsaved.

[35 : 56] Sorrowful. Why? Why? Why would Jesus not receive this man at that point when almost every Southern Baptist church would have?

I'm not bashing Southern Baptist. I've been one all my life. But why would Jesus not receive him? Well, nearly every church would. Would gladly have added him to the role, baptized him, probably deaconized him, given him a place of leadership, probably a Sunday school class to teach, put him on some important committees.

That's probably what we would have done. I'll tell you why Jesus did not say to this man, all you have to do is fill out this card.

Go out there and find a pew to call your own. Why Jesus did not receive him. repent.

[37 : 24] Because he would not repent. He would not repent. He refused to forsake his sin.

He refused to forsake self. And self-rule. And take up the cross and follow Jesus.

he refused to do that. And Jesus knew that this man was utterly lacking any sense of his own sinfulness.

And so he got to the very heart of the matter. What was this man's specific sin do you think? I think it was probably covetousness. We could identify that from the story certainly.

Jesus said sell everything you have and give it to the poor and he went away sorrowful. He had great wealth. He was an idolater. That's what covetousness is.

[38 : 33] It's idolatry. Self-centered, self-selfishness, pride, certainly. These would be kind of the broad categories of sin, specifically covetousness.

And that had caused him to be a transgressor. And I would maintain a transgressor of all the law. Of all of God's law.

But now, I would quickly say that it's not the specific sin that is the real problem here. I mean, sin's the problem, but the real issue here is not just what his sin was.

It could have been anything. That's not the real issue here. And Jesus, by the way, was going to die for all of his sins. And Jesus would forgive him of all of his sins, whatever the sin was.

The problem, the real issue was his unwillingness to forsake his sin. To repent and to obey Christ and to follow Christ and to trust him.

[39 : 44] And just, I want you to consider how Jesus dealt with this. It's masterful. Not necessarily the way we could do it, but I think there's some things we could learn here in our own evangelism.

But in verse 17, his first response to the man's question was keep the commandments. There's the answer. You say, is that a valid answer?

Keep the commandments? Well, in a sense it is. I mean, if, and I say big if, hypothetical if, if a person could keep all of the law, then he would be blameless.

I mean, if he kept all the law, letter, the letter of the law, and the spirit of the law as well. If a man could keep all of the law, he would be blameless in a sense, and he would then have eternal life.

But, of course, that could never happen. Because all have sinned, come short of the glory of God. And so every one of us, every human is convicted by the law.

[40 : 46] And this man was convicted by the law, but he would not admit it. He would not come to grips with that. That he was a lawbreaker. And he said, what many today, I think, are saying, they would say, well, you know, yeah, of course, I have sinned, but I would never do any of those big sins.

I would kill, murder anybody, and steal, and commit adultery, and those kind of things. You know, I'm not a bad person. I mean, there are a lot of people who would say that.

I would not do all those terrible kinds of sins. So we kind of define sin as the big sins. God's going to understand all the little sins.

And this guy, I'm sure, was a very moral man, very upright, right man. I mean, he lived his life probably in an exemplary way spiritually and biblically.

But he was a sinner. And Jesus showed him that actually he had broken all of the Ten Commandments.

[41 : 55] Broken all of them. You say, how does he do that? Well, Jesus said, identified to this man that he loved money more than he loved people. All right? He said to the man, go sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and he would not do it.

He said, in order to be saved, do we have to give all of our money to the poor? No, you're missing the point here. Jesus is identifying, going right to the root of his sin, and his sin is the love of money. And he loved money more than people. That means he broke all of the second tablet of the Ten Commandments. all those related to man, our relationship with man.

And then he said to him, or identified that he also loved money more than he loved God. He said, come and follow me. But he would not, and so he broke all the commandments on the first tablet, all those related to God.

Like, love God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength. no other gods before me. He wanted his sin more than he wanted righteousness.

[43 : 06] And Jesus says, this is your sin, forsake it, repent of it, and follow me, and he would not, the Bible says, he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions.

And it's a classic, really. Classic case study. And this scene is repeated over and over and over again today by those who will not forsake sin and self and submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their life.

God has some strong words in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 10 about people like that, people who will not repent.

Let me just read that to you. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 10.

The Bible says, for even when, that's not it, here it is, and with all unrighteous deception, speaking of the lawless one, but his focus is those who perish.

[44 : 22] In verse 10, those who perish because they, that is those who perish, the lost, they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.

And for this reason God will send them strong delusion that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness.

I say that last phrase describes lost people and epitomizes lost Americans in this country that is so saturated with the word of God and the gospel did not love the truth but rather loved unrighteousness.

Truth unrighteousness. Those two are compared put side by side. Now we would think truth, the opposite of truth is error and so they would not love the truth instead they loved error.

In a sense that's true but the opposite of truth is unrighteousness. and this describes so many in our world today.

[45 : 36] Here's kind of a typical response that you might get and I have gotten from those that I've had the opportunity to share the gospel with. They would say, some would say something like this, well preacher I know I'm a sinner.

Yeah, you're right about that and I know Jesus can save me and I want to be saved. I really do but just not right now. Ever talk to anybody like that?

Yeah, yeah, I know that's what I need but not right now. Not right now. Because a lot of those people know that if I repent of my sin now I'm talking about repenting of sin the kind of sin that I plan to be involved in this weekend.

And I've already made my plans. Or that some area of my life is suddenly just going to have to go away. They're not willing to do that. And there are so many who are in the grips of that.

Who kind of in one hand they have the gospel. Not have it in the sense that they've received it but they have it they have the knowledge of it they have the truth there because I mean it's shouted from the mountaintops especially in this nation and Bibles you know our country is saturated with the word of God and it's on the radio waves and the television I mean there is still some true gospel being preached on TV today and in other areas and so they have the truth they have the gospel here and then in the other hand they have their sin their sin so here's the truth the gospel which involves submission to Christ to the lordship of Jesus Christ and over here they have submission to self self rule truth unrighteousness truth unrighteousness and he chooses unrighteous the love of sin and so

[47 : 50] God says you'd rather have your sin okay then you get what goes with it delusion deception ultimately damnation why because you believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteous and that is where many people are today some gone off to believe lies of some religious cult and there are new cults coming on the scene every day it seems in our nation and in our world others believe in the lies of some kind of works religion and that gets a whole lot of them a lot of people others believing in the lies of some kind of twisted philosophy about things the supreme lie of all is that many are deceived into thinking that because they believed in the facts about Jesus

Christ and because they walked down some aisle in a church and filled out a card when they got down there and then got wet in the baptistry that the biggest lie is that that somehow makes it automatic that they're saved without without by the way ever giving up their sin without ever repenting and that is the worst lie of all you know I think those who are involved in false religions and cults many of them will come to a place where they identify the inconsistencies of it and they abandon it and look for truth elsewhere there's an opportunity there to hear the truth of the gospel and respond to it there are others who are believing in some weird philosophy and they eventually come to the place where they see that that's lacking and they abandon it and start looking for something else and there are those involved in a works kind of religion or add to that an emotional kind of religion and sooner or later they become dissatisfied and abandon that but those sitting in the pews of the bible believing church like this one are perhaps in the most dangerous place in a sense those who have never been saved not truly blind by their own false assurance thinking that somehow they can have what they want and what

Christ wants at the same time thinking they can have their sin and have Jesus too and it will not work Jesus said in Mark 8 34 whosoever will come after me let him deny self and take up his cross

and follow me for whoever will save his life shall lose it shall lose it but whoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospels the same shall save it in another place in fact a parallel passage in Matthew 10 and verse 38 or 39 he says he that finds now listen to this he that finds his life will lose it that is you are are doing it yourself and this is what I want this way
I'm going to live and this this is my life and I'm going to hold on to this and this and these things I like I love he who finds his life will lose it and he that loses his life for my sake will find it it's all about repentance and faith the old childhood adage that goes like this finders keepers losers weepers that's wrong according to Jesus it's finders weepers losers keepers have you lost your life for Christ have you turned forsaken sin self rule and turned to Jesus and trusted him have you done that Jesus said take up the cross and follow me or you're not worthy of me he said unless you repent you will all likewise perish I know this message this morning is really directed toward a very small number in this room certainly there's benefit in God's people understanding better and more deeply the need for repentance to be a part of the gospel message but specifically the aim here are those in this building who have yet to repent of sin truly repent of sin and trust Christ as Lord and Savior and I urge you please come to
[54 : 18] Jesus today come like him to me trust Jesus repent put your faith in Jesus faith in Jesus faith in Jesus