

# The Conversion of Sinners

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**Bible Text:** Isaiah 29:14-22

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## Shreveport Grace Church

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Let me invite you to look with me in Isaiah chapter 29 and verses 15 through 24 is going to be my text.

Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest? And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off: That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought. Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

What a difference in the way that this chapter ends compared to the way it began. The last few weeks we have been reading a very solemn portion here concerning Israel's plight in the day. Not just a political plight, but a spiritual plight. Like today a lot of people worry about the economy in the United States and they worry about the politics. But what about the spiritual state of this nation?

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 29:15-24.

I wonder where those are who are concerned and who wonder even about their own spiritual state before the Lord.

You know, our time on this earth is but a small blip on the radar compared to eternity. And I wonder how many are even concerned for their own spiritual state before the Lord. Of course, then, again, as we read in verse nine and 10 of Isaiah 29, how can you be concerned if you are like a drunk? It says there:

“...wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep.”<sup>2</sup>

When you are in a deep sleep you are not aware of what is going on around you. You could be in danger. The house could be on fire and you wouldn't be aware. Such is the spiritual state of every one of us as we are born in this world.

I know that goes contrary to what most people think about human beings. They say, “Well, we are all basically good.”

That is man's testimony. God says there is none good, no not one.

You know, unless the Lord wakes you and shows you what you are before him as a holy God, you will, just like people die in a fire never waking up, you will die and enter into eternal condemnation feeling good about yourself and yet lost.

And so we see here in chapter 15 a warning to begin with, not to take those things that pertain to God and Christ and try to smother them, try to put them out of our mind. Some might even be thinking that today and say, “Well, this is Mother's Day. What are we doing talking about this?”

Well, I am talking about something of vital importance to every one of us here and that is our state before a holy God.

But men like to hide things. They like to pretend like it is not really as bad as what it seems. You have heard about it, the head in the sand syndrome. You know, I have already made up my mind. Don't confuse me with the facts. The ostrich with the head down in the sand.

A lot of people reason that way. That is how they deal with the most important issue of life and that is my spiritual state before a holy God. They prefer not to think about it. Don't talk to me about death. Don't talk to me about judgment. And yet, like they say, just as real as death and taxes, you know, there comes around a time of year when you have to deal with it whether you want to or not. The same is true with regard to standing before a holy God whether you want to or not, everyone of us sitting in this room in a few short years is going to be standing before a holy God. Then what will be your state? What will be your case?

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<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 29:9-10.

“Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?”<sup>3</sup>

You know, before a holy God all things are open.

You know, the number one place where people hide? In church. They get a little bit of a guilty conscience and they run to a worship service somewhere and they look for somebody to make them feel better about themselves. And then when they go out they can take a deep breath and say, “Ok, I have done my duty.”

But as the conscience wells up again and they realize that something is not right, they try to do other things. They seek help everywhere but where help us and that is in Christ alone.

And verse 16:

“Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay.”<sup>4</sup>

Ever since the fall of Adam—and we fell in him and this is by representation. When Adam fell, we fell. Can anything good come from a woman, in other words, be born?

“There is none righteous, no, not one.”<sup>5</sup>

Everything has been upside down since. Men’s judgment is upside down. What men call good that God calls evil. And what men call evil God calls good.

You say, “How so?”

Well, what do men call good? They see themselves as good. They feel themselves good before God. I help my neighbor. I do what I can to contribute. They even think their will has something to do with God showing them favor. They call good that which is evil. But they also call evil that which is good, because when you begin to tell sinners that there is nothing good in them, they get mad, that the only good that there is is in the Lord Jesus Christ and apart from him there is no salvation. They get mad.

They are saying, “Well, you are cutting out a lot of people.

I am not. The Word is.

Christ said:

“ I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 29:15.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 29:16.

<sup>5</sup> Romans 3:10.

That is just the Word. But people say, “Well, that is evil. That excludes a lot of people.”

Do you know what? Salvation is not by entitlement. There is none of us sitting here that is entitled to God’s grace. There is none of us sitting here that is entitled to salvation. And if we think we are that just shows how upside down our thinking is. That was the way that Israel was when Isaiah was preaching to them here. He said in verse 16:

“Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay.”<sup>7</sup>

Have you ever heard the clay say to the potter, “You can’t do that”?

You know, you say, “Well, that is ridiculous. Maybe in a fairy tale, you know, the clay talks.”

But that clay and what it becomes depends entirely upon what the potter makes it. It is silent. It is passive. If the potter is not pleased to make something beautiful of it, it is just clay. That is all it is. It takes the potter’s hands. And I have watched some work. And if I tried to do it, it would end up looking worse. It would have been better left as clay. Just leave it alone. It looks better as clay.

And that is what happens when we try to fix ourselves up before a holy God. We can only make it worse. But for Christ doing what he did, coming to this earth and laying down his life for sinners...

But, you know, if God were to pass us by can the clay say to the one that made it, “What are you doing”? That is what verse 16 is saying.

“Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?”<sup>8</sup>

God is wise in all that he does. He is wise in his judgments, but he is also wise in how he saves sinners. And he has put all of salvation in the hands of one person. That is the Lord Jesus Christ. And all of salvation in one work. It is not man’s. It is not yours. It is not mine. One work, that is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If salvation could have been in any other way, why do you think that God would have even sent his Son and put him through what he did? I would say that would be a pretty mean God to do that to his Son when salvation could have been in an another way anyway. But the reality is there wasn’t any other way. There was no other way for God to save sinners than to pay for their sin and to pay for their sin he delivered his only Son. He spared not his Son, but delivered him up that he might freely give to us all things.

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<sup>6</sup> John 14:6.

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 29:16.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

And so we see the Lord pointing these in Isaiah's day away from themselves to a work that he would do. And that is really from verse 17 all the way down to verse 24 what we see. As desperate as things were in Isaiah's day and I would say as desperate as things are in our day... there is a lot of religion. You know, there are a lot of people attending places of worship today at different places around the world and yet my question is: How many truly know God? How many truly know the way of salvation? They have to be taught. You know, this isn't something that you just stumble onto or you get educated in. It is by revelation. It is God being pleased to do a work that takes that heart that is otherwise in darkness and blindness and turns that heart to Christ by revelation. And that is the work that is described here.

Maybe some of this language you are not used to, but it really has to do with how a sinner is converted to God, how a sinner is converted to Christ. Is conversion something that a man can do? Can a leopard change his spots? Can an Ethiopian change his skin?

You say, "Well, that is a ridiculous question."

Well, it needs to be asked because there is a lot of people out there right now that think they can do something to change their will or change their ways and get God to accept them. But there is not a one of us sitting here that can do that.

Do you realize what you are up against? You are up against a holy God, just like it says in verse 19 there.

"...the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel."<sup>9</sup>

This is a God that the people of our generation are not hearing about. They hear about a God of love. And the way it is presented is as if you can really do no wrong, because God loves you. So no matter how you live, no matter what goes on, in the end God loves you and everything is going to be all right.

Think about the funerals you have attended. Have you ever heard of any preacher that preached that that person that died was lost? I mean, I have never attended one. I have got an acquaintance up in Lexington, Kentucky that I visited a number of years ago and he is a funeral home director. He has been in the business for 40 some years, probably retired by now, but, you know, he said that. He said he has seen a lot of funerals, but he has yet to find anybody that has ever passed away that the preacher has done anything but give them... preach them into heaven.

You know, if everybody that died automatically goes to heaven what does this book have to do with anything? But that is the way men think. They find it difficult to believe that God would ever send anybody to hell.

And they say, "Well, God is a loving God. He wouldn't do that."

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<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 29:19.

But do you know what? God is a loving God, but he loves his righteousness. That is what he loves. And unless that righteousness has been satisfied there is nobody on this earth that has a hope for heaven.

You say, “Well, how do you satisfy a holy God?”

You don’t. Neither do I. Christ did. He satisfied his Father in every jot and tittle as he lived on this earth and he paid the penalty for sin for a people that God the Father had given him. But he is holy. He is just when he sends people to hell because he is holy. But he is just when he saves sinners because he has saved them in a holy way. He has saved them by paying the penalty for their sin. And that is what we see set forth here.

Here we see a beautiful portion of Scripture concerning then conversion of sinners. And what I would say, first of all, is that there is nothing too difficult for God. If God has purposed to save you, he will save you. If he has purposed to leave you to yourself, you will be left to yourself. And here in verse 17 he talks about that transformation and verse 17:

“Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field?”<sup>10</sup>

Now here, again, is God’s sovereign choice, because if you look on a map, Lebanon is north of Israel. Tyre and Sidon. Do those cities say anything to you where the Lord met that Shunamite woman and showed her mercy when he passed by many in Israel? That is Tyre and Sidon were in Lebanon. That is where Tyre and Sidon were. And here even though at this time he had passed by Israel and given them over to this ... their own blindness and their own, as it says there:

“For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes.”<sup>11</sup>

Is he not right to do so? He doesn’t have to save. And yet he goes outside of Israel to Lebanon and he says, “All the while that I am passing by Israel right now, I am going to do a work in Lebanon.”

“Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field.”<sup>12</sup>

At the time it was nothing but a forest. And you can see in verse 17 it says that.

“...and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?”<sup>13</sup>

In the place of a forest there is going to be now a fruitful field. God is going to do his work. There are times and seasons to things. And I am thankful there are. You know, we

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<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 29:17.

<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 29:10.

<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 29:17.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

talk about it all the time when it comes to the weather. It seems like there are an awful lot of hurricanes. It seems like there, you know, for one year it just seemed like one hurricane after another, everybody talking about it. And they all said next year is going to be worse.

Do you realize that when they said next year is going to be worse there wasn't one hurricane that hit the coast? That is how God confounds the wisdom of the wise. How many times these last few weeks, you know, we have seen on the weather map storms coming, hunker down?

Well, it did. But it passed by Shreveport. It hit over in Yazoo, Mississippi seven people died there, but here blue skies.

We kind of thing, well, you know, what good is the weather man? I thankful it passed by. I feel badly for the ones in Yazoo having to deal with it, but who determines these things? It is God. It is not mother nature. It is God. Even if he causes that hurricane to hit the coast. You know, there is preachers that get stuttering whenever they are asked, "Well, who did this?"

I have heard some say, "Well, God would never do that."

Well, if he didn't do it, we are in trouble. That means there is a chaotic force at work in this world out of control and we really don't know what is going to happen. I am thankful that things are in the sovereign hand of God. And I can go to sleep at night resting in the fact that whether he brings a storm my way or he brings peaceful clouds, it is God doing it. He has his way, it says in Nahum, in the wind and the storm. And he has his way in the calm of the sea. That is just who God is.

And so in spite of the way things were, in spite of everything being upside down, here we have a message of hope that the Lord can take an otherwise fruitless field and turn it into a fruitful field.

You look at every one of your sitting here. If you are the Lord's, you think about what you were as you were born in this world. And if he has taught you of Christ, you think of what you are now.

How did that take place? Did you really have anything to do with it? No. That is the work of God's grace.

So how does this conversion manifest itself? Well, first of all, in verse 18, I like the way that is put.

"And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Isaiah 29:18.

There are many people that are deaf, not physically, but spiritually deaf. That is the way we are born until the Lord opens our ears. You might be in that state right now. You have heard tell about the Lord Jesus Christ. You have heard tell about his Word and yet you are deaf to the hearing of it.

But I will tell you this. If the Lord ever opens your hears, you will not be deaf any longer. Or, as it says here:

“...the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.”<sup>15</sup>

That is how we are born in this world, not physically blind, but we are in darkness, our minds are darkened because of our sin nature. But when God is pleased to do a work and those eyes are open, you see. Now suddenly as you read the Word, you see the glory of Christ here in this Word whereas before you didn't. It was just a book of rules and regulations and old history. But all of the sudden now you go back to the Old Testament and you see how all these things were types and pictures and promises of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is a work of grace. That is how conversion is brought about. And it is through the gospel. It is though the Lord opening eyes and ears to cause sinners to hear and sinners to see the glory of Christ.

Secondly, as you read on here in verse 19:

“The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD.”<sup>16</sup>

We live in a day where meek means weak. If you are meek you are weak. There is a to of preaching designed to bolster men's self image. You have got to have self esteem.

These are words that psychologists use. And they think that if we can just get people to feel better about themselves, they will be a lot better. But, you know, the work of grace doesn't make sinners feel better about themselves. The work of grace causes sinners to see themselves as they are before a holy God, as nothing and to feel better, if you will, about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is a place where you are sitting today and where everyone of us is nothing and Christ is all. And I know that goes contrary to what you can see on marquis out in front of church buildings where they say, “Come worship in a place where everybody is somebody.”

You know one of the problems about the everybody is somebody thing? When you get all those kinds of people together they are fighting each other because everybody wants to be somebody. And if they don't get the recognition then they are going to let you know.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 29:19.

I thought this was a place where everybody was something. How come you are not giving me enough glory, due respect, honor, recognition? You have caused a fight.

But when you tell people here is a place where everybody is nobody and Christ is all, I hope you are not uncomfortable with that. Do you know what it does? It shuts their mouths, because we know ourselves to be nothing but sinners before a holy God and where one alone is exalted and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what it is saying here to the meek. It humbles you, because you realize if God were to look upon you, he would have to condemn you. You have nothing to bring. I am not asking you to bring anything.

I have had some visit here for a few weeks in a row and one told me one time he said he kept waiting for the other shoe to drop, because I never mentioned offerings. I never mentioned tithes. I never mentioned giving. Just talked about Christ. And he thought if I stay long enough, maybe eventually he is going to bring it up.

That is not what gives us right standing before a holy God. We don't even take up an offering. If the Lord so purposes you to give, you give, but that is not what gets you in the door and that is not what keeps you.

I trust that for all of us here, the one reason we keep coming back is because the Lord has caused us to see our need. And there is an urgency to it. Give me Christ or I die.

And that is what it says here.

“The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD.”<sup>17</sup>

Not in themselves, but in the Lord.

“... and the poor among men...”<sup>18</sup>

Those whom the Lord converts, they see themselves as poor. Blessed are the poor in spirit. The poor person has nothing to bring. And he is not expected to bring anything.

Can you imagine going down to a poor neighborhood and offering free food, but oh, by the way, we need a donation at the door before we are going to feed you? No, the reason you are there is because they have nothing to bring. The reason I am here is because I have nothing to bring. I have nothing to recommend myself before a holy God. But I am rejoicing in the holy one of Israel.

You say, “How can you rejoice in a holy God?”

Well, if he has taught me of Christ's satisfaction I can rejoice, because he has paid it all. But, you see, it takes the Lord giving eyes to see that.

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<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 29:19.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Now what did the Lord do? In verse 20 there was a time when the Syrians were just bearing down on Israel and it was the Lord bringing that to pass. And then suddenly he removed that enemy.

You can study about it in the history books. It was Sennacherib at the time who the Lord had caused to surround Israel, to bring pressure to bear on him. But verse 20 says:

“For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off.”<sup>19</sup>

They were just waiting like a lion on this nation of Israel to devour them. And the Lord caused that lion to roar for a while, but then he silenced the lion. Sennacherib withdrew his troops and went back to his country on a rumor. And then the Lord took his life, took him out of the way. You can read the history yourself, but the point is that for those that are the Lord’s, it is the Lord who does the work.

You think about who our greatest enemy is. Is it not our sin? A lot of people fear Satan. You know, they still talk about it. But, do you know, our greatest enemy is ourselves? It is our sin before a holy God? So when I read that the Lord has made, taken the terrible one and brought it to naught, I can rejoice. When I know and understand that when the Lord Jesus Christ died, my sin was put to his account, that is why he died. There was no reason in the world why the Lord Jesus Christ should ever have died. He lived a perfect life. Had he not come to die, he would have continued to live eternally. No man took his life. Christ said that. I give it of myself and I take it up again.

There was a judgment. There was an execution to be rendered and that is why the Lord Jesus Christ laid down his life and took it up again, that God might be just to declare righteous, justify everyone for whom Christ died. That is how he brought the terrible one to naught.

“...and the scorner is consumed.”<sup>20</sup>

You know, your sin can hound you, rightfully so. You can try to hide it and pretend it isn’t, but in your conscience you know that you stand condemned before a holy God. It will scorn you to your grave. I have literally seen people facing death and heard them cry out in utter misery knowing they were about to enter into eternity without any hope.

I remember I told you this before, preaching over here at Landmark nursing home a dear lady that came every meeting once a week for four years, but every time I would try to point her to Christ she would cry out, “Not me. I am too great a sinner.”

Her conscience, her sin hounded her to her grave. You talk about a sad state of mind, to face eternity without a hope. But do you know what? If the Lord has paid your debt, he will in time cause you to look to Christ and see that the scorner has been consumed. That

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<sup>19</sup> Isaiah 29:20.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

sin and how great it is before a holy God, yet if Christ has paid that debt, it can hound you no more.

I am not just talking about past sins. I am talking about present. I am talking about future that when you fall—and you will—if Christ has died for you, the Spirit of God has taught you Christ, you will be able to say, “The Lord paid even that debt.”

There is no sin too great but what the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has paid for. That is an amazing thing when you stop and think about it. That is the hope of those that the Lord has been pleased to show mercy and grace to. And if you look anywhere else for relief you are not going to find it. It is going to scorn you and hound you. That is why people that have no hope in Christ, where do they run to? Psychologists. Or they run to the preacher. They run to the friend, somebody. Give me some help.

But it is quicksand unless your hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.

But that is what conversion does. It turns us away from ourselves. It says in verse 21:

“That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.”<sup>21</sup>

That is what surrounds us right now. You are not going to find any help in man. You are just not going to do it. Most people when they can’t find help, what do they turn to? Drugs or drink. Try to drown it. But that is just a temporary relief. When you wake up you still have got to deal with it.

Look here in verses 22 to 24 and then I will be done. When the Lord is pleased to do that work of grace in the heart, there is a turning to the Lord. It says in verse 22:

“Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham.”<sup>22</sup>

You see, he spoke here of Lebanon Gentiles that he was pleased to bring in, but here now he turns to the Jew, Jew and Gentile. That is what makes up the true Church of God in Christ, Jew and Gentile.

“Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob.”<sup>23</sup>

What does Jacob mean? Supplanter.

“Jacob have I loved.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Isaiah 29:21.

<sup>22</sup> Isaiah 29:22.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Romans 9:13.

The only reason the Lord had mercy on Jacob was because he loved him. But it says:

“Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.”<sup>25</sup>

If the Lord has given a sinner a true hope in the Lord Jesus Christ because of his shed blood and because that righteousness that he worked out, there is no more reason to be ashamed before a holy God. To be ashamed is not to trust in what Christ has done.

You know, here is the hope of sinners, that if Christ has paid my debt that means God is satisfied and I enter boldly into his presence and we are encouraged in Scripture to do that, to come boldly into his presence to find grace to help in time of need. And it says in verse 23:

“But when he seeth his children...”<sup>26</sup>

Now this is talking about spiritual children, now, those that the Lord is pleased to make his children out of all of the seed of Jacob. It is not all Israel that is of Israel. There is the seed of promise. There are those that the Lord has chosen out and that he will cause to know Christ.

But notice whose work it is.

“But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him...”<sup>27</sup>

This matter of the Lord saving sinners is not by heredity. It is not by genealogy. You know, just because the Lord has been pleased to reveal Christ in us, it doesn't mean that he is going to save our children. He might just as well pass them by. It is his right to do so. Yet we pray for their salvation, but it is the Lord's work to do. And if the Lord is pleased to do a work in our children, we can't say it was because we raised them right. Parents like to take credit for that. Well, I did something right.

No, if there is any mercy shown it is because they are:

“... the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name.”<sup>28</sup>

Sanctify means to set it apart, to glorify it.

“...and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.”<sup>29</sup>

That is the work of the Spirit to do.

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<sup>25</sup> Isaiah 29:22.

<sup>26</sup> Isaiah 29:23.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

And then it says in verse 24:

“They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.”<sup>30</sup>

Understanding and doctrine. That is what takes place whenever the Lord is pleased to work in the heart. He gives us an understanding, first of all, of ourselves, that we are nothing before a holy God. He gives us an understanding of who God is as holy and just that if he should send me to hell he would be just in doing so. But he also gives me an understanding of the work of Christ that when he came and lived and died and rose again, it was that he might save sinners. That is why he came to this world, not to save the righteous. You know, if you are clinging to any righteousness of your own, right now, pray God strip that idol right from your heart, because it shows a blindness.

Someone said, “Sin has slain its thousands and self righteousness its ten thousands.”

An awful lot of self righteous people that the Lord will leave in that blindness to face a Christless eternity. Oh, to have an understanding that in our spirit we have erred, but now he has brought us to an understanding. There was a day when I used to think my will had something to do with my coming to God. If I just will it, he will receive it. Now he has made me to see that all my will can do is condemn me.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.”<sup>31</sup>

You don’t want to be left to your will. But you want that will to be submitted and bowed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“...and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.”<sup>32</sup>

Murmured how? Well, murmured with how God deals with sinners. You know, you might be sitting there right now thinking in your mind, “I don’t like this God.” I have had people say that. “I don’t like your God.”

Well, do you know what? Like him or not it is who he is based on what this Word has to say. And to continue to run the other way or plug your ears or close your eyes and act as if he is not who he is, you might better be running from a bear, a wounded bear than to think that you are going to escape a holy God. May he bring us to bow? May he turn these hearts? May he give us understanding? That very doctrine that so offends, may he cause us to rejoice in it?

You know, I love the doctrine of God choosing sinners. There was a day I didn’t. There was a day I hated. I was taught to hate it. I was brought up in my heart to hate such a

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<sup>30</sup> Isaiah 29:24.

<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 53:6.

<sup>32</sup> Isaiah 29:24.

God. And yet as he has taught me, I have realized that that is the only way that any of us could ever be saved, God doing the choosing.

I used to think it was unfair to think that Christ didn't die for everybody. That is what you hear out there in religion.

“Christ died of everybody.”

Well, if he did, he is a miserable failure, because what does his death accomplish if those for whom he died end up going to hell anyway? You know, the reality is that he died for those that the Father gave him and those that the Father gave him, he will most certainly have. He will most certainly bring to himself. And the rest he leaves to their own devices. That is his right to do.

There was a day when I couldn't bow, but I do now.

You say, “What made the difference? Did you get educated?”

No. It pleased the Lord to reveal this Savior in my heart and cause me to own him and to rest in that truth that all for whom he died he has saved, he has justified, because of his shed blood. It is God's work to do. All I can do is sow the seed and then the Lord will do his work. I pray he will give us that understanding, that faith.

All right, brother Mike.