

# 5 Most Amazing Words You Have Ever Heard

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Preacher: John Blanchard

[ 0 : 00 ] That's a scary introduction.

I recall being told of a meeting in America where the speaker was introduced very generously, and the pederation, the climax of the introduction was, I want you to know that our speaker has made a million dollars out of oil in Texas.

Well, this, of course, got the attention of the audience, and then the speaker stood up and said, Well, thank you for that, sir, and I appreciate the spirit in which it was said, but I do think one or two words of correction might be in order.

Firstly, it wasn't actually me. It was my brother. And secondly, it wasn't in Texas. It was in Oklahoma. Thirdly, it wasn't oil. It was cattle. And fourthly, he didn't make a million. He lost a million. And when I get that introduction, I kind of fear, goodness, maybe at the end of it all, they'll say, We've got the guy who lost a million. But thank you, sir, for inviting me here, and it's been a great, great privilege to be with you this morning.

[ 1 : 08 ] Let me begin by asking, and it's great to be in a church for the first time. You simply don't know who the people are, except that I do know Trey and Cinder, and for a small fee, I'll tell you what I know about them.

But I don't know anything about the other people. So let me ask you a very simple, basic, straightforward question. Are you a Christian?

Please don't answer vocally. Are you a Christian? Now, I'm not asking, Do you hope you're a Christian? Do you think you're a Christian? I'm trying to be a Christian.

I'm a Southern Baptist. I come to First Baptist Pickens. Don't blame you for doing that. I'd come here if I lived in this neck of the woods. But are you a Christian? Do you have a credible testimony? Could you come up here, if your knees were tied together to stop them knocking, and give a credible testimony that the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior and Lord?

[ 2 : 10 ] Now, if you are, I've got some wonderful news for you. The best news you have ever heard. News so wonderful that if you grasped, hear the words carefully, if you grasped everything that the message means, you would have a job keeping your seat.

You would be at least metaphorically jumping up in the air with excitement. Why do I say that? Because I'm going to tell you the most wonderful thing you have ever heard about your future home in heaven.

Now, you may have heard many sermons on heaven, but you may never have heard this. And I've called it, as I think you will have seen in the bulletin, by way of a sermon title, the five most amazing words in the entire Bible.

And Trey Lee was mumbling away some attempts at it yesterday, but as he also had a 10-foot left to right downhill putt on spiked greens, he wasn't getting close. But either with the putt or with the suggestion, the five most amazing words you have ever heard.

Now, if you're not a Christian, then I have been praying that by the end of the service, you will be saying, that's what I want.

[ 3 : 34 ] That's what I'm looking for. If only that were true of me. And I pray that there'll be a longing in your heart that that would become true for you, and that God will graciously meet the longing in your heart.

Turn with me to the first epistle of John. Right towards the end of the New Testament, for those unfamiliar with the Bible structure. And we might just cheat and go to the very end of the letter for just one text here.

Chapter 5 and verse 13 tells us why John wrote the letter. I write these things to you who believe, that is, who trust in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

So that's the purpose of him writing. Now get to chapter 3 and the beginning of the chapter. Look at verse 1.

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called the children of God. And the phrasing there in the English kind of obscures the spirit of what was being said, which is something along these lines.

[ 4 : 53 ] What kind of love is this? Now, we can express human love in amazing ways. Imagine the reference now to being the children of God.

Imagine a family without children of their own, and they adopt a child from a third world family, a desperately needy child. I had an email from a friend just the other day.

They've had three children of their own and adopted 18 others from needy countries in the world.

Imagine the love that they have poured out upon those children, taken them from their squalor, and probably from being deprived of both parents killed in civil war and in some other way.

Made them their own, taken them into their family, poured out their resources upon them. Difficult to imagine human giving love being expressed in more ways than that. And John says, yes, but what kind of love is this?

What kind of love is this that the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God? And the difference, and why John is expressing it in this, but look at the difference way, is that the parents, these adopting parents, had nothing against these 18 other children from different needy countries.

[ 6 : 16 ] They were neutral as far as they were concerned. They simply, out of the fullness of their hearts, had compassion on them and drew them into their family. Here's the difference. God had something against us.

It was while we were sinners that Christ died for us. Our whole natures were corrupt and godless and vile and had no time for God or for the things of God.

We were entirely opposed to Him. We were, to give Paul's testimony in Ephesians 2, we were by nature children of wrath, which simply means we were by nature born under the wrath of God.

And that's how, left to ourselves, we would have lived for the rest of our lives. Imagine that. We would have lived for the rest of our lives under the wrath of God. So again, if you are not a Christian this morning, maybe you think you're nearly one or you're close to one or you're mixed with the right kind of people.

Let me tell you something unspeakably solemn, but terribly true. You are at this moment under the wrath of God.

[ 7 : 25 ] When Jonathan Edwards preached this great sermon on sinners in the hands of the angry God, he said, it's only of God's grace, I paraphrase him, it's only of God's grace that this very moment, the earth doesn't open up and you fall down into hell forever.

Now, my friend, that's where you are this morning, if you're not a Christian. So how great a love, how amazing a love is this, lavished on us that we should be called the children of God.

And not only does it say it once, he says it a second time. Look at the end of verse 1. And that is what we are. It's as if he says, you may not believe this, so I'm telling you again.

Oh, and look at the beginning of verse 3. He says the same thing. Let me read you the whole passage.

How great is it that the love of the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God. Secondly, and that is what we are. And then the beginning of verse 2, dear friends, now we are the children of God.

[ 8 : 33 ] If John had been speaking to them word by word instead of writing to them, I think he would have said, as he might have seen frowns of unbelief on people's faces, watch my lips. Did you get it?

We are the children of God. That's what we are. We are the children of God. Then something amazing happens to this apostle. He becomes an agnostic.

It's gone awfully quiet in here. He became an agnostic. And here we are. Look at it in verse 2. Dear friends, now we are the children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known.

In other words, he is saying, look, what the entire eternal future of God's people is concerned, the entire line-by-line future is concerned, we don't know.

We haven't been told absolutely everything. Of course, he was writing in ignorance of the television evangelist who said he'd been to heaven for 45 minutes and had to work with God, patted Jesus on

the shoulder and come back, and got it on his television program and sold a million books.

[ 9 : 38 ] So he didn't have the advantage of meeting this evangelist. He said, look, there are things we simply don't know. But his agnosticism lasts for only the time that he's got to write those words, because immediately he becomes absolutely certain, and he says this, but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

So here are the five most amazing words in the Bible. We shall be like him. We won't just be with him, or before him, or alongside him, or in front of him.

We will be like him. Now, it's impossible for us, in our finite states, to grasp anything more than the outer fringes of what all of this means, but let's do the best we can in the course of a service like this by concentrating just on what is being said here, one word at a time.

And it may help us, believe it or not, to try to grasp it if we begin at the end and work toward the beginning. There are just a few times when I preach when I actually begin at the end of a sentence and work toward the beginning.

Why I do that, why that works, I just don't know. Freud would probably say that I was dropped on my head as a child, so I've got all things the wrong way around. But as Freud was a fraud, I wouldn't have believed a word he said anyway.

[ 11 : 11 ] And so, this is how we're going to do it. We shall be like him, like the Lord Jesus. Now just think of his earthly life.

Think of it generally. He was tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin. Think of the words that he spoke. Everyone was amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips.

Think of his meekness. I am meek and lowly of heart. Think of his patience.

When they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he made no threats. Think of his compassion. Time and again, he was moved with compassion.

Think of his humility. humility. I haven't come to be served, but to serve. Think of his faith. He entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

[ 12 : 18 ] Think of his obedience. My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. And yet, when we've ransacked the Gospels and the Epistles, for example, of his perfect character during these 30-something years on earth, we've only touched the surface of what John is saying because he is not speaking about, he's not looking back and speaking about the earthly Jesus.

He is speaking about Jesus as he now is. He's speaking about his glorified humanity. And amazing and staggering, and this gets more amazing and staggering as it goes along, Jesus is referring to his glorified humanity.

And the clearest confirmation we have of that is in John 17, the high priestly prayer, where Jesus prays, I have given them the glory that you gave me. Oh, not his eternal glory.

We don't become divine. But all that Jesus did, all the glory that was poured upon him, he accepted, not for his own benefit, but for ours.

And that's the glory that we will share with him in heaven. We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. So we shall be like, we shall be like him.

[ 13 : 32 ] And then secondly, we shall be like him. You know, when babies are born into families, there's always some very interesting discussions going on among family members.

Who does he look like? Oh, I think he's got his mother's nose and his father's eyes and his grandpa's cheekbones and all that kind of stuff, you know. Well, it's a genetic certainty because parents do pass on their genes.

It's a genetic certainty that the parents will be represented in the children. They will bear some resemblance even if it's not always and strikingly apparent.

But the time is coming or truthfully, eternity is coming when all Christians who have ever lived will be like him. we shall be like him.

And we can certainly flesh that out in two ways. First of all, there will be a physical transformation. Turn back with me, but keep your finger in, first John, there, to Philippians chapter 3.

[ 14 : 39 ] And in Philippians 3 and verses 20 and 21, Paul says, says, our citizenship is in heaven.

And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Now, the bodies we have are truly amazing. C.S. Lewis once said, you've never met an ordinary person. Our bodies, our physical bodies are truly amazing.

When you go into the details, the more amazing they come. In the psalmist's words, we really are fearfully and wonderfully made. And yet, as the result of the fall, how feeble and frail and fragile they have become.

Every atom of our bodies is prone to disease and deterioration and decay and eventually to death.

[16:03] But not when we see him. we will be physically transformed. Our bodies, and we really can't totally get our heads around this, our bodies will be identifiable with our present bodies.

You'll be able to tell the pastor from his wife. Okay. You'll be able to tell the pastor from his, you can do it now, I hope, and you'll be able to, she's the good looking one.

And you'll be able to tell the difference in heaven. So our bodies will be identifiable with our present bodies but not identical to them.

Because our present bodies, presently constituted and subject to the ravages of the fall, can't be in two places at once and are currently designed and limited by their humanness and by their inability to do a thousand and one things.

But our heavenly bodies will not be so constricted. They will be adapted to live in eternity and not merely in time.

[17:15] And just as the body Jesus now possesses is no longer subject to the limitations of time and space, so neither will ours be. The perishable will be clothed with the imperishable and the mortal will put on immortality.

Don't we all long for that? And I have news for you, the longer you live, the more you long for that. And especially those who have reached the metallic age with gold in the hair and silver in the teeth and lead in the boots.

And when I said that to somebody, they said, you've forgotten, titanium in the hips. And yeah, I mean, we long for all of that to be over and done with. We long for our new bodies which will have none of those things.

And that is the glorious prospect that lies before us. Romans 8, we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. Now that wasn't current thought 2,000 years ago.

The Greeks and other pagans, well, what is happening at death is that the spirit at last gets out. Listen to the difference. Escapes from this prison, this earthly, bodily prison, and now the spirit is free.

[18:29] Now what that idea of freedom was and what in the world that spirit would do is another matter. But you see, they saw death as meaning the permanent splitting up, well, the escape of the spirit from the body and at last the body's no longer going to mess us around and do us any harm because it simply won't exist.

That's not what the Bible teaches. Christianity totally rejected that and said, no, what we are waiting for is the redemption of our bodies. There is a wonderfully physical element in the future home, the new heavens and the new earth of God's people.

And the bodies will be there. We're not going to leave them in the grave. But they will be reconstituted as glorious, eternal bodies.

And there will be a spiritual transformation as well. This is the second way in which we should be like Him. Now, what is Jesus like now? Well, we can say about Him whatever we can say about God.

But there's no need to speculate what John especially has in mind. Look in the text with me at these three specific things and notice the way that John uses the present tense.

[19:47] Look at verse 3. The last words, He is pure. That is, He's without any contamination or defilement.

In His very nature, He is morally perfect. Then look at verse 5. In Him is no sin. And this follows from the first. And what a tremendous encouragement that is in the context of the promise we are studying.

And then look at verse 7. He is righteous. And we have that repeated for the note takers here in chapter 2 verse 1 and chapter 2 verse 29. He is righteous.

The word is just. It means in complete conformity with the rightness, the consistency, the integrity, the justice, the truthfulness and the faithfulness of God's law.

So, Jesus is pure and sinless and righteous. And these are, if you like, John's shorthand notes on the heavenly character of Jesus.

[ 20 : 48 ] Now comes the how can you sit in your seats bit. We shall be like Him. As pure as He is pure.

As sinless as He is sinless. As righteous as He is righteous. There will not be any difference in our purity and sinlessness and righteousness.

we will be exactly the same in those qualities and characteristics of Jesus. We will be as pure as He is pure.

As sinless as He is sinless. As righteous as He is righteous. All that can be said now about the heavenly character of Jesus will be true to be said about you if you're a believer in that day.

we shall be like Him. We shall be like Him. Now it gets even more exciting.

[ 21 : 56 ] We shall be like Him. John doesn't say well you know it's a possibility. And for those who did very well in the Christian life for those who made great progress those who were greatly used those who were pastors of First Baptist churches.

We. All of us who are believers shall be like Him. It is not just feasible it is factual. Peter says when the chief shepherd appears you will receive the crown of glory that never fades away.

Paul in Colossians 3 when Christ who is your life appears then you also will appear with Him in glory. But the strongest of all the endorsements of that comes in that great passage in Romans 8.

Let me tell you a story. I was preaching in America a number of years ago now and a pastor said to me would you have a word with the man in my congregation?

He's a Christian he's a fine Christian and a brilliant man in his field. which happened to be dentistry but that's putting it mildly as far as he was concerned. He was an implantologist and I don't know how many ologists rolled into one and his offices I was later to see was just didn't need any wallpaper it was entirely covered with diplomas and honors granted to him around the country.

[ 23 : 22 ] He was a very very top man. But said the pastor although he is a Christian he would say his sins are forgiven he cannot be absolutely sure depending on what might happen to him in this life that at the end of life he will spend eternity in heaven.

He lacks permanent assurance of his standing in Christ. Would you have a word with him? Now I kind of wince when pastors say that and I think you've been preaching to him for 10 years and you think I'm going to sort him out in half an hour but anyway I said I'll be glad to have a word with him. So we met one day came into we sat in a Sunday school room somewhere and this great man and he is a great man in his field sat down with me and told me his story and yet that's exactly as the pastor had said and when he'd finished I must confess I thought what in the world can I say to him? What can I what point would I take up with him? And I turned instead to Romans chapter 8 and if you want to turn to me now that would be fine and I read to him of course verse 28 that we all know so well and we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him who've been called according to his purpose and then I'm sure I explained to him that the earlier part of the chapter is actually speaking about the very fragile breaking up crumbling away world in which we live creation in bondage to decay what if Paul had been a scientist he would have called the second law of thermodynamics the available energy in the cosmos in a closed system is just cracking up and that's so here is everything going wrong on a mega scale and Paul says and we know that in all things so he's just writing in this column doesn't matter what's going wrong we know this that God works for the eternal good of those who love him and then someone asks well how can he know that?

Notice the first word of verse 29 for which means because notice the link Paul says we know that everything is working for the eternal good of God's people and this is why we know now listen carefully God God for those God for knew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son that he might be the firstborn among many brothers those he predestined he also called those he called he also justified those he justified he also glorified and so I went through them again and here was this great man with his pencil making notes and I explained for example those God for knew which I said means much more than well God knows everything and God knows ahead of time who's going to become a Christian and who isn't so that's all that that means God has omniscience concerning the future and I said no that actually means something quite different it means God doing something specifically for a specific people and for each of the specific persons within that group of specific people it means God set his love upon them there's a parallel word we don't have time to look to it in Amos where the writer says

[ 26 : 35 ] God knew you above all the nations of the earth it doesn't mean God would have said search me I don't know if there are any other nations on the earth it means God chose you set you apart from all the other nations on the earth so that's the first thing but all of those God foreknew he predestined and there are people in our circles who wince a bit draw back a bit whenever you use a word like predestination and they may say I don't like the sound of that well I don't like the sound of some things I hear in church worship services but I like every sound I heard here this morning let me say my answer to that is well have a word with the author because I didn't write it God wrote it so if you've got a problem ask him God predestined and just nobody I can't think of a Christian who would wince and hold back and say well I'm not really sure that I want to believe that with the phrase that we're studying this morning we shall be like him what Christian would say

I really don't like the sound of that I mean they would say well that's terrific and I would say well but how do we know that it's true well precisely because of what he said here you see what is the predestination about predestination to be conformed to the likeness of his son that's the whole point God has predestined all of those on whom he said his love that they will be conformed to the likeness of God's son in eternity we shall be like him so the two are absolutely tied together and so Paul goes on those he predestined he called which doesn't mean he arranged that they heard the gospel most people who hear the gospel reject it and they're not included in this call and it doesn't matter how many systems we invent within the organized Christian church to have this and that event and we're looking for X people to be saved and all the rest of it that's by and large nonsense this is the inner call the inner call if I'm in an airport and I hear all sorts of announcements being made about there's a delay in this flight there's a change of gate there's a this and there that and I yawn through it all and think nothing whatever to do with me but as soon as I say well Dr. Blanchard on the flight they've got my attention

I hear that call that doesn't just reach here it reaches here and these two things down here and I get there as quickly as I can that's the difference between the outward call and the inward call and maybe that some of you here this morning and you've heard the outward call how could you do otherwise than hear the outward call under this man's ministry and you know the gospel if I said come up here and give me a brief outline of the gospel you could do it you could do it you could talk about God's creation man's fall into sin Jesus coming into the world to save sinners dying on the cross rising again from the dead you could rattle all that off so you've heard the outward call a hundred times but have you heard the inner call the inner call in the heart which is irresistible the irresistible grace of God so Paul goes on those he called he also justified he made them right with God look treat this podium as time so time looking from your angle starts here and finishes there so here we are

God for you before time began he predestined before time began during time during your lifetime if you're a believer he called you and he justified you so now we've got for new predestined called justified oh and there's one more and those he justified he also glorified so that of course is in the eternal future so went through all of that and he had pages of notes by now and I said just one more thing what do you think are the tenses of the verbs that are being used here for example what is the tense of for new he said that's a past tense so out came his pencil I said you're right past tense and what about predestined what do you tense well that's in the past tense past tense and what about called well that would be in the past tense what about justified past tense what about glorified he put his pen down he said ah now you're trying to trick me and he said and that's my problem I can see all the others but it's this question of will I be glorified that's it will I eventually get there and I said Max listen carefully the word glorified is in the past tense Paul is so certain about something that's going to happen in the future that he messes around with the grammar in order to magnify the grace of God it's in the future it is as certain as any of those in the past he put his pen down I saw a tear trickle down his cheek and he said John 30 years of doubt have just rolled away and correspondence with him afterwards convinced me that it had so we shall be like him so to recap again we should be like him we should be like him we shall be like him well what do we make of this we shall be like him we shall our bodies we've touched on that already our lowly bodies full of so many weaknesses they have sickness and death written all over them

[ 32 : 38 ] I have a very large volume at home called Guide to Family Health and if I have a little ache or a pain or something I flip open these hundreds of pages to look at what I've got and you know what happens the symptoms could also be this and something it's like googling something up and three hours later you haven't reached the end of the rabbit trails from it and I wind up thinking

I've got about 157 diseases as I can understand at the moment I don't feel I don't feel in pretty good shape at all so that's what our bodies are like and our spirits subject by nature objects of God's wrath and spiritually the things that there are in our bodies and in our spirits that would cause us to look twice at this phrase we shall be like him think of some of the sins that have stained and polluted and plagued your life

Jesus at one stage when people were discussing where sin had its genesis said this what comes out of a man is what makes him unclean for from within out of man's hearts come evil thoughts sexual immorality theft murder adultery greed that ring a bell malice deceit lewdness envy slander arrogance folly all these evils come from inside and make a man unclean see the problem is not that we're deprived but that we are depraved we're by nature corrupt and vile and godless and you know the more spiritually mature we become the more we know those things to be true Paul in Romans 7 says I know that nothing good lives in me that is in my sinful nature I've heard people say well Paul was looking back to his pre-conversion days and say boy I was a mess then and I can't find any way to interpret it as being autobiographical autobiographical and looking past before his conversion I tell you the further you go in the Christian life the more you identify with Paul who says I know that in me that is in my sinful nature the idea that when you become a Christian your sinful nature is removed and you go through the rest of life whistling a happy tune with never to worry in the world is baloney that could hardly even find a place on religious television though it does make a big attempt the fact of the matter is that in our sinful natures there dwells no good thing and we shall be like him

C.H. Spurgeon received a copy once of Andrew Bonner's commentary on Leviticus Bonner was a Scottish preacher he was so blessed he sent it back to him and said could you autograph it and give me a photograph now I'll be happy to sign your books afterwards but no photographs please nor would you want one and Bonner replied dear Spurgeon here is the book with my autograph and my photograph if you had been willing to wait a short season you could have had a better likeness for I shall be like him I shall see him as he is so will all who belong to Christ now those of you who are Christians isn't that wonderful news and you're a Christian and there have been ups and downs there have been doubts and fears struggles with that and fears within and sometimes you've been hit by very heavy blows and sometimes two or three triple whammies and you've wondered at times nothing wrong with that the best of Christians as I see it reading history have had their moments but isn't it wonderful to have this reassurance we shall be like him oh and if you're not a Christian as we come to the end of this service would you like to be like him almost four years to the day

I laid the body of my wife Joyce in her grave and I'm sure it will not be very long before I join her there and if you were to go to Epsom Cemetery just that side of London you would find a beautiful headstone in black marble with gold lettering across it and her name Joyce Sylvia Blanchard date of birth 2nd of December 1933 date of death 17th of February 2010 and underneath these words with Christ which is far better than a big space and you know what's going there I've booked that and the reason I chose the text is this even when I'm dead I'll be preaching and everybody who passes will look and whether they've got an interest in my name or not will say and I've known people mentioned to me already they passed that and read the text with Christ which is far better now my friend as I leave you and perhaps never to see you again let me urgently ask you to give serious weight to this when the moment comes for you to die and I don't know what the marker will be on your grave or whether you'll be cremated that's immaterial this is for illustrative purposes only on your headstone one of two things could be written maybe you or your family have something else in mind but one of these two could be written with Christ which is far better better than anything you have ever experienced and better than anything you could ever imagine or without Christ which is far worse worse than anything you have ever experienced or anything you could ever imagine will you come to Christ and join those of us who rejoice in this amazing wonderful staggering almost unbelievable truth but it's believable because God said it through his servant we shall be like him let's pray father thank you for giving us this sacred hour together and I pray that you will give to each one of us the grace of understanding and even more the grace of obedience and I pray especially that any who has become to this moment in our service are knowing in their hearts that these things are not yet true for them

[ 40 : 54 ] Lord by your spirit work in their hearts that they might call out to you to be saved and join those of whom these words are wonderfully true so that they too shall be like him and we ask it in his name amen W He What you what he He what he what he Lord He He What What