

Setting Captives Free Podcast
The Rod of God and the Mediator for Man: Job 9:32-35
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Mike: Hello, hello everybody, this is Mike Cleveland with my brother, Erick Hurt. So glad to be coming to you again with another podcast. This one we are very excited about. We are going to be discussing an important topic. Erick, I have a feeling it will be the gospel of Jesus Christ. What do you think? (chuckles)

Erick: (chuckles) Yeah, brother, I believe it will be because we don't just want to have a talk here, we want to point our listeners and ourselves to that which has power to transform us. So, yeah, today is going to be about the gospel, brother, and I'm really excited to be here with you.

Mike: Amen. Good point. Well, we want to look today at the book of Job, Chapter 9 and we'll look at verses 32 to 35. And you know Erick in this passage Job has a problem with God. He has had everything taken from him including his family, his farm, his friends, everything has been taken from him. His family was all destroyed, all except for his wife, and she said "Curse God and die". So he lost all of his children in one day, he lost all of his flocks and herds in one day, he is now covered with boils and sores, and he is having a bad time of it. Of course, we have the back story here that God called Satan in and God initiated a conversation with Satan. He brought Job up to Satan and said, "Hey Satan, look at my servant Job. He's doing great." Satan says "Well yeah, because you blessed him. Take that all away and let's see what he does then". So here Job has gone through all these extremely difficult things. Erick, what would it be like to lose all your children in a single day and your job all in one day. What would that feel like?

Erick: Oh boy, it would feel like your world has just ended. Your entire life, you know, this would be absolutely a miserable place to be in, wouldn't it? You know the weight of this would be excruciating, one would think?

Mike: Yeah, you know some people talk about well you know I've had a difficult situation at work, or I've had problems in my marriage, and I'm all depressed. Well, this is far beyond that. This is much worse than any of us have gone through. And Job is struggling with it, to say the least, and if you look at verse 32, he's talking about God here because he's understanding that God has done this to him. Or since we know the background in Chapter 1, God has used Satan to bring these things to Job in his life. This is a severe test he is going through and he is talking about God here in verse 32: *"He is not a mere mortal like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court."* Erick, he's saying I can't take him to court and make him explain Himself because He's God. I can't sue Him, I can't demand an answer from Him, he's God. You know a lot of us have felt this way. God has done things that I don't just like. That I am uncomfortable with, that hurt me, and I don't appreciate, and "God, why have you done this?" And yet we know we can't treat Him like a man and drag Him into court and make Him explain Himself. He's God! And so Job from this point on now is going to make a little turn, he is going to express his desires and his wishes. And Erick this is something that we all desire if we think about it. What Job is about to express. Why don't you read verse 33 there if you have it? Job 9:33.

Erick: Job 9:33 *"There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on both of us."*

Mike: So he's longing for a mediator, isn't he? He's longing for someone to reach out his hand to God and reach out his hand to Job and bring them together.

Erick: Amen

Mike: He has this need within him, "Oh, if only I could have an arbiter, if I could a mediator if I could have someone who is like God and man that could come and bring us both together, put his hand on us both, put his God hand on God and his man hand on man, and we would come together in that person. If only! Oh, you can sense the longing, Erick, can't you sense the pathos, the extreme need that he has for some mediator to bring God and Job together.

Erick: Amen, and that mediator we know, we know who that mediator is, don't we brother. And this mediator knows exactly what Job had gone through because this mediator Jesus Christ gave up everything, and had everything had been taken from him, and you know emptied himself to nothing, brother. Left his heavenly place, left His father's side and came into this world as a man and was stripped of everything. He lost everything and went to the cross for us with joy, brother. He was stripped, and yet

joyfully, and remarkably where the hand was laid on them both. There was the mediator, there was the God-man that took us for us and took it from us and then turned instead not to give us what we deserved, to punish us according to what we deserved, but took it all, took every ounce of it, every bit of our sin, and shame and trouble and everything that we have ever experienced was experienced by Jesus on the cross. And what a beautiful illustration of love and what a beautiful illustration of that courtroom that Jesus went in on the cross nailing it completely all finished there for us.

Mike: Amen. 1 Timothy 2:5 says: *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,”*. As you said, Jesus came between God and man and took the full brunt of God’s wrath, his anger against sin was all expended on the Lord Jesus Christ who came between us as our mediator and in a sense reached out and touched the Father and reached out and touched us sons and daughters and brought us together as made us one and reconciled us through his body unto death. And as he did that we have become one with the Father, we are united to God the Father and God the Son because of the mediator, the man Christ Jesus.

I think about it when he was on the cross and his arms were stretched out and you can see him in the position of mediator, reaching out to take two parties and make them one. And this is what he has done for us. And the next verse, again says Job is expressing this longing, “I wish, I wish I had someone to remove God’s rod from me so that his terror would frighten me no more”. Job is afraid of God because God has hurt him, God has wounded him and he wishes that there was somebody who could take God’s rod away from him. When he says God’s rod, he means God’s wrath, the rod of punishment and Job is longing for someone else to be punished. Oh, if there was someone who could take this horrible punishment, this rod of God away from me. I just wish someone you know could come and not only bring us together but remove my punishment. Erick, we have someone who took God’s rod from us.

Erick: We do, yeah. Amen, like Hebrews said that he had to be made in every way like his brothers and to take on flesh and blood so that he could take the rod at the cross, so he could bear the wrath of our sins, he became as we are and were so he can pick us and clothe us in that in which he is, which is righteousness and holy and blameless. And what an amazing illustration that the God of heaven and earth, the one who spoke and the universe leapt into existence, would take on flesh and bone to become as we are brother, so he could pour out his life’s blood for us, so he could take that rod and take it away from us. And it is just incredible this love and mercy that we receive at the cross, this love that we receive at the cross. It’s so deep and wide. Who can comprehend the love of God, and how deep and wide it really is, brother?

Mike: Yes, it's beyond our imagination, it's beyond words to describe that somebody would come along and take our punishment, that somebody would come along and take God's punishment away from us, brought to himself.

I think of Micah 5:1: *"Marshal your troops now, city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod."* Israel's ruler would be struck with a rod. And you might ask well who is this ruler, where would he be born, and where would he come from? Well, verse 2: *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."*

And so Erick, out of Bethlehem came a ruler, this ruler was struck on the cheek with a rod, and this is symbolic of the fact that Christ would be crucified on a cross, he would be literally hit on the face with a rod and his back was lashed until it looked like a farmers field because it was plowed. His back was lashed, his beard was pulled out. In fact, he offered his beard to those who pull it out, he offered his cheek to those who would hit it, his head to those who would crown him with thorns, his hands, and feet to those who would nail him to a cross. He came to take our punishment to take the rod of God away from us. And Erick, what amazing news that we do not have to be punished for our sins because Christ was punished. Jesus took the rod of God away from us. Look what Job said the result would be. He's saying "Oh if only I had someone to remove God's rod from me so that his terror would frighten me no more.

Do you know what? Fear has to do with punishment. And so look at Jesus, he was punished in your place, brother. Because he was punished in your place what does that do for you? It removes your fear. You can live life, this life we can live boldly, confidently trusting the one who died for us without fear. Isn't that amazing?

Erick: Yeah it really is. The fear is that he is coming for me but the terror is that he is coming for me with a rod but he is coming for me as you so well stated. But what takes away that fear? Jesus coming not to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through Jesus Christ, the one who was condemned for you. Boy, if that does not remove the fear and the rod and the wrath of God, I don't know what will. But that's certainly tremendous love that God has for us. When we look there, brother, when we look to the cross, constantly we remember, we're reminded just before the podcast, that we've been cleansed from our former sins, we've been cleansed from our former life and every single sin brother, every single sin that we've ever committed was struck in Christ when he was on the cross for us, struck with a rod, nailed in his flesh, torn, like

you said, with his back plowed, he was not even recognizable on the cross because that was how ugly and horrible sin is and was. And so Jesus was brutally beaten for us and nailed there and canceled our sin debt there and condemned there and so that way for those who are in Christ Jesus there isn't any condemnation left. Why? No one speck of condemnation left for you and I, brother and for this who put their faith in the cross and put their faith there, in Jesus' shed blood where our flesh was put to death because he was condemned for you and I. That's why there isn't any left for you and I. So you talk about fear being gone, the rod removed, boy what does it do to our hearts when we look there? It makes us want to fall down and worship with great gratitude and thanksgiving that we are free in Christ indeed. Isn't it, brother?

Mike: It does, I love how you just said that. That's beautiful and the fact that we have no fear as we approach God. We can't have fear. Fear is the beginning of wisdom but the cross is the end of fear. And so we don't want to live in fear of God. We live in awe and wonder and respect and deep worship of him but there's no fear that he's coming after us with a rod. I love how you said that. Why? Because he went after his own Son.

And so if you look at Christ at the cross, just see him being stripped naked. Why? To clothe you in the honor you don't deserve.

Look at the blows. Jesus took the blows. He took the rod of God, he was nailed to a tree. He suffered these agonies of death to heal you and to redeem your life from the pit and set you free.

In other words, Jesus was punished so that you might be pardoned.

You know that the only time, the one and only time that Jesus did not call God Father was when he was on the cross. That was the only time. Why? He called him "My God, My God, he didn't say, my Father, my Father". Why? He was being treated as if he were not a Son. Why? So you and I could be. So he cries out "My God, my God" so that I might cry out "My Father, my Father".

Jesus paid this huge debt that we owed. Jesus paid it, he paid it with blood, he paid it with his perfect life laid down for us, sacrificed on a tree so that we might be forgiven and pardoned and raised from the dead and made new, given new thoughts, new hearts, new loves, new passions. All of this because Jesus took the rod of God for us and now we have no fear. Erick, what does the next verse say in verse 35 there?

Erick: Verse 35 says: *“Then I would speak up without fear of him, for I am not so in myself”*. As we were talking earlier, now I can speak without fear of him. Because Jesus took that away. Like you said earlier, “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the end of fear is the cross”. I loved how you said that. I believe that was what you said. It is just so beautiful because now I can speak without fear of him because he is not coming after me, he’s pardoned me because he’s put the punishment on the Son. What does that do for our hearts brother? It sets us free. It fills us with joy. It fills us with great gratitude. And I no longer have fear in myself. And I know brother there is someone listening right now that is probably looking at God as if the wrath is coming at them, they are looking at God wishing and hoping that there was somebody else to take this rod away from me. And hopefully, you have heard it clearly that Jesus has done this. He’s taken it all away. He’s taken every sin, no matter the sin. We do not want to say that Christ came to die for many sins. He came to die for every sin and so every sin that you and I have ever committed, listener, listen. It was for you. It was so that you could be pardoned. Like Mike said earlier, he was disrobed so that he could robe you in His righteousness, blameless, holy and without shame, without guilt. Isn’t that remarkable to hear this message of hope, this message that has power to reach down into your heart and cut it and heal it and raise you up as a new creation where you are no longer enslaved to all your thoughts of fear of God? All your sins that maybe tried to tell you that you should be condemned - you don’t deserve the cross. And on and on they go. But we look to the cross and see it and believe that message because that’s what happened. It was the greatest exchange ever known and ever seen. And the greatest love that you and I will ever experience. Isn’t it Mike?

Mike: It is indeed. And don’t you want to just tell Job that (chuckles)?

Erick: (chuckles) Yes.

Mike: He is crying out: “Oh if there was only someone to mediate. If there was just someone to bring us together if there was just someone to remove God’s rod from me” and I just want to shout:” Job, there is!” Of course, there is now.

Erick: Right (chuckles).

Mike: You know he was crying out for Jesus and for the cross.

And you know maybe the listener here is doing the same as you said. There are thinking that the rod of God is coming for them because all they can see is their sin. Well, they need to stop seeing their sin and start seeing their Savior and start seeing the

cross. God lifted up his arm to swing his rod right at you, listener, and Jesus stepped right in front of you and took that rod and he was beaten to a pulp. And then crucified on a tree. Why? To remove God's wrath from you.

Now listener, all you can experience is the love of God because:

Your sins can't condemn you. They already condemned Jesus.

Your sins can't give you guilt. Your guilt was taken off of you.

Your sins can't bring you into judgment. Jesus was judged for you.

Your sins can't put you to death. They put Jesus to death.

And so you are able to speak up without fear of him. You can come to him boldly. Erick, it says "to come to the throne of grace boldly with confidence". We can come right into the presence of God knowing that we have no sin on us because Jesus has removed it. We do not fear punishment because Jesus took it. So Job says, he ends this passage with: *"but as it now stands with me, I cannot."* or *"in myself, I can't"*. He has a fleeting thought: "Oh if there was someone, and then he's like....but it's not now".

Listener, it IS now. We can stand up and speak to Almighty God face to face because Jesus has opened for us a new and living way through His blood to make us right with God to give us a hope and a future and we can say to Job: "Oh we have someone! Someone has come. He's our mediator. He brought us together with God. He removed God's rod from us. His terror does not frighten us anymore. We speak up without fear and we can stand in his presence now relishing the fact that Christ is for us, Christ has died for us, Christ has risen for us, and we are here in his presence forevermore Erick because we are free from guilt, free from condemnation, free from sin, and that just makes us free, free, free, doesn't it!

Erick: Yeah, it sure does. I just love the way you said that listen to you go on and on about the cross. Hopefully, the listener has understood it, has heard it, has sunk down into their hearts and given them hope today, brother. Just as the cross has given us hope, lifted us out of sin, drawn us to Christ and his shed blood, cleansed us in it, we washed in it brother and the place where we were totally cleansed and our lives were completely changed and this happens over time, not overnight in many cases. As we become sanctified and become more and more like Christ, more and more transformed into the image of Christ. So listener if it takes a while that's OK. But when you look to

the cross and you remember these things that we have been discussing today and see it clearly that Jesus was condemned for you, when you see that Jesus took your sin off you and placed it completely on himself.

So we hope today that you heard loud and clear the message of the cross because that's because it's the only message that we want to share, isn't it Mike?

Mike: It's the only message of power. If we don't share the message of the cross we are powerless.

Erick: Amen

Mike: No blood, no power. No death, no power. No resurrection, no Holy Spirit, no power. This message makes us have a self-quake! I like the thought of that Erick because the self-quake is where our whole world is shaken up. You know the way we think, the way we treat other people, the way that we live is just rocked to the very core of who we are. Why? Because we have seen that Jesus loves us. That's what it takes to be a Christian to see that Jesus has loved you and has given himself for you, has suffered in your place, has taken his sin on himself as Erick says, has clothed himself with your sin. He was naked on the cross but he was covered with your sin. You may feel naked on this earth but you are covered in the righteousness of Jesus Christ if you are a believer. And so the self-quake, this total rocking of our world what is so necessary for us to experience transformation. And Erick there's no other message that does it. There is no other message that can rock our world like the message of Christ Crucified and Risen.

So brother, maybe someone's listening who is thinking along the lines of Job. You know, man! I wish I could have a talk with God and we could talk this out and I'm just fearful of him. I can't seem to come into his presence because I'm terrorized by him. His rod is about to come down on me. Pray for them if you would and help them to see the cross. Ask God to open their hearts and their eyes to see the cross.

Erick: Yeah I will brother. Father, we are so grateful for this time together and we are so grateful we can look to the cross and that there is a wrath of God but it was stopped right there at the cross where Jesus gave up his life. He unclothed himself and from his riches from heaven he took on our sin, took on our shame, was raised up on a cross as a criminal so we could be pardoned and set free, and so our chains would be broken. That our lives would follow Jesus to the cross crucified, our flesh put to death by faith by looking to this cross. And so, Lord, I pray for the listener, that this message would sink

down into the heart and this message would cut and heal the heart because we are healed by Jesus' wounds and we are thankful that instead of coming after us, Jesus' back was plowed and he was nailed to the cross with our sin debt and therefore our debt was canceled in his flesh. Lord, he took it all because he was hanging there, he was loving us, he loved us right out of our sin. He was the only one that loved us to death, he's the only one that went to hell and back for us, and all the way into heaven risen where he is praying and interceding on our behalf. Lord, I pray that the listener would look to the cross now and see that this was for them, that Jesus became sin for them. Jesus wants to clothe them with His righteousness and make them spotless. He wants them and their lives to be crucified with him, that their old man would be buried in a tomb, that they might raise to a new life, raised free from their former life because those who are in Christ are free indeed. This is what the cross is all about. The cross is all about setting captives free, paying our sin debt, that we might live for him and no longer for sin. This was so that sin would be brought to nothing and that we would live to Christ, through Christ, and with Christ. So, Lord, we lift up that one listener that their hearts would be pierced today and that they would see the cross in a new way and never see it the same again. We ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Mike: Amen.

THE END.

September 25, 2019

"Good news in the midst of wrath"

Mike Cleveland and Erick Hurt

Nahum 1

Erick: Well, good morning, my name is Erick Hurt and I am here to do another podcast with my good friend and partner in ministry Mike Cleveland, Mike how you doing today brother?

Mike: I am doing so good Erick and I am so glad to be with you today brother and looking forward to what God will teach us in His word and how He will work in our hearts and the hearts of those who listen.

Erick: Amen. And so today we thought we'd go through Nahum chapter 1 and you know it's only 15 verses long but we don't have time to go through all the verses but what we do have time for is to illustrate of the cross in this message, and that is that God was um getting ready to destroy Nineveh for their wickedness, uh for their sin. And yet um you know he is taking vengeance on his adversaries and you know the word says that 'the Lord is slow to anger but great in power' and that the Lord will by no means clear the guilty. Um that He rebukes the seas and makes it dry, He dries up all the rivers and the mountains that quake before Him and the hills melt, uh you know demonstrating His power and you know He's saying 'who can stand', uh before His indignation, who can endure the heat of His anger?

And Mike we were under the same judgment as Nineveh, weren't we brother when we were trapped in our sin and shame and of the darkness thereof?

Mike: Yes, you know this is really the condition of all people by nature, um by nature we are subject to the wrath of God for our sins. Um, I like that question in verse 6 of Nahum 1 'who can withstand His indignation?' And it just begs an answer 'nobody', God comes in wrath and indignation and anger because of our sins, we are not able to stand because His wrath it says is poured out like fire and we are but stubble before Him, our sins have been the kindling of this fire that wherever you find sin Erick you find the wrath of God. And uh it says that He's coming to Nineveh to pour out His wrath, His fierce anger.

That was our condition before God by birth it says in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 3 that we were by nature 'objects of wrath' just like Nineveh here.

Erick: Yes, exactly and in verse 7 it says 'the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, He knows those who take refuge in Him'.

So, you know and we see the cross here too don't we brother, that uh you know that the wrath of God is coming for His enemies. Uh but also we see that He is the stronghold and we can take refuge in Him, and uh you know but verse 8 continues it says 'but with an overflowing flood, He will make a complete end of His adversaries and will pursue His enemies uh into darkness'.

Now, this is just the Lord, uh, like you said brother, His fire and His anger against sin. And this is the wrath uh that He was coming after us with brother, and uh that is a scary thought to think about, isn't it?

Mike: It is scary and that's what puts the fear of God in people when they know that their sins are like a magnet that draws the wrath of God and it's described in two ways in this passage. Fire and flood- and we see both of those in, for example in Genesis 5 about the flood that covered the whole earth that was the flood of God's wrath, and then in Sodom and Gomorrah we see the fire that destroyed those cities, um fire and flood these are symbols of judgment and God is coming now to judge Nineveh and we should just put ourselves in this story, Erick, we were the object of God's wrath, we were the magnet that drew His anger because of our sins. Um, this is not a very pretty picture and it, you know, it's not 'live your best life now'. No, you are under God's wrath, you are under the curse of the law, you are separated from God, you are separated from the head by nature and by birth. And so this is a proper uh description of our condition before a Holy God, who also demands that we be Holy. His law requires our perfection brother and I haven't come anywhere close, I've done nothing but sin and thumb my nose in His face, and so I am deserving of the wrath, the anger, the fire and the flood of God.

Erick: Hmm, Amen, that is very well said, I was just rejoicing as you were talking about that and um just praising the Lord in my own heart uh for this freedom that He has given us. That His anger, in fact, didn't make it as far as it should have, in other words, it didn't land on us. And um in verse 12 it says, this is what the Lord says, 'Although they have allies and are numerous they will be destroyed and pass away. Although I have afflicted you, Judah, I will afflict you no more'. So, uh you know we see the cross here brother, don't we, we see that the allies are numerous but they will be destroyed and pass away, just like Jesus triumphed over the enemy and made a public display and spectacle of Him, um and that we will not be afflicted any more. Why? Why will we not be afflicted brother? Because the cross is the place where Jesus stepped in and hung in our place. The cross is the place where He entered into the darkness to pursue His enemies but then at the cross, He did both, He pursued His enemies into the darkness and then drew them out, and just, it's incredible to think that He would do such a thing for us, that He would love us all the way to go into the darkness Himself on the cross. That He would lift us out of it, that sin would be judged in His own flesh and so, just remarkable to think that the cross is both for Victory for one and um you know like we talked about wrath and um you know for the adversary.

Mike: It is, um this whole passage Erick is a description of God pouring out wrath, well what happened at the cross was God poured out His wrath Jesus became the magnet for God's wrath, Jesus stepped in front of the flood and was baptized, was consumed in it, you can see pictures of that if you look in verse 10 when God was going to pour out His wrath on um, what was the name of the city?, uh, Nineveh, sorry. (Mike chuckles) it says that they would be entangled among thorns, you know and here you see Jesus wearing a crown of thorns. Um, you would see that God would come to them in the darkness and pursue them, and here Jesus hung on the cross for three hours, it was pitch black, it was midnight at midday and He was entangled among thorns, why? Because God is flooding Him with wrath, God is consuming Him as if Jesus were dry stubble. And the fire of God's wrath just ignited on Him, and Erick He was consumed for you and me, brother He died under the wrath of God, and the reason He did that

is to remove it from us, to set us free from God's wrath, to make us to be acceptable to God as if we had no sin and the reality is- we have no sin, because Jesus removed it from us and died under this horrible fire and flood of God's wrath in our place brother, isn't that good news?

Erick: Oh boy, it really is good news brother and that's why I love what verse 13 says, and uh we will get to it in just a second but looking to the cross and believing that message brother that He took it all from us, that He became the object of God's wrath for us. Uh, you know took on human flesh and bone and hung for us completed, finished, it is, it's over, it's done, we look there brother and we see in verse 13 now I will break their yoke from your neck and tear your shackles away. This is what happens when we look to the cross and believe this incredible message that He took our place and that He has destroyed the sin that has held us captive and had a yoke around our neck for so long and the shackles that we didn't have the strength to tear apart, nor did anyone else. Steps couldn't help us, you know and recovery groups couldn't help us, because those things can't tear shackles, they can't cut iron bars, they can't set captives free, but Jesus did when He was nailed to the tree for us. His body was broken so that the yoke could be broken off our neck, and His hands were pierced and nailed and so the shackles would fall away and fall off of us, and as you said, brother, this is good news!

Mike: It is, um, if you look at verse 15 here and remember the context and the setting of this chapter which is God coming to destroy in wrath, and people might just say 'wow there is absolutely no good news to be found I am hopeless and I am desperate'. But look at verse 15, 'look turn your eyes, focus on, look, there on the mountains the feet of one who brings good news. Who proclaims peace. Erick, we are told here to look, and we are told to look to the mountains and there we will see the feet of ONE, not many, not soldiers, not an army but the feet of ONE. Why are we to look at his feet, Erick? They were pierced for our transgressions. This ONE who brings good news on the mountain was wounded for our transgressions and He brings us the good news that we are forgiven and we are free and we are reconciled to God and we are made new in the attitude of our minds and our hearts are made new. This is such good news set right in the setting of horrible wrath and judgment and destruction, and you see Jesus took our wrath and He was judged in our place and He was destroyed, He was covered over in the flood of God's wrath remember, in Genesis 5 through 8 where it talks about the flood? It says the earth was covered to a depth of more than 20 feet, well Jesus here was flooded with God's wrath and He was buried in it, and why? Because He is bringing us the good news of our justification, of our being made right with God, out of our being clothed in the righteousness of Christ and Erick He proclaims peace. Brother, how does He do that? How does Jesus proclaim peace to you?

Erick: Well everything that you said brother and for those that are listening right now, just as Mike said 'look, look there on the mountain- on the mountains, the feet of ONE', I love that how you said that brother, that was just so awesome. The feet of ONE who brings good news and who proclaims peace, because when all these things are taken off you, which they were, and me and Mike and others, all the sin and all the weight of all that Jesus bore on the cross for us, when all of this is removed from you and you see that you are clothed, you are robed, you are

cared for. When you see Jesus's arms stretched out on the cross for you, not only 'for you' but stretched out 'to you', loving you, forgiving you, not counting your sin against you. Brother, this brings such peace to your own heart, because before you were absolutely hopeless, that you would ever be free from these sins that entangle us so much, that keep us held in this bondage. And so yes, this is good news, this is how peace is proclaimed that through His death and through his resurrection you and your life follow Christ to the grave. And if you follow Him to the grave that means you've been crucified and then you shall raise, if we've been crucified with Him brother than we shall certainly join Him in his resurrection. Uh, which means that our desires are changing, which means that we have the opportunity and the ability to love like we didn't before when we were trapped in our chains and in our prison. And this is, this brings great hope, this brings, this is wonderful peace and you know it is just tremendous to be able to experience this new powerful life uh because of the One who went up on the mountain.

Mike: You know I, I was just sitting there worshipping as you were talking my heart being so affected by what you just said there. Um you know you look at what it took for Jesus to bring peace to you and me, it's as if God declared war on His own son; He pummeled him, He flooded him, He consumed him in the fire of His wrath, all that you and I might have peace. And you know Erick when Jesus came to the disciples in the upper room after His resurrection, He said to them 'peace be among you' and the very next thing He did is show them His hands and His feet, it's as if He was saying 'look on the mountains, look at the feet of one who brings good news'. I am sorry He showed them His hands and His side, He showed them His wounds in other words, and so He was connecting, His, their peace with His wounds. And just as it does here, look they are on the mountains, the feet, of one who brings good news who proclaims peace. Why because Jesus fought the war for us to win the battle for us, to bring us peace with God, and Erick when you have peace with God everything else in your life is at peace, isn't it?

Erick: It really is yes, and everything uh changes, and everything begins to change even if it is slowly. Which it is slowly, uh you know the work of the cross works slowly in your heart and when you begin to have peace in your heart, uh when you are not hiding and lying and cheating and uh you know covering your tracks. Uh because your desires are changing and becoming new, boy what a tremendous relief, that is to be walking in this new life, resurrected as a new creation and it brings tremendous peace and you know and love into your heart and restoration to your marriage if you are married. And restoration to other relationships and there is so much that happens at the cross, you know many come to Setting Captives Free thinking they are going to be free from just weight loss, or free from just impurity, or free from just depression. Now why am I saying it like that?, why am I saying just weight loss and just impurity, and just depression because it frees us from every sin. It frees us from everything, there are things in our life that we don't even see, uh that Christ paid the price to deliver us from. It affects, the cross affects every single aspect of your life. Uh, you know and so it is just every area of life becomes peaceful. Uh you know, and it's just such wonderful good news brother, you know someone is listening, Mike, and needs this encouragement today, they need to look there on the mountain, on the feet of the One, Jesus Christ who brings good news, who brought the ultimate sacrifice, who was sacrificed once to deliver those in bondage and cleanse them with His own blood. And

brother, would you encourage somebody today to look there? To be set free there? And then pray for us?

Mike: Yes, indeed. Um, Colossians 1 verses 19 and 20, talks about Jesus and it says 'through Him to reconcile to He himself God all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven by making peace through His bloodshed on the cross'. Erick, Jesus made peace, He made it for you, He made it for the listener. If you are here today and your life is in shambles, you are at odds with God and yourself and others, where everything is, it feels like a war inside yourself or like a storm is going on, right now God has told you 'look there on the mountain, just turn your eyes to the mountain of Calvary and look at the feet of the one who was pierced for you. Just look at the remnants, look at the proof of His love for you, look at how he took the arrows of God's wrath from you, look how He suffered in your place to bring you this good news and this passage in Hahum chapter 1, gives us our response to the cross of Christ. Celebrate your festivals! Erick, we are to have a party, we are to celebrate this good news that has set us free, this good news that has brought peace where there was a storm. This good news that has reconciled us to God and made us at peace with Him by removing our sin and nailing it to the cross.

If you are listening today and your life is a storm, your life is a battle, look to the mountain of Calvary and see Jesus making peace for you, see His feet, that is, see the proof that you have peace with God, because those feet are scarred, and they are the scars of love friend, just look there and you will see what I mean. Don't just look at His feet, look at His eyes, look how He loves you and receive this good news and live your life as a perpetual celebration from now on. Let's pray:

Father in heaven we come to you and are so grateful to have been reconciled by the blood of Jesus cross, Lord we see that He took our sin away, we see that he suffered in our place, we see that He made us righteous by taking on all our sin, we see that He has become for us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification where He has become all, our all in all, where He has become our peace with You. Lord thank you for innocence declaring war on Him, flooding Him with your wrath removing our sin from us in the process. And I just pray for this one listening right now who wants desperately to receive your peace, Lord help them to turn and look at Calvary, to see that they took Jesus up that hill, that they took Him to that cross, they nailed nails in His hands and feet and shoved a crown of thorns on His head, and yet He offered His back to those who would hit it, to His cheek to those who would strike Him, He offered His beard to be plucked out for us and He was a sight that no man could recognize, Lord because He was making peace. And I thank you for that and I thank you right now that we could have peace and I pray for this one who has now turned and looked at the cross, Lord please help them throughout the rest of their lives to celebrate the festival, to rejoice in the death of Jesus, to carry around in their body the death of Jesus that the resurrection of Christ might be manifested in them, and I ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

Erick: Amen.

Setting Captives Free Podcast
List Of Wrongs: Psalm 130: 1-8
OCT 9, 2019

Mike: Hello, everyone, this is Mike Cleveland coming to you from Washington State with my good friend and brother, Erick Hurt from Arizona. Hello Erick. How is everything with you?

Erick: Everything is well over here in Arizona, Mike. I am enjoying the cool weather and really excited about doing another podcast with you.

Mike: Amen. We have an important subject to discuss today and the subject has to do with keeping a list of wrongs that have been done to us. Erick, what is wrong with keeping track of wrongs that have been done to us?

Erick: You know Mike, we are just stacking up frustration and pride in our own hearts and we are not living out the gospel of Jesus Christ. In other words, all of our records of wrongs have been crucified in Jesus' flesh and nailed to the tree, brother. There is no record against us anymore. When we stack those up and think about them, we are looking inward and we are not looking at the cross where it was finished for us. We are not having the ability to extend that forgiveness out to others. This list is very detrimental to us, to others and to every relationship we might have.

Mike: Amen, well said. So let's look today at Psalm 130 and let's examine that very subject that we are talking about. So in Psalm 130, it is entitled the Song of Ascents. In order to ascend, we have to be coming out of the depths. And in verse 1 David is saying, "out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord." You know Erick, sin puts us in the depths. Last week, you and I interviewed Gary from Scotland and he talked about digging his own grave. Do you remember that?

Erick: Yes, I do.

Mike: He talked about descending, he kept going down farther as if he had a spade in his hand and he's kept digging and going lower in his sin. He eventually reached the depths and this is what happens to us. Sin always takes us down, doesn't it, brother?

Erick: It sure does and I believe Gary said he kept digging and digging, going deeper and deeper, and we can identify very clearly and strongly with that, being so deep that it seems there is no way out and no hope.

Mike: Exactly, you lose hope because the grave falls in on top of you because you have sinned so much that all hope is eclipsed as if you were just dwelling in a grave. It is very much like Jeremiah said in Lamentations 3: "I call on your name Lord from the depths of the pit". And this is exactly what we see David doing "out of the depths I cry to you, Lord". You know when you are in the depths, Erick, we cry to the Lord for help. We don't try to find a step ladder to climb out of the pit, we don't try to find a rope to pull ourselves out. In other words, we don't find self-help groups and try to implement all the principles they teach us. Why? Because when we are in the pit we need God's help. We need mercy and grace. And so he says: "Lord hear my voice let my ears be attentive to my cry for mercy".

Sometimes, Erick, we are not heard when we cry to the Lord because we are not crying for mercy and for grace. We are praying maybe like the Pharisee: "we are crying to the Lord. Wow! I am glad that I am not like that sinner over there. I've done this and I've done that.

When we cry to the Lord like that, He does not hear our voice. And so we come in a position of needing mercy and grace and this is what David is doing. He is recognizing that number 1, he is in a pit and he is down in the depths; and number 2, the Lord can help him! And I know from your testimony Erick that you have experienced crying to the Lord from the depths and having the Lord be attentive to your cry for mercy.

Erick: Yes I have experienced both where you cry for the wrong reason - not for mercy but it's for my own gain. Just for relief of some sort. But when you cry out as you have said, crying out for mercy, you know Mike, it's just incredible to experience this mercy. It incredible, we are not putting up a ladder to get out of our pit although I've tried many times just like you have and those things have never worked. We are just in isolation down there in that pit with no one to help. It's a miserable life, Mike. It's a miserable place to be and we are driven into isolation. It's like you said, boy when we cry out for mercy, He sure gives it to us, doesn't He? We see in verse 3 that "If you could leave a record of sins, who could stand?" Mike, that would be incredible. Could you imagine the record listed against us? We couldn't stand against that. We would be instantly judged and taken off for the rest of our lives in prison. We couldn't stand if the Lord kept a record of sins. Brother you've experienced that haven't you?

Mike: oh my goodness yes. I was just thinking in Ezra chapter 9, God is coming to his people who are captive to set them free but they confess something to him. They say: "We are left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt though because of it not one of us can stand in Your presence." That's a summary of the whole world. We all stand before the Lord guilty. Because of our guilt, we cannot stand in his presence. Now, this passage tells us, Erick, that the Lord does not keep a record of sins. What does that mean? Does he just wad the piece of paper up and throw it away? That he had a record of sins and he just decided not to look at it. What does it mean to not keep a record of sins?

Erick: There is a record. There had to be a judgment but as we can see here, it's so awesome to see that this mercy is tied to if you kept a record of sins. So in other words, the record of sin was going to be paid for, somehow by His mercy. We know, brother, where that record was paid at. It was paid as a result of our sin. But it was held against someone else, instead of being held against us. And so isn't it marvelous to think about that mercy is tied to this record. It's just incredible, Mike.

Mike: I really appreciate what you just said. There had to be a judgment. Sin has to be rectified, paid for, canceled in some way. It's not just what God says that I'm going to be a nice old grampa and overlook everything you've done. No, there has to be a payment made, so this record can be canceled. Erick, you exactly alluded to it. On the cross, Jesus took our record and made it His own, assumed the debt that we owe, took on the crimes that we committed and He suffered in our place, and He died our death as a punishment from God to fulfill the judgment, the righteous judgment of God. And so in Colossians 2:14, it says: "Having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us, He has taken it away nailing it to the cross".

Brother, as you look at the cross and you hear the nails being pounded in, they are not only going into the flesh, the hands, and feet of Jesus, they are going into the record of our legal indebtedness. It is being nailed there, everything you've done, brother, every thought that you have had that was wrong, every action that you have taken that was in disobedience to God was taken off of you and nailed to the cross. Therefore it was taken away and you no longer bear that record. So God does not bear that record of wrongs because He removed it at the cross where sin was paid for and judgment was taken away from you.

Erick: And friends if you are hearing this and you are hearing our voices, this is the same for you. At the cross, you have received mercy. At the cross, the Lord has not kept a record of sins on you but put them on Jesus. He hung so you could stand. This is why

we surround our thinking, this is what sets our mind on things above, this is why we huddle up around the cross constantly. We not only need to be reminded and remember what took place there, we see everything else there; we see the love and the mercy and the grace of God bestowed on us because He condemned His Son for us and for you. He nailed that legal document finished and paid for where He redeemed us with His own life. It is just incredible. It's not just simply walk an aisle and raise your hand. It is an absolute heart and life change experiencing power. Friends, when you see the cross in this way when you see that you have been forgiven, every sin that you've ever committed has been canceled. There is no record left for you. There is no more judgment for you. What does it do to your heart listening to this now, friends? Mike, I know that we have only got through three verses and I can hardly stand it anymore. I'm just so excited that we have received this mercy at the cross, brother. It is life-changing, everything changes. Your marriage, you are set free from sin and from sin's power. And it is just a wonderful thing to look at the cross and see all that transpired there. Isn't it, brother?

Mike: I love how you just worded all that! Huddled up around the cross, Jesus hung so you could stand up and all of those amazing truths that happened at the cross. So let's just look at the implications of verse 3: "If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?" The implication is since He did not keep a record but instead nailed it to the cross, we can stand. What that means is that we can face the judgment of God knowing we will not be declared guilty, knowing that One took our place and took our guilt and made us righteous before God, we can stand before a holy God. And this is what is rejoicing David's heart. Now look at and compare verses 1 and 3. If the record of sins has been removed, then you come out of the depths. Then you are no longer in the grave of sin, that you are now alive and raised up with Christ and seated in the heavens with Christ, you are a new creation in Christ. The old you is gone, dead and buried. The new you can stand because you are in Christ, and in Christ, Erick, anyone can stand before God knowing their sin is forgiven, there is no more sin on them, and they only have the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And so if you are in a pit today, if you have dug your own grave, what you need to see is that God has removed your sin from you, He will never bring it up to you again. He will never hold it up to you and treat you as if you had still committed those sins and were deserving of punishment. He will never do that. He chooses to forget and why? He nailed your sin to the cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore you can stand which means you are up and out of the depths, you are alive in God in Christ Jesus. And verse 4, Erick, says: "But with you, there is forgiveness," What does forgiveness mean?

Erick: Oh man, this means that I'm accepted, brother, I'm loved, I'm loved out of my sin. I'm forgiven. I'm given a new heart and a new spirit, I'm set in a new direction, I'm loved, brother. I'm loved by my Father. Jesus was rejected so that I can be accepted and forgiven. He was the Lamb of God Who laid down His life, the final sacrifice. Once. He was sacrificed once for the forgiveness of sins. That means the blood of Jesus is still flowing for you and for me and all who are listening, that look there and believe this message. And I love how you said it earlier Mike, you reminded me of Colossians 3 that our lives were hidden in darkness, but now our lives are hidden in Christ. We were once hidden in the darkness, brother, in the pit and in the depths, but now our lives are out of that pit, hidden in Christ, in the Light. It is incredible to think that our lives are hidden in Christ and it warms our heart and we hope that those listening are receiving this and that you are looking to the cross with us and receiving the love and forgiveness that Jesus poured out on the cross for you.

Mike: Amen Erick, and I am sure that there is someone listening today, maybe a husband or maybe a wife, and possibly you have kept a record of wrongs. Maybe you have kept a physical record, printed out the damaging emails or kept a video where somebody was caught or whatever you have done. Maybe you have been storing something away in your closet or in the closet of your mind but now you understand that the gospel means that God destroyed your record of wrongs. Therefore, now it's your turn. Maybe now you would want to go to that physical closet and take all that stuff out and burn it and say that I'm never going to hold this against you again. Because Christ took my record to the cross with Him, I'm going to remove this record. Or maybe it's the closet of your mind and you replay the visual images in your mind, that continue to make you bitter, that continue to keep you from forgiving. And maybe today's the day when you see the blood of Jesus Christ wash all over that record of sin.

No relationship, Erick, as you talked about in the beginning, no relationship can stand the keeping of the record of wrongs. Someone said that a good marriage is the union of two really good forgivers. I think that is really true and so I encourage you, brothers and sisters, to remove the record, to destroy it, to forgive the one who has wronged you and that will not only free them from the record but free you from the prison of unforgiveness.

So we continue on brother and we look at verses 5 and 6, there is a future-looking aspect of this removal of the record of wrongs. It says: "I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in His Word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning." Erick, don't you feel he is looking

forward to the future to this time when the sins would truly be forgiven and the record would be destroyed?

Erick: Oh yes, amen brother and that is our hope, our longing what we wait for. What he was longing for. Absolutely so this is why we love to look at this cross and see that is where it all happened, brother. As you so well said, for the folks who are listening, look there and see how much they have been forgiven themselves, placing their hope, waiting on the Lord and seeing their whole record was destroyed and canceled. It makes it easy to extend that loving grace to others. So we are just hoping that one more heart will put their hope and trust in the Lord and that they are set free at the cross and that they are willingly jumping up to run and to extend forgiveness. That they see that they have been extended this too.

Mike: Amen, and when we put our hope in the Lord as it says in verse 7, what do you get?

Erick: "Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption." Isn't that wonderful? Unfailing love. Isn't that what we all desire in this life is unfailing love? To put your hope in the Lord, you're going to receive His unfailing love, you're going to receive the love of a Father. A true love that is non-comparable.

Mike, before the cross loved and healed my heart, I thought I loved my wife. But it was not until my former life was put to death on the cross, I was raised up to be a new creation as you mentioned earlier, that I started to really receive this unfailing love and really saw in Christ my full redemption. He paid the price completely. And it is just incredible how this love begins to pour into you and me. When you look at the cross, this love begins to pour into your family and others and it is just incredible what happens to your relationships. They become relationships that you thought could not go deeper. In fact, they are much deeper than you thought possible and this is what happens to the heart and the life and when we put our hope in the Lord and to put our hope in this cross where Jesus put it all to rest, put it all to death, and buried it in a tomb. He is not digging it up, but we shouldn't either. Let's leave there and recognize that we have been raised and received this unfailing love, this redemption where we were purchased through blood. Just yesterday I told a friend of mine that before the cross and through blood, everything has happened through blood. Our former life is all through blood, Mike. And what we're saying is that through the cross, through His death, Jesus' death and through His powerful resurrection, everything in our life from our former to our new,

is through the blood. We need to always remember that with every passage we read through the scriptures, and let our hearts be overwhelmed with this unfailing love.

Mike: Well you have given us a new way to read the scriptures. Every blessing that we receive comes through blood. It comes through Jesus' death in our place. We would have no blessing, we would have only cursing. But in Him is full redemption. Erick, I love that term full redemption. It does not say redemption with probation, it does not mean half or partial redemption. It's full redemption and husbands and wives need to get this don't they, that Jesus redeems us fully and completely. Churches need to get this. Churches will look at people's past and say you can't be a missionary, you can't be a this or a that. All that comes from is a lack of understanding of the basic gospel. Because at the cross, my old man, your old man, died and we rose again as a new creation. We have the Holy Spirit in us. This new creation lives differently and has a new heart and therefore you can't charge this new person with old crimes. You can't charge the living person with the crimes of a dead person. We have full redemption in Christ. It says in Romans 3:24 that "all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Erick, there's your passage. Through blood. Justified freely through blood. The redemption that came by Christ Jesus. The full redemption.

I love the lyrics to the song, "Hallelujah what a Savior",

Bearing shame and scoffing rude
In my place condemned He stood
Sealed my pardon with His blood

Hallelujah, hallelujah
Hallelujah, what a Savior

Guilty, vile, and helpless we
Spotless Lamb of God was He
Full atonement, can it be?

Hallelujah, what a Savior.

Erick: Amen! I am ready to rejoice, what about you?

Mike: I already am! I know! How does the passage close, brother?

Erick: Oh boy, we are about to jump up and sing the hallelujah chorus! Brothers and sisters listen to this: “He himself will redeem Israel from part of their sins.” No, all of their sins! “He himself will redeem Israel from all of their sins.” Brother, this is amazing. Jesus is coming down, I’m coming down. I’m going to redeem you from all your sins. Just as you said in the last verse, not partial redemption, full redemption. He Himself will redeem you. He Himself hung there for you. And I love what you said brother, how can we put rules and regulations on dead people in the church. Maybe we should walk over to the cemetery and do a podcast and read the passage there. For you died and your life is hidden with Christ and you have been raised to a new creation where God has put a new heart and a new life in you. Brother, there is nothing holding us back to go preaching this good news to anywhere the good Lord would take us. There are no restrictions whatsoever because my old man has died and I have been redeemed from all of my past, from all of my sins. And if there is no record in heaven kept against me then why should there be a record on earth against me? And so we are just not in line with the gospel if there is a record on earth, are we brother?

Mike: Oh boy that was good! Oh my goodness! That’s fantastic. I love that Erick and I are going to close with that. Well, let me read one more verse and here Zechariah has been made aware that the Messiah is going to be born in a few months and he says in Luke 1:68: “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel because he has come to his people and redeemed them.” So here’s the fulfillment of the passage in Psalm 130. He Himself will redeem Israel from all their sins. Zechariah looks to the birth of the Messiah and says because He has come to His people and redeemed them.

Lord this just delights my heart Lord Jesus, this just lifts me up to the third heaven, this gives me joy, this gives me complete forgiveness, complete pardon, complete atonement, full redemption, and full salvation. Maybe someone is listening to us today, would you impress upon them the fact that at the cross of Jesus Christ their sins were fully atoned for, fully paid for, they were fully redeemed, they are fully accepted in the blood of Christ. Lord help this message settle into their hearts. Help their hearts to rejoice in it and accept it. We ask these things in Jesus Name, Amen

The end

Setting Captives Free Podcast
Old Covenant and New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34
OCT 17, 2019

<https://soundcloud.com/mike-cleveland-583085544/old-covenant-and-new-covenant>

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my Law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:31-34

Erick: Good morning, my name is Erick Hurt and I’m here once again to do another podcast and we just delight in these podcasts and love to do them. Mike, I know that you are excited about today’s podcast and you can’t wait to get right to it, right brother?

Mike: I can’t wait to get right to it because it’s a very misunderstood concept today and we are going to hopefully by the grace of God speak clarity to this issue. Thank you for choosing this topic and let’s begin.

Erick: (chuckle) Amen. And so, first of all, let me just say real quick that if you are blessed by these podcasts would you please think about writing in to Setting Captives Free? You can do that by sending an email to helpdesk (all one word) helpdesk@settingcaptivesfree.com. That would be wonderful to hear how these podcasts are affecting your life or blessing you.

So now today we thought we would go through and use Jeremiah 31:31-34 so Mike would you like to start us off this morning?

Mike: Sure. Jeremiah 31 verse 31 says: *“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.”*

So Erick, first of all, we have to understand that there was an old covenant and then God promises here to make a new covenant, right?

Erick: Amen, yes. Yeah and you know this is just wonderful news here and the days are coming, the old is going to pass away basically and the new is going to be instituted and we’re going to see as we further along in this podcast that it’s truly good news and the new covenant is good news, brother.

Mike: Amen, as we think about this old covenant and the reason for the new covenant being established, here's where the confusion comes in, where people have to be clear when they're reading their Bibles: am I reading old covenant or new covenant and we have to be able to distinguish the difference between the two. Hopefully, we will be able to get a chance to do that today.

Erick: Amen. And so you know as we continue on in verse 32, it says: *"not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord."*

I mean that this is just amazing, brother. It's not gonna be like the old covenant. It's gonna be totally different. It's not gonna be like the one when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. It's going to be a different covenant, brother. God was their husband and they were unfaithful brother, weren't they?

Mike: Yes, and this gives us an indication of where that old covenant started. When he took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, he took them straight to Mount Sinai and at Mt Sinai, he gave them a covenant of Ten Commandments and that old covenant basically goes like this Erick: Obey me perfectly, perfectly or die forever. he instituted this old covenant right there at Mt Sinai by writing with his finger Ten Commandments that, those commandments, Erick, they illustrated, they showed us the character of God: that he's a holy God, a righteous God, that he requires that there to be no murder, no lying, no adultery, that there would be no idolatry, that's the first one where we would have no other gods before Him. It was given to the nation of Israel and Erick they said: "We will do it. Whenever God requires and demands and commands, we will do!" And this was the heart of the people to obey but the problem is that they had a sin nature and so they broke the covenant. You can see that in the book of Joshua chapter 1 where he says: "Choose this day who are going to serve!" And they all said: "We will serve the Lord and we will keep his covenant". In fact, people put that on their plaques and on the door frames: "Choose this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord". But they don't put the very next verse where Joshua says: "You are unable to serve the Lord. You are not able to keep his covenant. And that is just as true today for us as it was for them."

And so the old covenant, the Law was perfect but there was a flaw in the covenant. The flaw was people's flesh, our inability to perform God's requirements, our inability because of our flesh to keep his Law.

Erick: Yeah and the Law and the old covenant became the greatest spotlight didn't it to highlight our sin and to highlight the fact that we could never measure up, we could never obey and like you said the Law was weakened by our sinful flesh. We needed something new, Mike, we needed a new covenant because the old covenant wasn't good news because it was not a law that could give life.

But the new covenant is good news. But we are not saying that the old covenant isn't good. We are just saying that the way that it highlights sinful man and it exposes us for who we are and it shows us that our complete inability in our own strength to do anything about the flesh.

Mike: That's exactly right and we get an indication of the difference and we look at verse 33, the next verse: *"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,"* [so he is talking now about the new covenant] *declares the Lord. "I will put my Law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."*

So right away we see two things here Erick. First of all, that God is taking the initiative to do for the people what they are unable to do for themselves. In fact, if you look at this passage simply count the number of times that you hear God saying: "I will". And it is 20 times. I will save you the time of counting [chuckles]. Twenty times he says "I will".

Look at verse 25: "I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint".

Verse 27: "I will plant the kingdoms of Israel and Judah"

"I will watch over them to build and plant."

I will. I will. I will. As compared with the 10 times in the old covenant where God says "Thou shalt" or "You will" or "You will not commit adultery". "You will not lie...and so forth".

We immediately see the difference and then the second thing we see here is that the new covenant would be internal. It would be in our hearts and in our minds whereas the old covenant was an external Law written on tablets of stone. The new covenant would be internal. It would first and foremost affect the heart. "I will write it on their hearts". And in reality, the new covenant is where God circumcises the old heart and replaces the old heart of stone. The stone is the symbol of the old covenant written on tablets of stone and given to people with hearts of stone and here in the new covenant what God does is gives us a new heart. he writes his Law, his Word, his gospel on our hearts so its internal. Isn't that absolutely wonderful?

Erick: Oh it is! I'm just over here just rejoicing as you are preaching this good news to my heart. I'm receiving it brother and I am just filled with just it's just amazing that when you or anyone is sharing this good news brother it is really good news that heads straight to our heart isn't it? And I love how you said that it had its internal it's not external. The new covenant is that which is internal. A work without hands. A circumcision of the heart. It is the heart that must be affected. You know, not rules. We can't obey rules and obey steps and Laws. It has to be something that God does. And although we have broke His covenant and though he was a husband, he's not leaving us, he is going to bring something even greater in this new covenant and I just love celebrating the cross with you brother, it is just wonderful to look at the cross together and to celebrate this good news. And in verse 34 it says:

"No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," [I love that from the least to the greatest] declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and I will remember their sins no more."

Brother, that is just tremendous. *"I will forgive their wickedness and I will remember their sins no more"* They are completely wiped out, completely forgotten, caste in the sea of forgetfulness. he has cast your sin on Christ Jesus on the cross and removed them as far as the east is from the west. He's not even going to remember them because of Jesus Christ becoming sin for us and removing our sin and clothing us in His righteousness and giving us his Spirit. I mean brother this is good news, isn't it?

Mike: (chuckles) I'm just rejoicing in what you are saying here, Erick. It's a delight to hear you preach the gospel like this.

But right here we see what the basis of both covenants is. What's the foundation? The foundation of the old covenant was our performance. We had to measure up. We had to jump over that high bar and we never could. Here the basis of the new covenant in verse 34 is forgiveness. He says you will all know me. Why? *"I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more."* Isaiah 38:17 says: *"I have put all their sins behind my back"*. Now God does not have a back, he's a spirit but what he is saying here is that I have put your sins where I can never see them. They will never affect me. I will not treat you based on your sins. Micah chapter 7 verse 19 describes the fact that he has hurled all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. And so the basis of the new covenant is forgiveness Erick and the removal of sin.

So just to take a second here brother to contrast the old and the new is very important when you're reading the scriptures. Are you reading based upon the old covenant or the new? I'm not talking about the Old Testament or the New Testament. I'm talking about the old covenant or the new covenant. You know what we have to understand is even reading the words of Jesus himself you know we have to understand that Jesus was born under Law and he grew up under Law and he came to magnify the Law. And as he dealt with the Pharisees, they would say things like the old covenant says "Don't commit adultery. But I say to you if you have lusted in your heart, if you have had thoughts of adultery then you have committed adultery.

So what is he doing? He is magnifying the Law, the old covenant. Why is he doing that Erick? He's doing that so we would sense our need for there to be a new way in which to become righteous. If I see that even my thoughts are condemned, even the lust in my heart is condemned, oh my, I have no hope. I better just fall on the ground and plead for mercy and is there no other way? And so Erick when is the new covenant established and this is an extremely important point because if we were to listen to the words of Jesus as he communicates to the rich young ruler. When the rich young ruler says: *"What do I need to do to be saved?"* and Jesus says: *"You know the Law. Keep the Law"*. If we were to listen to the

words of Jesus and put ourselves under that old covenant there would be no hope for us as he says to the Pharisees: *"You must be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."* Erick, there's no hope for us! That's the old covenant that Jesus came to magnify and to fulfill and then he instituted a new covenant and when did he do this brother?

Erick: Well he did this on the cross, brother. When we look in Hebrews 10, we see that the writer of Hebrews quoted from Jeremiah 31 and right on the heels where he says *"Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more"*. In verse 17 he follows that with verse 18 which says: *"And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary."* Brother all the sacrifices of the Old Testament pointing up to this one sacrifice where it would end it all. That is why Jesus said it was finished. Ah, this is where it was instituted through blood. The new covenant, the blood covenant of Jesus Christ. And right there at the cross, wasn't it brother where our sins were forgiven, our minds were washed, our inside of our heart was cleansed, our heart of stone was removed, we were given a heart of flesh, brother, because you are right because we would otherwise have zero hope of being changed, we would have zero hope of being set free from our prison of sin. That which has taken over our very lives. We would have no hope that if Jesus never died on that cross, brother. We would be trapped forever. But this is the covenant. This is the new covenant and this is which that brings hope to all who look there and believe this wonderful message of the cross. You can be forgiven and washed and cleansed and be made new. Your old man can be put to death and you can actually rise with the same power that Jesus Christ rose with. Free. Free from the bondage, free from the power that sin had over your life for who knows how so many years. It doesn't matter. And so this is the place that we always draw our attention to because it is the only place, brother, of power to effect change in us. And isn't it wonderful to celebrate this?

Mike: It is absolutely wonderful, Erick. I love how you put that in all of the effects of the new covenant that you just said. So let's make a summary:

Jesus was the last old covenant prophet. He was born under the Law. He grew up under Law obeying God perfectly in our place and now Erick God looks at you and every believer as having fully kept the old covenant Law. Why? Because Jesus did. And you are in Jesus. Just like he saw you in Adam where you took of the forbidden fruit, and you brought the curse of the Law, and you were disobedient to God. Now he sees you in the last Adam where you perfectly kept the old covenant Law, every demand, every command, every requirement you have fully met. You can see this in Romans 8, verse 3.

Let's summarize. Jesus born under the Law, grew up under Law, taught the Law, and He also taught the gospel pointing forward as He says as a kernel of wheat remains alone until it dies and falls into the ground, then it produces much fruit. What was he doing? He is pointing forward to the new covenant to the gospel. So he's under the Law, he's keeping the Law, he teaching the Law, he is magnifying the Law until it comes to facing the cross when he says in Luke 22:20:

“In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

Oh Erick, look at it. he takes that cup of wine. he pours it out. What's that a picture of? When he would go to the cross he poured out his blood, he would give up his life, he would pour out from a heart that was stabbed by a Roman soldier, he would pour out his blood? Why? To instigate a new covenant and this new covenant is based upon forgiveness of sins, it is based upon the work that God would do in making us righteous, in making us flawless. And so Erick, we are not under the old covenant. The terms of the old covenant have been nailed to a cross. We are now under the new covenant which means that we are forgiven, all those things that you mentioned, brother, forgiven, we ourselves are put to death in Christ, our old heart was circumcised out of us, we are given a new heart, a heart of flesh, that is a heart that is alive, a heart that beats, a heart that loves. This all happens right at the cross and it is instituted as you said the new covenant in his blood which is poured out for you. Erick, Jesus poured out his blood for you. He gave up his life for you. And in so doing he not only fulfilled the old covenant, making you righteous but he poured out his blood in the new covenant, forgiving you of all those wrongs you did do so now God sees you as having been perfect, lived perfectly and as forgiven of all the things you didn't do right. This is tremendously good news.

Erick: And I hope that those listening are celebrating as I am over here just listening to you, Mike. Celebrating in the contrast of the old and new that Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Law so that in Christ we have perfectly fulfilled the Law. And that is just tremendous news. And you know let me just finish up here with Hebrews 10:19. Listen to this brothers and sisters: *“Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way [that Mike was just talking about] by a new and living way opened up for us through the curtain, that is his body.”*

That his body was the curtain that was torn, brother, it was his blood spilled out for us and since we have a great high priest over the house of God let us draw near to God with a sincere heart, with this new heart, brother and with full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from having a guilty conscience, and having our bodies washed with pure water. Exactly what you just said when Jesus was speared in his heart, the blood that forgives us and cleanses us, our conscience, removes our guilt and you know the water that cleanses us and washes us. I mean it is just so amazing that the curtain was torn in Jesus' flesh and now we have access to the Father through Jesus. Everything is through the blood isn't it, brother? The new covenant through blood. Everything, our whole belief system, everything that we connect to in God's word is always through blood and it's amazing that this final sacrifice as you said earlier, the last Adam, not just the second Adam but the last Adam, the last one, Jesus Christ who shed his blood so that we might be forgiven and washed and redeemed and purchased out of the slave market. Ah, I mean, brother, if you could speak to just one heart listening and then close us in prayer brother?

Mike: Yes if you have read the words of Jesus and the words of the old covenant and have felt nothing but despair in your heart, have felt hopeless that you could ever be as righteous as your Father in heaven is and therefore you can't enter the kingdom of God. If you have felt that the words of Jesus have condemned you because he was upholding the Law and you have felt that there was no way that you could meet them, then let us introduce you to the new and living way. Come to Jesus, come to God the Father by way of the cross where your sins were removed from you, as far as the east is from the west, where they were thrown behind God's back, where he has placed them in the sea of forgetfulness. He no longer remembers your sins, brothers and sisters. He has removed them from you. You have a new way to come to God now but not based on your performance but based on Jesus' performance, where he kept the Law in your place, where he died your death, where he rose for you, to justify you all based on what he has done. I tell you accepting this truth will change your heart. It will circumcise your heart. It will cut you and heal you. It will put you to death and make you alive and you will live differently than you have before. And so come to the cross right now and look up, receive the flowing blood, Jesus did it for you. He says in Luke 22:20: It's for *you* that he shed his blood. And that water that flowed from a smitten heart cleanses you." Let it do its work just now.

Father-in-heaven, Please draw that person right now to the cross and cover them with your blood. Show them the atonement that you made on their behalf that they might receive this new and living way and understand now, maybe for the first time, that they are not under the old covenant but there is a new covenant now, a better covenant that speaks a better word, the word of blood forgiveness, the word of blood atonement, the word of blood reconciliation. Thank you, Lord, for this message of the cross, In Jesus name Amen.

THE END

Poisoned Pot

Podcast by Mike Cleveland and Erick Hurt

November 6, 2019

Mike: Hi, good morning or good afternoon, depending on where you are this is Mike Cleveland, I am here with, my brother in the Lord, Erick Hurt, and we are here to do another podcast. Erick, thanks for joining me; it's so good to be with you and do a podcast today, brother.

Erick: Yeah, it's good to be here, Mike, I am really excited to do another podcast with you. You know these never get old because we just get to look at the scriptures and look to Christ, and you know our hearts are overwhelmed by His goodness and His grace towards us when He went to the cross for us brother and laid down His life and we just enjoy doing these together, so it's good to be here with you.

Mike: Amen, and even though these never get old, we will.

Erick: [Chuckles]

Mike: And as we do, in fact, I was just telling Jody the other day, you know, I hope thirty years from now when I'm 87 and you're 84, speaking of [laughter] that we're getting older [Erick chuckling] and we, you know your wife is going to roll your wheelchair up to the computer, and we will just sit down and do a podcast together, cause I, I learn so much from you, brother.

Erick: Well, likewise, brother, I always learn something from you as well when we do these podcast and just, you know, that's what it's all about it, we learn from each other, we are huddled around the cross together looking there together and encouraging one another, and this is what happens isn't it, brother, when we are all looking to the same place.

Mike: Amen, Amen. Well, I am excited about the next three podcast s because we have three stories, uh to read, and so we are going to take them from the book of II Kings, and the first story is about poison in the stew. The second story is about the leprosy of Naaman, and the third story is about an ax head that was lost. And these stories are here to instruct us, Erick, they are here to teach us, correct us, rebuke us, train us in righteousness, and so, I am excited about these next three podcasts, brother, because we have these opportunities to read some stories together and see if God would help us

to make some sense of them and to help people in their walk. Are you excited about the stories, as well?

Erick: Yeah, I really am Mike because you know many times I've read over these stories, but I, that's all I've done, I didn't look deeply into them, I didn't study them. You know, but we just read over them, and we can all get into that where we miss the cross, we miss the main message. And, so yeah, these wonderful messages, brother, so I am really excited to be here with you to do them.

Mike: Well, I hope now we can see how God put the main message in each of these stories. Uh and so we don't want to miss that which is of first importance. And so, let's read, actually Erick I am going to read this first story, it's only four verses.

Erick: OK

Mike: So, I am just going to read it, and then we can talk about it together. And so here is how the story starts, in 2 Kings chapter 4 verse 38, And Elisha came again to Gilgal when there was a famine in the land. And as the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, "Set on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets." 39 One of them went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and cut them up into the pot of stew, not knowing what they were. 40 And they poured out some for the men to eat. But while they were eating of the stew, they cried out, "O man of God, there is death in the pot!" And they could not eat it. 41 He said, "Then bring flour." And he threw it into the pot and said, "Pour some out for the men, that they may eat." And there was no harm in the pot."

And so, Erick, here we have a problem and let's just look at the problem and the solution because that's the two things that this passage shows us. A problem and the solution, so what is the problem here?

Erick: Well, the first problem was that there was a famine in the region and that they needed to eat, brother. [Erick chuckles], but further than that, not only did they need to eat, but what they had served to eat, they were unable to eat, brother. You know there was poison in the pot, and you know this is just a huge problem. If there is poison, Mike, whether you have food or not, that won't do anybody any good, will it?

Mike: No, and if they did eat it, what would have happened?

Erick: Yea, they're gonna die. So, either way, they face death. There was famine, no food, and the food they did have; there was death in that pot as well.

Mike: That's right. And because somebody had gathered these wild gourds that came from a wild vine and they got some gourds off that vine, they put them into the stew and here the pot was totally inedible. They could not eat this stew because it would have killed them. And so, there was poison in the pot or death in the pot, and the stew was completely poisoned through and through, and it would have killed them had they eaten it. That's the problem. Alright, and now what's the solution? The solution to this problem was what?

Erick: Elisha told him to get some flour, and he put it in the pot, and he said, "go ahead now and serve it to the people." And there was nothing harmful in the pot; the flour, Mike, absorbed all the poison and made it edible.

Mike: Well, why do you think that Elisha did not tell them, "Well, OK, so there is poison in the pot. Go into the pot and get the poison out?" [Erick chuckles] Why did he say "put flour in," why did he not just say, "those gourds that you put in; pull them out."

Erick: Yeah, it wasn't that easy, Mike, the poison had permeated every aspect of the stew. There was no way to pull it out. There is no way to pluck it out. It was permeated through the whole thing; it needed a different solution, brother. You know?

Mike: That's exactly right. And so the question, Erick: is the Bible a wilderness survival manual? Is it teaching us how to purify poisonous stew, is that the point? [Mike chuckles]

Erick: [chuckling] Oh, brother, you're funny. Well, yes, actually, The Bible is a wilderness survival manual. [Mike chuckling] We were born in a wilderness of sin, but our good Brother Jesus saw our sin, saw that we are permeated with sin, and there is no way to pluck it out, brother. There is no way for us to heal ourselves from sin. There is no way to pull it out; there is no way to pluck it out; there has to be a Solution for us as well. And so, this is what the story is teaching us, brother. [Erick chuckles]

Mike: Yeah, exactly right, each story is given to us to help us in our walk, to help us understand how God works within us and so, yea you are right Erick, exactly right, the Bible is teaching us here how to experience freedom from the poison of sin. Now, If you think about it, we are like this stew, in the sense of sin has worked its way through our entire system. You know our minds are infected so that our thoughts are dark, our

hearts are polluted, our emotions and will and desires, and everything about us has been affected and infected by the poison of sin. And so, Erick, this teaches us something, and that is that we cannot focus on one issue and try to pull it out of our lives. If we have anxiety, if we have depression, if we have impurity, pornography, if we have- let's say our problem is overeating. We can't focus on that one area and try to pull it out any more than these people could have focused on finding one wild gourd and pull it out of the stew. No, it worked its way through like you said, through the entire pot and so you know Erick, it's like whack-a-mole. Playing whack-a-mole, right?

Erick: Yeah

Mike: You knock one down, and another one comes up, and you know as soon as you focus on one, then you got more issues, and because why? Because all of us, all of who we are, is infected by the poison of sin. That's a pretty miserable description, isn't it?

Erick: Yeah, it really is, and you know I just love the description of the story that there was a famine because that's indicative of our lives too. We are never...we are not satisfied; we are hungry; we are thirsty. We need something, and we are just like this man here who went out and picked the wild gourds. No one knew what they were. We didn't know what we were doing. We didn't know that what we were doing was going to infect us further, or keep us in bondage longer, or take us down deeper into the darkness. And so you know, we didn't know the solution either, brother, at one time. And you know, there was poison in the pot of our lives.

Mike: Right.

Erick: Yeah, and so, yeah, like you said, we can't focus on one issue [Erick chuckles] there is poison in the pot of our lives, brother, and it cannot be pulled out, plucked out, and it can't be....you know, it's got to be worked on internally, in the heart as you said earlier. It can't be, you know, focus on this one area and you will be free from that one area, and then we will go to step two area, and then we will go to step three. You know, it doesn't work like that. That is not freedom, that is some sort of behavior modification that doesn't bring freedom. It brings further bondage because you are never going to arrive. You are going to continuously, for the rest of your life, try to work (so to speak) on one area, then two areas, then three areas, and you will never arrive at freedom. Mike, you will never have the poison completely removed from the pot where it becomes edible.

Mike: That's right, that's exactly right. Can you imagine these people if they had tried to sit down and start fishing through the poisonous stew? You know, trying to find those gourds that by now have melted and were assimilated into that pot. They would have tried for so long to try and fish that out, and that's a waste of time. And so, Erick here's the solution: Elisha says to get some flour and put it into the pot. Some flour like you make bread with, to put some substance in rather than try to take the poison out. And here we have a solution that does not seem to make sense. As far as we know, flour doesn't draw poison to itself. This is not a solution that seems logical in the mind of man. And yet God was teaching us something here, Erick, and this is where we come to the main point of Scripture because, as you know, every little story in the Bible always points us to the big story, the main story of the Bible. And so, let me just say it like this and then we can discuss it. Two thousand years ago God looked down to this earth and saw that there was poison all through the pot, all through humanity, sin had run rampant and people were in bondage, people were slaves, people were sinful to the core. And sin had worked its way all through humanity. And then God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. Jesus is called the "Bread of Life" who came down from heaven to give life to the world.

Mike: And, Erick, how is Jesus coming to this earth and going to a cross, like Elisha putting the flour into the pot?

Erick: Well, brother that is just, you know, just wrenches our heart to think that God would love us so deeply that He would send His Son down to the depth of the pot to become sin for us, brother, to absorb all His wrath and judgment against sin on the cross. Jesus absorbed it all, brother. He removed all the poison because He became sin for us on that tree, He was cursed; He was rejected, He was cut off, and yet this is the place, brother, where it all happened. Two thousand years ago, as you said, where God so loved the world that He gave. Jesus laid down His life, the Good Shepherd, who laid down on the staff of the cross, as we say sometimes, you know. And He did it willingly, brother, with joy in His heart. For us, because of His great love for us. It is astonishing to think about how God could love us full of sin, and there was only one way to remove the sin from the pot of the world, and that was to send His one and only Son. The perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God, the Bread from heaven, as you said a moment ago, would absorb all the sin for us. Put it to death on a cross, bury it in a tomb, and then raise to life, brother, where there's nothing (no poison) left. Jesus absorbed it all for us, He took it all to the cross for us, and then gave His spirit to us so that we can walk in a new life, we can walk in the spirit totally without poison in the pot. It was removed and put to death on a tree. And so that's what we clearly see in this story, it is that is why it's called the good news because when there is poison in the pot, brother, that is not good news.

But when there is flour thrown into the pot, down into the depth of that pot, under the heat of that stove and Jesus under the heat of God's wrath so that we could be free. So that our chains could fall off, so that every aspect of our life, not one thing, not two, not ten but every single areas of our life where our heart changes, our minds are cleaned and cleared and we can love, brother, because we've been loved so much and now we can love others. Brother, I can love you; I can love my wife and others like never before because the poison has been removed, and it's been replaced. And so, brother, we just sing the hallelujah chorus as we do these podcasts. Don't we, Mike?

Mike: I know I am [chuckles] That was so beautiful the way you said that. That blessed my heart. I like to think of making this whole thing visual. Think about the poison in the pot, alright? So, you've got a bunch of black poisonous gourds that are put into this stew, and then the flour, it's white, you know, flour? And it's put into the stew. And if you can visualize that, if you can watch it happen, what you would see is that flour becoming black. It's absorbing all of the poison; it's taking it to its self; it's becoming black even though it was white. And then the stew itself is becoming white; it has all the poison pulled out of it. All the poison went to the flour, and there was nothing harmful in the pot from then on. Erick, think about this, brother. When Jesus came to this earth, and He went up on the cross, He though sinless, became sin for us, like you said, He, though completely white (if you want to put it in those terms) became black as he absorbed all our impurity and idolatry. All of our wrong thinking and our wrong acting, all of our hatred and bitterness. He took all that onto Himself, all of our cancer, all of the sin and sickness and sufferings of the whole world, was hanging there on the tree. And Jesus was becoming black as sin; He was just...look at Him hanging there. He is completely covered head to toe in sin. And why is He doing this, Erick? That there might be nothing harmful in you and me. Because as He pulled the sin into Himself, He pulled it out of us. He purified our hearts, our thinking, our desires, our loves, our longings, everything about us is becoming righteous, and what it is, is that He took the sin upon Himself that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. And so if there is nothing harmful in the pot because the flour was completely black and completely made poisonous so that there might be life in the pot. This is the good news of the cross of Jesus Christ.

Now Erick, let's think about something else; the world, with its methods, programs, and solutions, has this exactly opposite; they have this exactly wrong. They say that we inside of ourselves are good and that the problem is outside of us. It's our parents, it's the culture, it's society, it's that bully that's hurting us, it's something done to us, and the problem is out there. It's not inside, and so they have the diagnosis wrong, both in where the problem is and where the solution is. And so, Erick, what are some of the

solutions that the world or that even the Christian programs offer to us today to try and purify the pot?

Erick: [chuckling] Well, they offer steps and recovery groups. You know where they get together, and you know: step 1 admit you are an addict. Admit (for example) that you are addicted to whatever it might be (fill in the blank) and that you are always going to be that way, brother. And you know, that like you said, that's outward, you know, we are trying to change behavior. But it's not the behavior from the outside that needs to be changed; it is the poison that needs to be pulled out from the inside out, like you said. And, you know, the way you demonstrated and talked about the flour, I'll never look at flour the same again. Because that was absolutely beautiful how you said, you know, Jesus in His righteousness, white as snow as He is, right? Pulled out and became black, and as the flour in the stew. I just can't get over it, so I had to say it again. [chuckles] and the stew became white, just as we took on Jesus' righteousness. This is, this is what needs to happen, you know, steps aren't going to help because they can't reach and pull out the poison from within. It's only from the outside trying to get you to change a certain behavior, but it won't change your heart, and it won't change your thinking, and that's why you will be in that type of recovery atmosphere for the rest of your life, never getting anywhere. It's like a merry go round that never stops, and it's, you know, you become dizzy with it (if you will) and you will never have a change of heart, a change of mind, a change of direction, true freedom, to experience all that Jesus came to this earth to give to you and me. And so that's what I see, Mike, is the difference. Jesus is pulling out that poison that we all have been infected with, and so, brothers and sisters, we hope that you are looking to the cross with Mike and me because you will have your heart affected. You will have your mind cleansed, and your very life will change for the rest of your life, right, Mike?

Mike: Amen, I love how you said that, Erick, and you know, you think about for a minute just one more quick illustration where Peter was sinking in the waves, and, you know, people would have come to him, and the world would have taught him "Peter, the solution is within you! Find that human spirit within you that always bobs up to the top. You know, just exercise your willpower, Peter, you can do this, Peter. You can do this!" and he would have sunk and drown. But Peter understood the solution was not within himself, and so he uttered these three words, "Lord, Save Me!" And as soon as Peter said that, Jesus reached out and pulled Peter up out of the sinking waves. And maybe people are listening to this today, and they're sinking, and they've heard the world's solutions to try harder, to do better, to change one area of their life, and yet they still feel like they're poisoned inside, their hearts, their thinking, their attitudes are still poisoned. They may look ok on the outside, but internally, Erick, they know that there is a poison

inside. We invite them to look to Jesus, look to Jesus, cry out to Jesus, see Him on the cross, see Him suffering to heal you. He was wounded for your transgressions. He was bruised for your iniquities; by His stripes you are healed, that means He took your sin away from you. Just like he took your punishment away from you, your judgment, your condemnation, He took it all away from you, and what did He give you in its place? His righteousness, His spirit, but how do we receive that, Erick? We receive it by faith; we receive it by believing, we take that flour into ourselves, we receive the message of pardon and forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we believe that message, we are purified in our hearts, and our thinking, our minds, our desires, our emotions, everything is purified at the cross, right?

Erick: That's right, and we just need to keep looking there, we keep looking to the cross, and we keep seeing it in different stories, and we keep seeing it in every passage that we read, and we don't skip over it, we don't miss it, we connect what we read to the cross of Christ because everything has happened through the cross. Through the death of the Son, who laid in the tomb, who raised on the third day with power, that we always make the connection, we are always pointing to the cross where we learn so much. We love the forgiveness of God, you know, the cross is where our hearts are continually filled with His love and as we continue to look there, to remind us of how much we've been forgiven, that this is the place where we've been pulled out of the darkness because Jesus went into the darkness (like the dark, poisonous stew) and hung there for three hours and you know, so we always look there. If you have a hard time forgiving people, look to the cross and see how you have been forgiven. If you have a hard time with humility, look to the cross, and see the King humbling himself to become nothing. Whatever issue you have. If you have a problem in your marriage, whatever it is. We look to the cross because our hearts are affected there, and we're made humble there and were made grateful there, and our hearts are filled with gratitude there and love there, and peace and joy are there. And so look to the cross and connect it with every passage you read and you will never be the same as Mike talked about, everything will change. This is the wonderful good news, brother, that you and I get to share in these podcasts over and over again.

Mike: Yes, that's so true. Jesus is the solution; He is the Bread of life. He said, "I am the Bread of life. I came down to give life to the world." How did He do it? He took our sin. He took our death. He took our punishment. He took our judgment away from us and gave us nothing but healthy stew in the pot. He is the flour, He is the substance, that came to this world and went to a cross for us. Erick, I hope someone is listening today, and they have seen why they are maybe not being able to overcome a particular sin,

they can't seem to pick that wild gourd out. They are focusing on the wrong place, aren't they?

Erick: Yes, they are. Yes, and it's looking at the cross, believing by faith. It is not trying harder, not staying laser-focused on one aspect of your life because it's so ironic, like you said earlier, we focused on one aspect of our life at a time. You know, we will do this one and then go to this one and then the next one. No, we focus on one place, one place where everything changes. When your heart of stone is removed, and you get a heart of flesh, than, you know we hear it all the time, Mike, people come here to Setting Captives Free, and they start the course Purity boot camp," and about halfway through the course, not all of them, but some, about halfway through the course or towards the end they begin to say, "Oh, I thought it was just impurity that I was coming here for." And they begin to see how God permeated their pot, and they see that their life was, it wasn't just impurity that they are coming here to be free from. They are beginning to see how other areas of their life, there was sin in the pot in other areas, and it's just wonderful that they see that. Because then they see the totality and the reality of the cross itself, of ALL that Jesus came to do and to remove it ALL from you, not one, not two, but every sin, all shame, all your guilt, because He became all of that on the cross for us, like you said a couple of times already. Jesus was judged and condemned so that we could go free, brother. And that [chuckles], that must affect our heart.

Mike: Yes, it must affect all areas; it purifies all areas. I'll close with Titus 2:14, Erick, and then maybe you can pray for someone. But Titus 2: 14 talks about Jesus, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and listen to this, "and to purify for himself a people that are his very own eager to do what is good." Erick, He died to purify us. He died to take those wild gourds of sin into Himself and purify us so that we are a people eager to serve Him and to do good works. I bless the Lord, Erick, that he came and took our sin upon himself and became as it were impure in order to purify us.

Erick: Amen. And so let me just read real briefly this part of this song: *"Because the sinless Savior died, my soul is counted free for God, the just is satisfied to look on Him and pardon me. To look on Him and pardon me."*

So, Father, we pray that, in Jesus' name, we would all look to Him who came to the earth, Who went up Calvary's hill willingly and with joy in His heart, to die on a criminal's cross for us. We pray for one to be looking at the cross, to be drawn to the cross, and to have their poison removed by Jesus Christ who came to earth, the perfect Lamb of God, white as snow Himself, thrown into the pot pulling out our sin, and exchanging becoming sin for us and clothing us in His righteousness. It just seems too good to be true, but in this case, it is true, and it is so good, it's good news. And we pray, Lord, that

someone listening would have their heart affected by this message, that they would look to the cross and see that it was their sin that Jesus was taking into his own flesh, He was under the wrath of God, He was in that pot of stew becoming poison for us, so that the poison can be pulled out of us. So that we could be clothed in His flawlessness, so that we can become spotless and without blemish and so Lord, please allow this heart to look to the cross to see all that happened there, all the love, He wasn't just having his arms stretched out taking our sin but He had His arms stretched out in love to us, He was loving us to death and so Lord, please reach out, lift us their eyes to see Jesus becoming sin for them and extending pardoning to them, they are free to go and "if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed." And, so Lord, we ask this with thanksgiving and gratitude in our hearts in Jesus' name, Amen.

Mike: Amen

Setting Captives Free Podcast
Forsaken So We Can Be Accepted: 1- Psalm 22
Dec 4, 2019

Mike: Hello everyone. This is Mike Cleveland and I'm from the state of Washington and welcome to another Setting Captives Free podcast. We're excited that you are joining us today and I'm also excited to have a good brother and dear friend of mine, Alex, from Chicago here and actually we are going to be doing 2 sessions (amended: 4 sessions on Psalm 22) together and I'm very excited to be with my friend and brother. And Alex how are you doing today?

Alex: I'm doing well Mike. Thank you for the invitation, thank you for the blessing of being able to be with you. On the podcast, I have very much been blessed by all the podcats that you and Erick have done. So I really count this a privilege.

Mike: Thank you Alex and we have been blessed by your writings for a long time and actually I was thinking about how long it has been Alex. You are a mentor with us at Setting Captives Free and if I am thinking correctly I am going to guess somewhere between 6 months and a year. How well did I do?

Alex: It's been more than a year!

Mike: Really!

Alex: It was July, in fact July 4th, 2018.

Mike: Oh wow, it sure has. Well OK. Well, your memory is a whole lot better than mine. So good to have you. We've just been so encouraged and built up in our faith by what God is doing in your heart and life and the way you have been mentoring other people so we are excited to have you on today. And just speaking about mentoring with us, you know your testimony is very powerful just from the sense of how God has worked in your heart, changed your life, given you a passion to share the good news of Christ Crucified with other men. And maybe you can take a second here before we get started in our study and just share your testimony and what God is doing in you presently.

Alex: So yeah thank you and it really is all God's doing. I know absolutely in my life. I think like many of the men, of the people, that come to Setting Captives Free I saw pornography for the first time very young, 6 or 7 years old. I was a cub scout. We were on a newspaper drive. We went into a man's house, and just plastered all over the walls were these images. You know all the scouts on that outing on that summer day saw something we had not seen before you know. But God uses it all for good you know. The things that the enemy uses for evil, God uses for good. Anyway long story short, I became involved in pornography, then as a teenager and then it stayed with me all through college and even through graduate school into marriage. I just kept

getting deeper and deeper into slavery. I didn't grow up in the church. I had a very loving family but we didn't go to church. My life was a shambles. I felt completely like a hypocrite, I was living a double life, I pretended like on the outside that everything was fine when I was completely falling apart on the inside. I was totally without hope. I felt like I had just a huge crater in my chest where my heart should have been and I was completely enslaved. I spent hours a day literally trying to find the next image and completely enslaved to it to the point when I wasn't doing my work and I ended up losing a job that I loved. But God had a plan in all of that. My wife started going to church and so I decided to follow her because maybe it could help our marriage. I had no intention after seeking after God (chuckle) but He was seeking after me and after about a year of hearing the gospel preached. I really praise God and I thank God for a church that, a Baptist church that we went to, where the pastor preached the cross. He preached the death and resurrection of Christ and so I started hearing that. After about a year I found myself one time with an altar call close to Christmas time, 1999 at this point. I walked up to the front not really knowing what I was doing (chuckle) but God had started changing my heart already before that. Immediately after that I had a desire to read the bible. I started reading the bible and started going to Sunday school classes and Wednesday classes and started reading about Christ and what he has done for us. He started purging me from my many sins, a lot of lying that I had done. Before that started changing my life and over the next couple of years he really convicted me of my pornography and self-gratification, and I became physically ill at one point after having done that in a hotel. You know, you know about that traveling in hotels, what a trap they are?

Mike: I sure do.

Alex: But one night I really felt the conviction that this was to stop, this had to stop in my life and so that was 2001, November 2001, and by God's grace, he freed me from pornography and self-gratification from that night. I have not been back completely. Christ's work in my heart. And I am so thankful for that.

Mike: This is amazing to me for several reasons. First of all, I think about Luke 17 when Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come but woe to anyone through whom they come." Because I think back as a 6-year-old did you say, a 6-year-old or 7?

Alex: Yeah, I think 6 or 7 yeah.

Mike: A cub scout going into a house that you were not expecting to see anything but all of a sudden the house is plastered with pornography and caused you to trip up in your life and then to stay in bondage and a slave for many years in that condition. So that's amazing. The second thing that is amazing to me is if I understood you right you didn't go to any support groups?

Alex: No

Mike: Any twelve-step groups, nothing, no programs of man...

Alex: No.

Mike: You heard the gospel preached, you studied the bible. The Holy Spirit convicted you in church and in reading the scriptures and circumcized your heart, and put you to death in Christ and made you a new creation. Is this right?

Alex: That's exactly right yeah. And I didn't know all that at the time as we often don't. But I knew that it was wrong and I knew that he convicted me, knew that God was working in my heart.

Mike: Yeah.

Alex: I had a love for Christ and for the scriptures but at the same time I still had that desire for the pornography for years but after that night he removed it from my life and again just by his grace. Then just a few years after this I learned about Setting Captives Free, the 1.0 version and I went on that and it was wonderful. You know at the time I found it to be quite beneficial, it helped me a lot and then I found Setting Captives Free 2.0 a year and a half ago. I thought now this was really amazing (chuckle). This is all about the cross. I knew in my heart what had kept me free all these years was the love of Christ in my heart. When his love fills your heart, nothing else can come in. It completely gets rid of all the desire for the pornography. There is still temptation, absolutely. But compared to the love of Christ in my heart? No way! There is no way that I want to give that up! It was like, no! Anyway it is by His grace. It is because of His love.

Mike: You described his love as a breastplate of righteousness I think?

Alex: (chuckle) yeah.

Mike: it protects us from the fiery darts of the evil one. You know Alex if you think about what has happened to you it is exactly what Romans 2 describes as circumcision of the heart. Because I remember you saying you got physically nauseous. Now what is it that makes a person who is in such tight chains who desires and longs after impurity and maybe all of a sudden and maybe not all of a sudden over time, whatever it is, he becomes nauseous of the very thing that used to attract him so. So this is called a heart change. And that is powerful, brother. Because as you said it keeps us free, it makes us free indeed not just from the behavior but free from the desire for it and free from the love of it. We found a greater love, the love of Jesus as He reveals Himself and keeps us free. And I love to hear your story brother and I have always been encouraged by that. They overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. You keep sharing that. It is a powerful force against the evil one.

Well, thanks for sharing that Alex and let's begin to transition now to our study. We are going to be looking at Psalm 22 for the next two sessions together (amended 4 sessions), the next two weeks of this podcast. I'm excited about it. I feel in many ways that this is holy ground if I can use that terminology. Because it is the burning bush of the cross that we come to. Moses as he came to the burning bush there was a response on his part. He had to take off his sandals. As we come to the cross we remove not our dirty sandals but our old self and we are crucified with Christ. I am praying for this kind of response as you and I go through this passage both in our hearts and in everyone listening that they would be drawn into this most powerful message that has ever been given on the face of this earth. So I'm very much looking forward to this with you and I know you are as well right?

Alex: I am I am. Thank you. Absolutely. What you have said is absolutely right. I think Spurgeon said something like: "If there is holy ground anywhere in scripture this Psalm is that." What you have said is absolutely right. Yes. So we can go ahead.

Mike: Well one thing that I appreciated that you have shared with me is that you have actually taken one day per verse as you have studied through this. So I don't remember exactly, 14 verses? How many verses is this?

Alex: 31 verses.

Mike: 31 verses. Alright. You have actually been at this more than a month right?

Alex: yes actually God put it on my heart more than a year ago to start studying the Psalms in my morning study time. I started back maybe a year and a half ago of studying the Psalms and I got just one verse per day. I really just meditated on that verse, I look up the words, I ask the Holy Spirit to show me and especially to help me see Christ and the cross and the gospel. And Mike, I have been amazed he is everywhere in the Psalms! I should have known! (chuckle). He's everywhere in the Psalms but I was not prepared for what I met with when I came to Psalm 22 to be honest with you. Honestly, before I started it, I was a little apprehensive because I thought *"Oh this is going to be very heavy and uncomfortable and depressing"* cause even though I had read it many times in the past it's like it was brand new. So many ways and I just feel like so many people so many of us don't realize the depths of this Psalm and the prophecy and the picture that we have of Christ. I think it was Luther or one of the other commentators who said that you know that this Psalm gives us a more accurate description of the cross than even the New Testament does.

Mike: Yes.

Alex: And the reason is that the New Testament is eye witness accounts from his disciples and from others who were around him. They're seeing it from the outside. But this Psalm is from the inside.

Mike: Yes that's an excellent way to put it. You might say that the New Testament gospels give us the facts of the gospel but this Psalm gives us the details of it and it ..

Alex: And the heart.

Mike: And the heart. Yes.

Alex: It's from Christ's own point of view.

Mike: That's right. Yes. His words speaking through David. I'm excited to go through this with you. Let's see if we can see the riches and the glories of Calvary as we study this together. So it starts off with a short introduction.

"For the director of music. To the tune of "The Doe of the Morning." And it is a psalm of David."

And Alex do you want to read the first verse and why don't we just look at that for a while.

Alex: Yes, and a pretty well-known verse. Because it is quoted many times. *"My God, my God why have you forsaken me. Why are you so far from saving me? From the words of my groaning."* That word 'groaning' is roaring. He's really roaring. He's really crying out.

Mike: So there's a loud agony and agonizing roaring groan that he is speaking here. And Alex as you know Jesus spoke these very words as He was hanging on the cross. He said *"My God, My God why have you forsaken me?"* That word 'forsaken' means to abandon or reject or to desert, to leave and so he is right at this point as he is hanging off the cross, Alex, God the Father has forsaken his own Son. That is extremely hard to get your mind around. How can we possibly understand this amazing transaction where the Father turned his back if you will on his own Son because at this point. Alex. Jesus had taken our sin upon himself. And as He hung there in his cries of anguish - you said his roaring, crying out, God had turned his back away from his own Son. Alex, why did he do this? What do we know from scriptures why God forsook Christ during this time?

Alex: Wow! We know that Jesus willingly took on Himself all of our sins. In 2 Corinthians, Paul says that for our sake, God made him, God made Christ to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we may become the righteousness of God. He took all of our sin on him. He became sin for us Mike. He suffered God's wrath that was due to us.

Mike: Yes.

Alex: He received all of that punishment.

Mike: Yes.

Alex: As you and Erick like to say he stood in the way of the arrows from the Holy Father that were due to us.

Mike: Yes.

Alex: So that we would have his righteousness, forgiven of our sins. That's why he's been forsaken. God had to forsake him because he was sin at that point.

Mike: Yes. And if you contrast that for example if you look at Psalm 9 verse 10, it says *"Those who know your name trust in you for you Lord have never forsaken those who seek you"*. You have never forsaken anyone who seeks you. And yet here at the cross, God forsakes, abandons, rejects, turns away from, leaves his only Son so that Jesus of course having known this and having agreed to this in eternity past, having entered into this New Covenant in eternity past, comes to the cross and treads out the winepress alone. He is alone, Alex. He's forsaken by God and Man. He's hanging on a cross in utter desolation, he's crying, he's groaning, he's crying out at the top of his lungs: *"Why have you forsaken me?"* I am so cut in my heart Alex as I even consider this picture. What does it do for you as you are considering right now, Alex, what Jesus went through?

Alex: I don't have words for it. It is so amazing what he would do for us, Mike. We who were his enemy. We are going to see that the people who were there were taunting him. That would have been me, Mike. I was his enemy before he saved me.

Mike: Yes. I was his enemy running from him. I was turning my back on him and that's why God the Father turned his back on his Son for all who have snubbed God, who have shaken their fist at God, who have said to God that I will have it my way. And turn from him and run. God says I am going to turn my back on my own Son, I am going to punish him in your place. That's in essence what he is doing here, Alex. He's punishing his own Son for you and I. He's forsaking Christ so that he would never forsake you and I. This is too amazing for words. We always try to put words around it. Sometimes we should just stop and be in awe of the cost that Jesus is paying for us. As we continue on it says: *"Why are you so far from saving me?"* Alex, he's experiencing quite a distance, an eternity of separation here from God the Father. He recognizes there is a huge gulf between him and God the Father. Have you ever felt this way like God is so far that there is so much distance between us? I sure have.

Alex: Oh yeah, absolutely. And Mike to be honest with you, before he saved me I hardly had any thoughts of God, only thought of God as some...he was not a personal God. I really had just no real conception of God. And so I felt totally alone. There was nobody I could tell about what I was doing. So I was completely, completely alone. Yeah. Truly it was all his initiative. I was not looking for him.

Mike: Right. We were running the other direction like Jonah.

Alex: Yeah, exactly.

Mike: But he asks this question: *“Why are you so far from saving me?”* He had asked earlier, I was mentioning in Psalm 10:1: *“Why, LORD, do you stand far off?”* Here Christ is experiencing this eternity of distance between himself and the Father. You know when we are in bondage to sin, it puts this huge distance and we feel like an iron ceiling over our heads that our prayers go up to that ceiling and fall flat, we just sense there is something between us and God and here this is what Jesus is experiencing as he is taking our sin off of us. He’s now loaded down with our sins. He’s experiencing this tremendous separation from God the Father and he says: *“So far. Why are you so far”* He says it twice. So far from my cries of anguish. And Alex maybe someone is listening to us right now and they are identifying with this cry from the heart of Jesus: *“I’ve felt this distance! I’ve sensed my sin separating me from the Father.”* But now look at the cross and what are we seeing? Jesus has taken your sin on himself and in doing so he took that separation. that distance, that distance between you and God the Father. And now why did he do that? To unite you with the Father. So there would be no distance. no separation between you and the love of God. Nothing can separate us now from the love of God.

Alex: Amen.

Mike: It’s amazing Alex to consider now the lengths to which Jesus went, isn’t it. Can you even believe, I know what you said earlier: *“It’s hard for me to put words to this!”* and it is me too - my heart is beating in my chest thinking about how far Jesus went for me.

Alex: Yeah. Farther than we will ever know, Mike. I mean my sin alone would have been enough for him to be totally separated. He took all of our sin, all of them, ...the love that he has shown us on the cross is amazing.

Mike: It’s beyond words. It really is. It says in Job chapter 3: *“For sighing has become my daily food. My groans pour out like water.”* Here Jesus speaking in those same types of words, pouring out his cries of anguish. What word did you use before?

Alex: His roaring, his roaring.

Mike: Roaring. Yes. You can see him on the cross Alex. He’s roaring, gushing, roaring out this horrible distance and this terrible sin that has just enveloped him in a cloud of darkness. He’s crying out *“Why have you forsaken me?” “Why are you so far from me?”* Alex, this is the holy ground that we have talked about here because he did it for us. Maybe the listener feels like “I feel so far from God my sin has put a big gap between me and God”. Jesus took that gap for you.

Alex: Amen.

Mike: Your sin, your guilt, your shame, took it all on himself and removed that distance and all that remains is repentance and faith, putting your faith in this message. Well, Alex, we come to verse 2 here. Do you have any thoughts here on that verse 1? I like camping out with you here.

Alex: (chuckle). Me too. No, I think that is wonderful. We can do verse 2.

Mike: *"My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest."* He is saying that continually I am crying to God and he is not answering me and I am not finding any rest. But again Alex, think about the fact that God here did not answer his Son here when he was on the cross. Why? So that God would answer the sinner's prayer: "God have mercy on me a sinner." God can answer that prayer now because he did not answer his Son Jesus when Jesus was roaring out to him. It is something to think about that, isn't it?

Alex: Yes. Yes. Amen.

Mike: So he is crying out. God is not answering: *"by night, but I find no rest."* There is no rest here. Alex, do you remember, I do not mean to bring up the past, just think with me about what sin does. We never have any rest, do we?

Alex: No, there was never rest, Mike. There was never rest, yeah. Always restlessness.

Mike: Yes.

Alex: There was never peace. I remember, I remember, a few years after being saved I woke up one morning and this thought came to my head: *"I have no guilt in my heart!"* and that was the first time in my life that I could remember that I did not feel guilty. It was like: "Thank you, Lord!"

Mike: Wow!

Alex: Without Christ, there is no rest.

Mike: Right. Sin is relentless. It's a harsh slave master. It gives us no rest. Alex when you could say truthfully honestly *"I have no guilt"* didn't you also sense tremendous rest in your soul?

Alex: Yes, absolutely. Yeah.

Mike: And again so we see that when we look to Christ we see Jesus on the cross I have no rest. God does not answer and I have no rest. Why? So that God would hear you, Alex, so he would hear me Alex when we cry out to Him and he removes our guilt and thereby we rest in His finished work. We say finally: *"I am set free. I am at peace. I am at rest."* All because Jesus suffered in this way that we are looking at here in this Psalm. Brother, this was an appetizer at the most but our time is coming to an end.

Alex: I know (chuckle)

Mike: And I thank you for agreeing to come back again and we need to finish this and we may even do a third one but we will see how time goes. But for now, consider with me somebody who is listening to you and I and have maybe identified with these cries of Jesus from the cross in their anguish and in their separation, and in their having no rest. What thoughts would you convey to them now as you are thinking about it?

Alex: I would tell them from my own experience and from so many others that we have seen at Setting Captives Free that there is no rest in the world and without Christ, there really is no rest at all. But that we can find rest. God has made a way. In Ephesians, it says that: *"He [Jesus] himself was our peace"*. Because he was forsaken as we have been talking about. He was forsaken for us. He took all of our sins. Past, present, future to the cross, nailed them into the cross. They are gone, Mike, as the bible says: *"They are cast into the depths of the sea"* and they are gone. Forever, never to come back again. When he sees us, he sees the righteousness of his precious Son because of his blood, Mike. His blood has covered and washed away all of our sins. That's the only place we can find peace in this world is in Christ. And it is only because of the cross. The cross is at the very center of everything. I mean even our dating system, the years are focused on the cross because everything changes at the cross! And that is the only place it can change. So I would really encourage any listeners who don't have that peace who are burdened with guilt to just come to the cross, to come to the Savior, as he invites us, any who are weary and heavy-laden to come to him and to believe and to receive what he has done on the cross, taken away all of your sins and given you his righteousness so that there is no more condemnation for those who are in Christ. There is nothing that we can do Mike. He has done it for us. We just have to receive it, we just have to receive it. As you said He was rejected so we would be accepted. He was punished so that we would not have to suffer that punishment. He Himself bore our sins on the tree, Mike, so we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds, we have been saved. So I would just say, come to the cross, come to the cross.

Mike: And to that, I would say, Amen. And I am so looking forward to our next session where we will dive into the rest of this Psalm. Thank you so much, Alex, for being here today.

Alex: Thank you, Mike, It has been a blessing. Thank you.

Pierced in Hands and Feet to Set us Free---Psalm 22:3
With Mike Cleveland and Alex

Mike: OK--Hello everyone, this is Mike Cleveland here with my friend Alex. Alex, how are you today?

Alex: I am doing great Mike, how are you?

Mike: Excellent, so glad to be with you. So thankful for the previous opportunities we've had to look into Psalm 22 together. And uh tonight, today we should be finishing this chapter and I'm just very excited about continuing our study. How about you?

Alex: Amen, Yes me too, very much looking forward to it.

Mike: You know this is an amazing Psalm as we said in the last recording, this Psalm describes the experience of the crucified one. You know the gospels portray the facts of the crucifixion but here we are looking tonight at the experience, the feelings, the details of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Alex: Yea.

Mike: It is a solemn chapter, it is a exciting and worshipful chapter from the sense of seeing our Saviour suffer and die and we have to understand I think Alex, before we just jump in here that this chapter that we are looking at is for everyone who is broken. For all who are impoverished in their sin, for everyone who has experienced a betrayal, for everyone who has been rejected, for anyone who is haunted by their past or have pangs of a guilty conscience, listen to this message today. Just listen to what the Psalms speaks to your own heart, and this is for the healing of the nations, it's for good news for those who are needy and broken and hurting. And so let's jump right in.

Alex: Amen.

Mike: One thing to mention here Alex is that this is an ongoing study that you and I have been doing and so we need to remind our listeners to please go back and listen to the previous two recordings so that you will have the context of where we are at. Right?

Alex: Right, Uh Huh, that's right, yea.

Mike: So we are actually picking it up in verse 14. I feel like we are jumping right in the middle of this story, but we've seen up to this point the terrible experience of the crucifixion, the events surrounding it and so we've come to verse 14 and Alex do you want to read 14?

Alex: Sure. Yes it says “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax, it is melted within my breast”.

Mike: And so what are we seeing here brother?

Alex: So, this is one of the descriptions where--this is the Psalm of David but it's really Christ's words. It is very clear as we go through the whole Psalm but it's from his own point of view on the cross, and He is poured out, He is giving all of himself here on the cross. He said 'He is poured out like water' and some passages in the old testament you see references to pouring out water onto the dust and you can't collect it again. It's poured out, it's gone- forever. His energy is gone, His strength is gone, all His bones are out of joint, He said, He is completely spent for us, He has given Himself completely on the cross.

Mike: Yes, you know the actual physical description here all of his bones are out of joint, is a description of what happens when someone is hanging on a cross and all of their bones are out of joint. And what would you think would happen if to someone's heart for example; if your heart had turned to wax within you and then you were stabbed in the heart, what would come out?

Alex: Yea, it would be like John saw, water and blood and you would really, you see because all the water would just pool around it and it would collect and he said He's poured out like water. And we know that John saw that, an eye witness, when He received the spear in his side water came out, water and blood.

Mike: Yes, it's so, in some ways shocking to see this happen but, you know blood is what is necessary for forgiveness, there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood and water is used in cleansing and so when we look at the cross we see Jesus, His heart pouring out in blood and water. Blood that forgives every sin, every transgression Alex.

Alex: Amen.

Mike: Every sin that man could commit was forgiven at the cross of Jesus, but it's not just forgiveness, if that were all it were well then we'd keep sinning and keep bounting to be forgiven. But it's water too, it's the cleansing “He is faithful and just to forgive our sins but to also cleanse us from all unrighteousness” water and blood, because the heart of Jesus had turned to wax and had melted within him.

Alex: Amen.

Mike: Verse 15 says, “my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.” For here we see he was thirsty, it was a combination of this physical suffering that he endured in crucifixion but also the spiritual torture which was even far worse, so those two things combined and He's thirsting Alex. We have to understand why and it's because, sin, it causes us to thirst, that is to crave and to yearn after.

We are never satisfied, we are always thirsty and so when Jesus went to the cross he was physically thirsty but he had entered into our condition. He had our sin on him and so I think there is more to these words when he said 'I thirst', don't you?

Alex: Yes, Yes absolutely. It really sits, last time we talked about there being no rest when we are in sin, this is the same thing.

Mike: Yes.

Alex: It's thirsting, it's just going from one to another, Yea absolutely.

Mike: Yea, exactly it's a good description for instance; when I use to be in bondage to pornography I would continually thirst and go from one image to the next or one simple relationship to the next and what is that? That's thirst, and here you see Jesus his tongue sticks to the roof of his mouth, he's so thirsty, he's entered fully into the experience of the sinner. And the wonderful thing tho is Alex, He entered into that experience in order to quench our thirst.

Alex: Amen.

Mike: To bring us to satisfaction and so you know if you look at His experience with the woman at the well for example, she was thirsting and He said to her, you know 'whoever drinks this water will thirst again' and He was referencing her life of sin. She went from man, to man, to man, she was thirsting. But the interesting thing about that story is, in the very beginning of it, He was thirsty and He asked her for a drink but no where is it recorded that she brought Him a drink. So, He thirsted while at the same time, He said 'whoever drinks the water I give will never thirst'. So while He is sitting there thirsting, He's quenching her thirst. She leaves her water jar behind and she is now drinking of the Living Water. Alex, think about this when He was on the cross, He was thirsting in order to quench your thirst and my thirst. What is that for you as you think about that?

Alex: Amen. Ahh, it just makes me love Him even more, it's just another amazing reminder of how much He loves us. How much He loved us on the cross and continues to love us and pouring, you know He said Living Water will come out of us and He's the source. He's the source of the Living Water, we have the Holy Spirit now in us. It's all because of what He did on the cross, there was no other way for our thirst to be quenched- without the cross.

Mike: That's exactly right. So He thirsted on the cross and what came out of His death is the Holy Spirit who is called 'Rivers of Living Water' and so He died, He thirsted for the purpose of quenching our thirst, satisfying us in this river. 'There is a river that makes glad the city of God' and it quenches our thirst and it flows from the cross. Well it says 'you lay me in the dust of death' and so, He is referencing His own death here, He came from the glories of heaven and is now laid in the dust of death. Let's read verse 16, "dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me, they pierce my hands and my feet". And initially Alex as you read this, you have to go 'wait

a minute' at this particular time of writing which was 1000 BC, the manner of death was through stoning.

Alex: Yes, exactly.

Mike: So what was this 'the piercing in the hands and the feet?'

Alex: And it really, it made no sense back then. It made no sense until the cross of Christ and these verses 16-18 are such an amazing prophecy of exactly what happened at the cross. You know I don't see how anyone can read these and not realize that this is divine, that this is a divine prophecy given to David. It's almost like he was there seeing it, except what we talked about before that he is experiencing it too. That this is nothing that ever happened to David, this is clearly an execution. It's not someone being very sick, clearly an execution is being described, but nothing that ever happened to David. Like you said they use to stone people they didn't pierce their hands and feet, what is that? But, when you see it in light of the cross it completely makes sense. It has to be divine, (chuckles) there is no other way.

Mike: Absolutely. Yes it has to be divine, as if Jesus were speaking through David these very words about something that had never happened up to this point.

Alex: Uh Hmmm. Right. Right.

Mike: But when we come to the cross, we see the fulfillment of it. You see it again in Zachariah chapter 12 in verse 10 where it says "they will look on me the One they have pierced and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child". And so the only child would be pierced and what would the result of it be? This cutting of the heart where we mourn in repentance, where we experience this tremendous heart transplant where our heart of stone that's dead is cut out of us and we are given a heart that is a heart of flesh. Where we live to obey now where as before we loved to disobey. Here, they are piercing His hands and His feet, years, a thousand years before this was ever even invented as a means of execution. And then he says, do you want to read verses 17 and 18?

Alex: 17 Yes. "I can count all my bones they stare and gloat over me, they divide my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots", and again these verses are sighted in all the gospels, all the gospels talk about His crucifixion and how they divided His garments and even cast lots for them. It's a very, amazingly precise prophecy of exactly what happened. But even beyond that--we see His shame again, we see that here's the sinless One on the cross and those around Him are just staring at Him, they are taunting Him. We saw some of that before, they care more about His clothing than they care about Him? Taking His clothing, it's really, it's just amazing how much suffering He went through for us Mike. He loves us that much and we are spared of that, we are spared all that because He took it for us.

Mike: That's exactly right. He was laid in the dust of death that we might be raised from the dead and taken to heaven with Him. He had everything taken from Him that we might have everything given to us. He hung in humility and shame that we might be partakers of His glory. He had our sin on Him, that we might be justified before God. And so we are seeing His humiliation but the interesting thing is that, He is willingly going through this knowing in advance what He would do. So, it was the death of this perfect One who became sin for us who purposely laid down His life as a sacrifice on our behalf, to remove our guilt, to remove our shame, to make us righteous, to make us flawless. And that's what we're described in Colossians 1:21. And so this prophecy about His clothes were divided and they cast lots for His garment. By the way Alex, this is a seamless garment, it says in the book of John which is an important detail, because who in the Old Testament wore a garment that was of one piece?

Alex: Yea, that would be Joseph.

Mike: Yes, Joseph exactly, and so he is undergoing much the same treatment as Joseph isn't he? Being betrayed and forsaken by his brothers, they sold Joseph into the hands of the Gentiles for pieces of silver and so you know the same garment is brought out. Also, the high priest in the Old Testament wore a seamless garment and so our attention is brought to this garment because there's our High Priest hanging on a cross the one who is interceding right now through His death pleading His wounds and His blood, He ever lives now to intercede for us He's our great High Priest.

Alex: Amen, He is our High Priest and He's the sacrifice.

Mike: Both, yes.

Alex: Both, yes.

Mike: Well here He cries out again in verses 19 and 21, He's crying out "But you Lord do not be far from me, You're my strength come quickly to help me". Now this prayer was not answered, because if you think about it He is placed on the cross at nine AM and then from noon until three PM which is the time when He died. Which is also the time of the evening sacrifice, you know darkness came over the land for 3 hours and this is the period of time when Jesus was burying the sin penalty of the whole world and during that period the Lord did not answer the prayers of Christ. Nor did He help Him in any way and so why? Why would the Father turn His back like this and turn a deaf ear as it were? And again we talk last time about the fact that, it's so that the Holy God would hear the prayer of the sinner.

Alex: Yes.

Mike: Alex, you and I have come and said, 'God have mercy on me, don't give me what I deserve, please don't treat me according to my sins. Please have compassion on me' and it's as if He rushes to rescue us, He hears us, that prayer.

Alex: Yea.

Mike: And I know that you've prayed and cried out like that to be rescued as well and have experienced His rescue, haven't you?

Alex: Amen, yes amen and He did not leave us in our shame, He rescued us. When we cried out to Him, He rescued us all because our Savior was not heard, He was not heard so that we would be heard. He was forsaken so that we would be accepted, it's really just so amazing what He's done for us. Yea.

Mike: And don't you just want to say 'Thank you Jesus'.

Alex: UHUMM , Thank You Lord, yes Amen.

Mike: I just want to stop and just say 'Thank you'. As you look at everything He endured here, words are not sufficient by any means for He endured the wrath of God, the torture, the torment, the forsakeness. He experienced this hell on earth, this cross, it was just horrendous to see what He went through for us that He might rescue us. Not only from sins penalty but also Alex from sins power.

Alex: Yes.

Mike: Like we were talking yesterday it's not that He just saves us from hell, that's enough- that's so much, that's huge but in addition to that, cause the news continues to get better and better the longer you live this gospel, the more you see that He accomplished for you. So, if you look now at this passage in Psalm 22, there is a real turning of a corner here in verse 22 what corner are we turning now ? What is different from here on in this Psalm?

Alex: Yea and I wanted to just make a comment on 21, because it gives us a hint of that, so you know He says 'save me from the mouth of the Lion', He's already in the mouth of the lion. We talked about the lion before but 'save me from the mouth of the lion' and then in the ESV it says 'you have rescued me from the horns of the wild ox'. In the Hebrew though, the rescue comes at the very end. So, in the Hebrew it's 'and from the horns of the wild ox, You have answered me' and that's all in one word in Hebrew, 'You have answered me'. And then like you said, there is a complete change of circumstance, in verse 22 we see it says, 'I will tell of Your name to my brothers in the midst of the congregation I will praise You'. There has been a complete change, He was dead He was in the mouth of the Lion, He was laid in the dust of death and now in verse 22 He is alive, (chuckles) He's in the midst of the congregation, He is calling us brothers, this is referred to us in Hebrews chapter 2 so beautifully. But, He is there and He is leading the praise. It's amazing, so this is the resurrection, this is His resurrection.

Mike: Yes, indeed, yea like you said; this is the One who was poured out like water, whose heart was like wax, the One who was laid in the dust of death, the One who had his hands and feet pierced and we almost have to say-- 'wait a minute what are you talking about , you will declare your name to my people'. If you are in the dust of death there is not going to be any proclaiming of anything- you are dead. (Alex chuckles) But of course we know from the scriptures that, you know what do we see in the old testament? We see the sufferings of the Messiah, but also the glories that follow and the resurrection here is so clearly as you said, spoken about, as we see Jesus is now going to proclaim and to declare the name or the character of God, who forgives the sin of people, who accepts the ungodly, who justifies the ungodly. This is the good news of the character of God that had never been known up to this point . You know Alex sometimes you think about 'why did sin have to come into the world?' And I think it's pretty clear that there is part of God's character that He is a forgiving God. You know all the angels knew was that He had a righteous law that He was Holy, until sin came into the world and now we see another aspect and we go 'wow God forgives sin, He loves wrongdoers, He pursues the unrighteous to pour His love out on them'. This is the message, the character has to do with the character of God here His name, that Jesus says He would declare to His people and He would praise Him. And so then we go onto verse 23, "You who fear the Lord praise Him, all you descendents of Jacob honor Him, revere Him all you descendents of Israel". You know the cross, the one thing it should bring out in us is praise and thanksgiving and reverence.

Alex: Amen. Amen.

Mike: If you really understand the cross it will illicit praise and thanksgiving, it will well up within you, won't it Alex? Like living water.

Alex: Yes, absolutely. Right, right and it's really a beautiful beautiful picture in here Mike as you were reading where we were given three exhortations to praise Him, glorify Him, in the ESV it says 'stand in awe of Him, all you offspring' and if you look at that word in the Hebrew it really means 'to turn aside from the road', to 'sojourn'. And that you know gives us the picture of 'turn aside from the road, look at the cross'. Dwell on the cross to see what He has done, glorify Him, praise Him, it's just like you said- the cross is everything that we have to praise Him about, we need to praise Him everyday. Because of His sacrifice on the cross, and here He is exhorting us to turn aside from the road, don't just walk by and turn aside and stay with Him, dwell, sojourn here and praise Him.

Mike: It's really the opposite of, 'Oh Yea I know Jesus died for my sins'. Right?

Alex: Yes. Yes exactly.

Mike: It's the opposite. If we really stop as you said and turn aside, sojourn, we would be in awe of the price that Jesus paid to set us free, we would be, I like to describe it as a 'self quake'.

Alex: Yes, right (chuckles) I love that term.

Mike: At the cross there was an earthquake, you know shook everything but as we come to the cross everything is shaken, we are saying 'wait a minute I am ungodly, I have sinned and done what is wrong and perverted what is right, and yet what do we see? I am now accepted because the price was paid. When we in a sense we go to the cross, we fix our eyes on Jesus, we aren't passers by, we are those who turn aside and look and stare. We are in as you said, in awe, stand in awe of Him.

Alex: Yea.

Mike: He sunk so low, He went to such great lengths for us and for us to just run right by it, that makes no sense, we as you said- this is what you and I have been doing Alex in this study.

Alex: Yea (Alex chuckles)

Mike: We have been turning aside and standing in awe.

Alex: Yes, It's really beautiful too Mike if we can go verse 24. So in verse 23 we are exhorted to praise Him, glorify Him, stand in awe of Him, why? Verse 24 says "For because He has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, he has not hidden his face from Him, but has heard when he cried for Him." So, the reason we praise Him, is because of His amazing love for us, He was despised and abhorred but He comes in with us into our affliction to bring us out of it. He does not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted, He took it all on Himself. What a God we have, what a Savior we have, He doesn't hide His face from us, after He suffered, everyone turning from Him, including the Father hiding His face from Him and all so that He would never hide his face from us whenever we come to Him. He's there, when we cry out to Him He hears us.

Mike: That's such good news.

Alex: Amen.

Mike: You said that He comes into our affliction with us, it reminds me of the three Hebrew boys in the furnace.

Alex: Yes (chuckles)

Mike: And the king said, "Oh well who's the fourth one he looks like the son of God", when Jesus comes into our affliction with us that is what the cross really is. Jesus coming into our sin and taking it upon Himself to rescue us out of it. The father having turned His face away from Christ that He might not ever ever turn His face away from us, as you said there. And so that brings out praise verse 25, " from you comes my praise in the great congregation, my vows I will

perform before those who fear Him”, and Alex if you look at verse 26 “the afflicted shall eat and be satisfied”.

Alex: Amen.

Mike: Isn't it appropriate that in the context of the cross, we see the satisfaction would come to us, it's the meek, the humble, the afflicted eating and being satisfied.

Alex: Yes,

Mike: It reminds me of Hebrews 13 verse 10, that talks about an altar it says, “we have an altar to eat from that those under the old covenant have no right to eat from”, in other words the cross is an altar of sacrifice where by we derive great nourishment. Now as you think about this Alex, what does that mean, ‘that we eat and are satisfied at the cross’. What thoughts do you have about that?

Alex: Our, You know I know that all those years that I was a slave to sin, a slave to pornography, all those years I was looking to fill this emptiness inside myself that I could not fill. I mentioned before, I felt like I had a crater, an empty crater in the middle of my chest, I was trying to fill it, I never filled it. We are never satisfied until we have Christ in our heart, and He fills us, He is our everything, He is our substance, He is our life. His love fills our hearts and then we are satisfied, like we talk about at the well that ‘living water’, we will thirst no more. He, you know when we celebrate communion we celebrate the cross what He did and we take of the wine and the bread, symbolizing His blood and His flesh sacrificed for us and we are filled with them.

Mike: And this is the great joy that believers have is this being satisfied finally, right?
(Chuckles) Can you say finally?

Alex: Amen. (Chuckling)

Mike: All my years of wandering and eating poisoned food and drinking impure water, finally the cross has satisfied my heart. Alex, I think we have about 5 verses to go, let's make another podcast shall we?

Alex: (Chuckles) Sure.

Mike: We will do one more to finish up this Psalm. But just now think about a listener who is hungry, who's yearning, who is not satisfied, who is drinking from the impure well and is experiencing the emptiness, the lack of satisfaction that sin brings and Alex if you would just pray for them to see that there is satisfaction at the cross that waits for them and let's call them to come and join the feast that you and I are enjoying here.

Alex: Amen, Heavenly Father we worship you, we thank you Lord, we are always amazed at your love and grace to us Lord. Especially, as we stop and we look in awe at the cross Lord. At our Lord and Savior who gave His life. Gave Himself completely poured out His life Lord at the cross and Father we see that You fill those who come to You. You are inviting all those Lord, if there is someone listening right now Lord who is feeling that hunger, that emptiness, that ache inside that needs to be filled oh Lord please call them to the cross, call them to yourself through the Savior, through His sacrifice His finished work on the cross, that they would be filled Lord, that their heart would be full of your love that they would know the forgiveness of sins, that they would know and see that their shame is taken away, their guilt is taken away because Christ took it all on the cross and that they are delivered. The chains of slavery to sin are broken Lord, help them to come and abide and eat of the food we have at the cross, we can't get it no where else. We know Lord that Jesus stands and calls and invites all who will come, He doesn't turn away anyone. But He invites us all to come so may they come Lord, may they know Jesus as Savior and may they have their hearts filled by our Savior who gave Himself for us, Thank you Lord, In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Mike: Amen.