

When Calvinism Goes Bad (Part 2)

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I would have you turn in your Bibles to John chapter 6. John chapter 6. Read the first half of John 6:37 with me. "All that the Father give me", this is Jesus Christ speaking, He says "All that the Father gives me will come to me". If the Father doesn't give you to Christ, you won't come. If He gives you to Christ you will come. That's the truth. Now, I know there's a second half to the verse but I don't want to deal with that right at the moment.

Let your eyes wander down to verse 44. The word "come" is found here as well. "All that he Father gives me will come to me" in 37. If you are given to the Son by the Father, all that that is true of will come. says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." You need to be drawn, you need to be given, or you will never come. Let your eyes now drop down to 6:64. "But there are some of you who do not believe" Well, they do not believe because they would not believe. But notice, Jesus is going to take us behind the veil. "Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who would not believe and who it was who would betray Him." There's "those," plural, who did not believe and, in addition to that, who it was who, not only didn't believe, but would betray Him. He said, "this is why I told you that no one can come", there's our word "come" again, "to me unless it is granted him by the Father." You will never come to Christ unless its granted, you will never come to Christ unless you are drawn, you will never come to Christ unless you are given to the Son by the Father.

You all see that clearly. Our Lord, He takes us behind the veil. He lets us see into the secret things of God, the realm of God's secret dealings. I can remember first becoming a Christian coming across verses like this and just being staggered! I loved it, because there was a glory! Isn't there a glory in this? The glory is that man, in so much of his ignorance and arrogance, he thinks he's God when it comes to salvation. And verses like this, if you really get these verses, they make you feel pretty small. You come to realize there is a God who is worthy of trembling before. Who is in control and that we are not ultimately in control. That's what Jesus helps us to see. God alone possess the first word and the final word on the salvation of man. That's the kind of God I want. Not a weakling of a God. But a God that I can trust that is going to save me from beginning to end. And once I come to recognize that I'm in the palm of His hand and this whole salvation was not something invented by me but by Him and its secure. These things can be very comforting. The Father just orchestrating your salvation, my salvation, if we are ever to have it. This is glorious light that Jesus shines forth.

But, my concern, this is the second message in "When Calvinism Goes Bad." When Calvinism Goes Bad Part 2. You see, my concern is that we never take a truth like this - it is glorious, we never want to forget it, we never want to be ashamed of it - but we don't want to draw inferences and come to conclusions about truth like this that the Bible never ever comes to. And you see, there are those who do come to conclusions from verses like this, that basically the logic goes this way: Since no man can (emphasize that word). Since no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him, men logically, not that it's good logic, but they logically say, well if no man can it's absurd and it's cruel to require any man to do that which is beyond its power to perform. So its concluded that

unregenerate men and women that haven't been born again, dead in trespasses and sins, they can't come to God, therefore they are under no obligation to come to Christ. And so what happens? They should wait until they feel that God is regenerating them. They should wait until they sense that God is working regeneration or repentance in them. None are expected to repent, none are expected to strive to enter in, none are expected to come to Christ until after they are born again, until they are regenerated.

Look, I'm not going to argue the fact... Is it possible for somebody to believe unless they have life? But it's not for you to figure out if you have life, it's for you to believe! That's what Scripture says. So what happens is, this error comes in where people are more concerned with trying to figure out if they are regenerated then whether they should believe or not. That's what this error does. It takes away the duty of the unregenerate. Oh, God forbid we should tell the non-elect to come! Why? Well, because they are non-elect. Certainly, God never purposed that they should be saved. So the last thing we should do is invite them to come. Such men that fall into this error, they believe that we should never stand before a group of people like this or out on the streets, a crowd of people, whether if it is in this country or somewhere else, indiscriminately and universally bid and urge and command, entreat men to come to Christ.

Now, as my wife has repeatedly reminded me over these last several weeks. She says, "I don't know why you are doing a series like this, our church doesn't have this problem!" And I would say, okay, but let me tell you something, this is a slippery slope and before people get all the way to that point, which they were at in William Carey's day and they were at in Spurgeon's day. The ground starts giving way before you get all the way there. It's kind of like the train on the train tracks, it typically is not headed that way and "bang!" just like that it goes to the right. The divergence is slow at first. Often times error comes about in a gradual way. There's much more subtle manifestations of this same erroneous thinking. You see, it comes like this: we say, well, yes! We should be telling men to repent. Repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, we should be telling them and yes we should be expecting them to believe on Christ. But here's where that slippery slope begins to come in. Yes, we acknowledge that it's the duty of men. Yes, we read, like right there in Acts 20:21 "testifying to both the Jews and Greeks of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

But, here's where we go wrong. Where we can go wrong. And perhaps where some of you have gone wrong. It's the duty of the lost to do this, it's just not the immediate duty. Now, hear me out on this. We can fall into this mindset where it is okay with us that the sinner who doesn't repent, doesn't believe immediately because we start to think that he is unable. And what happens is...I've seen this kind of thing. I've been dealing with people, I get phone calls from people, I get e-mails from people. We have a real problem right now that goes something like this: you press somebody to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you press them to repent, and what do they come back with? I'm trying but it doesn't work. They come back with, "it's hard." I've had somebody just recently tell me, that's hard! Or that's hard to understand. Or they say, "I'm believing but God isn't saving me."

Or, you read in Ichabod Spencer, one of his accounts, he had a young man say to him, "I can't repent. I'm trying but I can't." Look, you tell me some of the excuses that people give you when you give them the Gospel and they don't believe right away. Have any of you heard those things? What are some of the other responses that people give? "I don't have enough conviction." "I don't have enough grief." "I don't feel bad enough for my sin." What are some of the other responses? "Not ready." That at least is being more honest. "God won't let me." Yeah,

I want to but the problem is with God. "I can't figure it out." "This is too hard to figure out." What's that? "I have time." Yeah, that's dangerous.

And you know what happens? If their response is one that you take and couple with, oh! no man can come. This man cannot come and he is telling me that he can't come. And so you take the two together and what you do is it sets you back off of saying nevertheless, you are commanded to repent now. But you see, we begin to give way to that. We begin to give space. You know what we'll do. What are the typical responses, rather than, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!" "Fall into the arms of Christ!" "Go to Him in mercy, bankrupt!" "Without price! Take that living water now!" What are many common responses right at that point that backs the sinner off and makes him think, based on what the Christian is telling him, that its not as urgent for him to repent right at that moment? You know what we'll say? You know what some do say? And this is a problem here.

Well, pray that God will give you conviction. Pray for the Holy Spirit. Pray for repentance. Pray that God will give you repentance. Pray that God will give you a new heart. Read your Bible. Listen to this Paul Washer sermon. Wait upon God. That is not the Gospel. That is not the Gospel! And you know what? You respond to sinners that way and you are on the slippery slope to Hyper Calvinism. Here's what happens, you have this person, this sinner, they are in their sins, they are told to repent and believe, and they say "I can't!" And you take them at their word on that. And that's one of the problems. We are too ready to take sinners at their word when they say they have already believed. Or they say they are trying to repent but I can't. Or God somehow isn't letting me. Or this problem, or that problem, or it is too difficult to figure out. I don't feel enough conviction. We take them too much at their word. And what happens is that right at that point, you now take what they are saying to you and you pair that up with, "oh yeah! unless it's granted of the Father, unless it is given, unless God draws them, they can't." And so, you know what we do? We try to figure out something we think they can do. And so we tell them, pray, or wait, or put yourself under good preaching, or go to the Bible and read in Scripture. There's a big problem with that. Pressing men to do what we imagine that they can do.

Now, I want you to think with me here. When men say they can't repent, when men say they can't believe, when we start thinking inability, they cannot, we need to remember why they cannot. Their inability is not like... if I take Jayden over here and I say, "Jayden, there's a box in the back over there that weighs 300 pounds. Would you go get that and bring it here?" And he goes over there and he says that he can't do it. And he says, "no child can pick this up unless God helps me or unless I grow big and I get strong" or whatever. And you know what, if he came back I wouldn't tell his mother, spank him because he can't do that. His inability is excusable, right? He's not to be blamed for it. It's an innocent inability. But is man's inability innocent? Man's inability is criminal, and we need to remember that. That inability which is no fault of a child to pick up a box is not like the inability of a man or a woman who doesn't come to God. And if we allow that to be an excuse, what we are doing is we are excusing them in their wickedness. Just the opposite is true in Scripture. Sinners who cannot come are blamed for the cannot. "you come to Him a living stone, rejected by men." Do you know why men can't come? Because they reject Christ. That's why they can't come, because their heart is not inclined to Him. They hate Him, they despise Him, their heart is averse to Him and so they don't come. "Rejected by men, but in the sight of God chosen and precious." God sees Christ chosen, precious, full of beauty. "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased." Man looks at it and rejects it. He says, "I hate that!" That's criminal! That's wicked!

Think about Luke 14, you know the parable. "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many." Why didn't they come? Why were they saying, "let me be excused"? You know why! Because they had oxen, they had a wife, they had a field that they wanted more. And listen to the last case there in that parable, it goes like this, "another said, I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come." Do you see the kind of cannot we deal with sinners who don't come? They cannot come because they don't want to come because they love something else. Obviously God does not expect us to trust in a Christ that is not revealed to us. Look, it's fine sending people to the Word of God if they go with a Berean mindset to look in that Word to see the Christ there and believe on Him immediately! But so often what it turns into is now the sinner is kicked back, he is thinking that he is justified in his unbelief and lack of repentance. Why? Because the Christian has told him that you just need to pray that God would give you repentance. Now, he is set at ease. And he has been set at ease by the very people that ought to be telling him, as long as you remain in that state you are enemies of Christ and you are in trouble! And yet, we've set him at ease when we tell him, just pray for repentance, because now he thinks... he imagines he really wants salvation, it's God's fault that he is not getting it, he is waiting for God to do something and all the time he is a rebel and the real issue with his not coming is because he won't come. And he refuses to come! Do not take sinners at their word when they say, they won't come or they can't come or they can't repent or it's too difficult. Charles Spurgeon has said, "of course it's too difficult to figure out when you just want to lay hold of your sin and you don't want to give it up." Yes, it's going to be difficult to figure out. No man is ever rebuked for not doing that which is naturally impossible. But sinners are not in that case, they are most definitely rebuked for loving their sin and not believing and coming to Christ. Scripture again and again asserts that it's nothing but criminal ignorance and criminal pride and criminal disdain for God and criminal dishonesty that is behind the reason that men don't come.

You think about this statement. In John 5:43. Here's Jesus. (Yeah, you all look at that.) Watch, what you see here. Jesus says in John 5:43, "I have come in my Father's name (I'm the Messiah, sent of God) and you do not receive me. (you don't receive me!) (excusable? let's keep reading.) If another comes in his own name you will receive him (in other words, you know what he is saying? Men, you have the ability to receive, but you are choosing to receive some and not me. You have the power to receive! You can receive men but you're not receiving me.) "How can you?" (He says, again, it's that can. How can you?) "How can you believe when your heart is inclined to receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God." Men are said that they cannot do what their evil disposition does not allow them to do. But it's an evil disposition! It's an evil dislike to receive Christ. It's criminal, it's not excusable. To not be able to come to Christ because you so hate Him, is that excusable? I mean, what's that? You can't come! Why? Because you despise Him, you disdain Him. Is God going to excuse you for that?

Listen to Romans 10:3. It is said of the Jews, "they did not submit to God's righteousness." Here is Jesus Christ, by the obedience of one. Oh! He works out the perfections that God's law demanded and they won't submit to it, they reject it, they don't want it. Do you know why? They wanted to be self-righteous, they wanted to live in their own pride, their own self-righteousness, they wanted to work out a righteousness for themselves. So what does it say, they did not submit to God's righteousness. They are at fault. How about this? Psalm 10:4 The Psalmist says, "in the pride of his face the wicked does not seek God." When you're dealing with a sinner and they are doing anything but running to Christ for salvation, it is because of their own pride, it is because of their own arrogance, it

is because of their own resistance, it is because of their own lack of submission to God. And you need to tell them, they are in a dangerous place, and as long as they stay there they are in danger of God's damnation. And that's what Scripture said and that's how they preached. That's how the apostles preached! And that's how Christ preached, they pressed those sinners, you make a decision now. A decision on your part is demanded immediately! Do not put sinners to sleep, church! Don't do it! They need to be pressed. It is now! It is urgent! It is their responsibility! Men are responsible to turn now! And with all their sin and all their resistance and all their rebellion, if they will but lay down those arms and fall into the arms of Christ, they will find mercy. Abundant! But as long as they resist that, whatever their excuse might be, they are enemies of God and they are in imminent danger. Do not put sinners to sleep! Because it just serves self righteousness so perfectly. For you to come along and say, "you need to pray for repentance," because now he imagines, I really desire salvation, I am praying for repentance and I am waiting for God to do something. And he is thinking, I am doing what I can do. It just perfectly serves his self righteous spirit. He now smugly sits there, his conscience is put to sleep, he feels like he really wants to be saved. He is deceiving himself, of course. Why? Why would I say that? Think with me here. If a man or a woman is hell-bent on rebellion against God, then they will not repent right now. Do you think if they turn around and pray for repentance their prayer is sincere? They are praying for what they hate and they don't want! Do you think God is going to hear a prayer like that? The whole thing is a charade! And you've helped build their foundation which is made of rotten stuff and it is just going to give way. It doesn't stand! For the sinner to go and actually be praying to be saved or to pray for a new heart, or to pray for the Holy Spirit... What you have done is, you've taken a man who is in rebellion or a woman who is in rebellion - they will not come to Christ - and now you tell them to ask God for what they hate and will not do and have no inclination for. They falsely believe that they really want salvation. But do you know what they really want? An escape out of Hell! And there's people all of the time, I see it, they get stirred up, they don't want to go to Hell and they are afraid of Hell, but then they come along and they say that they can't repent. And it's because they don't want to. It's because they want to escape Hell holding onto their sin. And don't you dear give them any comfort in that! Unless they surrender wholeheartedly. Lay down their weapons of rebellion and believe on Christ. They're inability is criminal, absolutely criminal.

John 8:43 Listen to what Jesus says here, "why do you not understand what I say?" You see, this is what happens with sinners. We talk to them and they look puzzled. "I can't figure that out, that sounds too difficult." Listen, if somebody is drowning out in the ocean and a life preserver is thrown to them, are they going to look at it and say, "oh! I can't figure this out!" No! When a man or a woman is desperate and they are clinging for life and they know they are going down and they know the wrath of God is upon them and they know they are just consumed. "I must flee from the wrath of God!" When that life preserver is thrown, they are going to grab it, and they are going to cling to it. But what happens here? "Why do you not understand what I say?"

You see, it's not just with us. Jesus encountered the same thing. But He didn't lower the standard and say, well okay, pray that God will give you understanding. "Why do you not understand what I say?" Remember, "no man can come", "no man can understand unless the Father draws." What does He say? "It is because you cannot bear to hear my Word." Get that, bear! Is that excusable? You can't bear... the reason why you can't hear is because you cannot bear what I say. You can't tolerate what I say. And does He excuse them? No, do you know what He does? What's the next thing that He says? "You are of your Father the devil." Wow! He didn't give them a way out.

He didn't send them home to read Scripture. Go to church, listen to a Paul Washer message. He condemned them on the spot. You won't hear what I say...wow! Jesus is supposing that these Jews could have received the teaching of Christ if it had only been bearable and agreeable for them to do so. And the fact that it was not agreeable to them is the only reason given as to why they could not understand and believe. Man's hostility to God is the reason why he does not get the Gospel!

And I'll tell you this, you can see how much God does think its the sinners responsibility because of the threatenings, terrifying threatenings of punishment for refusing to believe. I mean, two of the well known passages: Mark 16:16, "whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, whoever does not believe will be condemned." Damned in some translations. You will be damned if you do not believe! God holds you that responsible to believe immediately. And you remember, today is the day of salvation, you don't know if you've got tomorrow. You don't know that.

How about John 3:18? Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already. And what is the reason he is condemned? There's a because here, there is a cause for his condemnation. Look, you are guilty of all your other sins. Absolutely! Absolutely! But I'll tell you, if you believe, they are wiped out, they are washed away! And right now, when there is a Savior offered to mankind - listen to the words - "whoever does not believe is condemned already because He has not believed in the name of the only Son of God." I mean, this is a terrible ultimatum of our Lord. I mean, look, you tell people, whatever their excuse may be, you don't give them any hiding place but Christ! No hiding place! No hiding place in going home to read Scripture, no hiding place in praying, no hiding place in waiting, no hiding place but Christ! Isn't that what the song says? Christ alone is that hiding place. And you tell them, outside of there, you are outside of the city of refuge and the man-slayer is on your heels! You are in trouble, flee at once! Now! Terrible ultimatum. This is our message to the world, this is the message that we are told to take to every creature. Whoever receives it and submits to the authority of Christ has the assurance that they will have eternal salvation. Absolutely! But to reject Christ is to reject the Gospel. Damnation shall be his portion.

Listen to this, 2 Thessalonians 2:10, those who are perishing are described here. Why? "because they refused to love the truth and so be saved." They refused! It doesn't say that God refused. We are going to look at this whole lot more in another message. God holds out His hand, He extends His hand to a stiff-necked people all the day long! It's because they refused! "Therefore, God sends them a strong delusion so that they believe what is false. (Listen to this.) In order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Listen to what that is saying, if you will not believe the truth it is because of your pleasure in unrighteousness. There's another place that says, how can you believe when you are all tied up in the glory of men? It's the same thing, it's unrighteousness. That's one of the many unrighteousnesses. People will pleasure in unrighteousness. Do you know why people balk? Do you know why they stall? Do you know why they want to wait? Do you know why they are looking for anything else to do? Because as much as they fear Hell they want their sin and they won't lay down their weapons of rebellion. Don't give them a hiding place outside of Christ. Don't!

Now, here is something I need to be really clear on. You need to get this because this has come into this church as well. And its another fruit of Hyper Calvinism. We need to think... It says, "those are going to be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." What truth are we supposed to

believe? Here's what happens. You tell the sinner... for whatever reason they stall and you tell them, "go pray for a new heart." "You go pray for repentance." Here's what they do, they actually supposed that they're earnest, which they are not, they pray because they don't want to go to Hell. They feel in their self-righteousness they are doing what they can do. Now it's God's issue. But what are they waiting to see? They are waiting for God to do something. And so, you know what the question is in their mind? Do you know what is common with Hyper Calvinism? Faith is no longer in Christ and His work, faith is whether you believe you see the signs of God regenerating you. I see that in this church! I see people getting hung up on a regular basis on trying to figure out if the marks of true Christianity is in them. Rather than fleeing to Christ and seeing in Him all the value and all the perfection and all the all-sufficiency to save them, they are now there seeking introspectively looking for the implications that God is actually working repentance or working conviction or working faith or causing to be regenerated. I see it here! I see it here. That's dangerous and that is deadly and we need to be clear on this because what that kind of thing does is it gets a person's eyes on themselves. Not on Christ.

Oh! How often I see that these days. This is one of the fruits of Hyper Calvinism that has crept in. Faith gets redefined as believing that I am regenerate, rather than believing in the all-sufficiency of Christ and His atoning work. Saving faith is not believing I am saved! Saving faith is believing that there is salvation in no other name, no one else, that there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved. It's believing that, it's looking outside of self. Faith is not focused on believing whether I have an interest or a lack of interest in the Gospel. That is not the focal point. Faith believes upon the saving work of Christ as my only hope! I hope that you can see and feel the difference here. There is a huge difference as to trying to believe whether I'm a recipient or whether I'm looking outside of myself and seeing Christ as all-sufficient. Yes! Brethren, yes! Saving faith is all about embracing Christ for myself. It is. It's all about trusting Him for the forgiveness of my own sins. But believing that Christ is the treasure that is worth going and selling everything for. That's a whole lot different than trying to figure out whether these manifestations of regeneration and trying to believe whether its true in my life. Listen! God's call to mankind to believe is always based on what is true. It's always based on the promises of Scripture. And do you know what the truth is? You can believe that you are saved and not be. Or you can believe that you are not saved and be. God doesn't want you to put your faith in what might not be true! But what is true is this: If I cling to Christ, if I fall upon Christ, come to Him with no price, no bargain, total surrender, but falling on Him for mercy because of my sin. If I view Him as He is viewed in Scripture. What do you think the first chapter of Hebrews is all about? It's not trying to figure out if you're saved. It is projecting Christ as this one through whom God has spoken and through whom He has created this world and to whom all this authority and all this power and all this preeminence and the radiance of the glory of God in the exact imprint of His nature and having made purification for sins. There He goes rising up out of the dead! Soaring through the Heavens! Taking a seat at the Father's right hand! It's that! He wants our eyes outside of there! Of course, if we cling to Him, we've got the confidence that we are saved but that is not the focal point of our faith. Our faith is in Him, He is the object and if we get it wrong on this we end up with people who are just running around full of doubts. And I'll tell you it kills a church! It kills a church!

Charles Spurgeon said... Charles Spurgeon took the pulpit of John Gill. He said that during Gill's years that church went into steep decline. He said in the days of William Carey, over 40 years Particular Baptist churches

hung up on Hyper Calvinism, they decreased. I think there were like 250 and they went down to 180 in 4 years. It's death! It's death when we don't make Christ the object and send men there to believe immediately. Now! It is their duty to believe immediately. To believe on Him! Not to be transfixed with whether they are saved or not. But transfixed with Christ. And in that the confidence will flow. I heard John Piper say before, our best days are not when our eyes are glued on ourselves. Hey! As valuable as it might be to see that the evidence of true saving faith are in my life, that is not the object of saving faith! That does not save! It is clinging to the one in whom all the merits are. That alone is saving. Nothing, nothing can be the object of our faith except the promises of God. So, we must not lower the standard. We must turn people in all of their wretchedness and all of their sin... we can point out their sin, but there is only one hope. Don't murder men's souls when they claim it is too difficult to repent and believe by lowering the standard. Those who don't want to give up their favorite sins are always going to find the Gospel difficult to understand. Simply because they have no inclination for such salvation as that. Give no hiding place but Christ alone.

Well, one last thing that I would say here. Because, I see this in our day as well. The error comes in (this is another subtly of Hyper-Calvinism when Calvinism goes bad) when there is a reluctance to press sinners the way they are pressed in Scripture. To say anything to the sinner that sounds like works we run away from, and that is a Hyper-Calvinistic tendency to so want to protect grace that any kind of proclamation of the Gospel that seems like you're telling the sinner to do something is abhorred. But, that's not the way Christ and His disciples taught. Now, look! Works of the Law are far different than telling sinners to do what Scripture tells them to do in order to be saved. Works of the Law are the kinds of things you do to merit acceptance with God. Now, certainly the sinner in all of his wickedness has undoubtedly taken what God says that we should do in His Word and they've spun it in such a way that they apply merit to it and they have fallen short of the Cross. But, I want to remind you here at the end of some of the things that Scripture says that I just wonder how free, how influenced some of you might be to Hyper-Calvinistic thinking. Even though you don't realize that is what it is. That you can't say these things that Scripture says. Have you ever told a sinner, "awake O sleeper and arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you!" Have you ever told anyone that? Arise from the dead. You say, "they can't do it!" You know, this comes from that portion of Scripture where Paul is saying that you who are light in this world, children of light, you are to reprove the evil deeds! And this seems like in Ephesians 5:14 what you should be saying to them. Rise from the dead! That's what Jesus did. "Lazarus, come forth!" Sounds like it works for Paul, too.

How about 2 Corinthians 5:20, "we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God!" That is an imperative! We go to the sinner, "be reconciled!" We are ambassadors for Christ! We are imploring them on behalf of Christ! Christ is saying, "be reconciled!" There's no question about whether you can come. You are bidden to come! Isaiah 42:18, "here you deaf, look you blind, that you may see!" Have you ever said that to somebody? Here's a guy you know, he's dead in his trespasses and sins, he's blind, and you say to him, "hear! you deaf!" I mean, that may be better to say to the guy who you've just explained the Gospel to rather than, after his reluctance, send him to pray for salvation. Maybe you ought to charge him that way. "Hear you deaf!" That's what Scripture says. I mean, Matthew 22:4, "come to the wedding feast!" You're bidden. How about James 4:8, "cleanse your hands you sinners, and purify your hearts you double minded." Luke 13:24, "strive to enter through the narrow door, for many I tell you will seek to enter and will not be able." You have Revelation 3:17, "You're wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, naked.

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes that you may see. Deuteronomy 10:16, “circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.” That’s a good thing to say to the sinner that is saying, “this is too difficult to understand.” Say to them, be no longer stubborn! Show them! It is the love of their sin, the love of unrighteousness that they will not receive the truth! Circumcise the foreskin of your heart. Acts 2:40, “save yourselves from this crooked generation!” John 12:35, “the light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light. Lest darkness undertake you.” You are all probably familiar with John 6:27, “do not work for the food that perishes but work for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you for on Him, God the Father has set His seal. Then they said to Him, “what must we do to be doing the works of God?” “Jesus answered them, this is the work of God,” (not the work that God Himself will do, this is the work that He requires of you! It’s just like the righteousness of God, the righteousness of God that is revealed in the Gospel is not God’s righteousness, it is God’s righteous standard for you. It is God’s requirement of you! That’s what this is all about. The work of that you have to do... you may say, “that sounds awful legal.”) “this is the work of God, that you believe on Him who was sent.” I mean, are we to strive? Are we to arise from the dead? Are we to circumcise our own hearts? Are we to hear? Are we to see? That’s what Scripture calls you to do! And if you don’t do it you will die in your sin! Jesus Christ has paid the ransom price! Jesus Christ has perfectly fulfilled all the requirements that God requires for salvation. He came under the Law, never once did He defile it or break it. He became a curse, not like we do - because we do not keep everything in the book of the Law and do it, He did it all - He became a curse because He willingly took the place of sinners and He bids us, be reconciled! The glory is that there is a way to be reconciled! God has not just left us in our sins. He bids us, be reconciled! In these 3 areas, brethren, these 3 areas... that we not fall into the subtleties of not requiring faith and repentance immediately. That we fall into these subtleties of thinking that faith is believing whether we believe verses believing on Christ! Or, the other subtleties that we see...

Well, I said what I felt needed to be said at this point. There are other errors that I see creeping into the church. You know, Iain Murray has written a book called, “Spurgeon verses Hyper-Calvinism.” And in that book, he says that Spurgeon didn’t only have one controversy in his ministry back in the 1800s. Which we often remember the downgrade which Iain Murray wrote the book, “The Forgotten Spurgeon” back in the 1960s because churches and preachers had largely forgotten the sovereignty of God and the things that Spurgeon so fought for. But now 40 years later, Murray wrote, “Spurgeon verses Hyper-Calvinism.” Do you know why? He recognizes where Calvinism isn’t in the land, Hyper-Calvinism, being a twisting of that, really isn’t a problem. But where it has made its resurgence, that is where it becomes the problem. Thus, he wrote his book because even though he doesn’t see the full-blown, he sees these things creeping into the church today. And I see them as well, and I don’t want our church to go down that path. There may not be full-blown Hyper-Calvinism here, but these subtle errors - subtle - we need to watch out for them, we need to beware of them, we need to beware of letting sinners think that they are okay as long as they are not believing on the Lord Jesus Christ! We need to be very careful that we don’t make faith out to be looking for evidences of salvation and believing that their are evidences. True saving faith is beholding Christ! We don’t want to go wrong on that! We don’t want to give sinners a hiding place outside of Christ, we don’t want to put them to sleep! We need to urge these things upon them.

Oh, the third thing was, we need to, once again, speak like Scripture does. Stop protecting grace in a way that Jesus and the Apostles never felt that they needed to protect it. You tell them, “rise from the dead!” That is one of the most amazing statements I find in Scripture! “Rise from the dead!” I love that! “Hear! Circumcise your heart.” “Save yourself from this perverse generation!” Save yourself? Yes! “Strive to enter in.” Not in your own power. Jesus said that you can’t do any transaction with Him unless it is without price. So, the thing you need to recognize about all those things. There’s no price in them, there’s no merit. As good as they may be, they are good things. The difference between them and works of the Law: there’s no merit in them. If you make merit in them, then you miss Christ.

But, those things, if they are all bringing you to simply trust Him and to see in Him all that treasure. I need what He offers. I am going to perish in my sins, there is only one way! I’m as the murderer, the man-slayer, I’m not in the city of refuge and I feel the avenger of blood breathing down my neck and I need a place to run. You run there! You run now! You go! You say, “I don’t feel that, I don’t feel convicted.” Scripture does not say that you have to feel convicted. You say, “yeah, but it says, ‘everyone that labors and are heavy laden.’” Yes, but that is an appeal to people that are, but there are other places where it just says strive! Go man! You’ll buy without price, buy it now! You don’t have to feel a certain thing. Don’t put your trust there! Put your trust in the promises, and the promise says that if you believe on Jesus Christ you will not be ashamed! You go there now! Don’t wait for any feeling! Put your eyes on Christ! And go there at once and if for any reason, if you’ve been given any other hiding place or any other reason, even if it has been said by us or by me even, flee to Christ now! God help us, brethren! I know a lot of people are saved in here. But, may He spare us from these errors and I’ve seen them. You know these things have been prevalent among us.

What Spurgeon saw was that where this creeps in, God stops saving. Phil Johnson has written some tremendous stuff on Hyper-Calvinism that is up on the internet. He said that when it starts to creep in it kills the church, it becomes lifeless, it becomes dead. That is always historically what has happened. God is going to bless our message when it is most like Scripture, and when it is set forth with the same heart that they set it forth with in Scripture. What this tends to do is it takes the life, it takes the heart out. We’re going to talk at another time of how Hyper-Calvinism doesn’t believe that God has a general love for the world. It produces this lovelessness, a dry orthodoxy, that spins these doctrines and it takes the heart out and the love out and it just ends up being dead religion. God spare us from that!

Father we pray, help us Lord, help us! Oh may we ever retain the Gospel in this place and be clear with it. Lord give us to know the Gospel, and to pronounce it and to proclaim the excellencies of Christ with such clarity and purity as the Word of God demands. Pressing men to believe in the promises of Scripture, the Christ revealed in Scripture. Pressing them to do so now, today, the day of salvation! Not to neglect such a great salvation, but to freely receive it and to receive it at once! To lay down the arms of their rebellion. Bring all their sins to Christ. Be washed away, forgiven, the power broken, purified through this life and to be glorified forevermore. All in the merits of Christ, trusting Him. What a glorious Savior we have! Thank you, Father! In Christ’s name I pray. Amen.