

Jesus Is Enough

by Bayless Conley

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Are you ready? Alright, I got a message. We are dealing with the book of Colossians. It's interesting the city of Colossae was located about 100 miles east of Ephesus in the Lycus Valley in what is modern-day Turkey. There were two other cities that were nearby, Laodicea and Hierapolis. All three of the cities had churches established in them. And according to the book of Colossians, the apostle Paul also wrote a letter to the church of the Laodiceans, but it has been lost to history. We don't know what happened to the letter or where it went, but just an interesting thing.

And at one time, all three of these cities were equal in importance. But eventually, Laodicea and Hierapolis eclipsed Colossae in importance, to where even when Paul wrote the epistle to the church in the city of Colossae, it was not a very important city, not as far as politics or trade or tourism or anything else. In fact, today, if you go there by the Lycus River where these cities existed, there are amazing ruins in the sights of Laodicea and Hierapolis.

There are the ruins of stadiums. There are the ruins of theaters, of public baths. But they really are not even sure where the city of Colossae was. They're just not quite sure. By AD 400, the city didn't even exist. Somebody says, "Well, so what?" Well, here's the thing. Paul wrote a very important letter to an unimportant city. But it was not unimportant to God, and you are not unimportant to God. They may not be able to pinpoint where Colossae was, but God knows exactly where you are, exactly where you are.

We found, in the last few weeks, as we covered chapter 1, that the church at Colossae was being attacked by false teachers. They were saying that Jesus alone was not enough, that He was a good starting point, but now it was time to move into the deeper things of God. And these teachers said, "We alone have the secrets, and we alone can initiate you into these deeper things." They claimed to have had visions from angels, angels greater than Jesus. I think it really appealed to people's egos. They were claiming, again, that they alone could bring people into these deeper mysteries of God. And we come now to chapter 2 and verse 1. Paul writes this. He said,

¹ For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.

The word conflict is *agon*, the Greek word. It's where we get our English word, agony. He said, "I've had not just a conflict, but a great conflict. I've been in great agony, an agonizing struggle. I've been fighting a hard battle for the believers in these cities." Wait a minute, when Paul wrote this letter, he was in a Roman prison. What kind of a battle, what kind of an agonizing struggle is he having for these churches of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae? It was an agonizing struggle in prayer.

Jesus Is Enough

The Living Bible, just like the Message Bible, and many of you have one or both of those; they are not translations per se. They're paraphrases. What they attempt to do is not to translate the Scripture word for word, but they say, okay, we're going to translate ideas and thoughts; that if Jesus or Paul or Peter, what they're trying to communicate, what they said in their day if we were to say that today, how would we capture that? How would we express that thought? That's what a paraphrase does.

I'd like to read to you Colossians 2:1 from the Living Bible because a number of the verses that we're going to deal with today, the Living Bible, the paraphrase, actually got it exactly right. The Living Bible says this,

¹ I wish you could know how much I have struggled in prayer for you and for the church at Laodicea and for my many other friends who have never known me personally.

He wrestled for them in prayer, which is no small thing. Don't ever say, well, all we can do is pray. James 5:16 says,

¹⁶ The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Not little. Avails much. The Amplified Bible says this that it makes tremendous power available, dynamic, and it's working. Prayer. TL Osborn—some of you may know the name, some of you may not. He used to speak at Cottonwood fairly often. He was a great missionary evangelist back in the '50s, '60s, '70s, and on into the beginning of the '80s. He held massive salvation healing campaigns around the world. Throughout Africa, just about every African nation, throughout Asia, throughout Europe. Still, when I travel today, in different regions of the world, I meet people that were saved in TL Osborn crusades or people whose lives were impacted.

In fact, I remember I was in the Netherlands, spending the day with Brother Andrew. If you've never read the book "God's Smuggler," you should read it. It's about him. I was spending the day with Brother Andrew and a friend of his. And his friend is telling me the story of when TL was holding a campaign in The Hague many years before. He said, "I was in the back of the crowd. I was a nominal Christian. There was a man sitting by me who was completely blind. Stone-blind."

Says, "When TL Osborn prayed the mass healing prayer, the man's eyes opened up right in front of me." He said, "I spent the whole night crying and walking the streets of my city and praying." He said, "It opened up a whole new world to me and changed my life." So TL would have these amazing crusades, 50,000, 100,000, 150,000 people. And I was listening to the man; I think his title was crusade director. It was his son-in-law that did this for him for a period of time.

He would have to go into these countries, whether it was in Indonesia or somewhere in India or it might be in Europe or in some African nation. He had to go in ahead of time and secure the stadium or the 50-acre plot of ground where they could have an outdoor crusade. He had to arrange for all the sound equipment in the staging and do his best to get the churches to work together. He said there were always language barriers. He said, "I had to meet city officials. Many of them wanted bribes. There was all sorts of opposition."

He said, "So many times, we'd be trying to make this thing happen, and we would hit an impasse. Barriers that we could not get around. It just looked like the crusade wasn't going

Jesus Is Enough

to happen.” I still remember to this day what he said. He said, “Invariably, I would end up back at my hotel room, on my knees, agonizing in prayer, and God would always make a way. He would always open up a way where there was no way.” In Romans, it says the Holy Spirit will help us to intercede when that kind of praying is necessary. Let me read the verse to you, Romans 8:26,

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The Spirit helps our infirmities, or weaknesses. The word “weakness” it’s also translated “infirmity,” but it basically boils down to this: because of my weakness, I have an inability to produce results.

I can’t deal with the problem. It’s too big. It’s too complex. I don’t have the strength. I don’t have the resource. I cannot handle this. It says the Spirit helps us. And the word “help” there, it’s actually a triple compound word in Greek. Three thoughts. First thought is to take hold, second thought, together with, third thought, against. To take hold, together with, against. That’s what that word literally means, where it says the Spirit will help us.

You see this piano up here. All right, let’s say I have to have this moved from this side of the stage to the other. It has to be moved. It’s my job to move it, and I can’t. I do not have the strength. But if I get four or five strong men out here, they’ll take hold together with me against the weight of this piano, and then it can be moved, something I couldn’t do on my own. The Holy Spirit will do the same thing, whether it’s a family situation, a national situation, a health situation.

When we don’t know what to pray for as we ought. When we don’t have the strength, He will take hold together with us against our inability to produce results, and He will see that thing is moved. He will see that that thing is done. Sometimes we need to pray that way. We need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. We need to ask Him for His help.

I got a phone call one day. It was in the office. It was a guy that occasionally attended church. This is years ago. He said, “Look, my brother and his girlfriend, I’ve talked him into coming to see you. Will you meet with him tonight?” I said, “Yes, sure.” His brother was in an outlaw biker gang, and he’d been shot a number of times and done the same thing to other people. He was a violent guy.

I agreed to meet with them. Eight o’clock at night, I meet with them at the church. They come sit in my office, this biker guy and his girlfriend. She’s like five, six months pregnant. They’re both heroin addicts. I said, “Why are you guys here?” She said, “Well, I’ve been a heroin addict for years.” They’d both shot up before they’d come in to see me. Both of them were higher than a kite when they’re sitting in my office, scratching at their needle marks. And she said, “I’ve been a heroin addict for years.”

She said, “I’ve used heroin every day since I got pregnant.” Five, six months pregnant. She said, “The doctor said that my baby’s going to be abnormal and that it’s going to be born addicted to heroin.” She said, “I’m going to abort the baby, but my boyfriend’s brother said we need to come talk to you.” I talked to him, and I did all I could to convince them to keep that baby. About 45 minutes later, she said, “Thanks. This is a waste of time. I’m going tomorrow, and I’m going to terminate this pregnancy.”

Jesus Is Enough

So I get home. It's, I don't know, 9:30. I talk to Janet a little while, and I get in bed. As I'm lying in bed, I was seized with the deepest compassion I've ever felt in my life for the only innocent person in the story, that little baby. I began to sob, and I cried, and I cried, and I pled with God for the life of that child. I groaned, and I prayed, and I sobbed for probably 45 minutes, and it wasn't just me. Someone greater than me had taken hold together with me. It's the way you want to pray your whole life but seldom do.

About 45 minutes later, I just felt the burden lift and went on to sleep. I didn't see that guy in church for quite a while. Finally, months later, I ran into him. I said, "Hey, whatever happened with your brother's girlfriend and the baby?" He said, "Pastor, I should have told you. It's a miracle." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you saw them that night. The next day they went to the abortion clinic. As she's walking up the steps to go inside, she suddenly changed her mind, told my brother, 'I'm keeping the baby.'" Said, "Here's the miracle, the baby was born completely normal, not addicted to heroin."

No trace of heroin. Completely normal. Now, I don't know if they gave it up for adoption or what happened. But my friend, the Holy Spirit can help us pray like that. It's not hopeless if you can pray. Your children are not hopeless as long as you can pray. It's not hopeless for your unsaved neighbors if you can pray. It is not hopeless for our country as long as we can pray. These battles will be won by an army that marches on its knees.

Paul said, "I have this great struggle in prayer for you." Now, what was Paul after as he struggled in prayer? What did he pray as he agonized over these believers in the Lycus Valley? I'm just going to keep reading for the next few verses from the Living Bible as we move on. Colossians 2:2-3,

² This is what I have asked of God for you: that you will be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love, and that you will have the rich experience of knowing Christ with real certainty and clear understanding. For God's secret plan, now at last made known, is Christ himself. ³ In him lie hidden all the mighty, untapped treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

He asked God for three things for them. Number one, that they would be encouraged. That's a Greek word that historically is used to put the fight back into a soldier that has been discouraged. It's the prayer for a person facing a difficult situation to become courageous in God. Jesus told Peter, He said, "Peter, look, Satan has desired to sift you like wheat, but I've prayed for you that your faith would not fail." It's the same idea.

The second thing he prayed was for unity among them. He prayed that they would be knit together by strong ties of love. Did you know love is the most unifying force in the world, even more than agreement? Love is more important to unity than agreement is. Now, agreement is important. As believers, obviously, we need to have agreement when it comes to the major things if we're going to walk in unity.

The deity of Christ, we have to have agreement there. The sacrificial death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, the reality of Heaven, the reality of Hell. If you don't agree concerning those things, we're not going to have fellowship. There's not going to be unity with us. When it comes to minor things, all right, you believe in a mid-trib rapture of the church. I believe in a pretribulation rapture of the church. We can get along. One of us is going to be right. One of

Jesus Is Enough

us is going to be wrong. We'll find out. Let's go win some souls. Let's worship together. We can have unity. We can walk in love.

When it comes to what day to worship on, I have a friend who has got a great church, a soul-winning church. They pray for the sick, but he is convinced that Saturday is the day to gather on. Our main gatherings are on Sunday. You know what? I have great fellowship with this guy. He's a friend. There's nothing weird about it. We agree on the major things. I happen to think every day is the same. Sunday's great, but I think it'd be just fine if we gathered on Monday. That's my heart. That's where I'm at. He says, "Fine, Bayless, I think Saturday's the day." I said, "Great, good for you." By contrast, I remember I got on a plane one day. Person next to me, I struck up a conversation, and they said, "What do you do?" I said, "I'm a pastor." First question, what day do you gather on?

When they found out it wasn't Saturday, man, they lit into me. Wanted to pick a fight. It escalated. I had to shut it down and said, "Look, we're done talking. I'm sorry." Just immediate division on their part. Listen, if you are going to create division and be hostile to a blood-washed brother or sister because they voted for someone different than you, you're better than that. You're better than that.

Janet and I, we agree on all the major stuff of life. I married a really strong-willed woman, however, and we do not see eye to eye on everything. But we have unity because we love each other. Paul prayed they'd be tied together with these strong ties of love. The third thing he prayed that they would be assured that Jesus was enough. Let me pick it up again from the middle of verses 2-3,

² And that you will have the rich experience of knowing Christ with real certainty and clear understanding. For God's secret plan, now at last made known, is Christ himself.

³ In him lie hidden all the mighty, untapped treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Now, all of the Colossian believers their ears would've perked up when they heard this. Because these false teachers, it was like secret this and secret that, a secret handshake, secret knowledge, this mystery. And Paul says, "All right, listen, here's God's secret: It's Jesus, and everything you need, all wisdom, all knowledge is in Him, and you don't need anything else."

But those treasures of wisdom and knowledge, it said, they're hidden in Him. It's not like chunks of gold nuggets on the surface that you can just pick up casually with no effort. We need to press in and dig down in our relationship with Him.

There's different levels of knowing a person. There are a lot of people here today. We recognize one another. I see you. You see me. It's like, "Hey." You go to church, I go to church, we don't know much about each other, but you say, "I know him. I know her."

There's other people; I know your name. You know my name. You know my kids' names, and I might know a little bit about you. We've had some conversations. Then there's other people that know me much better. They've got a nickname for me, and I got a nickname for them. They know what I like and what I don't like and what I do and what I don't do. Then there's Janet, my wife. She knows me better than anyone. But there's still more to know about Bayless Conley, but those are all different levels of knowing me. Well, friend, there are endless levels of knowing Jesus. Endless. In verse 4, he said,

Jesus Is Enough

⁴ I am saying this because I am afraid that someone may fool you with smooth talk.

In other words, saying that Jesus alone is insufficient if you want to experience the deeper things of God. Let me read on. These verses will be on the screen. Pay attention to them. I want to read verses 5-10. He said,

⁵ For though I am far away from you my heart is with you, happy because you are getting along so well, happy because of your strong faith in Christ.

Overall, the church was doing quite well. Verse 6,

⁶ And now just as you trusted Christ to save you, trust him, too, for each day's problems; live in vital union with him. ⁷ Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him. See that you go on growing in the Lord, and become strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with joy and thanksgiving for all he has done. ⁸ Don't let others spoil your faith and joy with their philosophies, their wrong and shallow answers built on men's thoughts and ideas, instead of on what Christ has said. ⁹ For in Christ there is all of God in a human body; ¹⁰ so you have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power.

My friend, in Christ, in Jesus dwells the fullness of God, all of God in a human body. He is a river with no banks that has no beginning and no end. He is a sea with no shores. He spans the heavens with a palm of His hand, and He spoke creation into existence with His words, and you want something deeper? You say you had a revelation from an angel? He made the angels. He is the highest ruling authority.

And you ask, "All right, how could someone fall away or be led astray from Jesus and from the truth of the gospel?" Well, he gives two reasons here. The first one, they're fooled with smooth talk. It literally means they've been beguiled with smooth talk, just like the serpent did to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Romans 16:17 and 18 says this,

¹⁷ Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. ¹⁸ For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

By avoiding them, you avoid their smooth speech and flattering words. That's just what the devil did. In the garden, there's Eve. Serpent's talking to her and says, "Hey, you can be just like God. You can have this special knowledge. Eve, you have so much potential." Flattery. Listen, flattery's a lot like perfume. Smells great, but you better not swallow it.

A man came to me some time ago who had been saved here at Cottonwood Church. Had his life changed here. I know a bit about him, knew his story, amazing story of redemption, but he came to me some time ago and said he had received some special insight, and now he and other select few were part of an elite remnant. My relationship with Jesus as it stands now was not enough. I had not been initiated into the secret knowledge that he had. Now, listen, this is not Colossae 2000 years ago. This is Cottonwood today.

I've got another friend. Actually was friends with him and his wife. I've used them numerous times by way of illustration without naming them for something that God used them in to really

Jesus Is Enough

impact some global leaders. I had the thought just recently. I've lost touch with him. It's been years. Said I'm going to find out what they're doing. So I get on the internet, and I'm looking. I found him. Well, he and his wife aren't together anymore, and from everything I could see, he's with another men's wife.

She's still married to somebody else, but apparently, she's with him. Now he's into this deeper knowledge, and he has a following. He basically says, "Jesus is all well and good, but He's just a starting point. Jesus discovered this inner light that was in Him, but every human being has this inner light, and they just need to discover it as Jesus discovered it." He said, "I have the method to bring you into this higher knowledge." He's a cult leader.

Again, this is not thousands of years ago in the Lycus Valley. This is here and now today. Deceived. 1 Timothy 4, Paul said, in the last days, some will depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Some will depart from the faith giving heed. The deception starts when you give heed. When you begin to listen to things that you know are wrong, it gives a seducing spirit access to your mind. Suddenly, that which you previously knew to be wrong now begins to appeal to you and suddenly makes sense. Proverbs 19:27, the Living Bible says,

²⁷ Stop listening to teaching that contradicts what you know is right.

So the first way people get led astray to fall away from Christ is they give heed to smooth, flattering talk. Second reason is because of a failure to become deeply rooted in their personal relationship with Jesus. We read in verse 7 to let your roots go down into Him, Jesus. Everybody say, "Him."

Let your roots go down into Him. Draw up nourishment from Him. In verse 6, He said, "Live in vital union with Him." We need to press in and dig deeper and get to know Him more through prayerfully spending time in His Word, through spending time on our knees in prayer, and by hanging out with people that know Him better than we do. Jesus said these words in Luke 6:47-48,

⁴⁷ Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug deep.

Everybody say, "Dug deep." He's not talking about something shallow here. He built his house, and he dug deep, and laid the foundation on the rock.

⁴⁸ And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.

Jesus is talking about a relationship here. He said, "Whoever comes to Me and hears and listens and then does what I say puts it into practice." You come to Him. Jesus wants you to come to Him, to get on your knees and open your Bible, say, "Lord speak to me," and to pray, to come to Him and to listen and then to do. When you do that, your roots begin to go down deeper and deeper as you daily live in vital union with Him. "I'm coming. Jesus, I'm here. I don't feel like You're anywhere in the room, but I'm here. I'm going to read Your Word, and I'm going to worship You, and I'm going to talk to You, and I'm going to listen."

Jesus uses this analogy, like this guy that built his house on the rock. This building we're in right now and the other buildings on the campus here, we had to put pilings down in the ground

Jesus Is Enough

before we could even pour the pads. We put down, at great expense, I will say, 450 pilings. They're 40 feet deep, filled with steel rebar and cement. 450 of them, 40 feet deep each, before we even poured the pad for the foundation.

Because we did that, we were able to build up. We were able to erect. We were able to grow. If we want to grow in our relationship with God, if we want to build up, we have to sink roots down into our relationship with Him.

There are some people that are rooted in the social aspects of church, which is good. We need people. We are social creatures. We need community. But that alone cannot bring you to spiritual maturity. For those whose roots are primarily there when the storm comes, they are not likely to survive.

I love the music and the level of excellent stage production that many churches have, that we have here. I think what we do for Christ, it needs to be done excellently. They said of Jesus, "He's done all things well." The Bible says of Daniel, he was promoted because he had an excellent spirit. In fact, it's one of our pillars here.

Our five pillars of Cottonwood: Grace, G-R-A-C-E.
G—God's Word. Everything we do revolves around that.
R—Reaching the lost. That's one of the pillars here.
A—All generations working together.
C—Community
E—Excellence

What we do for Christ, we should do it with excellence. But when it comes to the worship and the stage production, which I love, I think there's a danger there as well. As I said, I travel a lot. And there are tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of young people around the world whose lives revolve around that, meaning around the excitement when we gather and worship. Around the emotion, around the synergy of the crowd, the vibe that happens. And they forget that really, truly, there's only an audience of One, and it's about Him.

Thank God for the vibe and the synergy of the crowd and all that. But if your roots are there, listen, if the preacher messes up and commits adultery, you'll be out the door. When hard times come, you're not going to make it because your roots are in the wrong place. They need to be in a deep personal relationship with Jesus. Then it doesn't matter what happens.

I got saved, as most of you know, you've heard me, I had major problems with substance abuse and alcoholism for a long time: a long time, years and years and years. I got saved in a street mission. I was the only one that went forward in that service. I cried like a child for probably 15 or 20 minutes. This big guy held me, and I just put my head on his chest and sobbed. I didn't know everything, but I knew Jesus was real. I started going to a little Pentecostal church. We affectionately called it the Tab. It was Faith Tabernacle. Everybody called it the Tab. I started going to this little Pentecostal church, and the music was terrible.

Now, understand music had been a huge part of my life, and the music was terrible. I remember thinking, "Okay, apparently, Christians are only allowed to play the keys of D, A, and G. And now, we're required to clap on one in three instead of two and four." The music was so bad. I was an outsider in the church. I knew it. I was the only male with long hair in the church. Most everyone avoided me. I think because they were afraid of me, frankly.

Jesus Is Enough

No one talked to me, except occasionally, someone would come up and say, “The Bible says it’s a sin for a man to have long hair. You need to cut your hair. God will stop being mad at you.” I’m serious. That was the only greeting I got from some people. But I didn’t care because they sang about Jesus, and I would cry. And they would preach about Jesus, and I would cry. Because my roots, then and now, they are in Jesus Christ and my relationship with Him. And if the music becomes second-rate, I don’t want it to; I’m not going anywhere. My roots are in Jesus. If you mess up and bring reproach on the gospel, I’m staying because my roots are not in my relationship with you. My roots are in Jesus Christ, in my personal relationship with Him. We move on. Verse 11, and I want to read this from the New King James. He said,

¹¹ In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Now, he uses two illustrations here to describe our new life in Christ. One is circumcision. In circumcision, it cuts away a part of the flesh and removes it. Basically, when you believed in Christ, the entirety of your sinful nature was cut away. That is, in your spirit, you became a new creation in Christ. The Bible says in the book of Ephesians that a new person on the inside is created in righteousness and true holiness. The Old Testament puts it this way; God’s going to take that heart of stone out of you and put a heart of flesh in you. There is a complete transformation that’s so radical Jesus called it being born again.

The second illustration He uses is baptism. In baptism, we’re identifying with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. When I go under the waters of baptism, I’m saying, “Hey, the old Bayless, dead and buried. My old life is gone. When I come up, I identify with Christ. I have a new life. I’m a new man, resurrected on the inside, just like Jesus was resurrected. If my family and friends want to watch, let them watch. If all of heaven wants to hang over the banisters and watch, let them watch. If every demon in hell wants to watch, let them watch. I belong to Jesus. The old Bayless is gone. I have a new life.” Baptism is a declaration of that.

Now, we’re actually going to dig a bit deeper into these verses next week. You’re going to have to put up with me again. We’re going to talk about how to bring what God has put on the inside to the outside and to live it out. For now, let’s just look at the next two verses. I’m going to end with these, verses 13-14,

¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

He wiped out the handwriting of the requirements that were against us. It literally refers to a written document listing all of our crimes, all of our infractions, all of our rebellion. It was a record of every law of God that I had broken with my heart and with my hands, inwardly and outwardly, every transgression, everything I’d failed to do. I had nothing in my heart, nothing in my hands to make it right.

But as Pontius Pilate had that placard nailed above the head of Jesus on the cross, it said, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews,” at the same time, there was a pair of invisible hands nailing another placard onto that cross, listing all of my sins. By so doing, He took my sin out of the way. He wiped them out, and He removed them. Every sin against Heaven, everything

Jesus Is Enough

that I had done wrong, every transgression, God nailed it to the cross. I love that it says that He wiped it out. That literally means that He erased it completely. No more record. That's what the Greek means.

You know, I use my little calendar on my phone quite a bit, but I'm still a bit old school. I hate doing updates. I shut my phone off at night, and I don't let them happen. The grandkids are not around now, but I was always having to ask my grandkids, "How do I do this?" When it comes to my calendar, I have this big giant calendar that I lay out. It's coated with clear plastic. Takes up almost the whole table. Put a coffee cup in each corner, and I've got a green marker and a red marker, and a black marker.

I put in every time I'm preaching at Cottonwood, every trip I've got where I'm preaching around the world, family vacation. "Oh, I got to take a fishing trip here." I put everything on the counter, and when I mess up, and sometimes I do, you know what I do? I just get a paper towel, put a little water on it, and, I wipe it off, and my mistake disappears. You don't know what it was. You can't find out what it was because it's gone. That's what happened to my sins when Jesus died on the cross. It's gone. It's been erased.

There was a girl that I used to know. Came to Cottonwood about 30 years ago. She knew me from my past life, and I didn't even know she was there. She wrote me a scathing letter. It came to the office. One of the girls said, "You probably should read this, Pastor." I start reading, and she basically said, "How dare you stand up behind that pulpit and teach people from the Bible because I know some of the things you've done." She graphically listed some of my sins, some things from my past life.

I wrote her back, and I said, "You know what? Guilty as charged. Everything you said, I did it, and a whole lot more and a whole lot worse that you don't know anything about, but when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He nailed my sins to that cross. I have been forgiven all of my sins, and I've been made into a new creation in Christ, and so can you." Now, when it comes to my relationship with people and stuff from the past, I may have to sort some things out from you. I may have to make restitution, but on Heaven's ledger, it's been erased. It's gone. I've been made clean by the blood of Jesus. Not by my good works, not by my personal sacrifice, but by what He did alone. What a Savior.

Jesus, my friend, He is enough and then some. If you're here today, maybe you're like me that day I sat in that mission and something inside of me. I was looking for answers my whole life as long as I can remember. Even when I was a little boy, I was asking Mama questions about God that she didn't have answers for. She would go to the priest and ask for answers, and she'd come back and tell me what the priest said. I didn't believe his answers. They didn't make sense to me.

My whole life, as long as I can remember, I was looking for the truth. It wasn't until a 12-year-old boy came to me in a park one day and I almost died the night before due to excessive drug use. I was in a pretty depressed state. And a 12-year-old kid came up to me and told me Jesus Christ was alive. I was in my 20s. I had never heard that. No one told me. Not at a single place I worked, not in a school. No one. I didn't know that. The kid rocked my world.

I've shared a bit of my story today, but maybe you're like I was. Maybe you're kind of the opposite of the spectrum. You get the Citizen of the Year award in the town you live in. You never kicked a dog, and you've been nice and don't mind paying your taxes. You're on all sorts of community things. It's from a legit posture of heart. You've really tried to be good, but you

Jesus Is Enough

can't be good enough to enter through Heaven's gates. We can't earn it, not through our own goodness, not through our own merits. That's why Jesus came.

The Bible says the whole world stands guilty before God. We've all sinned and come short of the glory of God. He sent Jesus not to give us religion, not to give us ritual, but to bring us into a walking, talking, living, breathing relationship with God. I've been living with Jesus, walking with Jesus, for about 47 years. I love Him more today than I have ever loved Him before. He is more real to me today than He has ever been before.

I feel like I have not even scratched the surface of what He has for me and who He is. Like the apostle Paul, his cry, "Oh, that I might know Him." You can know Him. If you've never said yes to Jesus Christ, here's what the Bible says, If you believe in your heart, God raised Him from the dead, and confess Him with your mouth as Lord, God will bring you into a relationship called salvation.

If you're willing to call Him Lord, that means you're willing to die to your rights of independent living and put your life in His hands and follow Him. He's called the Good Shepherd. He'll lead you the right way, and He'll change you on the inside. I want to pray a prayer with you all across the auditorium, outside in the plaza, or wherever you might be watching right now. I don't know.

You could be anywhere in the world right now, and I could be speaking any number of languages, but somehow, God has gripped your heart, and you need to know that He loves you, and He knows your name, and He knows your situation, and He wants to help you. He wants to lift you, and He wants to change you. If you will pray from your heart and tie your heart around these words when we pray together, God will meet you.

Could you bow your heads, close your eyes in this place, and maybe outside as well? I just want to ask quickly. Nobody's looking around but me at this moment, but if you'd say, "Bayless, I want what you're talking about. I don't want ritual, I don't want ceremonies that are mindless and empty, but I do want a relationship." That's what Jesus is offering. If you're willing to turn from your sin and from your way of life and give your life to Him, He will change you, my friend. If you're a prodigal son, a prodigal daughter away from God, it's time to come home, prodigal.

Time to come home. I want to include you in this prayer as well. You're living out on the perimeter. You've lost your fire. The coals are about to go out. It's time for you to come back and start serving Him with a passion. As I look across the auditorium, if you say, "I want in on this prayer. Pray for me." I'm going to pray when we pray together. Just lift your hand up, so I can see it.

All across the auditorium, up on the stage as well. It'll help you. Just an outward expression of the inward posture of your heart. And in your heart, you're reaching up to God. I see hands all over the auditorium. Your hand is reaching up outwardly. Your heart is reaching up inwardly. That's good. All right, put your hands down. Everybody look up this way. Just put that hand on your heart. Let's pray. Just say,

Oh, God, I come to you. With all of my heart, I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe He died on the cross to take away my sins. I believe He was raised from the dead. Jesus, I ask you now, come into my life. I call you Lord, and I choose to follow you. I believe that you are enough. Amen.