

## **Matthew 21-11-28b**

Let's continue our study now in the Word of God. And as we have seen, there is a point to these sections of Jesus' parable about the wedding banquet. And he arrives at it after identifying the one who comes to the banquet.

This man, of course, is symbolic of anyone. He is a single man, but it isn't as though there will only be one person who fails to put on the wedding garment, but he is representative in the same way that those who responded to the call from the crossroads are representative. Not everyone at the crossroads came.

And to be fair, the initial invitation and the initial call to the early meal and to the wedding banquet that night is not universally rejected in Israel either. There were those who responded. There were those in Old Testament days who saw the coming kingdom, who longed for it, the faithful prophets, the roster of faith heroes in Hebrews 11 tells us that it was not a universal rejection.

The disciples, those who responded, Mary and Martha and Lazarus and all others who responded when Jesus came, who responded, the woman at the well in John 4, and the people of Sychar in Samaria who came out and were saved. Those that Jesus healed, who Jesus said, your sins are forgiven you, your faith has saved you. So this is an emblematic parable that deals with categories.

And so categorically, those who had plenty of time to prepare and did not fall into two broad generalizations, those who are self-interested and therefore apathetic and those who are openly hostile and antagonistic. For those who are self-interested, as Jesus said about the Pharisees who paraded their righteousness on the streets to be seen by men, he said, they have their reward. That's their reward.

And these who go to their farm and go to their business, well, they have their farm and their business and that's it. In the coming kingdom and the beneficence and the blessings and the providences of the future, they don't enter into it. They will come and say, Lord, Lord, and he'll say, I don't know you, depart from me.

And all they have is what they went for in this life. So those at the crossroads who come represent those who do respond to the call, even though they have other pressing business. They have places to go and people to see, but they come.

There are those who did and those who didn't, but we have the representative group inside the banquet hall in this second part of the parable, this one man, there could be others, but the conversation serves the purpose with the one man. The king comes and says, friend, why do you not have on a wedding garment? And he has no reply. There's nothing he can say because he's without excuse.

Much as in Romans chapter one, God's eternal power and deity are on display in what has been created. And those who suppress that truth in unrighteousness are without excuse. And for this reason, God turns them over to that which they substitute and that which they choose instead.

And they become further and further into the darkness in that last half of Romans one. So bind him hand and foot, take him away, which is half the manuscripts have taken him away and half don't. You pretty much can't cast him into the outer darkness unless you take him away.

So it's not a problem either way, bind him hand and foot, cast him into the darkness outside. For those who rather jokingly like to say that hell is going to be a lot more fun than heaven or coming under the judgment and discipline of God is, you know, I'd rather be with the fun people than with the holy Joes and the stodgy saints, you know, who are sitting around being all pious. Just in case there was any doubt that, well, all the centers are going to eat together and just further enjoy their sin.

The binding of hands and feet, this man was traveling on a road with his feet and carrying his stuff with his hands. Now he will do none of those things, bind him hand and foot. He responded to the call of the king, and this would strongly suggest that he represents someone who accedes and accepts when the gospel is presented, but who is unwilling to perform what that same gospel and that same God further calls us to.

We are not only called to salvation from eternal judgment, but we are called to holiness. We are called to love. We are called to live a life that reflects the glory of Jesus Christ and prepares us for service now.

And in the future, you can respond to one call and not the other. That's what this man represents. He is friend.

He is in the banquet hall. He responded to the call. So he's not going to have his city burned with fire.

He's not going to be destroyed. He is not a murderer. And he's not so self-interested that he refused to come and said, I've got to continue my journey.

He did come, but he is apathetic to the requirement that responding to that invitation places upon him. If you are going to come to the banquet, you must further accept the garment of righteousness that the King offers, and you must put it on. God gives us plenty of spiritual armor, but we've got to put it on.

He doesn't put it on us. And once again, this idea that God dictates everything in his sovereign will leaves out the function of free will in both cases. There's many in the reformed tradition who would say, well, God's going to compel you to salvation, but then you have a choice.

Once you've been freed from sin and have responded to your election, now you will be on the upward way. I'm heading on the upward way, new heights I'm gaining every day. This is the pea and tulip perseverance of the saints, but you can fail and you can have short-term losses.

The trend of your stock is generally upward, but day to day, it might be kind of spiky. You might go down on one day and up in another, but because of the life which God has placed in you and the effectual call that he has put on you, you're going to be on the upward way and gain new heights over time. And this parable argues that the same free will that can choose to come to the banquet can choose not to comply with the requirements to dwell there.

These are the Israelites who responded to God and believed in God, but are not going to pass under the rod into the millennial kingdom because although they knew him as God, they didn't glorify him as God. Instead of accepting the righteousness of God, they sought to establish their own as Paul puts it. And my garments are good enough.

My notions of righteousness are good enough. And so at the end, and what I was about to conclude with in the first session is when you get to verse 14 of Matthew chapter 22, Jesus summarizes the point of this two-sided parable, this two-part parable by saying, this man is sent to the darkness, which is outside bound hand and foot. He's not going to accomplish anything for the king or for himself.

Bound hand and foot means there is no production. There is no progress. And this is one of the passages on which I base my understanding, which could change as I study and learn and hopefully grow.

But the binding of hand and foot that takes place for those who are in the outer darkness seems to me to represent no further opportunity to progress. So at the banquet in the millennial kingdom, if there are citizens of the kingdom, if there are those who are in the world who do not put on righteousness, who do not feed the hungry, give drink to those who thirst, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick and in prison, and there is still sickness and imprisonment in the kingdom. This is why the sheep and goats judgment is predicated upon what did you do with your opportunity? Were you outward looking? Were you seeking to benefit? Did you use your hands and your feet to express love and concern? Or did you live the self-interested, self-centered life and you did not look around? You're like the rich man who had Lazarus at his gate with dogs licking his sores because you didn't provide salve or balm.

You didn't even send your lowliest servant out there to give him a drink or to give him a few crumbs left over from your sumptuous feast. He sat there at your gate till he died. This rich man is not an unbeliever.

He has a conversation with Abraham who says, son, and this man's five brothers have

Moses and the prophets to listen to. And they don't need someone coming back from the dead to scare them into a different way of thinking. They've got Moses and the prophets.

If they will not listen to that, they won't listen even if someone comes back from the dead. So this is the scenario. And to clarify, I wouldn't add this to the translation, but for clarification of verse 14, many are called from the world.

Many are called from the large group, but from that large group, few are chosen. In other words, the calling and the choosing both look at the entire realm of those who were invited initially. It looks at the entire realm of those who are traveling the highways and the byways and are crossing the intersection of these great roads.

Many are called from there, but few are chosen from there because the choice, the acceptance, and in this particular parable, they are chosen for the blessing and the prosperity and the joy of participation in the banquet. Many are called, but who ends up in the banquet, enjoying the feast with the approval of the king? That's the choosing. And isn't it interesting that Jesus says about calling and election, which is the issue in Reformed theology and those who disagree with its conclusions.

In Jesus' parable, it's very clear that God's choosing rests upon those who have chosen to respond to him. I don't see how Jesus could have made it any more clear. The king sent out an invitation.

Anybody who wanted to come could come. Nobody restrained them. Nobody mugged them so that they couldn't come.

If sin holds us in chains and we cannot choose to respond to God's invitation, why isn't that in the parable? Not only is there rejection, not only is there apathy and self interest, but there is outright hostility, rebellion, and murdering of the messengers on the part of these who are rightfully judged. Their city is rightfully destroyed. They are rightfully eliminated.

Then those who do come from the crossroads are still not universally chosen. What is the basis of God's choosing of the remaining guests? What is the basis of God's judgment on this one man? He chose not to put on the wedding garment and he has no excuse. Sorry, my king, but they ran out of garments.

I was the last in line. Sorry, my king, but I was traveling in haste and I only had my AWOL bag and I didn't pack a wedding garment. Sorry, my king, but I was mugged in the road and they stole all my possessions.

Sorry, my king, I would love to put on a garment but there just was not one available. He can't answer because they're stacked up right outside the banquet hall. There's a servant waiting to help him put it on and he chose not to put it on.

Our fate, our future, our hope depends on what we choose. Many are called. Who is chosen? Those who respond.

Those who choose to honor the invitation and the one who sends it. I will honor those who honor me, God says. Those who dishonor me, I will lightly esteem.

I will treat lightly just like these people did the invitation. So this is harsh. Here is a celebration and in the midst of it, there is a judgment. The other guests might say, that's so insensitive.

Look, the servants have tackled this guy. He's struggling. They're binding his hands.

They're binding his feet. They're carrying him outside the light and the glory and the joy of the banquet hall and they're throwing him into the darkness outside. And look, there's weeping and gnashing of teeth, which implies that there's more than just this man in that darkness, which is outside.

I suspect that in that darkness is also the farmer and the merchant who similarly didn't follow the process of response all the way to its happy and blessed conclusion. You can peel off early. You can peel off late.

In either case, you're not in the wedding hall celebrated and accepted and chosen by the king. So, and the choosing that was initially done to the invitees transfers to those from the highways and byways. And this of course, represents national Israel as a whole, as a group rejecting.

There are wonderful exceptions. We know Old Testament and new, but as a nation, they are set aside. And as a people, the ethnoid, the Gentiles are then extended the invitation and they respond and they come.

But even among the Gentiles, just because you're a Gentile and just because you accept Christ, doesn't mean you're in and you're chosen. It is those who honor the king, those who fulfill all of the requirements for remaining in that place of blessing. This man is not killed.

He's not destroyed. His farm and family and environs are not tracked down and burned. He is no longer able to participate in the joy and blessing of the feast.

Well, this brings me to something that has come up in the last week or two. I try to keep us all at least in touch with what's going on in the larger culture, especially the Christian culture in our country and which extends now because of the internet and so on pretty much internationally. But you will remember way back when we had our fundamental study, I talked about the emergent church and that they were trying to emerge out from under stultified tradition and layer upon layer of dead ritual and empty legalism and so on.

There is nothing wrong with identifying these problems and seeking to escape them. But if you are going to leave one thing, what are you going to go to? Am I going out of the frying pan and into the fire or am I actually escaping so that I can head in a positive and fruitful and God honoring direction? It reminds me of working with machinery. Inevitably, something gets stuck.

I've been under a Volkswagen van, for example, with a wrench trying to loosen a rusty bolt. And I put the biggest wrench I've got on there and I cannot get any leverage. I have to use a small wrench because it will give me some swing and I can get it up in between all these other obstructions.

So I get a small wrench and I put it on the bolt and I'm pulling and pulling and pulling, trying to unstick this rusty bolt. When it finally does come free, my hand swings too far and I injure myself, painfully so, on other obstructions. When I get something unstuck, I'm pulling so hard that I go too far in the other direction and I get hurt.

I think in seeking to escape legalism, you can pull so hard to get unstuck from it that you go too far in the direction of license and freedom. With God, all things are possible and all things are lawful and I can do what I want and I'm no longer going to live under these strictures and these man-made limitations and traditional expectations. I'm free, free, free.

Jesus said, the truth shall set you free. Well, I've got the truth that legal isn't bad, so I'm free to do anything. I'm free to make all kinds of really bad decisions.

Well, there is a reincarnation of the emergent church. You can look these things up if you want to investigate it further. I'm only using it as an example because it bears on our understanding of what Jesus is saying in this parable.

You can respond and be saved. You can recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, trust Him for eternal life, and then think that you are putting on the wedding garment with what churches do and how they behave. We expect church attendance, we expect witnessing, we expect giving, we expect tithing, we expect support for missionaries, we expect you to sing the choir or play an instrument, we expect, we expect, we expect.

This gets put for the righteousness that should accompany those who are saved. Then people grow or reach a point where they are frustrated with some of this and they have an instinct that something is not right. They begin to look at certain parts of the Word of God and say, wait a minute, this isn't what I should be doing, this isn't what I should be believing.

People are taking scripture and beating me over the head with it and misusing this and sending me down a road that I don't think is right. So they want to break free of this. Well, that's why the emergent church wanted to emerge out from under what they

considered to be the flaws and the faults and the egregious failures of the traditional church, even the historical church, which you can absolutely identify errors always.

There's always something you can find fault with, whether you're looking at society, whether you're looking at systemic or systematic, this, that, and the other, you can find examples. You can demonstrate your case by pericope or by episode, by personal experience in some cases. But the problem is not with the structure necessarily.

The problem is not with the system necessarily. The problem is with those who are in the system who succumb to the lusts of the flesh, the pull of a fallen nature. To just give you a quick example, ideally, no one would ever have to lock their car, worry about whether they left their purse on the seat.

At night, you wouldn't have to lock your front doors, you wouldn't have to latch your windows, you wouldn't have to set any kind of an alarm because everyone would respect the property of others. No matter how needy I am, no matter how hungry my children are, I am not going to break in like a thief and steal. It's not right.

I'm not going to shoplift. I'm not going to deceive. I'm not going to take under false pretenses because that's morally wrong.

Is my house flawed because it does not have a burglar alarm system? Is my practice bad because I don't lock my doors and my windows? Is the problem with the house or is the problem that there are people who will take advantage of characteristics of that house and use it to fulfill the lusts of the flesh? I'm not going to cure robbery and theft by installing burglar alarms and latches and deadbolts. It may move, it may shift, or it may get bigger sledgehammers, but I'm not curing the problem. I am seeking to address specific outbreaks of that problem or specific consequences to myself of it, but the problem is not with a house if it lacks deadbolts and if it lacks an alarm system.

It's not a bad house. I don't burn down my house because it has no alarm system. What has happened in the Christian faith is there have been abuses in traditional church structure of all different kinds, but people reacting against that, it's a baby in bathwater scenario.

And they say, well, the problem is the scripture that you use to support what you're doing is bad and wrong. So I'm not just going to point out where there has been abuse or where there has been taking advantage. I'm going to burn it all down.

I'm just going to summarize this very briefly by saying that this began in the earliest days with Pentecostalism, with you're too much Bible and not enough spirit. So we're going to yield to the spirit. We're going to holy roll.

We're going to speak in tongues. We're going to let the spirit loose and not constrict him with any guidance from scripture. We'll only use scripture to proof text what we want to

do.

So it began with sort of the holy spirit movement. It graduated into a holy laughter, the vineyard movement, the emergent church 20 odd years ago, 25 years ago. And there was a pushback.

There was a reaction and the church said, wait a minute, this, this isn't helpful. This and people got burned out and we're ending up with mental problems because they just took all the constriction off of their emotions and riding this emotional rollercoaster was damaging people mentally as well as spiritually. And so this pushback sort of suppressed the emergent.

You don't hear about the emergent church anymore. It's not emerging any longer. And it kind of went away and people said, well, we ducked a bullet there.

Let's get back to worship and uplift and positive. Um, we'll, we'll talk about the, the Bible and we'll teach the word of God and we'll do that. And the emergent church problem has gone away.

Well, it has not gone away. What it has done is stepped into a nearby phone booth and changed clothes. And it is now called progressive Christianity.

It partakes of everything the emergent church adopted, but it has taken it a step further. And just for awareness, um, it looks at patriotism and thinking that America had a wonderful foundation with the founding fathers who were godly and who, uh, constituted our government on wonderful principles from the word of God. Unlike any constitution or nation that preceded it, there were divinely ordained truths about the right to life and Liberty, the pursuit of happiness, protection from property, uh, equal treatment under the law and so on.

Well, to support these things now has gone out of favor socially and even politically because it has been tarred with the brush of racism and systemic racism. And while white men wrote the constitution and, and race is used to try to pry away the structure. Are there people that have abused our justice system? Are there people that have abused our free enterprise system? Are there people that have aggrandized themselves at the expense of others? Are there people who have used the law and loopholes in the law and so on to perpetrate all kinds of dastardly things? Of course.

But in the same way that I don't burn down my house because not all the latches work, we don't destroy the nation and rebuild it from scratch because we don't like things that are going on in it. The problem is not the house. The problem is not the constitution and the problem is not the country, but there are those who say that it is.

And so they brand it Christian nationalism. Christian nationalism was responsible for slavery. Christian nationalism was responsible for oppressing people of color.

Christian nationalism creates hatred and dissent and us versus them. And so Christians, the whole movement to have an influence and a voice in how elections go that started with the moral majority and Jerry Falwell and things of this nature, this is horrific and bad and it must be rejected. So then there is the belief that slavery was justified by Christians in the South who were going to church every Sunday.

And they said, well, look, the Bible doesn't condemn slavery. So slavery is okay. Well, it is not the institution of slavery that is in view as a moral concept.

It is what masters do to slaves or it is what slaves might do to their masters as an expression of what is in the human heart. The institution is neither here nor there. And to be fair, God never told any of the patriarchs or anybody in the New Testament, free your slaves, it's a moral outrage.

And there's a great disconnect between what modern minds think that slavery is just the most heinous expression of the base human nature that ever existed. That's not the biblical view. I am not for slavery.

I don't want to be a slave. I don't want to own a slave. I think it is like a house with unlocked windows and doors in the sense that it invites abuse.

It makes possible a lot of abuse, but there are forms of slavery today that are just not so called coyotes bringing people across the border and pressing them into all kinds of heinous activities. That's slavery. That's human bondage.

And it is being practiced by the very people who would be the first to condemn slavery and racism and everything else. They are sponsoring, they are encouraging, they are funding and creating a situation that is absolutely slavery in its worst form. People are dying.

People are being pressed into sexual slavery by being taken across the border and disappearing into the nefarious underworld. The problem is not slavery. The problem is the hearts of people who will take advantage of an unlocked door or an open opportunity.

So I say that to say that if anyone begins attacking the institution and saying, if I change this institution, that's going to fix the problem. They're not on biblical ground. The Bible doesn't say, if he's a bad king, mount an insurrection and overthrow him.

Sometimes that may be necessary, but the Bible never says to do so. Fear God, honor the king. And when that was written, the king was Caesar.

Jesus said, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Don't oppose the Roman government. It's here for a reason.

The captives were told not to resist when they were taken into captivity because it was God's will that they go into captivity. Is captivity rife with opportunities for abuse and destruction? It absolutely is. But God didn't say captivity bad, enslavement bad.

God said, in those situations, slaves, honor your masters. Masters, be kind to your slaves. That's what it says in the New Testament after Pentecost.

It doesn't say, masters release all slaves immediately because the institution is inherently and systemically corrupt. Anything can be made corrupt. A church can be made corrupt.

The temple of God was made corrupt. Don't think that by gilding the temple, corruption is going to end. Don't think that by abolishing slavery, the oppression of others by evil hearts is going to cease.

It just finds other forms. It finds other ways in. Well, back to this burr under my saddle this week.

Progressive Christianity, which is just another tentacle of this same entity that has been used by the enemy to infiltrate and distract and deflect genuine Christian faith. Its newest form is progressive Christianity. What it says is, look, your heart tells you when you look at certain passages of scripture, that just can't be right.

And so what they have concluded is not all scripture is inspired. And you say, wait a minute, all scriptures God read. Well, I don't, I don't take that verse as inspired.

So that's where the Bible supports itself are explained away. And you can find copious examples of this. I will give you the name of one man who sort of fronts and represents the progressive church movement, one of several, but he's easily accessible.

And because he has put himself out and has published a series of books, Jesus Unbound, Jesus Untangled, I think were the first two, maybe the first one was Jesus Untangled. This, this is, this is redux of Bart Ehrman. This man started out graduating from a Southern Baptist seminary, spent 20 years as a Southern Baptist pastor.

And then he saw problems in the denomination, in the church, in traditional Christianity as he experienced it. And so he started pulling on that wrench and started pulling on that door to get it open and to get out. And when he did, he pulled so far that he's hurt himself.

And so now he no longer believes that all scripture is inspired by God. He believes that when scripture, the only parts that he accepts, and this is, this is another facet of it. So the first one is all scripture is not scripture.

Concomitant and added onto that is Jesus is the word. Just look at John one, one and two

and following Jesus is the word. So to find out what Christianity is, if you look at the Bible, you're a bibliolater, you're a biblicist, you're, you're using a flat Bible.

You're taking every passage the same. And this is the Bible that tells you that it's blessed to take babies and smash them on rocks. That's Psalm 137, which I'll get to.

But so we know that it's not right to smash babies on rocks. Although some of these same people will think that it's okay to abort babies, but they don't want to. I mean, these people are going to come out in, in, in favor of a woman's right to choose, which involves essentially crushing the heads of babies.

Well, that's what Psalm 137 addresses at the end is mangling babies. And, and, you know, you can't have it both ways, but what they say is, well, that's not scripture. Psalm 137 is not scripture.

And anything else I disagree with is not scripture because I have the word in my heart by word. Have I hit in my heart? That's the indwelling Jesus. And he, and the Holy spirit give me the ability to tell what is scripture and what is not.

And I can discern truth from error. And the old Testament prophets, uh, this whole thing in the law where Moses and the Israelites were commanded to go in and slaughter the Canaanites, the women and the children and the animals. That's not God.

And the argument is, Jesus said, if you want to see the father, look at me. When you see me, you have seen the father. Jesus didn't kill any babies.

Jesus didn't murder any women. Jesus honored the children and said, come into me and sat them in his lap. Jesus honored women and sat with them at table and, uh, you know, lifted them up.

So anything in the Bible that isn't the gentle Jesus with a child on his lap and Mary Magdalene by his side is not God and therefore not scripture. So now as Dr. Criswell used to say, they believe that the Bible is only inspired in spots and they are qualified to identify those spots. This is insidious.

And the, the it's flying under the radar of our generation, because this is happening with the progressive evangelicals, which, who I mentioned a few weeks back, who have new ideas about right and wrong and who aren't interested in marriage anymore, who aren't interested in a cohesive family structure who, uh, pick and choose, uh, from the message of society and from the message of the Bible and are the arbiters of righteousness themselves. If you make yourself the arbiter of righteousness, you have set yourself up in the place of God. That is idolatry.

You make an, they say you're making an idol out of the Bible. Actually, no. Um, but in the, in the, in the worst case, I will give an example of what this particular man has done.

By the way, if you want to watch any of his videos to see his, let him tell you what he believes and why he believes it. His name is Keith Giles, G I L E S. He's got a YouTube channel. Um, and there is a woman who has also, and one thing you will notice about these people, everyone in the progressive movement is reacting against traditional church.

People don't come off the street to faith in Christ and join the progressive church. Everyone. And I mean, everyone in the progressive Christianity movement is it's like Alcoholics Anonymous.

They're a recovering fundamentalist. They're a recovering evangelical. They were in it.

They felt like they got hurt by it. And now this is their, this is their alternate. This is their new view.

So it is always reactive. It is a rejection of something that they were exposed to. And instead of finding and fixing misunderstandings and coming to a better historic Christianity, they throw out the word.

They throw out the apostles. They certainly throw out Moses and the prophets. Moses and the prophets are right out because Moses is the one that told the Israelites go in and kill people.

That's not the gentle Jesus. Therefore that's not right, et cetera. I'll have more to say about this in the future.

We're kind of out of time for this morning, but let me leave you with a final thought that links these two things together. The parable that Jesus told these people are believers. I tell you even weeping, they are enemies of the cross because they go on to attack at the point that they release themselves from the authority of scripture.

It is the authority of the King that says, put on this wedding garment. This person says, you know, it's a milder form of rejection of authority that the, the murderers and the persecutors of the servants did. They rejected the King's authority.

Well, even if you get into the wedding banquet, if you reject the King's authority, you're still going to be thrown out bound hand and foot into the darkness where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth. We have to be so careful to recognize where God's authority is expressed. You remember the great commission, Matthew 28, 19 and 20.

What does Matthew 28, 18 say? The preceding verse, I've pointed this out in recent weeks. I'm going to keep on pointing it out. It's like Peter said, even though I've told you this before, I'm going to keep on telling you all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Jesus said, as the Pharisees, as the opponents of Christ in his first advent, these people say, yes, I believe Jesus is the authority Jesus is in me. So what I think is authoritative, I have the mind of Christ. So I think Moses is out to lunch telling Israel.

I think Joshua is out to lunch, leading the Israelites in to destroy the Canaanites. I think the prophets are out in the weeds when they say he was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our transgressions, that the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. And by his stripes, we are healed.

That's not scripture. And so they go on to reject the work of Christ on the cross in its substitutionary aspect. They call it penal substitutionary atonement, PSA for short.

When I was a disc jockey, PSA was a public service announcement. And we had them on eight track carts that we would pop in. That's a PSA.

But they say penal, that God is such a mean, arbitrary and self-interested God that if there's a sin committed, blood must be shed. And Hebrews 9.22, they throw it out without the shedding of blood. There's no remission of sin.

I can show you countless examples in the Bible. Here's nine examples of people who Jesus declared to be forgiven, and there was no blood involved. Therefore, Hebrews 9.22 is not scripture.

I'll tell you what is and isn't scripture because Jesus is in me. And so I'm expressing his authority. Jesus is the word.

And so the word that defines and controls my life. I'm telling you, this is insidious. It is persuasive to people who do not have a good biblical grounding and who cannot deal with difficult passages, like Psalm 137.9, blessed the one who smashes babies on the rock.

Well, we're going to take a few sessions to make sure that we are not those people who can't answer these criticisms. And the one that just gets waved like a flag and worn like a crown is smashing babies' heads on the rock. It's just emblematic of everything.

And it is so much a twisting and misuse of scripture. You can't believe it. So we're going to look at Psalm 137 sometime soon, might be this coming Wednesday, and just take that false axe out of these people's hands.

It is a complete misuse of that scripture, complete misunderstanding. And it is so important for us to understand the word of God so that it is not misused. And people don't use it to lead us astray.

That's the oldest lie there is. Satan did that to Eve in the garden. Hath God said, smash babies on rocks? No, he hasn't.

It's a Be on the alert. If you're interested in some background, check out Progressive Christianity and its condensed expression by Keith Giles. And if you want to also see a very gracious, well-informed, balanced, and irenic response to it also on YouTube, look for a lady named Alyssa Childers.

I think her name is Alyssa Childers. And this guy tears her up one side and down the other, calls her by name and accuses her of all kinds of personal sins. She never responds in kind.

She's not ad hominem. She doesn't talk about him personally in any way. He does nothing.

There's one of his videos where all he does is tear this lady up. She used to be in a progressive Christian church. She was there for years and she had the opposite reaction, but she didn't overreact.

And she wants to point out where it has gone wrong. And she does so very beautifully, very elegantly, very graciously. Let's the arguments speak for themselves and does not go personal.

This guy is nothing but personal, but be aware because we are here to shine his lights in the world. And if we are not ready to give an answer to those who ask us why we believe as we believe and why we hope as we hope, we're not doing our job as body of Christ. And we need to be sure we can do that.

And if not us, who? Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the full armor that you give us to equip ourselves against all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

We pray that as we reflect on the truth that the Lord Jesus expresses in this wonderful multifaceted parable, that the Holy Spirit will minister it to us so that we will not fool ourselves into thinking we have fully responded and are fully qualified for every good work when there are areas where we have actually failed and fallen short. As David prayed in Psalm 51, show us our hidden faults, purge us with hyssop so that we can be clean, wash us so that we can be whiter than snow. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen.