

“Behold the Man”
Dr. J.B. Buffington

Turn to John 19; we’ll be reading the first sixteen verses there. Let’s back up and read two verses in chapter eighteen to see why Jesus was scourged here. I’ll begin in verse thirty-nine: *39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber. 1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. 2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, 3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. 4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! 6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. 7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. 8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; 9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? 11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. 12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. 13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! 15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. 16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.*

Our Father, in Jesus’ name this morning, with the wonder, the awe, the shame of that hour, bless us Spirit of God. Would you help us to see Jesus but understand that we put Him there? Help us, Lord, Spirit of the Living God, you’re the one to convict of sin; and I pray you’d remind us as believers that with His stripes, we’re healed. And our sins, we were to blame. We sinned; we defied God. And help us not see just these men around Jesus, but we stand in that blood-thirsty throng, crying, “Crucify, crucify.” Lord, help us to weep, not over Jesus’ suffering, but help us to weep over our sins against our Lord. Move in our hearts today. Help us to see Him; and Spirit of the Living God, nobody but You can open our eyes and bring personal conviction and bring the lost to know that they stand in that crowd and cry, “Crucify,” also. Convict them of the sin of rejecting such a wonderful Saviour. Save the lost. Touch our hearts. Help us to leave here humbled in heart and mind and dedicated anew to You, to Your cause, Your day, Your house, Your ministry. Honor Jesus, we pray, in His name, Amen.

Out of those verses, I want to take the phrase in verse five, “Behold the man!” *Jesus prayed in Gethsemane that His own would be with Him and behold His glory. (Psalm 18:24) During that prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, He took Peter, James, and John with Him to watch with Him in prayer, not to behold His sufferings, but to uphold in prayer. They went to sleep while He prayed, but a holy angel came, Luke says, and sustained and strengthened Him in the garden. None of them saw the agony in the garden and the blood that came out of the pores of His skin and stained His clothing. They didn’t see that. Luke, the beloved physician, wrote about it by inspiration. Our Lord had no self-pity. None of that stirred in his heart and mind. And even under the load of the cross, as the women were weeping and wailing, I read in Luke 23:27: And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. 28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. 29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, blessed are those who are without child, and the paps which never gave suck. 30 Then*

shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. That's the tribulation period. 31 *For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* He said, "Don't weep for Me; weep for yourselves." It may be easy to weep about Jesus; look how He suffered. But Jesus said, "Don't weep for Me; weep for yourselves." And by the way, we're in a tender society where we've progressed so far from Barbarianism. Jesus said, "No, no, if they do this in a green tree, what will they do in a dry tree?" In the coming days ahead of us is a dry tree where men are far more cruel than they were in the days of our Lord. Oh, we're so gentle, and we're so humane. We protect the little ducks and the swans down on Lake Morton. You better not touch them. But down in South Florida, we've murdered little babies, unborn babies, and yet we're a "tender, gentle" civilization. We kill the innocent and cry for those who deserve to be put to death, capital punishment. They are released, released, and spend years and years and money, but nobody wants to go to protect the little children that are cruelly treated and their life passed out. What a humane civilization that we have. It's the dry time. He said, "Don't weep for me." He dismissed His disciples upon His surrender to the guard. In the eighteenth chapter, he surrendered. They didn't take Him. He showed a little glimpse of His glory, and they fell backward on their face in stark awe. And then when they arose, He bade Himself. He said, "Let these go away." So He dismissed the disciples. But I repeat again, our Lord was not looking for self-pity. Our Lord wasn't doing that. So He dismissed His disciples and put them in the background. He never requested — He knew He'd be crucified that night because He came to the world to die — He didn't even request, "Would you please stand by with Me while I suffer?" He didn't do that; He dismissed them. And consequently, God deigned however that you and I will be a witness of the sufferings of our Lord. John stood there; Mary the mother of Jesus stood there; Mary's sister stood there, Mary Magdalene, and the rest had fled. But somewhere back in that crowd stood Peter. Peter, the coward, denied Christ — He writes in 1 Peter 5, *I am a witness of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ.* Afraid to take a stand, afraid to identify, but he came back to view afar off. Some things are excluded in John's Gospel but are included in other Gospels. God has different reasons for the gospels. Matthew presents Him as King; Mark, the Servant; Luke, the Son of Man; John, He's the Son of God. However, God placed the crucifixion in every one of the gospels; you must not miss the Crucifixion. It's the center in the Gospels, and also it's a center and a central point from which all New Testament doctrine originates in the rest of the Scriptures. Pilate thought he was in charge, but a holy God was in charge that day in fulfillment of prophecy. Pilate stubbornly put a sign over His head, "Jesus of Nazareth The King of the Jews," and he was Sovereignly impelled to put that. And the Pharisees said: *Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.* And he said: *What I have written, I have written.* The Scripture says in the book of Luke and in John that it was written in three languages. One of the languages was Greek — that's the language of science and culture and philosophy, the intellectual. God said, "I want the intellectual crowd to know Christ was crucified." And it was written in Hebrew — that's the language of religion — for the devout, the religious person. But it also was written in Latin, the language of law, the political mind. And all this was done in such a way that Paul would later write and later stand before King Agrippa in Acts as he pleaded and pointed him to Christ. Then Festus said, "You're mad." And listen to what Paul said in Acts 26:25-26: *But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.* This wasn't done in some little place out of the view of the traffic. It was done where everybody knew about it, and God deigned that it would be a public thing. And in three languages, you see God wanted all to know about it. Why? *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, . . .* The intellectual, God gave for the political mind, the intellectual mind, the religious mind. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Behold, the man! As Pilate said that back in John, "Behold, the man," I have read the passages preceding that in the eighteenth chapter. Pilate was trying to get out of making a decision for the Lord. He knew that He was innocent, but he wanted to put it off on the people. You make the decision. He'd already declared four or five times, "I find no fault in him." Then he had an idea, "Well, they release one prisoner every year at the crowd's demand. Whoever they requested, they released one." And so he knew that surely they would request Barabbas. "Shall I release unto you Jesus?" They said, "No, no, no, turn Barabbas

loose.” Barabbas was a murderer. It said he was a robber here. Other places talk about the fact that he was a violent man. “Release Barabbas.” And here, now Pilate’s back again, and he has another idea, “I know what I’ll do. I’ll make them feel sorry for the Lord Jesus.” *Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged him.* My, my, I want you to understand that the essence of sin is selfishness. What’s in it for me? That’s sin. You see, before sin entered into the world, God was the center of this universe. But when sin came in, man became the center of the universe, and “God, you stay out of our affairs now. We run this, You stay out of our affairs.” And every sin that’s ever committed is committed in the interest of self. “I’m number one.” And when the Christian gets God out in the fringes, and he becomes number one, she becomes number one, “You back up, God,” your life will really get out of shape. The world is out of shape. I was talking yesterday to someone concerning a little clipping he had seen, and I had referred to it in the sermon before. Our scientific world could have never gone to the moon unless they got the sun in the proper place. They had the idea many years ago, it didn’t come about of the Bible, somebody else - religious person - that the earth was the center of the universe. No, it’s not. And they said the sun revolved around the earth, but it didn’t. And one day, they made an amazing discovery that the sun was the center of our universe and our earth revolves around it. And the scientific laws, they could do what they’ve done when they got the sun in the proper place, the s-u-n. And before salvation, listen, the S-o-n is out here and everything revolves around me — I’m number one, I’m number one — but when you get saved, you back up, and He’s number one - the S-o-n. And anybody who tries to push Him to the side, you’ll discover that you’re in a mess like the world is in a mess. United States is in a mess because we got too smart. We thought we were somebody with all of our technology — Man’s number one. “Stay out of our government; stay out of our schools; stay out of our homes; stay out of our way.” And all of the terrible tragedy and heartache is because man’s trying to be number one. You couldn’t be number one if God allowed you. How could you run the universe? God helped Job. What did he do? He showed Job chapter after chapter — Job, who is this that darkeneth counsel without knowledge? And he said, “Job, stand up and be a man. I want to talk to you. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world?” Job in his sorrow and his grief, God gave him chapter after chapter of his creative work. And, oh, Job got the message, not the answer, he got the message — if God’s able to run the universe, He can run my life. And that’s the message that God wants you to get out of the book of Job — If He can run the universe, He can run your life. You can’t run your life without disaster. *Behold, the man, and he began to scourge him.* And I repeat again what I said in the beginning, this was not given to make us weep over Jesus, but to weep over our sins that brought Him there. I hope you understand that. You brought Jesus and your sins cried, “Crucify, crucify.” Isaiah 53:5 *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.* “Don’t weep for me; weep over our sins.”

Now, when you think about the matter of scourging, we see the depravity, and God put this in the Scriptures not for us. And Matthew talks a whole lot more about the suffering; he shows the inhumanity of man. He wants you to see the Son of God. But here when you look at this matter of the cross and what men did to Him, you see the depth of the love of God; and you do not understand the depth of the love of God until you understand the depths of the depravity of the human heart. The human heart is the cruelest thing in this world. It’s crueller than an animal. An animal will not do what a human being will do to another. The jeweler, if he’s going to sell his beautiful diamond, he takes that gem out, he lays a beautiful piece of black velvet without any white in it whatsoever, totally black velvet, and puts the diamond in the middle of that black velvet. Why? That black velvet brings out all of the various facets of that beautiful gem and diamond. And God would have you to understand the love of God. He takes you to Calvary’s cross and against man’s black darkness of sin, He shows you the beauty of the love of God. “While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”

Now, in this, number one, “Behold the man,” we see the cruelty of sin and the scourging of the One who is to be scourged. Who was He? He was innocent. He was the Innocent One. Rome is noted for its justice. Rome throughout the world is noted for its justice, justice for the innocent and justice for the guilty. Rome knew no mercy, but here the place of justice that day, justice was not dispensed. Justice was ignored, and sin was espoused. The Innocent One — “I find no fault in him.” Who is He? Well, He’s the One Who knew no sin.

He's the One that raised the dead. He's the One that dried the widow's eye. He's the One that opened the eyes of the blind. He's the One that opened the ears of the deaf. He's the One that made the lame to walk. He's the One that made the maimed whole again. He's the One that stilled the storms. He's the One that forgave the sinner. He's the One that cleansed the leper. This is Who He is, and yet you see Pilate scourging this Man with a wrath against the purest of society, the Noble. Sin has no pity. When you sin, sin cares nothing about anybody else but number one. That's sin. "I'm number one." . . . *we have turned everyone to his own way.* . . . "I want my own way if it destroys the world, if it destroys the school system, if it destroys my home, destroys my children, destroys my church, destroys my health, I want my way." That's the essence of sin. And in the scourging, we see the cruelty of sin. Sin makes people heartless. And here, how heartless of a man trying to get somebody to make a decision would go through this matter of scourging the Innocent, the Purest of society, the Son of God who came in this world to live among us; nobody could point a finger at Him. He, the lovely One, was scourged. When you think about the scourging, Jewish law limited the scourging to forty lashes, but not Roman law. Roman law did not have any limit whatsoever, and Josephus, a Jewish historian, declared that Rome tormented the malefactors in every way possible before being put to death. Rome, the cruelty and Barbarianism, delighted in torturing people. Oh, we're so tender today. Men murder; men murder a whole lot of people; and, oh, we beg. Listen, don't be worried about it. "Oh, make sure he dies sweetly and innocently." And oh we cry out, "Oh, this guy he died; you know, that's an extreme punishment." But the Son of God — nobody cried about that. Nobody said "That's not right; that's not fair." But oh, the laws now about lethal injection, "Don't punish this person." Our society! It came out of the Word of God, the protection of the criminal and the execution of justice. Personality is not involved, and prejudice is not involved. Not for Jesus Christ. How He suffered! I have a couple of articles here concerning the matter of the scourging. The scourging of Rome was more deadly. It was administered by a trained man who used a short, circular piece of wood to which were attached several strips of leather. At the end of each strip, he sewed a chunk of bone or a small piece of iron chain. The instrument was called a flagellum. There was no set number of stripes to be administered, and the law said nothing about the parts of the body to be assailed. Our Lord was stripped and put on a rack and over stone and bent forward and his hands and his back until the skin is taut. The soldier performed the flagellations and out of curiosity bent down to see the face of the victim and then moved to the position about six feet behind him and spread his legs. The flagellum was brought all the way back and whistled forward and made a dull-drum sound as the stripes of leather smashed against the back of the rib cage. The bits of bone and chain curled around the right side of the body and raised small hemorrhages on the chest. The flagellum came back again aimed slightly lower, and it crashed against the skin and the flesh. The lash hisses through the air, and there appears a long pink stripe on the bare back. In seconds, it has reddened and turned blue. The lashes slice the air and cut the back, the arms, the legs, the shoulders, the wrists, the neck, the buttocks, the side. The thongs curl around the body and hit the face, the breast, the stomach. After thirty lashes, the kidneys are nearly bare. All purple welts break, and blood streams out, and the leather hits the raw, inner flesh. The Lamb writhes and twists under the torture but opens not His mouth. And oh, when I read the Scriptures concerning that, I read in the book of Isaiah the fifty-second chapter. When they got through with our Lord Jesus Christ that day, the Scripture says this in verses thirteen and fourteen: *Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:* And in Isaiah 53:2: . . . *he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.* We see in just a minute the mockery of sin by the soldiers, but when the Lord Jesus Christ stood before that crowd there beaten and battered, and they beat Him with their fists, and they spat on Him, and they pulled the hair out of Him. They hit Him on the head with a bamboo reed. They did everything in the world. I'll read about that in just a moment. And oh, He didn't look like a man. He said *his visage was so marred more than any man.* No human being has ever taken such a punishment, a beating from another human being, than Jesus Christ. Who did that? You did it. *They* did not do it; I did it. You did it. Our sins did that to Jesus Christ. If it weren't for that, Jesus Christ would not have been there, but He loved you so much He came to take your place there, and that which was coming to you, Jesus Christ took it. Now, we've looked at the cruelty of sin.

Now, let's look at the mockery of sin. Back in John 19, the mockery of sin, *And the soldiers platted a*

crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Here's a mockery of sin. Oh, the laughter, the ridicule of sin. And there before them stands the bruised body of our Lord Jesus Christ and the mockery of sin. And I read a couple of excerpts about what the soldiers did. In raucous sports they placed a robe on Jesus, not a long flowing robe. The Greek term used with this is "chalmus" a short coat worn over the shoulders. Standing there naked from the waste down, Jesus became the object of their vulgar remarks. You read Psalm 22, and Jesus Christ stood there naked and bare and was crucified naked. When you stand before a holy God and you reject Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you'll stand there naked before God physically naked and the thoughts and the desires and intents of your heart. You will not have one hiding place in the world, and Jesus was stripped because you and I will be stripped before the judgment bar of God. And so, here He is, this short coat and then the vulgar remarks. Each tries to top the others remarks. Each takes his turn, spitting on Him, cursing His name, slapping Him with a reed, punching His raw chest with their fists, Him upon whom God would soon bestow a name that was above every name. And now they spit on Him. McGee says here that the soldiers took this opportunity to have their fun with Him before He was crucified. When it says they smote Him with their hands, it means they played a cruel Roman game with Him. They could mutilate Him and do anything they wished with Him. All the soldiers would show the prisoners their fists. There's a man in California, King, about the matter of brutality by the police force. Nobody stopped Rome with Jesus, no limit, no stopping. Not a person cried out, "That's not right; that's not right!" They played this Roman game, and then they would show the prisoner their fist. Then they would blindfold the prisoner, and all but one would hit him as hard as they could. Then they would remove the blindfold; and if the prisoner was still conscious, he would guess what soldier hit him. Obviously, the prisoner would never guess the right one. They would continue this until they had beaten the prisoner to a pulp. Now you just stop and think. When Pilate said, "Behold, the man," — Here's the Son of God — doesn't look like a man, His face swollen, His eyes swollen, His intestines probably hanging out here and there, and His arms down to the bone and the bones showing, and He stands naked. And He stands there for you and me, and we become callous and hard. We hear about it, and it doesn't move us, doesn't stir us; and we go in our selfish living way. We have forgotten the amazing grace of God when He died for you and bled. We forgot the day that we were sinners and we cried out to God for mercy. And there he stands, "Behold the man." If somebody did that in the law force of the United States of America, the world would be standing up and saying, "That's not right; that's not right; that's not right!" But that's all right. Our Congress allows national endowment for the arts, our tax money for men to draw Jesus Christ as a homosexual, having sex with a boy and behind a pulpit with Lazarus. They allow, listen, to draw these figures of Jesus immersed in urine; and that's art. And oh, my, my. And you write about it, and the Congress says, "Well, that's a part of their rights." Rights, my foot! That's sin; that's wickedness; that's a hatred of the Son of God, a mockery. The hatred of sin, the cruelty of sin, the mockery of sin. Sin laughs at the holy, jokes at the holy, bows before the holy, sticks out their tongue, ridicules, and mocks respect and mocks reverence and mocks faithfulness and mocks sacrifice and mocks love and mocks worship and mocks church and mocks prayer and mocks Bible study and mocks family devotions and soul winning and mocks the holy and mocks marriage. Why? Self-interest. The mockery of sin, and we see it through television, a mockery of sin. We see it in the newspaper — mockery. We see it in the text books of our public schools — a mockery, laughter at the holy and the sacred, and make those who want to hold to it as narrow-minded and bigots and people that are self-righteous. A mockery of sin. The cruelty of sin.

Thirdly, we see the hatred of sin. Why did they do that? Without a cause. John 15, Jesus had said before, "They hated me without a cause." Pilate said, "I find no fault in him." Why do people hate Christ? There's no reason. There's no excuse. Why? What charge could you level at His doorstep? Without a cause. Satan hates Christ, and the sad thing — most of the persecution against the cause of Christ has come from religion. You read the Spanish Inquisition, where masses were shed for the slaughter of Jewish people. That's the reason Jews oftentimes say, "Me trust Jesus Christ? Well, look what they did to my ancestors and people in the name of religion, in the name of Christ, slaughtered." That's not Christianity, that's religion. If you read *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, who is it that burned people at the stake? Religion. Who is it that put them on the rack and stretched them til their bones broke and they protruded from their skin? Who did this? Religion. And the

cruellest thing in all the world is religion without God. Religion persecutes; religion hates; religion kills; religion destroys; religion enslaves. And the hatred of sin. You try to preach Christ Jesus and say He's a virgin born Son of God — at some infidel universities, those professors hate Christ. And the battle in the Southern Baptist Convention is over this — Who is Christ? Whose Son is He? The virgin birth, the bodily resurrection, the blood atonement. And those professors don't have any use for the Christ of the Word of God. Hey, religion of hatred. And here's the hatred — they think they're giving God a break by putting Him to death. The bleeding, bruised body didn't move them except to further their hate. Can you think of anybody with any humanity at all? It seems as though your greatest enemies, if you stood there and they were beaten like that. And Pilate said, "Surely, they'll reject Barabbas. Surely, they will not crucify this person when He stands there and His body is bleeding and black and blue. Surely, they'll say, 'That's enough; that's enough.'" But they didn't cry, "That's enough." There's something about hatred and unforgiveness that death will never stop. Listen, if somebody hates somebody, and they're put to death, they still hate. They still hate. All of the suffering of the Son of God reveals a hatred of sin. No sir, that's not enough. Crucify Him; don't stone Him. They tried to stone Him, but God intended that He die by crucifixion. They tried to stone Him, and they couldn't. But they cried out for crucifixion. That's Rome's way of putting people to death. "Crucify Him; Crucify Him." Now why do people hate Jesus? Here it is in John 3, self-interest. If I could get you to understand, sin is always selfish. Sin is always saying, "What's in it for me? I'm number one." Every instance, sin — that's the basis of it. When I read in the book of John, the third chapter, and I read these verses, Why are people lost? Why do they reject Jesus Christ? *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.* Oh, why do men hate Jesus? Because he's the Light of the world. And when a man or woman stands in front of Jesus Christ, He reads the upmost parts of their hearts, and they feel naked and bare before Him; and that will either drive you on your face before God to confess your sin and need of a Saviour, or it will drive you out in the darkness and you'll hate the Light. Why? Because it exposes your sin that you prefer to keep. Why do people hate Jesus? Because of the fact of the love of sin and the love of darkness. And when people die and go to hell, here's the thing — Did you know in hell there is no light? Do you understand that in hell you won't see anybody in hell forever and forever and forever. No, it is outer darkness. Men and women will writhe in agony without a ray of light. Why? "That's what I want, darkness. I don't want any light." And you reject the Light of the World. If your heart's right, you'd say, "Oh dear God, there's something wrong. Please show me. I want to be close to you. I want to fellowship with you, and oh, dear God, show me if there's something blocking fellowship with Thee. Don't hide Your face from me, dear Lord. Show me what's wrong. I want to fellowship with you." But, if brother, you love sin, you don't want to fellowship with Him because He makes you conscience of your sin. The hatred of sin. Why did they hate Him? Because they were sinners. And sin does not want to be discovered. The hatred of sin.

Then, the treachery of sin. Sin is treacherous. The traitor, Judas the disciple, sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. Peter the disciple denied Him for fear of man. All forsook Him and fled. Pilate betrayed Him in the place of justice. The Chief Priest and the Pharisees betrayed their office to be true to the Scriptures and devotion to God. The soldiers mocked Him who had never caused any riot or disturbed them. Treachery, sin is treacherous. It will make a man walk off and leave his wife. It will make a woman be untrue to her husband. It will make a mother abandon her baby in a garbage sack. It will make a man have incest with his daughter. It's a treacherous thing. It always betrays somebody. You can't trust it. We're trying to make covenants with the world. You can't make covenants with the world. It's bent on having its way. Why? Because they won't keep their covenants. Why don't they keep their covenants? Because self-interest. I don't want to keep the covenant, the Word of God.

Now, I must close. The universality of sin. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* All of us are sinners. You say, "I'm not a sinner." Well, just hang around, you're going to die. Sinners die. The universality of sin — I'm a sinner, but I've been to Calvary and pled guilty; and I'm a forgiven sinner. I'm a son in His sight now. I'm no longer considered a sinner. I'm a son. The Crucifixion — That's my place; He took my place!

Now, lastly, a revelation of the love of God. *God so loved . . .* Why did He love? The same word that says, *They hated me without a cause*, is used when it says there's forgiveness, same word, Romans 3:24, the word "freely." He loved you without a cause. There's nothing in you to make God love you. We hated Him without a cause. There was nothing in Him to make us hate Him. There's nothing in us to make God love us. We're not lovely. 1 John 4:10: *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

Romans 5:8: *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

That is active pursuit of sin, not passive. We're active in sin. That's when He loved us. He loved us before we were born. He went to the cross and had you on His heart personally. And He died in your place instead. Why? Because He loves you. Now, I haven't talked about the Crucifixion. I've talked about just the preparation for Crucifixion. It gets worse. How could it get worse? Well, it will. We'll see that next Sunday. But today, "Behold the man." Behold the awfulness of sin! Behold the love of God! Behold the fact that you and I put Him there! Behold that God wants us to be saved! You mean to tell me that He'd pay such a price like that to save me? Yes, sir.

John Newton wrote a song. He wrote of his experience, John Newton infidel, slave runner. He said, "I saw One hanging on a tree in agony and blood. He fixed His languid eyes on me as near His cross I stood. Sure never til my latest breath can I forget that look. It seemed He charged me with His death, though not a word He spoke. My conscience felt in all the guilt and plunged me in despair. I saw my sins His blood had spilt and helped to nail Him there. A second look He gave which said I freely all forgive. This blood is for thy ransom paid, I died that thou mayest live. Oh, can it be upon the tree the Saviour died for me? My soul is thrilled, my heart is thrilled to think he died for me."

Sinners, Jesus Christ loved you, died for you. If you can't understand that He loved you, it doesn't make any difference. He did it without a cause. That means you don't have to get all sorts of preparation. You don't have to cry so many tears, no sir. He loves you without a cause, and so you can come freely, just as you are without one plea. You can come to Him. He'll forgive you and save you.

Well, in closing. I tried to close, but I mustn't close without this. What does the love of Christ do for us as Christians? Now, we get used to this. We get careless about it, the Bible, careless about serving God, and careless about His day, careless about His house, careless about prayer, careless about giving. So what happens? Ho hum, and we forget. We better come back. Paul said "The love of Christ constrains me." I want to ask you, "Christian, do you care? Do you care?" Listen to the words of this song. "Shall I crucify my Saviour when for me He bore such loss? Shall I put to shame my Saviour? Can I nail Him to the cross? Are temptations so alluring? Do earth pleasures so enthrall that I cannot love my Saviour well enough to leave them all? For it's my sins that crucified Him. Shall they crucify Him yet? Blackest day of blameless anguish, can my thankless soul forget? Oh, the kindly hands of Jesus pouring blessings on all men, bleeding, nail-scarred hands of Jesus, can I nail them once again? Shall I crucify my Saviour, crucify my Lord again? Once, oh once, I crucified Him, shall I crucify again?" I ask you, child of God, we've talked to the unsaved, can you stand before the cross and say, "I don't care. I don't care." I don't think you can. You just forget. Now, today, would you just think where you are? You're saved. You went to the cross. You saw Him dying for you. Now listen; your sins nailed Him there. Are you living for Him now? Or are you living like you don't care? I ask in your mind's eye, climb Golgotha's hill and stand there and say, "Dear Lord, forgive me. I do care. I've lived like I don't care about You, Your cause, Your Bible, Your day, Your house. I've lived like I don't care. I don't have prayer at home, don't have Bible study, don't read my Bible, don't pray, don't give." Oh, what's happened? Well, we've forgotten the fact that we were bought with a price. Paul stands and he asks the church at Rome, the saints at Rome — He doesn't take a whip and say, "Now you're going to serve God." — he gets on his knees after telling eleven chapters of the grace of God. And he said: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* And if love doesn't do it, nothing will. "If you love me, keep my commandments."

