

Septuagesima: Matthew 20:1–16

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(THE COMPLAINT) – whine, judgment – They got a better deal. You never gave me a calf.

Mt. 25:24 you knew I was a hard man.

Mt. 20:11 they MURMURED against the good man of the house.

L – imagine – they just got here – we labored in the heat of the day

L/C = all get everything in the end = J.C. – all – yours

We have constructed (mental) a god – nice – within God, but he continually fails us – (He's safe, but can't speak or deliver, save. Unpreached Word = J.C.)

Idol factory

The problem with the true God – His ways – we don't like His ways.

Mt. 20:11 – gracious God – doesn't seem that – 11th Hour God not fair.

Animosity, bitterness (at those nearest) believing God's behind the whole thing. (Pursuit of happiness not owed, vs. you owe me.)

Impoverished – no water, no flesh pots

Soul lean Out of Egypt.

Mt. 5:17 think not destroy – law – prophets – LAW – VOICE – FEAR

Mt. 5:48 Therefore you shall be perfect, as Father in heaven is perfect

Hb 4:12 Thoughts and intents of the heart – he _____ hidden

Law = (Take no thought) of life, clothes, tomorrow, eat = we sin – when we do.

Deut 6:5 And thou shalt love the Lord with ALL your heart

Wages death – sow/reap

LAW = schoolmaster, tutor – its purpose – lead to cross (what Jesus did – god – a mental construct – image, my (Mt. 20 ways not yours!)

_____ why consciences burdened? Not trust God, as God.

Freedom – from accusation in conscience

Mind – heart condemns - (cross - 1 John 3:20 if heart condemns – greater)

Law brings out anger – awareness of our anger and hate of God

Law increases (magnifies sin / their hatred of anyone above them)

Aware of old Adam

Not thankful

Resentful of them telling truth – law _____ you make me a sinner

Trust – (Mt 6:34 why take thought?)

God already has done it.

Weight of law

He bare our sins

Daily - _____ in our court, instead of trusting the Lord

Mt. 20 – KOH – Master lost track of timesheets – records. If he's gonna act like that, can he be trusted? We need a God that can be trusted to do what is after all, only reasonable = predictable God. Work hard in the heat – deserve more. We'd be better t put out trust in man. Gracious neighbor.

Etc. But we're all deceived – in that we all just made it in at the last minute – by show of mercy – unless, of course, we were older brother, keeping the law all these years.

At the cross, all the demands of the law were met. _____ and accredited, imputed to the one who as crucified with Christ.

Your envy – lust - anger – bitterness,

Gospel – Christ is the End of the law (not theology)

Notes 4-1-07

The heart of man - THE COMPLAINT – no praise – God's not fair – not equal

Talents buried here – mind taken CAPTIVE – demonic, knowing ones.

Thoughts of evil – captive unaware – creative energies, gifts – buried.

Sins of mind – thoughts – vain thoughts (proud, pride, envy – lust concupiscence, hate God and man, unbelief, fear – full of unbelief – turned in (in court all day), complaint)

I will do this, or that.

Evil – How come they? How come she?

Prov. 27:3 as a man thinketh, so is he

Mt. 20: 1-on KOH is like a man that is a householder. (I'm God and I will do what I want with mine.)

Mt. 19:30 The early workers – COMPLAINT

Envy – He got more, and I worked harder.

11th Hour (Can't I do what I want?) Your evil judgment – dealt me a bad hand.

Gave him more gifts – parents – children, more beautiful, gifted

Creates a (THEY – they always, WE never) separation – no receiving – no receiving gifts (demanding a gracious neighbor or won't receive).

Who are you in this story?

(Ro 7:9) I died

1 Cor 2:16 we have the mind of Christ

Phil 2:5 Let this mind be in you

Phil 4:8 whatsoever things are true, beautiful

Thoughts

Ye are dead – hidden in Christ

In Christ alone, we are safe from the law

Safe from the accusing voice

Adam feared and hid himself (covered self)

I came that they might have peace (my peace I leave you).

Heavy burdened = law. Rest to your souls – trust

Come unto me – who? = Gospel

Sermon Notes - Don O'Connor - 4/1/07

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)

IT'S ALL OVER!

Paul said they were pressed out of measure in Asia. Why?

2 Cor 1:8-9 (8) For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: (9) But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

KJV God who raises the dead.

Until this becomes the reality for us, we're on the wrong basis. Hope in your neighbor is hoping in yourself. God's Word says something about people who put their trust in men. We trust a God that lives in men - we can trust that - and you will know those men. I'm not speaking gender now.

I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously, the grave is open won't you come and see.

They had just come out of Egypt and they soon forgot.

Exodus 15:23 (KJV) And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. myrrh - bitter.

Exodus 15:25 (KJV) And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

When Jesus (the cross) is cast into your life, the daily bitterness is made sweet. The cross is also the great offence because it puts me out of the picture.

In Chapter 16 - they had nothing to eat.

Exodus 16:3 (KJV) And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

People in the church today say that at least in Egypt they could do what they wanted - flesh out - walk after the flesh.

Exodus 16:4 (KJV) Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

God is gracious. He knows what we are when we come out of Egypt. How many of you thought God was getting a good deal with you? You are free, on one level, but that is just the beginning. There is a long trek before you get into the Promised Land. It should have taken 12 days or less, but it took 40 years because of their unbelief.

Exodus 16:12-13 (KJV) I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. [13] And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. God covered the camp with quail.

Psalms 106:11 (KJV) And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.

When you came out of Egypt, God protected you, put a mantle, a shield over you.

Psalms 106:12-16 (KJV) Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. [13] They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: [14] But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. [15] And he gave them their request; but sent

leanness into their soul. [16] They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord.

Moses wasn't the problem, God was. Moses didn't know what he was getting into. He didn't know that the murmuring would be against him. There are times when people will blame, you or me, or anyone, for what God is doing in their life. "If you would have loved me more. If you would have given me my way. If you would have, would have, would have..."

The kingdom of heaven is not like you think. It's not fair. You naturally would think that if you eat your spinach, clean your room, etc. you'd get more... But the kingdom of heaven is not like that. The natural man in me doesn't like it.

Matthew 20:1-6 (KJV) For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. [2] And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. [3] And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, [4] And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. [5] Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. [6] And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

How many of you have been idle this week, taking care of you and yours, and not God's household?

Matthew 20:7-9 (KJV) They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. [8] So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. [9] And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

Every man received the same wages, a penny. This was a day's wages. When I was a child, a penny had value to me; it could buy a lot when I was 4-5 years old. Look back 2000 years ago, at what a penny might be worth.

Matthew 20:9-10 (KJV) And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. [10] But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

They murmured against the good man of the house. One guy said they were like a vineyard in Napa CA, and he had a great vineyard. There was a storm coming and he needed to hire more laborers to get the grapes in. He went to the Unemployment Office to hire some men who were just standing around, and their girlfriends. One girlfriend, when they were paid, held up and exclaimed over the \$120 for the work they did, being hired at the 11th hour. All of them were paid the same, no matter when they began work that day.

Matthew 20:11-12 (KJV) And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, [12] Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

If you had been there bearing the burden in the heat of the day, and someone came at the 11th hour and got paid the same, would you murmur as these men did?

Matthew 20:13-16 (KJV) But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? [14] Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. [15] Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? [16] So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

They murmured at the goodness of God. Remember the older brother? It's the same story. He murmurs against his father. Why? Because his father had compassion on the younger brother. Because he had been working all these years. "This son of yours you bring him back and gave him a robe and a party, and you never gave me a calf to celebrate with my friends." You can read about it: envy, jealousy concupiscence. "They got a nicer house than me, a nicer car, and a nicer job, etc. They have a better body, better hair, etc." These are all outward. You sin against God, because you are to be content with food and raiment. Is there anyone here that does not have food or clothing? Is there anyone here who has ever murmured or grumbled or complained?

Luke 10:38-40 (KJV) Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. [39] And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. [40] But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

How many of you have been cumbered about? What were you doing out in the vineyard for 9 hours? One possibility - the 11th hour people got the same as those who had labored all day because they got just as much done in the one hour as those who had worked all day. How many of you have been gorging on grapes, acting busy? What were you doing all these years for Jesus? What were you doing this week, out in the vineyard, for Jesus?

Have you been restored to your original vocation - caring for the Garden? Has nature been given back to you - creation? Remember when creation wasn't good enough and we thought we had to be gods in control of everything? Be as god and you won't have to tend the garden anymore, that's what Adam and Eve thought. Every man is god in the world today. In this country there are as many idols as there are people

Martha was cumbered about with much serving. Not everyone wants freedom from their burdens. Many want to keep their controlled scene; Martha did. Martha was busy. How many of you think it would be fun to be around Martha? Jesus has to give her a shot. Your world is all about you and you keep it nice and orderly. Someone might come into your world that messes things up, and you do all you can to keep them away. You're angry with your sister because she won't do what you want. She sits and hears the Word and you're going around trying to make your own righteousness. You're a grumbler just like the older brother who was killing his father. When you're in contention with your father and putting him on the defensive, you hate your father. Martha is like what I would be naturally; God is useful to me, an appendage for me, until my neighbor won't do what I want.

The kingdom of heaven is also like a party. We can't have a party here. There would be too much wasted food and champagne bottles all over the place. God is into parties. The last shall be first. Those who came at the 11th hour will get paid the same. The father said to the older son, "What are you complaining about? Everything I have is yours. I was always into parties and forgiving wayward sons. But you can't forgive someone who hasn't sinned. You can, but they won't receive it for they are still judging the younger son and killing the father.

Exodus - they wanted to kill Moses because they couldn't get at God.

I want to put it into your mind how easy it is to grumble. The kingdom of heaven is like a householder who can do what he wants with what is his.

Page 174, The Preached God - essays and messages by Gerhard O. Forde, what he was doing just before he died. It is such good news for you.

The trouble...universal law...more difficult...Those who follow, can't.

The trouble is the idea of a universal law built into the human psyche turns out to be even more difficult to put up with than an objective divine law. Those who followed Kant — Hegel, Schleiermacher, Feuerbach, Marx, etc. — all saw that in one way or another.

What is being preached today in the name of Law? Morality, relative, cultural morality? You should be a good person, and do this or that, and your life will straighten out and you'll get more and be happier. This has nothing to do with Jesus.

Once, God was safely enthroned in heaven where he only occasionally bothered folks. Now, as Emil Fackenheim put it, he has left his throne and taken up residence bag and baggage in the pious Protestant heart where he can really do some damage. For now the self is really trapped. The sought-for good news has been virtually identified with the universal moral law. Any sort of help, any word from outside fades from sight.

Why do I have to hear this word this morning, I've got God within me, I've got the Holy Ghost? When you hear someone talking a lot about the Holy Ghost, you can be sure he's not there. The Spirit showed me. Well, how does that line up with the Word of God?

he has left his throne and taken up residence bag and baggage in the pious Protestant heart where he can really do some damage. For now the self is really trapped. The sought-for good news has been virtually identified with the universal moral law. Any sort of help, any word from outside fades from sight. And that means that there is no way out for the self except some kind of revolt.

If you have an employer, he can be an enemy to you. They expect excellence and they don't get it and they become a threat.

Against what? Against law, basi

everyone into the vortex of its own pain.

Pity is substituted for justice. And pastors who like to look upon themselves as "need-fulfillers" are of course gobbled up, often without a trace. Or, perhaps, a better analogy is that the self is a black hole, endlessly sucking everything into itself and eventually crushing it,

People go around being jealous - someone got something they didn't get; some family got something they didn't get. Wait a minute! It's the 11th hour. I want to know what you got.

When people are caught up in a complaint or a murmur that is all they can think about. All they think about is trying to justify themselves and try to put the false burden on someone else. Martha tries to put her own burden onto Mary, and then eventually on our Lord. Her problem: She never saw Jesus. Have you ever seen him? Or, have you seen a need-filler, an apparatus, someone to fulfill your god-project, your wish dream? Jesus puts an end to our god-projects - everything we're striving to hold together. You don't think Martha saw Jesus, do you? What did she see? She saw someone who wasn't doing what she thought He should do. She never saw Him. She was too busy to sit at His feet and hear His Word, and I'm just like her, every day. If it weren't for God's grace, we'd never get out of it, we'd never be Mary. There is one of me who is offended with God, the God who lives in you. She was offended with her sister. Have you ever been offended with someone because they won't do what you know they should to help you? You don't think I'd judge you, do you?

They complained and grumbled and murmured, and said, "Give me." The Scripture said that he made it all pointless.

Romans 8:32 (KJV) He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Some things happen in my life because I'm reaping for sowing to the flesh. But I know this also, that all things work together for good. I've had some things happen in my life in the last 10 years that I did not understand at all. I did all I knew to do and still things happened. I may have been ignorant, or wrong, or sinning, but in my heart I was doing what I knew to do. But I could never have believed God loved me that much, to allow the rain to fall on the just and the sun to shine on the unjust.

We are driven to get the Scriptures in our heart. How could understand the book of Job or Psalm 107 without experiencing it. This is why I don't want to put a big thing on children. I'd rather they play ping pong and let them be children. Hopefully, as they grow older, things will be revealed to them.

Gen - God's Children - they had perfect parents and it did not help. They ate of the tree of knowledge in a desire to escape their vocations. Creation wasn't good enough for them. They wanted to become gods. They listen to the voice of the serpent.

How long have you been laboring in your father's vineyard?

Isa 55:8-9 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

I think where the Church has to come to is found in 2nd Chronicles 20. A person, who murmurs and has a continual complaint, is turned inward and is like the vortex of a black hole, they are idolaters. They're trying to make a lesser god of you so that you can fill their needs. The place you come to is that you don't want to use anyone, anytime, whatsoever. People are allowed to do exactly what they want to do. For freedom, Christ came into the world. Sometimes the quickest road to Christ is when people get into sin. If you've been spared of it, you should thank God because you don't know the hell and torment some people live in. You think the younger brother had a good time? The leanness of his soul could have lasted as long as Joseph's brothers - 20 years. If it hasn't happened to you, don't think you've missed anything but hell and death. Warning - what a man sows he reaps. We are to warn one another. God is not playing around, we just thought he was.

Jehoshaphat is invaded by Moab. The armies are superior and whole nations are coming against them.

2 Chron. 20:6-12 (KJV) And said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? [7] Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? [8] And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, [9] If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. [10] And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; [11] Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. [12] O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.

The problem with some of you is that you know what to do to keep your nest feathered, but there is no peace or rest in the nest. God is not saying you can't have that, but he is saying, the

way I hear it, a lot of people have answers because they don't know the problem. They have not come to utter despair because they think the problem is; I don't have enough money, people don't listen to me enough, if I had a better car, gas is too high, if only my children would be better... If you got all of these things taken care of today, one hundred others would come. How many of you have one thing on your mind continuously? It could be demonic. We don't war against flesh and blood. We think that if we just had the right theology and spoke everything perfectly, the pastor would shape up. If people don't want to help you, I'd ask you why not. Would you swallow them up? Would you be the vortex of the black hole? Are you putting your hope in man and not in God? You're looking for the gracious neighbor and not the gracious God? Are you trying to straighten things out for other people? God has devices in the world today.

I can deal with sin, but you might not want to hear about sin. So what I'd like to recommend is that you find a good psychiatrist. It's all over. I don't want to deal with it. If you want to come and hear about sin and forgiveness, then okay. But if you don't want to hear about your sin, then you don't want to hear about forgiveness. What you'll hear from me is law. If you've been putting your hope in man, or self, which it usually is, you're always being let down because people are not God. Some of you are quite good putting false burdens on others. There is no freedom for you in any of that, just contention. It could be demonic and you might not be aware of the deception. Our war is not with flesh and blood. Therefore the weapons you've been given, the strength of the Holy Spirit, you might not be fighting with.

2 Cor. 10:4-5 (KJV) (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) [5] Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

The only thing to get right is to flee to Jesus. Become Romans 7 revisited every day. Why? The reason you still think you can handle your life, no matter what sign you pass under, is because you don't know how big the problem is. If I could only.... This may all be good, but our hope is no longer to be in ourselves but in God who raises the dead and is sufficient for every problem. Most of our problems stem from wanting to control our lives and the lives of others. This is sin which leads to covetousness and jealousy.

Wait a minute, we worked all day, they only worked one hour, and they got the same. There will come a time when you'll know that God can do what He wants with what is His. You are

His. Are you putting your hope in money, riches, your job, your house? Watch out, someone might come in and track mud on the new carpets.

Martha, my dear... Jesus loved Martha, aren't you glad? She was burdened, falsely burdened. And God has come to say unto you heavy laden, not just cruising by in your great life, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Matthew 11:28-30 (KJV)

Martha can't come because she still has hope in a little more hard work, doing more, getting up early, etc Whose vineyard do you think she's working in? Her own vineyard of sour grapes. She is not looking to Jesus as the author and finisher of her salvation, but to her own devices, to herself. She is a grumbler and a complainer, a vortex. Jesus, himself, won't go there, and she is resentful all the more. He won't do what she wants. Don't you forgive me? I thought you were a forgiving God, a God of love? Mary has chosen the better part. Mary is not all burdened down; you are.

What about these workers in the vineyard? This is a parable of complaints just like the older brother, because God, the father, won't do what he wants. It is a parable of what our neighbor is supposed to do for you; make you happy, pay your bills, make your children be good, keep you distracted... Is that what God is supposed to do, Martha, so you won't have to look at the truth? One thing God is not supposed to do is find sin in you today. Martha didn't even look to him. We are to look to him for every good in our lives, not to our neighbor. We put it on our neighbor, the church, the people around us, until we don't. We look for the gracious neighbor. This is idolatry. We have expectations, a lust list or a wish list if you want, and we're searching for a gracious neighbor. Unless this is put to an end, we will end up bitter and cynical like Martha, who will never blame herself.

The good news: The torment Martha lives in can come to an end. We live in an age when the air we breathe is filled with complaining. The spirit of this age is a continual complaint. There is no peace in it.

What is church really about then? Meeting heartfelt needs? The church can help me with my sin and the forgiveness of it. Looking to the gracious neighbor can be idolatry, if you're not looking to God. God is our provider, not men.

The Preached God, by Gerhard O. Forde

The Gracious Neighbor

What's going on anyway? Here we are, always talking about the new freedom, beautiful people, meaningful relationships, community, celebrat

den to tell you that Jesus is, and to say that all you need to feel is the bread on your lips and the wine in your throat. Maybe, in the world's economy, that doesn't seem like much, but in the end, when it comes to grace, my friend, that's about all you've got!

But then, if you are at all grasped by that, perhaps you can turn back from your impetuous quest and look for that not-so-gracious neighbor and have pity. For, having a gracious God, you are not to lay that burden on anyone else: "For I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your friends, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

If we listen carefully, I think we can hear even in that thunder the promise of a gracious God who plans to have his way with us at last.

The Gentiles come and work, and the sinners come in at the last hour and get paid the same. How many of you realize that it doesn't matter where you've been in the vineyard for the first 9 hours, all that matters is the gracious God is coming and saying that all He did for us in His Son, He has given to us in the penny – the day's wages – everything. It will take you an eternity to receive all that God has done in Christ. He has forgiven us and imputed to us His very righteousness. He has washed us. He has given us His body and His blood. He has baptized us and continues to baptize us daily, and give us Himself, daily.

I want to warn you about people who get jealous or envious of you, like me. The creative word for them is lost. The gifts of God that He has given have been rejected and the gifts that were accepted are buried under the offence of, No one every does enough for me. There is another story. A man was at the pool of Bethsaida, a crippled man, and Jesus walked by. In this pool, an angel came down and when the waters were stirred he who got into the pool first got healed. What did the man say to Jesus? No man will help me. No man can help you. I want to repeat;

if you have the answer, you haven't seen the severity of the problem. You need a God who raises the dead because there is a death sentence on Adam.

Paul – we were pressed out so we would not hope in ourselves but in God who raises the dead. Do you have a bigger problem than Lazarus? Was that too big a problem for Jesus? Jesus asked the man at the pool, “Would you be healed?” God is asking you that today. Would you be healed? Would you be made whole?

What would I have to give up? My car? My donkeys? Rise up and walk! Jesus is greater than the angel. He's great than the pool. He's the Word of God. Those who don't receive will look at their neighbors and are continually at odds with their neighbors, no matter if they are across the street or in the house. They turn inward and all the creative word of God that is in them, the gifts God has given them, are buried. All they can think about is their offence, and they are stopped. All they can think about is that they have no man to help them. Everyone seems to be doing pretty good around here. Where was I when God passed out the blessings? Maybe you were Martha, or working all those years, or working in the fields all day.

All your sins, you that have come, you that are last, if you just got here this second, you are first. Where should we look and how should we see our neighbor from this time forth? Maybe we could have a little mercy, and give our neighbor a break. Maybe we'd say, "I can love my not so gracious neighbor because he or she is a lot like me." "Maybe I can love people that aren't as gracious as God, even." Wouldn't that be something? Look where you could start.

May the grace of God fill your hearts toward your neighbors, to seek their good, seek the wealth of others? Not because you have to or because they're demanding for if they are demanding you can't give it to them. Mary got the better part and it won't be taken from her, now remember every day who you are in the story. Martha loved Jesus and Jesus loved Martha. There will come a point in your life where you will be like Peter out fishing, and the Lord will ask you, "Do you love me?" Could we trust him that even going through what our ships are always going through, that he is with us? Yes, because he has given us that gift.

I pray that we'd receive the 11th hour wage - everything. Did you know the older brother received the same as the younger brother? Everything I have is yours, I'm with you always. The older brother wouldn't let it go. He wanted to be in control of everything and he didn't trust his father. What if you just let it all go?

All that God has is yours right now. You are forgiven sons and daughters. Knowing this should help you want to be good at whatever vocation the Lord leads you to, and to be as good as you could be at it. You start right where you're at - in your homes.

Leaving here today, you've partaken of the body and blood of Christ. I want to declare to you as your pastor, that I forgive all your sins, whether they're against your neighbor, God, me, or anyone; all your known or forgotten sin; the sins you're afraid to look at and the ones that condemn you, I forgive them all, for Christ's sake.

AMEN

rection. What do you suppose "the neighbor" out there is trying to say to us in all this? Perhaps that he or she just doesn't want our burden, and scornfully spurns our quest

Lament. 2:14 (KJV) Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.

They have not discovered your iniquity to turn away your captivity. Without my iniquity being discovered, there is no forgiveness. Who have you been putting hope in besides Jesus? Who have you been angry with? Did they let you down? Are you angry about it? Some people even get bitter about it. How would you like to marry someone you could never do enough for? Don't marry a human being. Get yourself a good yellow lab. They are thankful. You throw them a bone 100 thousand times a day, and they'll come back wagging their tails.

Lament. 2:14 (KJV) Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.

What are false burdens? How many of you pick up false burdens? How many of you still operate under the law? The law will weigh you down and become the great burden. Christ is the end of the law, the end of you thinking you can find any righteousness by using the law. Those who live by the law will force you to live by the law, because they have hope in the law as far as keeping it goes. They don't see the second use of the law - to lead us to Christ - because we see our utter inability to keep it. Why come to Christ if you're keeping the law and are a good boy? The good didn't come to Christ. Christ died for the ungodly - really bad people. The really bad people are good, in their own heads. Good people are Pharisees, Scribes

and Pharisees. Who was he telling the parable of the vineyard to? Those who had been on duty 1,000 or 11,000 years. Christ died for them too. Christ died for the older brother. "Everything I have is yours and I'm with you always." The older receives the full inheritance of what we call everything. The father said it was right that they celebrate because the younger brother was dead, cut off, separated from all that you could call life, was alive again.

Where is your hope today?

— that perhaps even he or she is just another terrifying mask of the deus absconditus, the God of wrath? Were you to ask, the neighbor may well protest: "having lost God, it's not fair to expect grace from me. I'm only dying, as you are! Gimme a break!" Therein lies the omnipresent contemporary plea for mercy: "Gimme a break!" Well then, if we can't find a world full of gracious neighbors, can we not find some at least? Where to look? Even among the people of God it seems no different; we find the same troubles among them.

Well, okay then, if the quest out there in the world seems discourag
everyone into the vortex of its own pain.

All truth is reduced to lust.

Your civil problems, in the left-handed realm, are not my problems. If you live in Washington and you don't like the weather, you should move. If you don't like working in Seattle because of the traffic you should get another job. If you don't like the way the school regulates what we learn and accountability for excellence, you should go to another school. Let's put the responsibility where it lies.

Gal 6:5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

Of course, if it is within your power to help someone... But a lot of people want to murmur and complain so you will reject them and then they can justify themselves and blame everything on their rejection. You call a spade a spade or a heart a heart, and you're negative.

It's all over. I can laugh at some of it. When are you going to meet my heartfelt needs? I am. The biggest need is to be shown our sin and then to be forgiven. Who is Martha about? Who is Exodus 15 about? Who are the laborers? We'll see. Who are the ones who are mad about the people who got paid the same? Who is the older brother mad at? His father? A lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son - all three, lost, just like us. Every day, I still am lost and have to be found. I

don't find Him - He finds me. Forget your decision theology. If you had a brain, you'd get far away from Jesus, if you're a natural man.

We do not understand the doctrine of two total states - totally depraved sinners, one of us; and on the other hand, one of us a new creation that cannot sin. Whatever is born of God cannot sin. But this is eschatological too. Forde talks about trying to storm the eschatological realm prematurely. It is Heaven, where there is no law because there is no necessity for the law. Everyone delights to do God's will. I know the realms cross over, but you don't have any problems in Heaven where you are seated right now, in heavenly places, with Christ Jesus. Do you have any problems in the heavenly realm? You cannot be improved upon. The father sees you perfectly now. The righteousness of Christ has been imputed to you, even now, in this world. It applies even in this realm. In the walking out of it, you'll find there are two. You'll find you really like the new creation better.

So we do not need to grovel about in that too long. The self becomes a whirlpool of need, always trying to draw ev

ness? I read somewhere the other day about how we are supposed to be "sacraments of salvation" for one another. My goodness! That all sounds nice, but what about when we get down to actual cases?

Who is the object of your LOVE? Were you putting your hope in your neighbor and they let you down?

Remember, God is one who says that you who are heavy laden, and there is a heaviness in your heart over the burden of sin, you could receive all Jesus died for you to have - every single law fulfilled and that accredited to your account - now. You get a God who gave His only son, and one who will not withhold any good thing from you.

Is this the kind of people you'd hope in? Are we any better than the heathen?

Romans 3:9-19 (KJV) What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; [10] As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: [11] There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. [12] They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. [13] Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: [14] Whose mouth is full of

cursing and bitterness: [15] Their feet are swift to shed blood: [16] Destruction and misery are in their ways: [17] And the way of peace have they not known: [18] There is no fear of God before their eyes.

[19] Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Is this who you're putting hope in? There is a Christ in you and I can trust that Christ. I see that Christ in you, but I also see another.

Galatians 6:3-5 (KJV) For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. [4] But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. [5] For every man shall bear his own burden.

You brothers do help one another, but it should be received in gratitude, not demand it or putting it on someone.

Is not the pastor supposed to be a kind of professional gra

son." By extension, a fat corpse is a differently sized non-living person.⁶

Language itself slips and falls out of place. One must always think, act, and speak "positively" — something promoted, alas, and probably introduced into popular parlance by some of the church's well-known clergy. These clergy go about conducting seminars, I understand, for a fat fee, of course, on the glories of positive thinking for business. Think of it! This is what has come of the gospel. But some are beginning to smell a rat. As Donald Smith put it recently in a Wall Street Journal column, "A Positive Attitude? Bah, Humbug!"

In business parlance positive means that people are not supposed to object — ever.

It is one of the most manipulative phrases ever conceived, and it is more often used to club heads than to extract excellence. To object is to be negative, the all-purpose no-no of the century.⁷

He concludes by saying:

I believe that the greatest contribution anyone can make is to kill a bad idea. When this power is curtailed, everyone loses because stupidity and inefficiency are allowed to grow and flourish.

In the school, it's all over. You did that homework? It stinks! We want to be negative about certain things. Business is a good place for vocation to operate. We want to be real negative in business. When you see schlock, you want to call it what it is, whether it is in communication, blaming, no matter what it is.

We live in a world where people think we may be deemed too negative. Negative produces a bad self-image.

But now the floor has rotted away and we have fallen into the basement, the dank darkness of the self groping to find itself. The older suspicions about human nature are deemed too negative. They produce a bad self-image. Psychologists complain that social restraint promotes re

Sermon Notes - Don O'Connor - 4/1/07

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)

IT'S ALL OVER!

Paul said they were pressed out of measure in Asia. Why?

2 Cor 1:8-9 (8) For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: (9) But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

KJV God who raises the dead.

Until this becomes the reality for us, we're on the wrong basis. Hope in your neighbor is hoping in yourself. God's Word says something about people who put their trust in men. We trust a God that lives in men - we can trust that - and you will know those men. I'm not speaking gender now.

I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously, the grave is open won't you come and see.

They had just come out of Egypt and they soon forgot.

Exodus 15:23 (KJV) And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. myrrh - bitter.

Exodus 15:25 (KJV) And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

When Jesus (the cross) is cast into your life, the daily bitterness is made sweet. The cross is also the great offence because it puts me out of the picture.

In Chapter 16 - they had nothing to eat.

Exodus 16:3 (KJV) And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

People in the church today say that at least in Egypt they could do what they wanted - flesh out - walk after the flesh.

Exodus 16:4 (KJV) Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

God is gracious. He knows what we are when we come out of Egypt. How many of you thought God was getting a good deal with you? You are free, on one level, but that is just the beginning. There is a long trek before you get into the Promised Land. It should have taken 12 days or less, but it took 40 years because of their unbelief.

Exodus 16:12-13 (KJV) I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. [13] And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. God covered the camp with quail.

Psalms 106:11 (KJV) And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.

When you came out of Egypt, God protected you, put a mantle, a shield over you.

Psalm 106:12-16 (KJV) Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. [13] They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: [14] But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. [15] And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul. [16] They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord.

Moses wasn't the problem, God was. Moses didn't know what he was getting into. He didn't know that the murmuring would be against him. There are times when people will blame, you or me, or anyone, for what God is doing in their life. "If you would have loved me more. If you would have given me my way. If you would have, would have, would have..."

The kingdom of heaven is not like you think. It's not fair. You naturally would think that if you eat your spinach, clean your room, etc. you'd get more... But the kingdom of heaven is not like that. The natural man in me doesn't like it.

Matthew 20:1-6 (KJV) For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. [2] And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. [3] And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, [4] And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. [5] Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. [6] And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

How many of you have been idle this week, taking care of you and yours, and not God's household?

Matthew 20:7-9 (KJV) They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. [8] So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. [9] And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

Every man received the same wages, a penny. This was a day's wages. When I was a child, a penny had value to me; it could buy a lot when I was 4-5 years old. Look back 2000 years ago, at what a penny might be worth.

Matthew 20:9-10 (KJV) And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. [10] But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

They murmured against the good man of the house. One guy said they were like a vineyard in Napa CA, and he had a great vineyard. There was a storm coming and he needed to hire more laborers to get the grapes in. He went to the Unemployment Office to hire some men who were just standing around, and their girlfriends. One girlfriend, when they were paid, held up and exclaimed over the \$120 for the work they did, being hired at the 11th hour. All of them were paid the same, no matter when they began work that day.

Matthew 20:11-12 (KJV) And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, [12] Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

If you had been there bearing the burden in the heat of the day, and someone came at the 11th hour and got paid the same, would you murmur as these men did?

Matthew 20:13-16 (KJV) But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? [14] Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. [15] Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? [16] So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

They murmured at the goodness of God. Remember the older brother? It's the same story. He murmurs against his father. Why? Because his father had compassion on the younger brother. Because he had been working all these years. "This son of yours you bring him back and gave him a robe and a party, and you never gave me a calf to celebrate with my friends." You can read about it: envy, jealousy concupiscence. "They got a nicer house than me, a nicer car, and a nicer job, etc. They have a better body, better hair, etc." These are all outward. You sin against God, because you are to be content with food and raiment. Is there anyone here that does not have food or clothing? Is there anyone here who has ever murmured or grumbled or complained?

Luke 10:38-40 (KJV) Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. [39] And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. [40] But Martha was cumbered

about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

How many of you have been cumbered about? What were you doing out in the vineyard for 9 hours? One possibility - the 11th hour people got the same as those who had labored all day because they got just as much done in the one hour as those who had worked all day. How many of you have been gorging on grapes, acting busy? What were you doing all these years for Jesus? What were you doing this week, out in the vineyard, for Jesus?

Have you been restored to your original vocation - caring for the Garden? Has nature been given back to you - creation? Remember when creation wasn't good enough and we thought we had to be gods in control of everything? Be as god and you won't have to tend the garden anymore, that's what Adam and Eve thought. Every man is god in the world today. In this country there are as many idols as there are people

Martha was cumbered about with much serving. Not everyone wants freedom from their burdens. Many want to keep their controlled scene; Martha did. Martha was busy. How many of you think it would be fun to be around Martha? Jesus has to give her a shot. Your world is all about you and you keep it nice and orderly. Someone might come into your world that messes things up, and you do all you can to keep them away. You're angry with your sister because she won't do what you want. She sits and hears the Word and you're going around trying to make your own righteousness. You're a grumbler just like the older brother who was killing his father. When you're in contention with your father and putting him on the defensive, you hate your father. Martha is like what I would be naturally; God is useful to me, an appendage for me, until my neighbor won't do what I want.

The kingdom of heaven is also like a party. We can't have a party here. There would be too much wasted food and champagne bottles all over the place. God is into parties. The last shall be first. Those who came at the 11th hour will get paid the same. The father said to the older son, "What are you complaining about? Everything I have is yours. I was always into parties and forgiving wayward sons. But you can't forgive someone who hasn't sinned. You can, but they won't receive it for they are still judging the younger son and killing the father.

Exodus - they wanted to kill Moses because they couldn't get at God.

I want to put it into your mind how easy it is to grumble. The kingdom of heaven is like a householder who can do what he wants with what is his.

Page 174, The Preached God - essays and messages by Gerhard O. Forde, what he was doing just before he died. It is such good news for you.

The trouble...universal law...more difficult...Those who follow, can't.

The trouble is the idea of a universal law built into the human psyche turns out to be even more difficult to put up with than an objective divine law. Those who followed Kant — Hegel, Schleiermacher, Feuerbach, Marx, etc. — all saw that in one way or another.

What is being preached today in the name of Law? Morality, relative, cultural morality? You should be a good person, and do this or that, and your life will straighten out and you'll get more and be happier. This has nothing to do with Jesus.

Once, God was safely enthroned in heaven where he only occasionally bothered folks. Now, as Emil Fackenheim put it, he has left his throne and taken up residence bag and baggage in the pious Protestant heart where he can really do some damage. For now the self is really trapped. The sought-for good news has been virtually identified with the universal moral law. Any sort of help, any word from outside fades from sight.

Why do I have to hear this word this morning, I've got God within me, I've got the Holy Ghost? When you hear someone talking a lot about the Holy Ghost, you can be sure he's not there. The Spirit showed me. Well, how does that line up with the Word of God?

he has left his throne and taken up residence bag and baggage in the pious Protestant heart where he can really do some damage. For now the self is really trapped. The sought-for good news has been virtually identified with the universal moral law. Any sort of help, any word from outside fades from sight. And that means that there is no way out for the self except some kind of revolt.

If you have an employer, he can be an enemy to you. They expect excellence and they don't get it and they become a threat.

Against what? Against law, basi

everyone into the vortex of its own pain.

Pity is substituted for justice. And pastors who like to look upon themselves as "need-fulfillers" are of course gobbled up, often without a trace. Or, perhaps, a better analogy is that the self is a black hole, endlessly sucking everything into itself and eventually crushing it,

People go around being jealous - someone got something they didn't get; some family got something they didn't get. Wait a minute! It's the 11th hour. I want to know what you got.

When people are caught up in a complaint or a murmur that is all they can think about. All they think about is trying to justify themselves and try to put the false burden on someone else. Martha tries to put her own burden onto Mary, and then eventually on our Lord. Her problem: She never saw Jesus. Have you ever seen him? Or, have you seen a need-filler, an apparatus, someone to fulfill your god-project, your wish dream? Jesus puts an end to our god-projects - everything we're striving to hold together. You don't think Martha saw Jesus, do you? What did she see? She saw someone who wasn't doing what she thought He should do. She never saw Him. She was too busy to sit at His feet and hear His Word, and I'm just like her, every day. If it weren't for God's grace, we'd never get out of it, we'd never be Mary. There is one of me who is offended with God, the God who lives in you. She was offended with her sister. Have you ever been offended with someone because they won't do what you know they should to help you? You don't think I'd judge you, do you?

They complained and grumbled and murmured, and said, "Give me." The Scripture said that he made it all pointless.

Romans 8:32 (KJV) He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Some things happen in my life because I'm reaping for sowing to the flesh. But I know this also, that all things work together for good. I've had some things happen in my life in the last 10 years that I did not understand at all. I did all I knew to do and still things happened. I may have been ignorant, or wrong, or sinning, but in my heart I was doing what I knew to do. But I could never have believed God loved me that much, to allow the rain to fall on the just and the sun to shine on the unjust.

We are driven to get the Scriptures in our heart. How could understand the book of Job or Psalm 107 without experiencing it. This is why I don't want to put a big thing on children. I'd rather they play ping pong and let them be children. Hopefully, as they grow older, things will be revealed to them.

Gen - God's Children - they had perfect parents and it did not help. They ate of the tree of knowledge in a desire to escape their vocations. Creation wasn't good enough for them. They wanted to become gods. They listen to the voice of the serpent.

How long have you been laboring in your father's vineyard?

Isa 55:8-9 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

I think where the Church has to come to is found in 2nd Chronicles 20. A person, who murmurs and has a continual complaint, is turned inward and is like the vortex of a black hole, they are idolaters. They're trying to make a lesser god of you so that you can fill their needs. The place you come to is that you don't want to use anyone, anytime, whatsoever. People are allowed to do exactly what they want to do. For freedom, Christ came into the world. Sometimes the quickest road to Christ is when people get into sin. If you've been spared of it, you should thank God because you don't know the hell and torment some people live in. You think the younger brother had a good time? The leanness of his soul could have lasted as long as Joseph's brothers - 20 years. If it hasn't happened to you, don't think you've missed anything but hell and death. Warning - what a man sows he reaps. We are to warn one another. God is not playing around, we just thought he was.

Jehoshaphat is invaded by Moab. The armies are superior and whole nations are coming against them.

2 Chron. 20:6-12 (KJV) And said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? [7] Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? [8] And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, [9] If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. [10] And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; [11] Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. [12] O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.

The problem with some of you is that you know what to do to keep your nest feathered, but there is no peace or rest in the nest. God is not saying you can't have that, but he is saying, the way I hear it, a lot of people have answers because they don't know the problem. They have not come to utter despair because they think the problem is; I don't have enough money, people don't listen to me enough, if I had a better car, gas is too high, if only my children would be better... If you got all of these things taken care of today, one hundred others would come. How many of you have one thing on your mind continuously? It could be demonic. We don't war against flesh and blood. We think that if we just had the right theology and spoke everything perfectly, the pastor would shape up. If people don't want to help you, I'd ask you why not. Would you swallow them up? Would you be the vortex of the black hole? Are you putting your hope in man and not in God? You're looking for the gracious neighbor and not the gracious God? Are you trying to straighten things out for other people? God has devices in the world today.

I can deal with sin, but you might not want to hear about sin. So what I'd like to recommend is that you find a good psychiatrist. It's all over. I don't want to deal with it. If you want to come and hear about sin and forgiveness, then okay. But if you don't want to hear about your sin, then you don't want to hear about forgiveness. What you'll hear from me is law. If you've been putting your hope in man, or self, which it usually is, you're always being let down because people are not God. Some of you are quite good putting false burdens on others. There is no freedom for you in any of that, just contention. It could be demonic and you might not be aware of the deception. Our war is not with flesh and blood. Therefore the weapons you've been given, the strength of the Holy Spirit, you might not be fighting with.

2 Cor. 10:4-5 (KJV) (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) [5] Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

The only thing to get right is to flee to Jesus. Become Romans 7 revisited every day. Why? The reason you still think you can handle your life, no matter what sign you pass under, is because you don't know how big the problem is. If I could only... This may all be good, but our hope is no longer to be in ourselves but in God who raises the dead and is sufficient for every problem. Most of our problems stem from wanting to control our lives and the lives of others. This is sin which leads to covetousness and jealousy.

Wait a minute, we worked all day, they only worked one hour, and they got the same. There will come a time when you'll know that God can do what He wants with what is His. You are His. Are you putting your hope in money, riches, your job, your house? Watch out, someone might come in and track mud on the new carpets.

Martha, my dear... Jesus loved Martha, aren't you glad? She was burdened, falsely burdened. And God has come to say unto you heavy laden, not just cruising by in your great life, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Matthew 11:28-30 (KJV)

Martha can't come because she still has hope in a little more hard work, doing more, getting up early, etc Whose vineyard do you think she's working in? Her own vineyard of sour grapes. She is not looking to Jesus as the author and finisher of her salvation, but to her own devices, to herself. She is a grumbler and a complainer, a vortex. Jesus, himself, won't go there, and she is resentful all the more. He won't do what she wants. Don't you forgive me? I thought you were a forgiving God, a God of love? Mary has chosen the better part. Mary is not all burdened down; you are.

What about these workers in the vineyard? This is a parable of complaints just like the older brother, because God, the father, won't do what he wants. It is a parable of what our neighbor is supposed to do for you; make you happy, pay your bills, make your children be good, keep you distracted... Is that what God is supposed to do, Martha, so you won't have to look at the truth? One thing God is not supposed to do is find sin in you today. Martha didn't even look to him. We are to look to him for every good in our lives, not to our neighbor. We put it on our neighbor, the church, the people around us, until we don't. We look for the gracious neighbor. This is idolatry. We have expectations, a lust list or a wish list if you want, and we're searching for a gracious neighbor. Unless this is put to an end, we will end up bitter and cynical like Martha, who will never blame herself.

The good news: The torment Martha lives in can come to an end. We live in an age when the air we breathe is filled with complaining. The spirit of this age is a continual complaint. There is no peace in it.

What is church really about then? Meeting heartfelt needs? The church can help me with my sin and the forgiveness of it. Looking to the gracious neighbor can be idolatry, if you're not

looking to God. God is our provider, not men.

The Preached God, by Gerhard O. Forde

The Gracious Neighbor

What's going on anyway? Here we are, always talking about the new freedom, beautiful people, meaningful relationships, community, celebrat

den to tell you that Jesus is, and to say that all you need to feel is the bread on your lips and the wine in your throat. Maybe, in the world's economy, that doesn't seem like much, but in the end, when it comes to grace, my friend, that's about all you've got!

But then, if you are at all grasped by that, perhaps you can turn back from your impetuous quest and look for that not-so-gracious neighbor and have pity. For, having a gracious God, you are not to lay that burden on anyone else: "For I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your friends, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

If we listen carefully, I think we can hear even in that thunder the promise of a gracious God who plans to have his way with us at last.

The Gentiles come and work, and the sinners come in at the last hour and get paid the same. How many of you realize that it doesn't matter where you've been in the vineyard for the first 9 hours, all that matters is the gracious God is coming and saying that all He did for us in His Son, He has given to us in the penny – the day's wages – everything. It will take you an eternity to receive all that God has done in Christ. He has forgiven us and imputed to us His very righteousness. He has washed us. He has given us His body and His blood. He has baptized us and continues to baptize us daily, and give us Himself, daily.

I want to warn you about people who get jealous or envious of you, like me. The creative word for them is lost. The gifts of God that He has given have been rejected and the gifts that were accepted are buried under the offence of, No one every does enough for me. There is another story. A man was at the pool of Bethesda, a crippled man, and Jesus walked by. In this pool, an

angel came down and when the waters were stirred he who got into the pool first got healed. What did the man say to Jesus? No man will help me. No man can help you. I want to repeat; if you have the answer, you haven't seen the severity of the problem. You need a God who raises the dead because there is a death sentence on Adam.

Paul – we were pressed out so we would not hope in ourselves but in God who raises the dead. Do you have a bigger problem than Lazarus? Was that too big a problem for Jesus? Jesus asked the man at the pool, “Would you be healed?” God is asking you that today. Would you be healed? Would you be made whole?

What would I have to give up? My car? My donkeys? Rise up and walk! Jesus is greater than the angel. He's great than the pool. He's the Word of God. Those who don't receive will look at their neighbors and are continually at odds with their neighbors, no matter if they are across the street or in the house. They turn inward and all the creative word of God that is in them, the gifts God has given them, are buried. All they can think about is their offence, and they are stopped. All they can think about is that they have no man to help them. Everyone seems to be doing pretty good around here. Where was I when God passed out the blessings? Maybe you were Martha, or working all those years, or working in the fields all day.

All your sins, you that have come, you that are last, if you just got here this second, you are first. Where should we look and how should we see our neighbor from this time forth? Maybe we could have a little mercy, and give our neighbor a break. Maybe we'd say, "I can love my not so gracious neighbor because he or she is a lot like me." "Maybe I can love people that aren't as gracious as God, even." Wouldn't that be something? Look where you could start.

May the grace of God fill your hearts toward your neighbors, to seek their good, seek the wealth of others? Not because you have to or because they're demanding for if they are demanding you can't give it to them. Mary got the better part and it won't be taken from her, now remember every day who you are in the story. Martha loved Jesus and Jesus loved Martha. There will come a point in your life where you will be like Peter out fishing, and the Lord will ask you, "Do you love me?" Could we trust him that even going through what our ships are always going through, that he is with us? Yes, because he has given us that gift.

I pray that we'd receive the 11th hour wage - everything. Did you know the older brother received the same as the younger brother? Everything I have is yours, I'm with you always.

The older brother wouldn't let it go. He wanted to be in control of everything and he didn't trust his father. What if you just let it all go?

All that God has is yours right now. You are forgiven sons and daughters. Knowing this should help you want to be good at whatever vocation the Lord leads you to, and to be as good as you could be at it. You start right where you're at - in your homes.

Leaving here today, you've partaken of the body and blood of Christ. I want to declare to you as your pastor, that I forgive all your sins, whether they're against your neighbor, God, me, or anyone; all your known or forgotten sin; the sins you're afraid to look at and the ones that condemn you, I forgive them all, for Christ's sake.

AMEN

rection. What do you suppose "the neighbor" out there is trying to say to us in all this? Perhaps that he or she just doesn't want our burden, and scornfully spurns our quest

Lament. 2:14 (KJV) Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.

They have not discovered your iniquity to turn away your captivity. Without my iniquity being discovered, there is no forgiveness. Who have you been putting hope in besides Jesus? Who have you been angry with? Did they let you down? Are you angry about it? Some people even get bitter about it. How would you like to marry someone you could never do enough for? Don't marry a human being. Get yourself a good yellow lab. They are thankful. You throw them a bone 100 thousand times a day, and they'll come back wagging their tails.

Lament. 2:14 (KJV) Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.

What are false burdens? How many of you pick up false burdens? How many of you still operate under the law? The law will weigh you down and become the great burden. Christ is the end of the law, the end of you thinking you can find any righteousness by using the law. Those who live by the law will force you to live by the law, because they have hope in the law as far as keeping it goes. They don't see the second use of the law - to lead us to Christ - because we see our utter inability to keep it. Why come to Christ if you're keeping the law

and are a good boy? The good didn't come to Christ. Christ died for the ungodly - really bad people. The really bad people are good, in their own heads. Good people are Pharisees, Scribes and Pharisees. Who was he telling the parable of the vineyard to? Those who had been on duty 1,000 or 11,000 years. Christ died for them too. Christ died for the older brother.

"Everything I have is yours and I'm with you always." The older receives the full inheritance of what we call everything. The father said it was right that they celebrate because the younger brother was dead, cut off, separated from all that you could call life, was alive again.

Where is your hope today?

— that perhaps even he or she is just another terrifying mask of the deus absconditus, the God of wrath? Were you to ask, the neighbor may well protest: "having lost God, it's not fair to expect grace from me. I'm only dying, as you are! Gimme a break!" Therein lies the omnipresent contemporary plea for mercy: "Gimme a break!" Well then, if we can't find a world full of gracious neighbors, can we not find some at least? Where to look? Even among the people of God it seems no different; we find the same troubles among them.

Well, okay then, if the quest out there in the world seems discourag

everyone into the vortex of its own pain.

All truth is reduced to lust.

Your civil problems, in the left-handed realm, are not my problems. If you live in Washington and you don't like the weather, you should move. If you don't like working in Seattle because of the traffic you should get another job. If you don't like the way the school regulates what we learn and accountability for excellence, you should go to another school. Let's put the responsibility where it lies.

Gal 6:5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

Of course, if it is within your power to help someone... But a lot of people want to murmur and complain so you will reject them and then they can justify themselves and blame everything on their rejection. You call a spade a spade or a heart a heart, and you're negative.

It's all over. I can laugh at some of it. When are you going to meet my heartfelt needs? I am.

The biggest need is to be shown our sin and then to be forgiven. Who is Martha about? Who is Exodus 15 about? Who are the laborers? We'll see. Who are the ones who are mad about the people who got paid the same? Who is the older brother mad at? His father? A lost sheep, a lost

coin, and a lost son - all three, lost, just like us. Every day, I still am lost and have to be found. I don't find Him - He finds me. Forget your decision theology. If you had a brain, you'd get far away from Jesus, if you're a natural man.

We do not understand the doctrine of two total states - totally depraved sinners, one of us; and on the other hand, one of us a new creation that cannot sin. Whatever is born of God cannot sin. But this is eschatological too. Forde talks about trying to storm the eschatological realm prematurely. It is Heaven, where there is no law because there is no necessity for the law. Everyone delights to do God's will. I know the realms cross over, but you don't have any problems in Heaven where you are seated right now, in heavenly places, with Christ Jesus. Do you have any problems in the heavenly realm? You cannot be improved upon. The father sees you perfectly now. The righteousness of Christ has been imputed to you, even now, in this world. It applies even in this realm. In the walking out of it, you'll find there are two. You'll find you really like the new creation better.

So we do not need to grovel about in that too long. The self becomes a whirlpool of need, always trying to draw ev

ness? I read somewhere the other day about how we are supposed to be "sacraments of salvation" for one another. My goodness! That all sounds nice, but what about when we get down to actual cases?

Who is the object of your LOVE? Were you putting your hope in your neighbor and they let you down?

Remember, God is one who says that you who are heavy laden, and there is a heaviness in your heart over the burden of sin, you could receive all Jesus died for you to have - every single law fulfilled and that accredited to your account - now. You get a God who gave His only son, and one who will not withhold any good thing from you.

Is this the kind of people you'd hope in? Are we any better than the heathen?

Romans 3:9-19 (KJV) What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; [10] As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: [11] There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. [12] They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. [13] Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues

they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: [14] Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: [15] Their feet are swift to shed blood: [16] Destruction and misery are in their ways: [17] And the way of peace have they not known: [18] There is no fear of God before their eyes.

[19] Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Is this who you're putting hope in? There is a Christ in you and I can trust that Christ. I see that Christ in you, but I also see another.

Galatians 6:3-5 (KJV) For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. [4] But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. [5] For every man shall bear his own burden.

You brothers do help one another, but it should be received in gratitude, not demand it or putting it on someone.

Is not the pastor supposed to be a kind of professional gra

son." By extension, a fat corpse is a differently sized non-living person.⁶

Language itself slips and falls out of place. One must always think, act, and speak "positively" — something promoted, alas, and probably introduced into popular parlance by some of the church's well-known clergy. These clergy go about conducting seminars, I understand, for a fat fee, of course, on the glories of positive thinking for business. Think of it! This is what has come of the gospel. But some are beginning to smell a rat. As Donald Smith put it recently in a Wall Street Journal column, "A Positive Attitude? Bah, Humbug!"

In business parlance positive means that people are not supposed to object — ever.

It is one of the most manipulative phrases ever conceived, and it is more often used to club heads than to extract excellence. To object is to be negative, the all-purpose no-no of the century.⁷

He concludes by saying:

I believe that the greatest contribution anyone can make is to kill a bad idea. When this power is curtailed, everyone loses because stupidity and inefficiency are allowed to grow and flourish.

In the school, it's all over. You did that homework? It stinks! We want to be negative about certain things. Business is a good place for vocation to operate. We want to be real negative in business. When you see schlock, you want to call it what it is, whether it is in communication, blaming, no matter what it is.

We live in a world where people think we may be deemed too negative. Negative produces a bad self-image.

But now the floor has rotted away and we have fallen into the basement, the dank darkness of the self groping to find itself. The older suspicions about human nature are deemed too negative. They produce a bad self-image. Psychologists complain that social restraint promotes re

SOURCE