

Grip it and Rip it: Christianity Made Simple

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Bible Text: 2 Corinthians 4:1-7

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I want to invite you this morning to open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter four. If you have the dexterity, also open up to Revelation chapter two.

Now there are some of us in this room, I understand very few, that this weekend is a very important weekend in our life. For this is the weekend of the Masters golf tournament. For those of you who don't know what the Masters golf tournament is, it takes place every spring in August, Georgia at Augusta National, features the best players in all the world, play on probably the most difficult mess manicured golf course in all of the world.

Now even if you don't like golf and you think that is a good thing to go to sleep to Sunday afternoon, at least watch for the flowers if nothing else. They have got the prettiest azaleas in all the world. Just turn it on and watch the flowers. It is the most beautiful scenery you will see in a long time.

But this afternoon some of the greatest golf will be played by some of the greatest golfers in all the world.

And once Lee Trevino, one of the great golfers of all time from the Dallas Fort Worth area was asked, "What is the difference between a pro golfer and a normal golfer such as I?"

And he said, "About 1000 golf balls a day."

In other words, what makes somebody like me into one of the is if I would go out and I would hit 1000 golf balls a day, I would attain that level of proficiency hopefully one day of a pro golfer. I don't have the wherewithal, the time or the financial resources to make that a part of my life, nor is it my calling, but it would be nice to say the least.

Nonetheless, golf is a difficult game. If you have never tried it, trust me. The goal on a golf course is to shoot par, roughly 72, at least that is what it is at Augusta, Georgia. The average golfer in the world when they play shoots a 113, almost twice the par. If a person who plays golf can shoot 90 or better on a regular basis they are in the top one percent of all the golfers in the world.

Now think about that. If you do 18 strokes worst than you are supposed to, you are in the top one percent of all golfers in the entire world. It is a difficult game with a simple principle.

Let me illustrate it by this. It is from a movie that I do not advocate watching, but there is a scene in it that is hysterical. It is the movie *Tin Cup*. For those of you who have not seen it, it starts Kevin Costner and Renee Rousseau. It is about a great golfer who his life goes downward, so to speak, and he becomes an attendant of a driving range in El Paso, Texas. And part of the movie is fighting back to play in the US Open which is another one of the four majors.

Renee Rousseau is the girlfriend of another pro golfer on the tour and she comes to him for help with her, quote, unquote, golf swing. She shows up at this dinky little driving range in El Paso, Texas and she has every contraption known to man for hitting a golf ball. She has got these straps you put on your elbows, these things you put on your knees, this thing you wear on your head and she has got all these crazy contraptions to help her hit a golf ball. And Kevin Costner, as her tutor, is helping her do all these different things to no avail. And finally she gets frustrated and she says, "Is there any other way to do it?"

And Kevin Costner says, "Yeah."

She says, "What is it?"

He says, "Just grip it and rip it."

It is a great slogan, because when you get down to it, hitting a golf ball is about gripping a club and just taking a rip at it. Often times when we look at the Christian life we look what does it mean to follow Jesus? We often fall into the trap that Renee Rousseau did in that movie. We devise all of these contraptions. We devise all these studies. We devise all these things and it almost becomes information overload.

And so this morning in 2 Corinthians chapter four I want to show you how to grip and rip the Christian life, so to speak. We are going to boil it down so simple this morning. We are going to do the ABCs of the Christian life.

I will begin in chapter four of 2 Corinthians verse one. It says:

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.¹

Now in real simplistic terms, we are going to go through the ABCs of the Christian life this morning. The first one is A. In chapter four verse one I want to look at what is the attitude that we are to have when we wake up in the morning, so to speak. It begins by saying, “Therefore, we have this ministry.”

Now I want you to notice something there. It says that your attitude is to be one of ministry.

I know what some of you are thinking right now. Time out. I am not a minister.

Oh, yes you are. In fact, 1 and 2 Corinthians, by the way, were written, quote, to the saints which are at Corinth. It was not written to the pastor at Corinth. It was not written to the staff at Corinth. In other words, when he says, “We have this ministry,” he doesn’t mean those who are in the church leadership. He says that all of us, if we are the saints, if we are the children of God, we have a ministry.

I want you to turn to Revelation chapter two and I am going to show you something that took place in the first century that I think we are seeing the reverse of in today’s culture. Revelation chapter two, it begins by laying out the seven churches in Asia Minor that Jesus Christ speaks to through the apostle John. The first church is the church of Ephesus. It is a great church. You would want to be a part of it. Their doctrine is sound. Their biblical knowledge is impressive. The one problem that they had, though, is that they had lost their love for Jesus and we will address that this evening.

But one thing I want you to notice is in verse six. There is something that Jesus mentions to the church at Ephesus that we need to hang our hat on this morning.

He says:

“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”²

You know, often times we have a hard time grasping of God hating something. And here in Revelation two he says, “I hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans.” Now it didn’t say he hated the Nicolaitans. It said he hated what they did. He hated the way they behaved.

Let me give you a slight history lesson here. Nicolaitans, from two Greek words nico-meaning victory, Nike shoes, victory; -laitans meaning the laity or those members of the church.

¹ 2 Corinthians 4:1-6.

² Revelation 2:6.

Simply what was taking place in the first century is there was this problem. And, by the way, if you have watched TV this week, you have seen a modern day demonstration of some people who still believe in this, that they were taking people in high positions in the church and making them literally lords over others. In other words over others. In other words, there was a pecking order, so to speak, in the church and that those that were on the staff and those that were the pastor thought of themselves in a higher manner than the quote person in the pew. They were the Nicolaitans.

And one of the things that God says is, “I hate that when you take a man and put him in a position or place over another man in the family of God. I hate that.”

We don’t do it that way here. In fact, we do it just the reverse. Here is what I see take place. That is not my job. I am not the minister.

Do you know what you have just done? You have just announced the deeds of the Nicolaitans in reverse. Rather than saying you are lord over someone else, you are saying, “I don’t want to do it. It is not m y job and that is for someone else to do.”

Now I understand that I am preaching this morning, but I want you to look at verse five.

“For we preach...”³

Did you know you are a preacher? You are. In fact, in just a moment when we deal with the B, the behavior the Christian life, you are going to see that the sermon that you preach tomorrow could have more impact than the one I am preaching right now. Every day of your life you are a minister preaching a message. The question is this. What is the message that you preach?

Chapter four verse one says:

“...we have this ministry...”⁴

Back on up to chapter three verse 18. I want you to see what he says that ministry is.

You say, “Well, how am I am a minister? How do I minister unto the world?”

It is very simple. Verse 18.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”⁵

³ 2 Corinthians 4:5.

⁴ 2 Corinthians 4:1.

⁵ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Some of your Bibles may read, “as if in a mirror.” In other words, the point is simply this, that what ministry really is, is presenting Jesus as Jesus and getting yourself out of the picture. It says simply this that present myself with open face as if a glass.

When I have a conversation with someone, when I have an interaction with someone as I am going to Walmart, as I am going to the grocery store, as I m getting my car washed, as I am on a ball field, that what ought to happen is my life ought to so mirror Jesus’ that they don’t see Jeff, they see Jesus.

By the way in Acts chapter 11 verse 26 there was a church that was started at Antioch and as they got going they had been there about a year and the pagans, the lost ones, the heathens of the world looked at this group of people and called them Christians. In other words, they act just like that Jesus guy acted.

The first time the word “Christian” shows up in the New Testament it wasn’t because they called themselves followers of Christ. The lost world said, “They act so much like Jesus, we will call them followers of him.”

But in verse 18 it says that our ministry is simply this, that my life ought to be so transparent on behalf of Jesus that they don’t even see Jeff. They see him.

But there is another aspect of our attitude. Not only are we ministers that present Jesus and not ourselves, look at the last part of verse one.

“...we faint not.”⁶

The Christian life is not simply about Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night if you are really, really dedicated. The Christian life is about 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And I am her to tell something. You will preach a louder sermon at your job than you will here. You will preach a louder sermon down at the local store than you will here. You will preach a louder sermon than how you react to something that takes place on the ball field or at school or in the classroom or somewhere than you even will here.

So this idea of this concept that there are, quote, unquote, ministers and everybody else is false. Now there are leaders. There are pastors. 1 Peter chapter five addresses that.

You know, when I was in evangelism I used to drive all over the country and one of the things I used to love was this. You would see a sign where it would list the staff of the church. An example it would say, “Pastor, Jeff Meyers; associate pastor of music, Ricky Keller; youth and children, Chris Johns; ministers, everybody.”

I used to love it when I would see that because what that would make the statement of is simply this. Yes, we have specific leaders who have specific jobs, but we are all ministers. It is not just for those three guys. It is for everybody to do the work for the ministry.

⁶ 2 Corinthians 4:1.

By the way, Ephesians chapter four verse 11 says that God called some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors, some to be teachers.

Verse 12, to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry.

Folks, we are all ministers. And so when you look at the attitude, what should the Christian have as his attitude in life, realize that everywhere you go and everybody you run into contact with, you are a minister.

By the way, we joke about this a lot of times and it is fun to do, but sometimes we will go, "Don't say that, you know, pastor is there." Don't say it around anybody else, either.

Oh, I wouldn't do that, we are in church. Don't do it on the ball field either.

I can't believe you said that at church. Well, don't say it at work either.

Now we get to the behavior, verse two.

"But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."⁷

There are four simple things here in verse two that describe if you want to live the honest, up front, transparent, simple Christian life. First and foremost, renounce the hidden things of dishonesty.

According to a program that was on 20/20 a little while back they said that the average American tells 29 lies a day. In fact, lying has just become a part of our culture. You know, we just kind of maneuver the truth. We massage the truth.

Let me be honest with you. If you want to stand out and there be a distinct difference between you and someone else in the world, just be honest with people. Just be honest.

Now that doesn't mean lose all your tact, ok? What that means is be honest. In other words, we are coming this time of year, you know, April 15th is coming, that old tax season. Is there any other greater temptation to be dishonest, guys? I mean, let's just be honest about it. There is these temptations that creep up going, whoo, they won't know about this and they won't know about that.

Tracey and I have a dear friend from west Texas. His name is Pat Graham. Pat Graham is a pastor. We call him positive Pat, but nonetheless Pat Graham is a pastor. He spent the first 15 years of his adult working life as an internal auditor for a large bank in west Texas. He made a lot of money. He had a lot of material goods. He had a lot of stuff in his life. But there came a day in his mid 30s where the president of his bank came to him

⁷ 2 Corinthians 4:2.

about spring time when they were getting their final things in order and asked him, said, “Pat, we need you to massage the numbers.”

He said, “I can’t do that. I am sorry. I cannot do that.”

They said, “You either massage the numbers or you are fired.”

Needless to say, Pat is pastor nowadays. God used that event to work in Pat’s life where he needed to be.

See, one of the problems is when we come to a situation where we are tempted not to be completely honest about it is we think, well, what will this lead me? It might lead you exactly where God wants you.

You say, “Well, this might get me fired if I am honest.”

Maybe God wants you to have a different job.

You say, “Well, this might lead to me having to move.”

Maybe God wants you to move.

You say, “Well, maybe this will lead to me having to stay.”

Maybe God wants you to stay.

In other words, you will never go wrong with honesty. Trust me. Jesus never had to be deceptive to lead anybody into the truth. Just be honest. And I promise if you leave this place and you are honest you will stick out like a sore thumb because you will be so different than the rest of the world.

Now let me just be honest with you. We have a problem today where you can’t tell the Christians from the non Christians. It is hard. But if we were honest, it wouldn’t be hard at all.

The second thing it says here.

“...not walking in craftiness...”⁸

In other words, do a little self check on what are your motives for doing what you do. Not having selfish designed motives to do things so as to only benefit me. Based on chapter four verse one, the only thing you should be doing is showing them Jesus. So if you are walking in craftiness, so to speak, to benefit yourself, you are walking in craftiness. In other words, everything you do ought to be out of a pure motive in a pure heart.

⁸ Ibid.

You know, I know it is a very popular book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, but the first line is really all you need. It is not about you. It is about God. And that is simply what the second thing... when it says, “not walking in craftiness,” it simply means not having your motivation as you and your own desires, but those of God.

We get to the third thing.

“...nor handling the word of God deceitfully.”⁹

Wow. This is where it gets a little entertaining in church situation, because how we have become so good at taking parts of the Bible and using them to defend whatever position we might hold. In fact, there are three ways that people mishandle the Word of God. The first is this. They add things to the Bible that are not there.

For example, how many times have you heard somebody says, “Well, the Bible says God only helps those who help themselves”?

It is not there. You won’t find it.

How many times, though, have you heard some phrase that is popular and someone begins, “Well, the Bible says...” And then they spout something out. It may or may not be there.

The second thing people do is this. They subtract words from the Bible.

How many times have you heard someone say, “You know, money is the root of all evil”?

The Bible doesn’t say that. The Bible says the love of money is the root of all evil. But when you take that word out what you simply say there is you have misquoted God. And that is a dangerous position to be in.

So many times we add things to God’s word because we think that is what should be in there. By the way, he gave us what we needed. And the second thing is we take things away because we don’t like them.

Let me be honest with you. There are parts of the Bible I don't like. How about the part where Jesus tells Peter, “Forgive your brother 70 times seven and keep on forgiving?”

How many of you all don’t like that? We don’t like it, because we want to be able to say, “Hey, Dominic.”

That is no what the Bible says.

⁹ Ibid.

But here is the third one that you will see so often, particularly in a corporate church body is taking things out of context, taking phrases that seem to justify and or defend what you want to believe or do, but having nothing to do with what you are defending.

I mentioned being in evangelism for a little over six years of my life, preaching over 250 different churches and all these youth camps all around the world. There were times, in fact, on a weekly basis, where I would quote from and preach from God's Word and it did not make somebody happy. I know that you find that hard to believe, but there were tons of people who just not like what I said. And this is what would typically happen. They would greet me at the back door as everybody was filing out and someone would shake my hand and say something.

“Jeff, you know the Bible says do not judge. You were judging up there tonight.”

Do you know what? The Bible does not say, “Do not judge,” but that does not mean that anything goes and you can pick the theology of your choice and the path of your life.

Matthew chapter seven verse one says:

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.”¹⁰

The point of Matthew chapter seven has nothing to do with casting judgment, has everything to do with hypocrisy. In other words, don't set a standard for someone else that you wouldn't set for yourself.

By the way, let's go back to point one. How many times do we set a standard for your pastor that you are not willing to set for yourself? See, I look at it just the reverse. I hold you to the same standard I hold myself to, because we all have this ministry. We are all wearing the fatigues. We are all wearing the camouflage. I am just at the front of the line. Do not handle the Word of God deceitfully.

I am going to tell you what. This is how Christians express themselves in a mean manner. They sit jabs with the Bible. Have you ever noticed that? Something they don't like or something they [?] they jab you with a Bible verse. [?]

Go and look up that verse when somebody does that to you and make sure they did it in context, because often they take little phrases, wham, and they just slam you.

I am telling you some of the meanest people are people with Bibles in their hands. They are, because they take the parts they like and use it to their own discretion versus stepping back and saying, “Well, what has God said?”

Do not mishandle the Word of God. And here is the fourth thing.

¹⁰ Matthew 7:1-2.

“...but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”¹¹

I want you to notice the little pathway here. The first thing is be honest in everything that you do. You ought to do that anyway. The second thing is don’t have any ill motives or any craftiness in doing the things you do. Do everything to glorify God not to benefit yourself. And the third is take God’s Word and use it properly. Don’t use it as a weapon of anger or a weapon of justification, but use it for what it was intended. And then to the fourth, manifest the truth.

“....commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”¹²

Simply what it means is this. Realize that the majority of the world are not believers. Realize that the majority of the world is not on the road to heaven. So, therefore, because you are a preacher, because you are a minister, look at everything you do as does this help them get saved or will this hurt them get saved?

By the way, over in 1 Corinthians chapter six there is a verse I hang my hat on. It says this.

“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.”¹³

In other words, what God was telling us is there are some things that the Bible says, “Hey, man, you are free to do, but based on the situation you better not do it because there are some people who have a perception that has become the reality that will be their stumbling block.”

Now you all aren’t real familiar with this somewhat, but Tracy and I are. I will be honest. This is the first time being here in Prentiss County, I have never known what it is like to be a dry county. Ok? I have just never known it. I have spent my whole life living in wet counties and I don’t mean just wet. I mean swamp wet. I mean, we had a friend that came to see us a couple of weeks ago from the Dallas Fort Worth area and we went to eat at [?]. And I said, “Now, Michael,” I said, “This is going to be different than what you are used to.”

He said, “What do you mean?”

I said, “You are going to go to a Mexican food restaurant and there is not going to be a beer sign up.”

He said, “Nah, they don’t exist.”

I said, “They do here.”

¹¹ 2 Corinthians 4:2.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 6:12.

We went. He was mesmerized. But coming from that background I am going to tell you something. Tracey and I as Christians, not just as pastors, as Christians have had to alter our life in such a manner because what will happen is you go to a crowded restaurant in the Dallas Fort Worth area they say, "Well, we are busy here. Why don't you have a seat in the bar and just wait?"

To which Tracey and I would turn and say, "We will just go outside."

Were we drinking anything? No. But it sure could have been perceived that way. That is exactly what this is saying. Don't allow anything to creep in or seep into your life that could be perceived as ill.

This is what 1 Thessalonians 5:22 says when it says, "Have no appearance of evil."

I want to share with you a story when I was in college. I will admit this and she has heard this story. This was before I met Tracey. I was dating a young girl and I had a 1965 mustang. Now I went to Baylor University, the now national women's basketball champions. I had to get that in there. But nonetheless, I met... thank you. I appreciate that.

Ok, I am at Baylor University where they had a shirt that said, "Bows, bears and BMWs only at Baylor." Driving a 1965 mustang at Baylor University stood out like a sore thumb because most kids had new cars and I had a 30 year old car. I had this 1965 mustang. One night I had gone over to see a young lady who I was dating at the time. We went. We had dinner, what not and I left that evening. The only problem was when I went to go start my car something happened that frequently happened with my 1965 mustang, I put the key in the ignition, I turned it over and I got nothing. It didn't start.

So I went in. They didn't have cell phones back then, young people. I know that will shock you. I went inside and borrowed a phone. I called my roommate. I said, "Come pick me up. My car has died again."

Well, he wasn't real happy because this happened on a frequent basis. He came. He picked me up and he took me back to my apartment. The next day we get up. We go. We get the car started. We go back.

That Monday night... That was on the weekend. That Monday night was my weekly fraternity meeting. I was in a fraternity in college. Seventy-five young men sitting around in a room doing the things that they do.

At the beginning of every meeting they gave out awards for different things and we had this one award that they gave out every week to the young man who had, quote, unquote, the most success with the ladies that weekend. I told you it was a fraternity. Ok? This wasn't a church group, all right? That was an award they gave out every week. I will never forget that Monday night. I am doing about my business the things that I did in the organization. They are giving out these awards that I would never qualify for because

most of them you had to have ill behavior to get to which they said, “Oh, when we give out this award we have a special presentation this week.”

And they called for a guy by the name of Mike to come up and give the award. And he got up. Mike was a fifth year senior at the time.

You know college, best five, six years of your life, ok? He was a fifth year senior. We had seven year seniors in there, too. That is a whole other story.

Nonetheless Mike was a fifth year senior. I am just saying he was a little bit older. Mike gets up and he says, “I am so proud to give this award this week because we are going to give it to somebody we never thought we would see here. We are giving this award to somebody that none of us dreamed, but, by golly, congratulations Jeff Meyers.”

I went, “What are you talking about? Where have you been that I haven’t been? I don’t know a thing you are talking about.”

And they all clapped and hooted and hollered. Whoo, Meyers.

I am going, “I don’t have a clue what you are talking about.” I said, “Mike, you are going to have to tell the story, because I don’t know a thing about it.”

And he said, “Well,” he said, “Sunday morning,” he said, “I got up real early to go run.” He ran a lot, jogging. He said, “About 5:30, six in the morning,” and he said, “I noticed your car in front of so and sos apartment.”

I went, “Yeah?”

And he said, “That can only mean one thing.”

And it clicked. I said, “Mike,” I said, “I was at my apartment sleeping.”

My mustang didn’t automatically get fixed every time from that point forward. In fact, it would continue to break as long as I had it. Can I tell you what I did the next time that Mustang broke down? I got in and I pushed it home. Why? Because I did not want anybody to do what this is talking about. I did not want anybody to look at my life and say, “You know what? Something is not gelling.”

Was it hard? Sure. Pushing a mustang a mile and a half by yourself and your roommate is not a fun experience. One time we towed it with a water hose. College students can’t afford all the nice equipment. That is kind of fun as it is going... you know.

My roommates dreaded getting the call. I broke down again. Why? Because that meant we had to take a lot of time and a lot of energy to make sure that nothing was a stumbling block.

Folks, these are real simple things. Be honest. Don't have ill motives. Handle the Word of God properly and just think of others instead of yourself. That is the behavior.

What is the consequence? Verse three.

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.”¹⁴

In other words, if we don't do the behavior, if we don't have the attitude, the ones who are affected most adversely, are those who are lost. The lost world who is dying and going to hell will not see what verse four, five and six call the light of Jesus Christ.

Let me give you some statistics that ought to frighten you. And if they do not frighten you, you need a serious revival meeting in your life this morning. In America this year approximately, give or take, about roughly four million babies will be born. Roughly two million people will die. That is just the census statistics. Roughly two million Americans will die this year.

Now the big question is this. How many of those Americans who die are believers in Jesus Christ?

Well, you can do all the data you want, but I am going to be very generous this morning. In fact, I think I am being very positive in saying that roughly 20 percent. I think that is incredibly positive statement. I think it is more in the 10 to 15 range, but I would say that 20 percent of all the people who die in America are believers. That means that every year in America 1.6 million Americans die to spend an eternity in hell, 1.6 million which is almost the population of the state of Mississippi.

Let's break this down into some terms maybe you could understand a little bit easier. That is 4450 people a day. Roughly 4500 Americans die every day to spend an eternity in hell.

Let's make this a little bit simpler for you. That is 185 an hour.

We have been in this worship service right at an hour and statistically speaking 185 Americans have died and gone to hell. Or maybe I can make it even more simpler. That is three every minute. Every 20 seconds in America, statistically, somebody dies and goes to hell and they don't have to.

In fact, it says here the reason that happens is because you and I, the ministers of Christ hide the truth by our behavior. The things we do is hiding the message of Jesus.

I was in the fellowship of Christian athletes when I was in high school and we had a statement. I cannot hear you because your actions are too loud. In other words, it doesn't matter what you say. It is what you do that people see. I promise you. The sermon you preach at a local restaurant is more powerful than any Sunday school lesson you will

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 4:3.

teach up here. I promise you. The sermon you preach on a ball field, the sermon you preach in a factory, the sermon you preach in a school is of greater impact than anything that takes place up here.

It says:

“...if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.¹⁵

Three times in verses four, five and six it says that we possess the light of Jesus Christ, simply this. The consequence of not living the Christian life is that people die and go to hell. That is the consequence and it is real.

But it says here that we possess the light.

We are going to do a little illustration for you here this morning. I am going to show you what the world really looks like

You know, we have got spotlight on, but that is what the world really looks like. It is a dark world out there. In fact, if even in America if only 20 percent of the people are believers it is pretty dark out there.

Let me just be honest with you. This dark lost world, it is fun to live in sometimes and sometimes the darkness becomes more fun to live in than the light.

But it says here that we possess the light of Jesus Christ in our life. Let me use a simple illustration. This is my flashlight. Not bad. Do you realize that this room has 130,000 cubic feet of air, 7000 square feet of floor and yet this light is doing a pretty good job, isn't it? I won't blind you all. I promise.

Isn't it amazing what just one light can do? You know, if time would allow us and our eyes were able to focus in time, this one light could light up the entire room.

Now it may not be light enough to where we could all read something, but nonetheless it would eventually, as our pupils begin to dilate and get used to things, we could see better.

You know, what is amazing to me is this, that this one light is lighting up a room of over 300 people in it with lots of space. Can you imagine if we had two or three more lights, five or six, seven or eight or nine or 10?

You know, one of my favorite writers, authors, is a man by the name of Charles Swindoll. Many of us know him as Chuck Swindoll, a former pastor out in California. Then he went to be the president and the leader of Dallas Theological Seminary. Now he actually pastors a church in Frisco which is the Dallas Fort Worth area. He wrote a book some years ago that I just love. He entitled it *Simple Faith*. In other words, what does it mean to just simply live the Christian life?

¹⁵ Ibid.

And one of his illustrations in that book was about the fact that when we get saved the light of God comes to live in our life, much like this flashlight. He said, “But here is the problem with most Christians is they enjoy what they enjoy what they call the flashlight part.”

In other words, I want to go into an environment where everybody else has flashlights and, hold your eyes, I will flash my light. And everybody else has a flashlight, too, and they go, “Hey, you got one. Let me show you mine.” And everybody just goes around flashing their flashlights at each other.

And then in there he had a challenge. He said, “Why don’t you take your one flashlight, go into the darkest room you know and see what happens.”

It was the reading of that book in the fall of 1991 that spoke to me so much that I went and joined a secular fraternity. I went and found then darkest room I could find of immorality, of just stinkiness.

Do you know what I learned real quick? An honest lifestyle preaches volumes. Do you know what I found out real quick? Not having ill motives preaches volumes. Do you know what I found out real quick? Handling the Word of God is a very loud sermon, but here is what I learned that one Monday night at that meeting. That it is not just about me. There is a lost world watching me to see what I will do.

In just a moment we are going to have our time of invitation and out for a few lights that are going to be on the platform, we are going to leave the room pretty dark, because I want you to somehow with your senses grasp the reality. The world is a dark place. And you are to be the salt and you are to be the light.

Folks, the question is: Are we going to shine our lights or are we going to hide it?

Let’s pray.