

Ignorance and Unbelief

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: 1 Timothy 1:12-13

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Now, I am going to use an offensive word tonight as a title for my message. And I am going to make some statements that will be probably offensive to some. But, you know, the apostle Paul said that the gospel of grace is offensive. I will tell you why religious people will get up and walk out on a proven veteran minister of the gospel when he is declaring the very foundation truths of the Word of God. Who is God? What happened in the fall? What is the condition of natural men? Who is Jesus Christ? And how did he redeem sinners? I will tell you why men and women and young people will get up and walk out. One word, ignorance.

Our Lord said, "You neither know me, nor my father." And the apostle Paul said this about himself, if you care to look at the Scriptures in 1 Timothy, chapter one, verse 12. The apostle Paul said about himself, in 1 Timothy 1:12 talked about what he did, a blasphemer. He blasphemed the gospel of Christ, the name of Christ. "I was a persecutor," verse 13 of 1 Timothy one. "I was injurious, but I obtained mercy and I did it ignorantly. I did it ignorantly. Unbelief, yes, but I was ignorant."

And then over in the book of Acts, chapter three, the apostle Peter speaking talking to the Jews he said in Acts chapter three, verse 13, "The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus whom you delivered up and denied him in the presence of Pilate when Pilate was determined to let him go. But you denied the holy one. You denied the just one, the one who enabled God to be just and justifier. You desired a murderer to be granted unto you and you killed the prince of life. You killed the prince of life whom God raised from the dead."

Verse 17. "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance you did it. You did it ignorantly, ignorantly."

And several times in Paul's writings he writes to the Church and he says this. "Brethren, I would not have you to be ignorant, ignorant."

But this is a religious generation. Old A. Reilly Copeland was speaking out in Texas one time years ago. I was out there in a Bible conference and I suppose then he was in his late 60s or early 70s. And he said, "The thing that has amazed me throughout my ministry is that a man or a woman, if they are going to go into the business, any business, they were going into the florist business. They will go to school. They will study

flowers, botany, business administration and all these things. A fellow that is going into the grocery business, he will become an apprentice. He will become a learner. He will become a helper before he goes in business for himself. If a man is going to be a plumber and plumb a house, especially his own, he will study for a little while before he starts putting pipes together. If a man is going to be an electrician he will take at least a few months or years to study electricity. But,” he said, “the thing that shocks me is every mother’s son is an expert on the Word of God, every mother’s son is an expert on the Word of God and they can’t be taught. They are not open to be taught. They are not willing to be taught. They are ignorant. They are unlearned, untaught and especially in the critical issues of the Word of God. That is where they are ignorant, in the critical issues.”

Now, my friends, to keep from being too offensive let me make two statements. Number one: A man may be very intelligent and this is an intelligent generation, no question about that. I suppose the most intelligent generation of men and women and young people ever to live on this globe. They have put men on the moon. You can sit in your living room and push a button on your television and see people on the west coast almost simultaneously, hear a man speak 3000 miles away. They have got airplanes that fly without pilots. They have invented so many things. They are putting artificial hearts in people.

This generation is an intelligent generation, but a man may be very intelligent in matters of the world and totally ignorant in the things of God, just totally ignorant, as dumb as a moron.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter two, he said, “Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love him. The natural man receiveth not the things of God. They are foolishness to him, neither can he know them that are spiritually understood.” And I am saying there are men and women in this congregation who are brilliant, brilliant in the things of this world. They can make hand made furniture. They can do all manner of things that attract the eye and the attention of men, brilliant, things that many of us can’t even hope to do, couldn’t even draw a picture of it.

But I will tell you this: Understanding and knowledge of the things of God comes by revelation not by education.

And then the second thing I would say is this. A man may be very knowledgeable in the Bible, very knowledgeable in the Bible and still ignorant of how God saves the sinner.

One man said to Spurgeon one time, he said, “I don’t believe in election.” And he said, “I want you to know that I read the Bible through 23 times on my knees and I have never seen election in the Bible.”

Mr. Spurgeon said, “Well, two things wrong. Number one, you need to get up in a comfortable chair. That’s no position to read any thing. No wonder you didn’t see it.

You are too uncomfortable. I'm surprised," he said, "you saw anything. And the second thing is you are reading too fast. Twenty-three times through the Bible in the length of time you have lived is too fast, son."

Let me tell you something. The apostle Paul was a knowledgeable, well read, intelligent, religious man and didn't know saving grace. He didn't know Christ. He was ignorant, he said. "I did it. I persecuted the Church. I hated the gospel of grace and I did it...I was ignorant."

Not many folks here tonight stand up and say, "I am ignorant." But they are. They are ignorant. If you don't know something you are ignorant. Isn't that right? If you don't know it you are ignorant. And the apostle Paul said, "I was ignorant."

Tim James told us somewhere in a conference, it may have been here or somewhere else, about a little sparrow sitting on a telephone wire. The little sparrow sits on the telephone wire. He is supported by the telephone wire in his position. And he has a firm grip on the telephone wire, but he is plumb ignorant of the message going through the wire. There are some voices in that telephone wire, but he doesn't know what they are saying. He has no understanding at all of what they are saying. And I have known many folks to be sitting on the Word of God. They say, "Standing on the Word of God." I have heard that all my life. "Standing on the Word of God," like that sparrow sitting on that telephone wire.

"And I have supported by position by the Word of God."

That's exactly right. You can prove the moon is made out of green cheese almost by the Word of God if you take it out of its context. And they are supporting their position and they are standing on the Word of God, but they are completely ignorant of the message going through this book. There is a message in this book. There is a message of a person. And that is the reason when the apostle Paul was brought out of his ignorance and obtained the mercy of God he began to say, "Oh, that I may know him, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection."

One song writer said, "The religious man stood at the judgment, but his self righteous rags would not do for the men who had crucified Jesus were all religious men, too."

Now, our spiritual ignorance can be attributed to several things. And I am going to go through this just briefly to get to my main points. Our spiritual ignorance, and I am talking about we don't know, we are ignorant. And that ignorance can be attributed to several things. And remember, I am saying this. You can be a smart man in the things of the world and ignorant in the message of grace. And you can be a wise and smart and intelligent educated man in the Scriptures. You can go to Bible schools and colleges and have degrees and be a preacher, a deacon, an elder or a pastor and be ignorant of God's grace. That is right, the message of God's grace. Some of them have been in that shape.

And our ignorance can be attributed to several things. Number one, our natural depravity. Blind men don't see. And it doesn't matter how much light you have, they still don't see. You can have a glimmer of light or you can have a room of light, but a blind man doesn't see. And a deaf man cannot hear. I don't care how loud the noise is, how clear the sound is, he does not hear. And dead men don't understand. And God said, "You are dead in trespasses and sins." And that is one reason why we don't understand...that is one reason, Gary, why men are ignorant. They are dead, dead.

And the second reason is the blinding influence of Satan. Paul said, "If our gospel is hid," now brethren the gospel is not hid in the sense that God is keeping it from people. The gospel is not hid in the sense that it is somewhere where nobody can find it if they are looking for it. The gospel is hid in the sense that it is in Christ and they don't know who Christ is or where Christ is what Christ did. And therefore men are looking in other places to find salvation, but it is hid in Christ. Something that is hid is easy to find if you know where it is. But you can look all day somewhere else and never find it and it will remain hidden to you until you find out, David, where it is. And our gospel is hid to them who are lost in whom the God of this world hath done what? Blinded them, blinded them.

And I will tell you...I am going to show you something in a few minutes about Satan, but the God of this world, Satan, literally, in reality, actually has blinded men. There may be somebody here tonight whom Satan hath blinded to the gospel.

And, thirdly, our ignorance may be attributed not only to our deafness and our depravity and to the influence of Satan, but a lot of times our ignorance is attributed to the fact that we are indifferent to the Scriptures. We don't read the Word of God. I know a lot of preachers who do not read the Word of God. They read contemporary books and magazines and articles and all these things, but they don't read the Word of God. And Church members do not read the Word of God.

My friends, I told somebody this the other day. The older I get and the more I try to preach, the more I am driven to two things: I am driven to this book itself, not what somebody says about it, that's good. That helps me. But I am driven to the Word itself. God's promised to bless his Word. He says, "My word shall not return unto me void. It shall accomplish that whereunto I have sent it." He said of his own will begat he us, not with a gospel tract. I am not against them. Of his own will begat he us not with a good quartet song. Of his own will begat he us, bless God, with the Word of truth. And I think that is vital. Don, I am seeing that more all the time. Give men the Word of God. Don't preach about it. Don't preach on it. Preach it. Read it.

But we don't know what the Bible says. One young lady...do you remember Todd down at Lexington when I was down there preaching for the youth, she said, "Well, I don't agree with him." Of course, she said, "I don't know much about the Bible, but I know what I believe."

Well, she is not alone. 90% of this religious population says the same thing in their hearts. "I know what I believe. I don't care what the Bible says. I know what I believe."

Indifference to the Word of God. And then our blindness and our deadness and our ignorance can be attributed, to a great extent, listen to me now, a great extent to our religious tradition. And I think every one of us would fall back in power when I say that and say, "Brother Mahan, I am not holding to any religious tradition."

Aren't we? Let's be careful.

One day our Lord Jesus Christ came. It was a sabbath day. And there was a fellow had been lying by that pool, I believe he was the one, 38 years. Now you think. This man hadn't walked in 38 years. He had been lying by that pool. He was a well known local beggar. He was a man who hadn't walked in 38 years. His legs, I'm sure, probably weren't any bigger than your thumb. That little dried up shriveled fellow, dirty, rags on him, and everybody had seen him that had passed by hundreds of times, hundreds of times and seen him lying there in his filth, in his poverty, in his weakness, in his affliction. And Christ the Lord came to him and says, "Take up your bed and walk."

And let me tell you something. That fellow didn't limp off. He stood up and picked up his bed and put it on his back. Now, think of it, David. Here is a man that never had walked. But my Lord's power and grace and strength were so complete in his healing that he became a weight lifter on the day God healed him. And he walked down the road carrying that bed. And some religious fellow saw him and do you know what they said? "Glory to God [?]."

No, sir. They said, "What are you carrying your bed on the sabbath day for?"

We will run people away from the Lord's table because they don't belong to our church. I have been in that fix. We will take an unsaved Baptist into the church without baptizing him, but we will make someone else be rebaptized to protect our tradition. Isn't that right? Sure it's right. And you know it. We will fight over how to take up an offering, whether to bring it down here or take it back yonder or put it in a plate and split a church on whether a woman ought to wear a hat or not. We are not married to our tradition? I'd heap rather tackle you on the gospel than one of your church traditions. I'll tell you that. We will stay friends longer me not believing the gospel than cracking one of your church traditions, the average person, now.

If I can't prove my church came from John the Baptist I can't fellowship with certain people. I can preach anything as long as my church came from John the Baptist. That is a tradition. And I will tell you this. When you get so blinded by your traditions and it is up here in front of your face so strongly, you can't see Christ. You can't see Christ. God is not going to reveal anything to us. Our tradition keeps us from Christ. Our tradition keeps us in ignorance, defending a position that we didn't get from the Bible.

We certainly didn't get it from the spirit of grace anyway.

And then some of our ignorance is due to pride. Oh what proud creatures we are. Our Lord one day said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, you have hid these things..." What are these things? Well, these things are mentioned often in the Bible. What shall we say to these things? Whom he foreknew he predestinated. Whom he predestinated he called. Whom he called he justified. Whom he justified he glorified. What shall we say to these things?

"Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, smart alecks, and revealed them to babies."

Oh, I tell you if we could just come down like little children. My little grandchildren, one five and one six and a half and they will just sit by my chair and believe about anything I tell them. They are not smart alecks.

"Big daddy, who is God?"

And I will try to tell them.

"Big daddy, who is Jesus?"

And I will open the Bible. They won't argue with me. They are little children. They can be taught. But we are smart. We graduated, you know. We can't learn. We can't learn. Our pride won't let us sit at the feet of Christ and learn like a little child. Oh, may we be enabled by the Spirit of God to learn, to learn from God's Word.

Over here in John chapter six I want you to look at something for just a moment, in the sixth chapter of John. I want to be delivered from ignorance, ignorance. In the sixth chapter of John, verse 44, our Lord said, "No man, no man, I don't care who he is, whatever his background, heritage, ancestry, no man, whatever his natural gifts, intelligence or ability, no man black or white, Jew or Gentile, no man preaching...no man, can come to me, believe on me, embrace me, lay hold of eternal life, no man can come to me except my Father which sent me draw him, draw him, draw him. And I will raise him up at the last day. Now, listen. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all...they shall be all taught of God. And every man, therefore, that hath heard and what? And learned of whom? Of the Father. He comes to me. He learns of the Father.'"

Who taught you? Who taught me? Did we learn from some preacher? We learn from God.

Old brother Barnard used to say, "If my voice is the only voice you hear, you are going to hell, if my voice is the only voice you hear." You have got to hear him speak who speaks. You have to hear him speak who speaks through his Word. You have got to hear him speak who speaks in quickening power. You have got to hear him speak who speaks with divine authority. You have got to hear him speak who speaks life into dead

sinner. Oh, he speak through men by his own will, by his own purpose, according to his own decree and design. But he still speaks.

Our Lord, when he sent his disciples out he said, “Now go preach. And he that heareth you, heareth me. And he that heareth not you, heareth not him that sent me.”

Taught of God. Do you want to learn something? Do you want to learn something?

Well, let's turn, first of all, to 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Now, listen to me and I will try to be brief on each one of these, but I think they are vital. And when I brought this message to our folks recently some of them were so enthused about it they wanted to get the tape and we went too long and missed the message and that's one reason I'm preaching it again tonight.

When Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10, we are trying to get...trying to keep me down in some kind of time limit, Don, and that is so hard to do. But in 1 Corinthians 10, verse one, “Moreover, brethren, I wouldn't have you to be ignorant. I wouldn't have you to be ignorant. I don't want you to be ignorant.”

By what, Paul?

Well, verse four sums it up. “And they did all drink the same spiritual drink for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ. That rock was Christ.”

I wouldn't have you to be ignorant, men and women, of the Old Testament types and pictures and patterns and prophecies and promises. They are all Christ. Do you know what this book is all about? The first 39 books of the Old Testament, Genesis to Malachi, loudly proclaim someone is coming. That is what it says, someone is coming. And the four books, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John we ordinarily call the gospels. They all declare, “He has come. He has come. His name is Jesus of Nazareth.” And the epistles boldly declare, “He is coming back.”

But this is history. This is a him book, H-I-M, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is history. I wouldn't have you to be ignorant, brethren, that rock that Moses smote, that was Christ. That passover feast that they observed, that was Christ. When that high priest went under the veil into the holy of holies and put the blood on the mercy seat that priest was Christ, that blood was his blood, that mercy seat is Christ, that tabernacle is Christ, that cloud that guided them through the day is Christ, that pillar of fire at night is Christ, that eastern gate is Christ, that altar is Christ and that lamb is Christ and that incense is Christ. It is Christ throughout the Scriptures. That ark floating yonder on the waters of God's wrath is Christ.

Turn to Hebrews chapter four a minute, Hebrews the fourth chapter. Listen to this, verse two. Those folks, talking about those folks over there in the Old Testament. It says in Hebrews 4:2, “Unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them. How was the

gospel preached unto them?” That is what I have been talking about. That rock was Christ. That manna from heaven, that bread. He said, “I am the bread from heaven.” That bread was Christ. Abraham saw it and believed. Moses wrote of it and believed. Isaiah saw it and believed. All the way through the Old Testament, there were those who saw these pictures and types and believed in the redeeming God, Jehovah, God my Savior who would redeem by blood, the blood of his own Son.

But that gospel didn't, listen...the Word preached didn't profit them because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Now, I want you to hang on to your seat just a minute. Old brother Shelton used to say, “Grab a hold of your seat. We are going to jump a creek.”

Well, over here in John chapter 16, now, listen to me, John 16. I want you to stay with me and listen. In John 16, I am saying this, that from the first prophecy in Genesis 3;15 to Revelation 22, the last verse it says, “Even so come, Lord Jesus,” every picture, every promise, every prophecy, every pattern, every type in the Old Testament throughout the Word is Christ. Men have always been saved by Christ. They have been cleansed by his blood, all the way through the Word. And the business of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Christ whether he is revealing Christ in a promise, God says, the seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head; whether he is revealing Christ in Abel's offering; whether he is revealing Christ in the passover blood, whether he is revealing Christ in the smitten rock, whether he is speaking to Joseph saying, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus,” whether he is announcing it to some angels on a hillside, “Unto you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord,” or whether he is preaching it to you tonight from the Word of God in clear unmistakable terms, the business of the Holy Ghost is not to astound people with gibberish language called unknown tongues or to cause lame people to get out of chairs and walk, the business of the Holy Ghost is to reveal Jesus Christ.

Now, look at John 16. Our Lord Jesus Christ said this, verse 13. “Howbeit when he the Holy Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak of himself.”

Is that clear? Number one, David Coll, he will not speak of himself. Any time you hear somebody talk about the Holy Ghost, Holy Ghost, Holy Ghost, he hasn't got the Holy Ghost. When you hear a man preaching Christ, Christ, Christ, he has got the Holy Ghost. He is preaching the Christ of the Bible. He will not speak of himself. Listen. “But whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak and he will show you things to come. He will glorify me.” Everywhere I listen to these fellows that got the gifts and the tongues and all these other things. They are not glorifying Christ. They are glorifying the gifts. They are not seeking Christ, they are seeking the baptism or seeking the gifts or seeking the tongues or seeking something else. They are not seeking Christ. Christ is not glorified. The Holy Ghost is glorified. The gifts are glorified. The tongues are glorified. The healing is glorified. Everything is glorified but Christ, so I know the Holy Ghost is not in it.

And somebody said one time, “Well, now that’s the unpardonable sin.” Don’t ever call a preacher, whatever you do, don’t say anything about the [?] and the Roberts and the Bakers and all these other fellows. You might be blaspheming the Holy Ghost. I am not even concerned. Do you know why? They are not preaching Christ.

Now, I would be afraid to say something about his preaching. He preaches Christ. I would be afraid to say something about your preaching. I would be awful careful, awful careful, because you are preaching the Christ of the Bible, the Christ of God, the creating Christ, the eternal Christ, the incarnate Christ, the righteous Christ, the crucified Christ, the buried Christ, the risen Christ, the ascended Christ, the seated Christ, the interceding Christ, the sovereign Christ, the coming Christ, the reigning Christ, [?]. Do you see what I am saying?

I will tell you where this stuff came from if you turn to Matthew 12 and I will show you where they got it, Matthew chapter 12, now listen. You want to learn something or do you want to go on being ignorant? Do you want to learn something and quit being so superstitious.

“Oh, don’t say anything about anybody’s religion. You might blaspheme the Holy Ghost.”

I am not worried. If I find one of those healers preaching Christ I will keep my mouth shut, but I have never found one yet. In Matthew chapter 12 they get it right here, verse 31. “I say unto you all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but to blaspheme against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto me. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man it should be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it will not be forgiven neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

“See what that has told you, preacher? You are in trouble.”

No. I am not. Why did Christ say that? What had taken place before hand? Does anybody know what had taken place beforehand? We have got verseitis. We are sick with verseitis. The [?] got x238. Somebody else got something else. And the blasphemers against the Holy Ghost got these verses, but they didn’t go back and look at verse 22. Listen. “There was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb. And he healed him insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.”

Are you with me? Now, whom did heal that man? The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. He had the Holy Spirit without measure. Our Lord Jesus Christ walked in the Spirit. He spoke the words of God by the power of the Spirit. He healed men in the power of the Spirit. He arose by the power of the Holy Spirit, but he did every bit of that to reveal who he is. Our Lord wasn’t showing off. He was revealing who he is.

John sent two disciples up there and said, “Are you he or do we look for another?”

He said, “You go back and tell John the blind see and the dumb speak and the deaf hear and the dead are raised and [?]. I am he.”

And our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father tells us who he is. The Word tells us who he is. The works tell us who he is. The Holy Spirit is revealing Christ. And these people in verse 23 all of them were amazed. They said, “Is not this the Son of David? Is not this the son of Abraham? Is not this the seed of woman? Is not this the Son of David? Is this not the priest after the order of Melchizedek? Is not this God our righteousness? Is not this the Christ?”

And here is the unpardonable sin. But when the Pharisees heard it they said, “No, he is not the Christ. He is not the Christ. This fellow, casteth out devils by the power of the devil.”

Do you see that? That is clear as a bell to me. And our Lord Jesus Christ said this, “You say what you want to.” And some of you said a lot of things about Jesus of Nazareth. Maybe he is the bastard son of a Jewish woman by a German soldier like one fellow said. Somebody said he is a winebibber. Somebody else said he is a glutton. Somebody else said this Jesus of Nazareth is this, that and the other.

But now wait a minute. When the Holy Ghost comes and in unmistakable terms lets you know who he is, huh, he ain't no winebibber. He is the Son of David. He is not a carpenter only. He is the Messiah. When the Holy Ghost comes...you might commit the unpardonable sin right here tonight. I don't know. God may cut you off. How many times God has preached the gospel to you. If...I tell you this. If a man preaches the Word of God, the gospel of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit it never fails. We always triumph in Christ. To some we are life unto life and what? He is twice dead. He is dead while he lives. Death upon death. Isn't that what it says? There is your dead line. You can walk, roll right over it tonight. And you are shaking hands with a dead man. Judicially blinded is dead.

God [?] is dead. And God said they wouldn't receive the love of the truth. Who is the truth? Christ is the truth. And the Holy Ghost reveals him. And they wouldn't receive the love of the truth and so God sent them strong delusions. And they believe a lie and they will wrap themselves up in a refuge of lies and be damned.

You see that? Clear as a bell to me. The unpardonable sin is to deny blatantly with an open face, a clear revelation by the Spirit of God of who Christ is.

Now, you play church all you want to. When you come to this business of who Christ is, you better get down to business.

“Who do men say that I am?”

“Well, they are saying this, that and the other.”

“What do you say?”

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ. Blessed are you. “The eyes you have my Father gave you. Flesh and blood didn’t reveal that you, but my Father in heaven. They got eyes, but they don’t see.”

And I will tell you. If that darkness in you that the light you have got is darkness, how great is that darkness? Twice dead, plucked up by the root, as sure for hell as if he was already there, unpardonable. That is proof, Don and Beth. That is where it is. That is exactly where it is. It is men attributing a revelation of the Son of David to the devil. That is the Holy Spirit’s business to reveal Christ.

I wouldn’t have you ignorant. Turn to Romans 10, Romans chapter 10. I tell you. That rock was Christ. That manna was Christ. Every Old Testament picture is Christ. God way over in [?] is Christ. Oh, my soul. There is so much material to preach. You could preach 10,000 years and never exhaust one verse, Jim.

Here in Romans 10. Brethren, listen to me. Verse three. They are ignorant. They are ignorant. His generation was ignorant, too. Why he said they are religious, now. He said in verse four, now, “I want my people to be saved. I bare them record they have an enthusiasm for God. They go the temple every sabbath day. They keep the sabbath day. They keep the feast. They pay the tithes. They were raised in law. They have an enthusiasm for God. They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. They are ignorant.”

What are they ignorant of, Paul?

Well, he said, “They are going about to establish their own righteousness. And they are ignorant of the righteousness of God who is Christ.”

Ron Trabant told a story when he spoke at our church recently. He said the United States purchased some land from somebody called the Louisiana Purchase from the Mississippi River to the Rockies. Was it Jefferson was president? Purchased that in 1803. And everybody thought he was a fool. And so he sent an expedition out to scout it out, find out what was over there. Nobody knew what was over there from the Mississippi to the Rockies. He sent two fellows named Lewis and Clark. And one of them had a black slave by the name of York. And York loved his master and his master loved him. They had been together a long time. And they took York with him. He shined his boots and took care of things, you know, They were very attached to one another, the old black York. Black...he was black, black, blue, black.

And so they stayed together and one morning they got up and York was missing. And Clark, I say it was Clarks’ black man, he came and asked Lewis, he said, “Have you seen York?”

He said, "No."

"Anybody seen York?"

Nobody had seen York. Lewis said, "He has run away."

Clark said, "No, he hasn't. No. He hasn't run away. He wouldn't do that, not out here anyway." He said, "Indians got him."

So they started looking for him. And then went out yonder and looked and the topped the hill and as they came up the hill they heard the awfulest yelling you ever heard in your life, yelling and screaming and yelling and screaming and they rushed up there and they fell on their bellies and looked over the hill and a bunch of Indians had captured York and they had never seen a black man, never, never, never, not one this black. And they had him out there in the creek with his clothes stripped off and they was trying to rub that black off with sandstone.

You laugh at those Indians. We have been doing that for years, trying to rub off the black with our religious works. But, you know, the black man...the Ethiopian can he change his skin? No, sir. And you can't with sandstone either. And you can't with religious works.

Can his sin be changed? From inside by God. God will give you a new nature. That is what the Lord Jesus Christ came down here for, to give us a perfect righteousness, to take away our blackness, blackness of heart. And that blackness of heart goes all the way through. It starts in the deepest recesses of our [?] corrupt heart and it permeates our whole being from the top of our heads to the sole of our feet. Only God can make it whole. But he does it with a substitute.

I have a perfect righteousness with his spotless garments on I am as perfect and righteous and holy as God's Son.

Turn if you will, quickly, to 2 Corinthians two. Here is another ignorance I would not have you be plagued with. In 2 Corinthians chapter two, listen to this, verse 11. Paul said, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us for we are not ignorant, we are not ignorant of what? His devices."

Let me tell you something, my friends. Let me tell you something. We have a real enemy. And that real enemy is powerful. He is cunning. He is deceitful. He is crafty. He is subtle. We are not wrestling against flesh and blood. If you are a true child of God, if Christ is your Lord and redeemer you are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principality and powers and rulers of the darkness, spiritual wickedness in high places. And every bit of it, all the antichrists...

And you say, "What is an antichrist?"

It is anybody that is anti Christ. There may be antichrists here tonight. Christ said, "He that is not with me is what? Anti Christ." Isn't that right? Against is Anti? Isn't that right? That's not misusing the language. "He that is not with me is antichrist."

But the great antichrist is Satan. And let me tell you something, don't look for him in the beer joints. That is not where he operates. Don't look for him at the red light houses. That is not where he operates. Do you want to know where to look for Satan? In the pulpit, in the Church or on a deacon board, in a Sunday school class. Satan changes himself into what? An angel of light. Isn't that what it says? An angel of what kind of light? Religious light. And his ministers are ministers of what? Righteousness. His ministers are not ministers who are trying to get you to deny the Bible is the Word of God. He has got more sense than that. He knows that this Bible is the Word of God. He said to Christ, "Cast yourself off for it is written..." He quoted the Word of God clear as a bell, didn't miss an [?].

Old Satan...Paul said, "I am not ignorant of his devices. I am no fool."

I hear these preachers on television say, "Tell the devil to get back to hell where he belongs."

Job tried that. What about Peter? He couldn't cope with him, could he? Neither can you. And I will tell you. I don't want to wrestle with him. I don't want anything to do with him. And he has more bait, a little old bass swimming down there in the [?], "You ain't caught me yet."

I said, "I ain't used all my bait yet. I got one that will just fit you." That was what we was talking about, Jimmy.

Somebody here tonight said, "I have never fallen."

He ain't used the right bait yet, but he has you. He knows you. It might be a new job. It might be an inheritance. One old preacher years ago called the congregation and said, "Let's pray for brother Floyd Upingham."

And they said, "Why? Is he sick?"

"No, he is not sick. He has just inherited a large sum of money. He is going to sure need our prayers."

For every man that is fallen by poverty, 10,000 have fallen through prosperity. Satan knows what bait to use. His sole purpose is to take you away from Christ. He will give you a knowledge of the millennium so you can preach it. He will give you a knowledge of prophecy so you can work on it. He will give you some spiritual gift so you can use it and keep from preaching Christ. He will give the church some attraction to keep them

from looking to Christ. He will bring in some [?] teacher or clever person to divide the congregation and get their minds off Christ. They creep in. They sneak in. Satan doesn't come in saying, "I am a roaring lion. I am a raging wolf."

"I am a sheep," he said, "Among the sheep in sheep's clothing."

You know the enemy? Do you know the enemy? Do you know the enemy?

Paul said, "I am not ignorant of his devices. Oh, how crafty he is, how clever he is, how clever, oh, how clever. He said, "I am afraid." Like he deceived our mother Eve. He will take you away from what? The simplicity of Christ, the singleness of Christ.

And then watch this. I am going to skip this one here. Turn to Psalm 73, but, you know, in the meantime Paul said this. He said, "I wouldn't have you ignorant concerning spiritual gifts."

My friends, those gifts were real. Those miracles were real that those men...that those men that God gave them. They spoke in other languages. Those men heard the gospel in their own language. They didn't speak this gibberish. They spoke in languages. They did heal men. They did raise the dead. They did all those things, several reasons. Number one, the Word of God wasn't complete. It wasn't finished. They just had the Old Testament. And here were a bunch of ignorant, unlearned—to the world they were ignorant—but a bunch of unlearned, uneducated fishermen coming along telling all those religious people that Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures. And God gave them gifts and wonders and miracles and signs to confirm their ministry as proof that God sent them. "We know this man came from God. No man can do the miracles he does except God be with him."

Also these men were preaching to a bunch of Gentiles who didn't even have the Old testament. They didn't have a tabernacle. They didn't have the Levitical law. They didn't have the Mosaic law. They didn't have any of those things. And here these men went out there in a bunch of heathen Hottentots preaching the gospel with no Bible to say, "Turn to Galatians 1:14." They needed gifts. They needed miraculous things.

But I don't need them. The Bible is complete. I don't need any...I don't need to heal anybody. Besides, tongues are a sign. Now, listen to me, 1 Corinthians 14:22. Tongues are a sign.

You say, "I want a sign."

Somebody said, "Tongues are a sign you have been baptized with the Holy Ghost."

A sign to whom? To you and to the Church. Tongues are a sign not to believers, but for unbelievers. Believers don't need signs. They don't walk by sign. They walk by faith. Anybody here who needs God to give him a sign for any thing, our Lord said, "This is a wicked, adulterous generation and no sign shall be given." But what? The Word of God.

Father Abraham said to Lazarus down there. Father Abraham said, "Well, they got the Bible. They got Moses and the prophets."

"Yeah, but if one of rose from the dead, they would believe."

"Well, you got it wrong, son. They won't believe though one rose from the dead if they hear not the Word of God."

And I will tell you this. If I could heal every sick person in this building tonight it would make me famous. It would make me notorious. It would make me rich. But it wouldn't make you a Christian. And it wouldn't glorify Christ. And it wouldn't make you believe the gospel either. People would follow me around like a pied piper and that's what those guys want. They throw dimes at my feet. They heal my body. This old world is interested in the flesh. They are not interested in their souls.

Lazarus was raised from the dead, but he died again. But when Christ raises a man from a spiritual grave he will never die. "He that believeth on me will never die, never, never, never, never."

We got the whole book. I don't need those things. I don't need them.

And no preacher that I have read after in the old puritans or our forefathers ever had those gifts: Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Huss, Knox, Whitefield, Spurgeon, Edwards, Gill...name them, never had it. Never talked about it except like I'm talking about it right now. They were for that day.

Now, if God wants to restore them, that's God's business. But I don't want to make it up. I want to see it. I don't want to make it up. I want God to send it. He divides to every man severally as he will.

But look at Psalm 73 quickly, verse 22. David said, Psalm 73, verse 22, "So foolish was I and ignorant. I was ignorant."

David was ignorant? Yeah, we can be, too. And why was he ignorant? What was his trouble? He misread God's providence. In Psalm 73, verse two he said, "As for me my feet were almost gone. My steps were well nigh slipped. I was envious at the foolish. I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

That's what brother Scott said a while ago, those people said, "Explain this. We haven't lost our confidence. We have lost our faith. [?] been killed."

A good mother, a good church member. Where is God? And that is what David said right there. He said, "I have been abused and I have been persecuted. I have been afflicted, I have been inflicted, I have been all these things and I look over there at those people who are wicked and hate God, there are no bands in their death. Their eyes stand

out with fatness. Everything they touch turns to gold. Their children aren't sick. But believers have all these heartaches and sorrows and trials and afflictions and were is God?

Oh, David said, read on, verse 12, "Behold the ungodly. They prosper in this world."

Verse 13, "Have I cleansed my heart in vain, washed my hands in innocency? All the day long I have been plagued and chastened every morning. If I say I am going to talk about this I will offend against the children of the generation I have children. When I thought to know it was too painful for me until I went to the sanctuary of God. And God taught me therein. I saw that the wicked weren't prospering. They were on their road to hell."

You want to change places with any of them? God chastens his children. God afflicts us. Why? To teach us things we need to know, make us like his Son, to teach us patience. Maybe God puts you through a trial so you can sympathize with somebody going through that trial some day. You can't weep with those that weep unless you wept. You can't sympathize with those in sorrow until you have sorrowed. You can't walk the route with a man and hold his hand unless you have been there first.

God knows what he is doing. Quit arguing with God and quarreling with God and finding fault with his divine providence. Don't be ignorant. God is the first cause. Isn't that what Scott said? Of all things.

I can't explain it, but I do know one day I will understand it. For all things work together, all things in heaven and earth and hell, all things, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all things big and little, past, present and future. All things work together for the eternal good to those that love God. And when you put your baby in the coffin and stand there and watch them lower it in the ground, don't find fault with God's providence. You will know someday that he has a reason if you are his child. And it is for your good. It is for the good of his kingdom, it is for the glory of his Son, it is for the blessing of his people.

And I will tell you this. If we wouldn't hold so tight to these things, God wouldn't have to break our hands to get them out. That's right. Turn them loose.

"I can't give them up."

You must. Christ will be Lord of all or he won't be Lord at all. The best way is so you won't weep too much when you bury your son is bury him now. That's what Abraham did. He killed that boy before he ever climbed that mountain. Yeah, he did. He believed God would raise him from the dead. And in his heart that boy was dead. And we better put all of our earthly possessions and relationships and everything else...just take them out to he cemetery and have a funeral and put them in the ground and walk back with Jesus. And then when the Lord does it, we won't find any fault with it. You see, they are already dead. They are just flesh.

And then that will bring us to this and we will quit, 1 Thessalonians chapter four, 1 Thessalonians chapter four. He said, verse 13, "I wouldn't have you to be ignorant, brethren, I wouldn't have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep. Let your sorrow not even as others who have no hope."

I don't want you to be ignorant. There is a little girl. I told this story some time ago. You may have heard it. But this little girl playing out in the back yard when her daddy was cutting the grass and some bird, some kind of bird had built a nest low enough that she tiptoed up and saw the little blue eggs in the nest. And she called her daddy over and she said, "Look what I found."

The bird was gone.

He said, "Honey, don't touch it. Now, though it can be your treasure, and that can be your find and your secret, but don't ever touch it. Leave him right there because they belong to the bird."

And she would go out every day and she would sit the bird sitting on the nest and it leaves. He would go out there and peak and look at her eggs. And so some time passed and things happened. She went away somewhere on vacation and came back. The first thing she did when she got home, she ran out in the back yard and tiptoed up and the eggs were gone, just a few shells.

She looked down under the tree and there in the grass some little blue shells. And she gathered up the shells [?]. She got the shells and brought them in and she said to her mother, she said, "My treasure is gone." And she held those shells.

And her mother said to her, "Honey, the little birds that lived in those eggs are hatched out and those little birds are living and those little birds have flown away into the air and all you have got left is the shells. Don't cry over the shells. Your treasure is free."

And let me tell you something. When you have to stand over a casket, don't cry over the shells, the little bird is free. Huh? This old shell. Right? There isn't nothing to this thing. Some of you have found it out. There ain't nothing to it. This old house...that's a good song in a way. It ain't worth a dime.

But I will tell you this prisoner here is going to fly out some day. And when you see the shell laying in a casket, don't cry too much. Just sit there and wish you was where I am. That's right. Don't cry over the shell. The little bird has gone home, gone home.

I wouldn't have you to be ignorant.

But let me show you something before I quit in 1 Corinthians 14, Corinthians 14, verse 38. 1 Corinthians 14, verse 38. Now I don't want to be harsh. Brother, Don Bell said that he listened to one of my tapes and a lot of the harshness was gone. I don't want to be harsh. But I want to be truthful. And sometimes to be truthful you have to be pretty

strong. But it says here in verse 38, “If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.” Isn’t that right, Daryl? If he wants to be ignorant, let him be ignorant. And Peter called it a willing ignorance.

“They willingly are ignorant,” he said. They said, “Where is the promise of his coming? Since the fathers past away everything continues as they are.” He said, “They willingly are ignorant [?].”

But I will tell you. I want to share a story with our preacher brethren because they are especially loved and they are like this story. The one time there was a preacher sitting on a train riding, looking out the window. And he was meditating and thinking. Some fellow walked up and sat down beside him. And he just glanced at him and nodded and kept looking out the window and the fellow sat down beside him said, “Good morning.”

The preacher turned. He didn’t want to talk. He wanted to think. He said, “Good morning.”

The fellow said, “I am in the jewelry business.”

The preacher thought a minute and remembered that Scripture in Malachi that said when he makes up his jewels. Have you read that? When God makes up his jewels. He turned and said, “I am, too.”

And the fellow said, “Well, I travel a lot for my company.”

The preacher said, “Well, I do, too.”

The fellow said, “Well, I am in business with my father in the jewelry business.”

The preacher said, “Well, I am, too.”

And the fellow said, “Well, we only deal in the very best jewels.”

The preacher said, “We do, too, the very best.”

The fellow didn’t say anything for a while. After a while he said, “Well, I am on my way to a meeting with my father.”

The preacher said, “I am, too.”

And the fellow closed, finally realizing that the preacher wasn’t going to do much talking. He said, “Well,” he said, “I hope when I meet him I can give a good account.”

And then the preacher said, “I do, too.”