

# 24-0922p Transcript

## 24-0922p - *Christianity is no test drive*

**Bible Reader:** John Nousek

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## Christianity is no test drive

### Scripture Readings

**Scripture Reader:** John Nousek

The first reading comes to us from Isaiah 59, the first three verses, Isaiah 59 verses 1 through 3. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor is ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity. Your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered adversity.

### Sermon

**Preacher:** John Nousek

Good evening. So this evening's sermon I've entitled, Christianity is no test drive. Those of us that know about vehicles and buying cars, not a test drive.

The first reading comes to us from Isaiah 59, the first three verses, Isaiah 59 verses 1 through 3. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor is ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity. Your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered adversity.

Those are some pretty cutting words spoken to us by our creator, but it doesn't stop there. I'm going to read from Isaiah 64 verses 5 through 7, Isaiah 64 verses 5 through 7.

You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness. Who remembers you in your ways? You are indeed angry, for we have sinned. In these ways we continue, and we need to be saved. We are all like an unclean thing, and all of our righteousnesses are like filthy rags...

That's pretty vivid

...We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away, and there is no one who calls on your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us, and have consumed us because of our iniquities.

Sounds awful.

Sounds really awful. That was the only message there ever was from the Lord, and that was the end of the story. Wow, wouldn't the people be just beating down the doors to get in to hear that, or not? It's not very encouraging by itself in some respects.

So let me be the first to acknowledge that these words themselves are not very comforting. They're very stinging. In fact, I've met people, mostly unbelievers, that say words like that, are you kidding me? It's insulting.

That's rude. I wouldn't even go so far as to say, gee, that's arrogant from an unbeliever. Consider this.

Can you imagine if I walked in to where I work, any given Monday morning maybe, saw my boss sitting at his desk, walked up to him, and said words like that? Isaiah 53, 59.3. Your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity. Your lips have spoken lies. Your tongue has muttered perversity.

I just walked out of his office, walked down the hall. How far would I get before I heard words in response like, you're fired? You know, might happen. Well, Jesus Christ is the ultimate judge, present here, right here, right now.

In our space, he's spoken these words to us. Sometimes it's hard to hear words against us, especially when they're true. What's our response going to be? Will we try to fire God, move him from our presence if we could, so we wouldn't have to face these kinds of words? Many have tried.

Many at the highest ranks of society have tried. It's not a good idea. Fortunately, we have some good news for those who have obeyed the gospel.

Hearing the instructions laid out in this book, the book we call the Bible, it tells us there's some things we need to do. We need to hear the gospel. We need to allow our hearts to accept that as truth, as it is and can be proven so in many respects in many different ways.

We need to turn from our sins, repent, decide that we're not going to continue doing those kinds of things, confess Jesus as Lord, and then accept we need to be baptized into the forgiveness of sins. That's what he tells us to do, and some have. Truth be told, many have not.

You know, those that are willing to obey God's instructions that are found in the Bible, be warned, or as the saying goes, fair warning, because now comes the hard stuff in many respects. Even though we may have obeyed the gospel, there's more. There's good news.

There's more. 1 Timothy chapter 2 says, starting with verse 1 in 1 Timothy chapter 2, therefore I exhort first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving thanks be made for all men, kings, and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet, peaceful life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

So God wants all of us. He wants all of us. He desires all men to be saved.

It goes on to say, for there is one God and one mediator between God and man. Man, Jesus Christ, gave himself a ransom for all, be testified in due time, for which I, referring to Paul, has appointed

a preacher and an apostle. I am speaking the truth in Christ, not lying, teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Right here, Jesus is identified as God. And God is identified as Jesus Christ, judge and mediator of all people. Up to this point, a lot of believers, a lot of saved people, with me.

Now we read that, we understand, okay, you get it. Good. But then there's more.

There's more. In Romans 8, 35-39, we find out, it says, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword as it is written, for your sake, we are killed all day long. We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

Yet in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life or angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth or any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. I read something like that, and I talk to people about that.

Sometimes I lose them. And here's why. Is it saying nothing can separate us? It's not mentioned in this passage.

It's not specifically called out in this passage. Us. God, in that passage, we read the list of things.

Again, just in case, for I am persuaded that neither death or life or angels or principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. I say to you, you know, you come to a passage like that, and I think of 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17 that says, all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. The man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

All of scripture, not the ones we like, not the ones that sound nice, all. And so we have to interpret scripture as scripture. And in doing so, we find in scripture many places, I'll read a few now, where a person who is accepted is told, if this, an accountant, I work in spreadsheets all day long, in this program often many know, many don't know, it's called Excel, and in it, I write formulas, create things, calculations, calculate hundreds and hundreds and thousands of calculations in a matter of seconds, but you need to program what you want.

There's something very common called an if-then statement. If this is true, then do this. If not, do this other thing.

That works. Simple logic. God's laid out some simple logic for us.

A lot of ifs followed by then. In the book of Hebrews, in Hebrews 3, starting with verse 3, it reads, Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus Christ, who is faithful to him who appointed him, as Moses also was faithful in all his house. For this one has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, and as much as he who built the house has more honor than the house.

For every house is built by someone, but he who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken

afterward. But Christ as a son over his house, whose house we are, if, small little word, if, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

It's not firm until Tuesday at 3 p.m. or some other point in time. It says, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. You know, it's like, I think of the movie, you may have seen it, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.

Charlie, get a candy bar. Get one more candy bar. There's five golden tickets out there.

We can get one. And he opens it up and guess what? There it is. He's got the golden ticket.

He's in. He just has to show up at the door. No matter what, he's got the ticket.

It's great. And you can picture them, all the grandparents living in this little slum of an area, got the big hope. Golden ticket is in Charlie's hand.

Charlie's going to do it. Except it's not like that with Christianity. You don't get the golden ticket in the sense that you're in and there's nothing that's going to—there's some ifs.

God says there's if. This is where I lose people sometimes, because we don't—we just want the written guarantee that it's irrevocable, and it is, but it does have if. Hebrews, continuing, dropping down in Hebrews 3, verses—verse 12 and following, starting there at verse 12, it reads, Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

You've got two things here. You've got beware, and you've got the departing. It's like he's saying fair warning.

Why would there need to be a warning if there's no danger? And who is being warned? People that choose or allow their heart to become evil and depart from the living God. It goes on to say, verse 13, But exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if—there's another one—if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.

Again, that comes designated, specified. You know, we just have to be nice and good and follow Christ's instructions for a time. He wants us to be steadfast to the end, be faithful.

And then I'll read verse 16. For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, it was not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses. Not with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest? But those who did not obey.

Because we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. So you have non-obedience, non-belief. Now, obey is one of those words that, especially in this culture, grates on our nerves.

I don't like that. Obey. Like, what? Yeah.

Certain phrases come to mind when I hear a word like obey. First, it's, I don't understand. Why do I need to do that? I don't want to.

That's stupid. All these kinds of things. And yet, God says we must.

Those are his instructions. Just reading them. You know, it's like in our fleshly, cardinal existence, from the get-go, from the very beginning of our lives, we don't need to be told how to rebel, how to disobey, how to, I want.

What are the first words even a two-year-old might learn? No. No. Because that's just what we do.

We have to be taught. We have to learn. And we have to decide how we're going to live.

It has eternal consequences. I read in 1 Samuel 15, verses, verse 22. 1 Samuel 15, verse 22.

And Saul is being told in this passage, give you a little back story. Saul is told what to do, how to do it. And he decides to do it his own way.

Because I want it. He's thinking. He got tired of waiting.

So it reads in 1 Samuel 15, 22. So Samuel said, as the Lord has great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord, behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, to heed than the fad of rams. That puts a very high priority on obedience.

This is a hard teaching, I have to tell you, because it really pokes at a lot of sensitive areas for me. And I want to continue on. Here's another one.

John 14, the New Testament, Gospel of John, chapter 14, the 15th verse begins with the big two letters I F. If you love me, keep my commands. Here comes the then. And I will pray the Father and he will give you another helper that he may abide with you forever.

The spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him, but you know him or he dwells with you and will be with you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you, referring to the Holy Spirit.

He's speaking to those believers. If you love me, keep my commands. God said he's going to do some things.

Matthew 24, starting with verse 9. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you. Jesus is talking to the apostles. And they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. And many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

But there's the condition. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. One of my favorite books in the Bible, just because I like it.

I don't know why, I just do. Proverbs. Read Proverbs 21, first three verses.

It offers some good stuff. Proverbs 21, it says, The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord like the rivers of water. He turns it wherever he wishes.

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes. Lord weighs the heart. To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

The good news is we all do things. Sometimes we do things we shouldn't be doing. Lord weighs the heart.

There's grace. He's given us his instructions. There's grace.

There's also God's word, which reads, Hebrews 6. Another one. Hebrews 6, verses 4 through 8. For it is impossible. It's pretty strong.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put him to open shame. To me, this is even more difficult. I have to remember that God knows everything about me.

He knows all of my failures, and there's more than I dare to even try to remember. But we have to also remember that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. And so, we take all these things together, and we ask for God's grace.

So, I'll read one last one. 1 John 2, 19. I'm adding this as a follow-up to Hebrews 6 that I read.

It's impossible for those who were once enlightened. Referring to those that have left, those that, in case someone's wondering, well, if I've fallen away this far, is that the point? Or it's too late? No. No, because in 1 John 2, 19, it reads, they went out from us, but they were not of us.

For if they had been of us, they would not have continued, they would have continued with us. But they went out that they might be made manifest, but none of them were with us or of us. And so, for those that attempt through maybe church attendance or good deeds or other things like that, the claim that they are, they cannot themselves, add themselves to the church.

Those are the folks that we're talking about here. They went out from us, but they were not of us. That's how they are made manifest.

Manifest meaning evidenced. You see it, realize, okay, that's what that was. So, each and every one of us are unworthy.

However, because Jesus Christ, our creator, loves us, he's opened the door, he's made a way, and he commands us to obey. And then to persevere, even in the face of many trials until the very end. And that's, I think, where it gets hard.

They say, well, you know, I read this, I believe it, and I confess the Lord, and I'm willing to be baptized into the forgiveness of sins. It's all true. That's what we need to do.

That's what we're made to do. But we're also told to persevere to the very end. And if anyone is in need of assistance, persevering.

Or if anyone is in need in any kind, please step forward.