

Becoming Strong in Spirit

by Alan Martin

To be conformed to the image of Christ, we must be born of the Spirit, become strong in Spirit, and be filled with wisdom.

Scripture: Proverbs 13:20, Matthew 4:4, Matthew 22:9, Luke 2:52, 1 Timothy 4:15, James 1:5

Topics: "Maturity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the idea of compelling others to come to the word of God. He acknowledges that he may have misunderstood how this should be done, but believes that it is important to let people know the good news and encourage them to change their minds and believe. The speaker emphasizes the importance of submitting to God and living according to His will, as this is how we are transformed into the image of His Son. He encourages listeners to have a drive to know and understand God, and to prioritize seeking wisdom and walking with the wise.

Transcript

1 Corinthians 15, find verse 45, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 45, and so it's written, the first man Adam became a living being, and the last Adam became a life-giving spirit, however the spiritual is not first, notice that, it wasn't with any of us, was it? The spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust, so what do you think is most natural to the first man? The earth, the things of the earth, if anyone loves the world or the things of the world, what does it mean? It's where he's of, those are the things that are most natural to him. He is in what they would call in Spanish, carnal, you know, he's fleshly, they want meat, you know, it's the things that are most natural to him.

However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust, the second man is the Lord from heaven. Actually verse 47, it's interesting, it does use the term second, the second man is the Lord from heaven.

And verse 48, and as was the man of dust, so are also those who are made of dust, and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are what? Heavenly. So, those who are of Adam are like Adam, is that what it's saying? Those who are of the man from heaven are like the man from heaven. And he goes on to say it again, verse 49, as we have borne the image of the man of dust.

Would you finish that in your version? As we have borne the image of the man of dust, what does it say? Okay, it does say we shall bear. It's interesting, the reason it, some translations might say it different, because this is one of those places where you have a discrepancy in the Greek manuscripts. A very slight discrepancy.

One could be interpreted as a future, so shall we bear the likeness, and one is an imperative, let us bear, so let us bear the image of the man from heaven. It's interesting, what does that mean? Isn't this God's overall purpose, that we would bear the image of His Son? Isn't that, regardless of what the difference in calling that you or I might have, we have the same predestination, if God foreknew us, and He called us, every one of us here who are foreknown of God and called of God, have the same destination to be fully conformed to the image of His Son. In very similar language to this, look in Romans chapter 5, Romans chapter 5, verse 19, which man are we being spoken of here? For as by one man's disobedience, who would that refer to? That's the man of the earth.

For by Adam's disobedience, many were made sinners. The word made there is where we get the idea of constitution. Their constitution became to sin.

The very way they were ordered inside from that man. So, why do we sin? Because from Adam, it's our constitution to do so. We are acting according to the way we were constituted from what we received from Adam.

But, notice this. It says, so in the very same way. Notice that? Did the effect of Adam on you actually produce a dynamic result? Evident? Or did God just consider you a sinner? Or did you act like one? You acted like one.

You received a constitution that made you act that way. I'm not being redundant. I'm trying to make a point.

You must understand it's in that very same way. Through the obedience of the one man, many will be constituted righteous. Not considered, constituted.

Yes, by the mercy of God, we are considered righteous by the merit of Jesus Christ. But it's far more than being considered righteous. We're constituted righteous.

We receive the very nature and heart and character and power through the life of the last Adam. Who was the image of the invisible God. The exact representation of His being.

The one who sustains all things through the word of His power. That Adam, He is our forefather now. As we have born the image of Adam the first, now let us bear the image of the Adam the last.

There won't be anymore. There won't be anymore Adams because in Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. And in Him we are made complete.

And how does that work? If we, you and I, if we are to be conformed to the image of His Son, to Jesus. Then let's look and see that process. Won't it be similar to, if we're going to be conformed to His image, won't our experience be similar to His? Is that reasonable? Alright, let's take a look at this process of how God begins to conform us to His image.

To His Son. To the work of His Son. Let's start in Luke.

Turn to chapter 2. Luke chapter 2. And we'll just start with verse 39 for context. Luke 2.39 And when they had finished all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned unto Galilee, unto the city of Nazareth, their own city. And the child, speaking of Jesus here, and the child was growing and becoming strong in spirit.

Okay. Notice that He, this is one of the first things that's going to happen to us. Actually, it's the second thing that's going to happen to us in the process of our being conformed to the image of Christ.

Now, if you're becoming strong in spirit, what must take place before that can even begin? You must be born of the Spirit. Is that how Jesus began? Wasn't that His beginning? He was begotten by the Holy Spirit? Didn't Jesus say, unless you are born from above, you will not even see the Kingdom of God? Look and see specifically. We'll come back to Luke here.

But flip over to Matthew chapter 1. Matthew chapter 1, verses 18-20, state it this way. That Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. Matthew chapter 1, verses 18-20.

Now, the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child how? Of the Holy Spirit. That's how she was found with child.

Then Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is what? Of the Holy Spirit. So Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit.

It also says this back in Luke chapter 1, verse 35. When Mary asked the angel who had brought the announcement to her, she said, how, since I've never known a man, how are these things going to be? And this is what the angel answered her in Luke 1, verse 35. And the angel answering said to her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore, that which is being born in you, the thing born in you or the one born in you, shall be called the Son of God. So, where must we begin in this process of being conformed to the image of His Son? The first thing that must happen is you must be born of the Spirit. Because if you are only born of the flesh, what are you going to be? That which is of flesh is flesh.

If you are in the flesh, it's impossible to please God. You'll never be conformed to the image of God. You can't.

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit, and it's in Spirit we take on His image. See, the Bible says that those who are in the flesh cannot please God. The reason is that the mind of the flesh does not submit to God, nor can it do so.

So, if you're in the flesh, it's the reason things don't work. It's the reason you're not being conformed to the image of God. Because if you're in the flesh, you haven't even started yet.

It's not even begun. The beginning of God conforming us to His image is being born of the Spirit. And so, parents, if you have a child and you sense that they're still in the flesh, after the flesh, or if you're married and you have a spouse and they don't walk according to the Spirit, it's probably because they mind the things of the flesh.

Those who walk according to the flesh, what? They mind the things of the flesh. Those who walk according to the Spirit, what do they do? They mind the things according to the Spirit. One of the things you're going to find about the Holy Spirit is He's always willing.

Always willing to do the will of the Father. And it explains why a person does not walk in the ways of God. You can't do so unless you're born of the Spirit.

That's the beginning. You must be born again. And Jesus followed that by saying, that which is born of flesh is flesh.

That which is born of Spirit is Spirit. That's the beginning. He began by being born of the Spirit.

When He became a man, that is, right? That's His beginning as a man. That's when He became to be like us at all points. We know He existed before that.

But when He began life as a man, He began it born of the Spirit. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. That's where we must begin.

We must be born again. And then, the next thing there is back in Luke 2, if you're back there. Luke 2, verse 40.

The next thing. The second. He says, and the child was growing and becoming strong in Spirit.

That's a part of the process. You must begin to be strengthened in Spirit. It's interesting.

One of the things that's been on Brian's heart lately is the prayer of Paul in Ephesians 3 when he says, For this reason I bow my knees before the Father of Heaven from whom every family on earth derives its name. And I pray that He give you, He grant you His Spirit. He will strengthen you with power through His Spirit.

Where? In your inner man. Being strengthened with power in the inner man causes us to begin to be strong in Spirit. Because what are we naturally strong in? Flesh.

We must begin to experience being strengthened in Spirit. And then, the next step. Once you begin to be strengthened in Spirit, what's the next result? You begin to be filled with wisdom.

Because no eye has seen, no ear has heard, neither has it even entered into the mind of man the things that God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed it to us. By His Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. Because who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's Spirit within him? Even so, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. The mind of the natural man, what? It cannot receive the things of the Spirit.

Because how? They are spiritually discerned. So until you begin to be strengthened with power in the Spirit, you're going to be lacking in wisdom. Your thinking will be natural.

Not spiritual. And what did Paul call those whose mind was carnal? To be carnally minded is death in one place. The other thing it places as to be carnally minded is to be a mere infant.

Infant in Christ. An infant in Christ is not very strong. Do any of us consider an infant strong? They are the most tender.

We even have to hold up their head. They can't even hold up their own head. They have to grow.

They have to become strong in Spirit. Just like we have to become strong in Spirit so we can begin to be filled with wisdom. Are you following? This is a process.

Just meditate on these things that this is a process the Lord must take us through in conforming us to the image of His Son. Then follow with me in v. 46 here. No, I don't want to leave that yet.

Back up. Back to v. 40. I almost left one thing.

Ok, not only must we be born of the Spirit, not only must we begin to become strengthened, become strong in Spirit so that we can begin to be filled with wisdom, what's going to happen is then when this has happened, here's what's going to happen. Grace is going to be upon us. That's when grace begins to rest upon us.

You know what grace is? Grace is everything that flows from God towards us. Anything that flows from God towards us is grace. It's outside of us.

It is His favor, His wisdom, His understanding, His life, His goodness impacting us. It's grace at work in us. See, we know that evidently becoming born of the Spirit, being strong in the Spirit, and beginning to be filled with wisdom must have produced something in Jesus.

It must have produced lowliness. Why do we know that? God resists the proud. We will never be conformed to the image of God while resisting God, by being proud, by walking according to our own thoughts.

So Jesus was being strengthened in Spirit, being filled with wisdom, and it was evidently teaching Him to humble Himself. Isn't that interesting? To humble Himself. Because we also know from the Scriptures, from Proverbs, that God knows the proud from afar off, but He's near to those who are lonely, broken, of a contrite spirit.

And it also says that wisdom is with the lowly. So as we are being conformed to the image of God, as this is beginning to happen, it's going to produce in us a lowliness so that we can begin to become wise. So that grace of God can rest upon us as we're growing in wisdom.

Now let's go to verse 46. Same chapter, Luke 2.46. And then it happened, after three days they found Him sitting in the well. Where did they find Him sitting? Now, He'd been missing three days.

Okay, and let's just be honest. Paula, if your child was missing for, let's say, 30 minutes, and we were in a large group of people, where would you start looking for her? Where would you likely find her? Where would you expect to find her, Grady? With the kids. You'd look for her in the kids.

Isn't that natural? You know, the Bible says, wherever a man's treasure is, that's where his heart will be also. Now, where is He sitting? Where is He sitting here? He's sitting in the midst of the teachers. Why is He sitting in the midst of the teachers? Where else are you going to get understanding? What is it, Clare, He's interested in? What has already happened in His heart that He knows He's not going to get from His friends? He's begun to hunger and thirst at the righteousness.

He's begun to crave wisdom and understanding, and you don't get it from hanging out with your buddies. Young people, you hear that? I hope you hear me. You know, it's obvious when the Spirit of God is at

work, because He's creating such a desire to know.

One of the first things I noticed about Michael, remember Michael? Michael and Tonya? Remember them? The couple that didn't get together? Right when I met him, this new work of God began to happen in his life. And you know what immediately began to happen? I began to get emails from him all the time. This question, this question, this question.

I hope I'm not bothering you with my questions. And you think about it as a parent. About the time your child began to speak well, what was the constant thing? Daddy, what does that mean? How does that work? Why do you do that? When the heart of the Spirit is at work, it creates a desire to know.

To know the ways of your Father. Now how would Jesus, how could He possibly be in this place? Some people speculate, and I don't necessarily think speculation is a good thing, but it might be an interesting thought to jolt our minds. I do want to point out to this though.

Some people think that perhaps with the gold and the myrrh, and the frankincense gold and myrrh that Joseph and Mary received from the Magi that visited them, and that maybe they bought Jesus His own personal Torah. But they were a poor family, weren't they? When they came to present the offering at the temple, how much could they afford? Two doves. It was the extra offering given for those who couldn't afford what God asked at first.

That's how poor they were. So you think, I don't know if Jesus had His own personal Torah, but here's what I do know. Every week He sat in a synagogue.

From the time He could learn to speak and listen, let's just say from the time He was five. Five or six. That's 52 Sabbaths a year.

Not counting the special Sabbaths. That's just a minimal. Probably it's safer to say there was 60 to 70 Sabbaths a year.

Times five. 350, let's just say, hours. Okay? What do you think He did when He, Jesus, growing up as a boy, being strengthened in Spirit, and being filled with wisdom? What do you think He did when He was in the synagogue? What do you think He did? He listened.

And that is why, honestly, that is why some here are not growing in strength and in Spirit. And you know what? It won't happen. I'm not condemning anybody.

I'm just saying, precious as these little souls are, until they begin to listen, it's just because they're going to be here and they're going to go home. They're going to be here and they're going to go, and it's going to be like this. I'm sorry, it doesn't come by osmosis.

Jesus said, be very careful. What? How you hear. Because with the measure ye meet, it shall be measured to you.

Whoever has, he will be given an abundance. But whoever does not have even that which he thinks he has shall be taken from him. Okay.

So, even if Jesus didn't have His own Bible, what did they do every Sabbath? What was one of the things that happened in the synagogue every Sabbath? They read the Torah. And five times He would have gone to the Feast of Tabernacles, which for seven days, you know what they did during that time? They

read the entire law. What do you think Jesus was doing, guys? You young kids.

Your age. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. What do you think Jesus was doing? He was listening.

Why do you think He could say to Satan, face to face, man does not live by bread alone, but by every word. You think He had heard it before? He listened. And where is He when His heart has a desire to be in some place? The heart of the righteous is where? Is in the house of the wise.

Where is the heart of the fool? Where is it? The heart of the fool is in the house of pleasure. What does it say? Fools despise. Fools despise wisdom and discipline.

So when Solomon says, but whoever wants to gain understanding and to gain insight and to understand riddles and parables and the sayings of the wise, what's the first thing they must do? Therefore, let the wise listen and add to their learning. Do you see what Jesus is doing? You want to be conformed to His image? It's not going to happen by some osmosis. Boom! Bam! Come up, get prayed for, fall down.

Come listen to this person speak. Yawn and go home. It's not going to happen.

It's not going to happen until you hear. Where does faith come by? Hearing. And what was the problem in Hebrews 5 to those people who received the letter that says, although you ought to be teachers by now, you need someone to come back and teach you the elementary principles of God's Word all over again, because what's happened? You've become dull of hearing.

In other words, everything you heard and didn't listen to carefully, you need someone to go back and teach you them again. And how are you going to get them? By listening carefully. Do you want to be conformed to His image? You better listen to everything He says.

If you shrug it off, you're shrugging off His nature. You're not just shrugging off a man's opinion. Isn't that what Paul said to the Thessalonians? Because I know you've been chosen.

I know you've been chosen. You know how I know, Greg? Because when a man speaks, when I taught you, you don't just receive it as the things of me. You receive it as the things of God.

Now, that's Paul speaking, not me. But you see the difference? The way they listened was, this is from God, and I'm laying hold of it. And if that's how you're listening, faith is going to come.

And it shows that there's an inner working of the Spirit. The same working of the Spirit that was going on in Jesus even at 12 years of age. Even at 12.

And it's interesting, it's so specific. Verse 46, He wasn't just sitting in the midst of the teachers. What was He doing? It specifically says He was hearing and asking them questions.

And it says they were amazed, didn't it? They're amazed. You know what it is amazing? And I tell you what, it will amaze everyone here when some young person has no heart, no heart other than to know Jesus Christ and they start asking questions because I'll tell you what, when that's their heart, they're not going to be pursuing hanging out with their buddy. They're going to find where the teachers are and they're going to hang out with them.

You'll know when it's going on. You'll know when it's... I'm talking, it's that obvious. Why do you think they were amazed? How many thousands of young men 12 years old had been in Jerusalem for Passover?

How many stayed and were in the midst of the teachers hearing them and asking them questions? Is it any wonder they were amazed? Where did this young man get such a desire to know? Where did he get this heart from? I tell you what, it will be that evident in any of us.

I'm telling you, it will be. You know, you can tell where a man's thoughts are when he's sitting in front of the television. I'm not against television, but you can tell where his thoughts are.

Where are they? They're on the television. I mean, it's it. You get what you... If that's what you want, you get what you want.

And there's some good things. If you go there because there's something good, that's fine. But you can tell wherever a man's treasure, there will his heart be also.

So, how do you even get to the place where you begin to understand? Someone read real quickly Proverbs 2. The first part. Nice and loud. Proverbs 2. My son, if you will receive My words and treasure up My commands, you shall extend your heart to understand.

If you cry for discernment... So what does it take? When do you find the knowledge of God and begin to understand the fear of the Lord? When? When you begin to start seeking it. But it's got to become something for it to grab your interest that much. You know... Treasure.

Until it becomes treasure, you're not interested. See, wherever a man's treasure is, you see the accuracy of Jesus? It's got to become treasure. Now, it doesn't have... For us, you know how the grace of God has to happen to us? Like Jesus said it did in the parable of the kingdom.

We're just passing through the field. And we happen across... It looks like we happen across what? Treasure. Hidden in the field.

And when the man who was going through the field and he found this treasure hidden in the field, what did he do? In his joy, he went and he sold all he had. Guys, literally, he became obsessed with one thing. This treasure.

He knew this treasure would make him what? Rich. Sorry? Jesus used the parable because it works. It works.

You know what drives men today? Money. Covetousness. It's the idol of the world.

It's what they covet. When knowing God, when understanding who He is becomes treasure to you and you seek it like treasure, you'll find it. You'll find it.

You know where all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge are hid? That's why I want to know Him. I'm not trying to know Him because I should. You know, I don't have anybody.

I don't have a parent above me in the natural realm telling me I ought to do this, I ought to do that. I am driven by a personal desire to know. Why? Because what may or may not be treasure to you has become treasure to me.

My treasure. The fool, which means he's without wisdom and understanding, he doesn't value wisdom as treasure. What is treasure to a fool? Folly.

Does folly mean evil? No. You know, it just means that which is not useful. Not valuable.

It's just not beneficial. Paul said all things are lawful. But not all things are beneficial.

Isn't that interesting? I do apologize. Honestly, I do apologize. And I've been doing this because I so see it as treasure, I have often taught it like you must, you should.

I mean, that's the way I taught it. That doesn't make sense. I've just done a poor job of showing it's treasure.

I mean, if there was a million dollars up here and I said you can come and get it, would I have to tell anybody you ought to? I mean, if you're modest, you might think. But honestly, if there was something that valuable, I don't have to tell Mardel to go play golf. I've not had one time.

You know what I'm saying? I never tell my kids to pick up the guitar. Look, you do what you want to do. And when you want to know wisdom because you so see the value of it, then what's happening, that shows this work of the Spirit in your life.

And I guarantee you, the work that was already going on in the heart of Jesus was He wanted to gain more wisdom and understanding. And so He went where wisdom and understanding was because the Bible says those who walk with the wise, well, become wise, and a companion of fools will what? Suffer harm. Why will they suffer harm? You know why they'll suffer harm? You know, when the harm really comes, the Bible says to the fool, is at the end of your life when your flesh and body are spent, you will say, how I hated correction.

I would not obey my teachers. That's when it really comes. What comes in the meantime when you're with your friends is pleasure.

That's what you get. You get pleasure. I'm not against you having pleasure either.

But there's something better than pleasure. There's something better. It says, in my presence there is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures evermore.

There's something better than just the stimulation of the next activity. And parents, if I could encourage you to just while your children are young, until this process begins to happen in them, you're the tutor, you're the guardian, you're the ones they're subject to, until the time sent by the Father when they can receive the Spirit, it cries out, Abba Father. Until faith comes in their own heart, then they don't have to be under that strictest kind of supervision.

But until then, let me just at least caution you that life is not about the next thing to stimulate their interest. Are you hearing me? The next thing. Are you the provider of playland? I mean, I'm not saying it's sinful.

The question is not, is it unlawful or lawful? The question is, how beneficial is it? And so, measure these things. Have a purpose in it. Jesus was markedly different from any youth of His age because it was only one man out of the thousands that were in Jerusalem at that time sitting in the midst of the teachers asking them questions, and it astonished them.

And they were astonished at His understanding at 12 years old. It's interesting. He's begun to be full of wisdom to the point where what the things He understands is already astonishing others.

So what's the next thing He does? About that time, His parents find Him. And they ask Him, why do You do this? Don't You know that we've been looking for You? Actually, almost like grievingly looking for You in the Greek. Where have You been? And He said to them, why were you seeking Me? Didn't you know that I must be about the things of My Father? And they didn't understand the things which He was speaking to them.

Why didn't they understand the things He was speaking to them? They were in their natural mind. And He is already becoming in His spiritual mind. He's already begun to live by the Spirit already.

He's begun to live by the Spirit. It's already happening. And so what does the Spirit lead Him to do? What's the next thing He does when He encounters His parents? Look in verse 51.

And He went down with them and came to Nazareth. And what was He doing? He was subjecting Himself unto them. It's a beautiful work.

Remember, we're looking at the process of how does God conform us to the image of His Son. He takes us through this same process that His Son went through. He was made in all points like we are, tempted in all ways that we are, and yet without sin, so that He can be a merciful and faithful High Priest and He spent time with a great measure of understanding fully submitting to His parents.

This is a process that you and I are going to go through because it says, seeing ye have purified your souls, how? By obedience to the truth as beloved children. And part of the process of our coming to the fullness of the stature of Christ, being fully conformed to His image, is when we with understanding begin to submit to all the ways of our Father willingly, joyfully, because we see that His ways are good. Like the conclusion of Hosea.

The ways of the Lord are right. The righteous walk in them. It's the rebellious that stumble in them.

Jesus was fully submitting to His parents. Now, how long would this be? This process? Yeah, until He was 30. Yeah, 18 more years.

Wow! And 49, the things? It's just a general impersonal pronoun. It's just a pronoun. The things of the Father.

You see, it's very similar to what Paul said in Romans. Those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh. Those who walk according to the Spirit things of the Spirit.

And so, this is why Paul could say that many, I say, even with tears live as enemies of the cross. Their God is their belly. Their glory is their shame.

And what's the last thing? Their mind is on earthly things. See, earthly things. And so, it's just an indication that since you were born of Christ and you received Christ as Lord, so continue to walk in Him.

Set your mind on things above. That's where you were born. From above.

Set your mind on things above. Where Christ is seated at the right hand. Set your heart on things above.

That's where the treasure of wisdom and knowledge, all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge have been hidden in God. So, when we see it as treasure, that's where our mind and our heart should be. It's just natural.

It's just natural. And I'm learning. It's less about what you should, and it's more about the description of if you have experienced it, you will.

This is the description of those who have been born of God. That's why John says that all those who are born of God must not continue to sin. He didn't say it that way.

What did he say? They will not. It's because they've been born of God. No one abiding in Him continues to sin, practice sin.

That would be two opposite things going on at the same time. You're living in Him. His righteousness is being produced in your life.

So, this is my mistake. And I've made it many times. I've made it you should, you must, you ought.

I'm just going to describe it to you. If you truly have been born of God, this is what it will look like. And if you are progressing in the things of the Lord, this is how it will progress.

This is the way it will progress. It's strictly up to you. You know what it is? Whosoever will may come.

Now, I think I've been kind of like those servants that I kind of got this impression from after the first set of people refused to come to the king's banquet, what did he do? He sent them out. Go out into the highways and hedges and do what? Compel them to come in. Well, I think I've misunderstood how that compelling should work.

I do think we should let people know the good news. We announce good news and we can preach, change your mind, which is what? The word? Repent. Change your mind and believe the good news.

Change your mind and believe the good news. And believe the good things that have come from above. That's it.

I'm still growing in understanding myself. Let your light shine so shine before men. Be salt of the earth.

So, as a parent, I'm just telling you, we often as a parent seeing that the heart is not there, and we are, we can be this, and this is okay. This is actually part of the way it is because it says as long as the heir is a child, he's no different than a slave. You know the relationship with the slave and the master is? Do.

You do it. And until faith comes, where are you in their life? You do it. You do it.

Obey me. And what that does is that produces an accountability. That's a tutor and a schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ, but that will never produce the image of God.

That is a way to provide an accountability and a preparation. It's like that's paving the runway. I mean, even as powerful as a jet engine, take it out to Mardell's Field, and I don't think it's going to take off.

It's got to have a runway where it can get going long enough and fast enough with power to lift off the ground. And so the law is put into effect to lead us to Christ, but it will not produce that. And when you begin to see the work of the Spirit of God in your life, in your life and in the life of your children and the life of your spouse, what you're going to begin to see is this overwhelming hunger for righteousness.

They're going to begin to ask. They're going to begin to seek out wisdom. It's going to become something so natural to them.

Wait for that. Wait for that. God is a Redeemer.

He redeems those who are who? Where does He redeem people from? Under the law. He'll redeem those under the law. There's a time in place when a father takes his son and he says, I've assigned you under the tutors and the schoolmasters.

I can see in you, you understand me, you are ready to have my name. I trust you now that what you will do is represent my business. You know, really, when a father gives his son that privilege of his name, when he came to the place where the *quiosthesis* is the Greek word, it means a stated son, a declared son.

It's translated in our Bibles as the spirit of adoption. They didn't understand it in the same way. The way they used the term was when a father saw that his son was ready to be out from under the tutor and the schoolmaster, he declared him a full son and the son could use his father's name to transact business even on his own.

And all the people that dealt with his father would deal with his son in the same way. I would imagine even now, Benjamin Renaud can go to some of the same places that Mark Renaud has worked for years and your word is just as good as his. Because you regard it as a son of your father.

And when the father is ready for that, when he sees that work, you know what he does? He redeems us from under the law and what does he give us? The spirit of adoption. And what does the spirit of adoption cry out? Abba Father. You want to know another translation for Abba Father? I delight to do thy will.

So what do you think the real sign that you've begun to enter maturity in this process of being conformed to the image of His Son is? When doing the will is your delight. When doing the will of the Father is your delight, that process has begun to take deep root in you. Don't you see it? This is a process we go through.

We must be born of the Spirit for the process to even begin because the mind of the flesh does not submit to God, nor can it do so. It's hostile. It's hostile to God.

So once you're born of the Spirit, then you begin to be strengthened in Spirit and you begin to receive God's wisdom because His ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. The wisdom of God is foolishness to the world.

But to the mind of the Spirit, to the mind of the Spirit, oh, it's life and peace. It's manna to your soul. And you begin to be strengthened in Spirit.

You begin to grow in Spirit. And you begin to pursue. One of the first things that you begin to understand is how valuable wisdom and understanding is.

It doesn't mean you're there. But once you begin to taste and see how good God is, you begin to crave that purity. You begin to crave that wisdom.

You begin to crave that understanding in a way you know you can't get it from hanging out with buddies playing euchre. I'm not saying euchre is wrong. Don't get me wrong.

It's something I'm aware we do. That's all I'm saying. It's part of fellowship.

Fine. I'm just saying. It's something okay to do.

Okay to do. Even fun to do as a family. And you can do fun things as a family.

But, I'm just saying, if I were looking for someone craving to know and understand, that's not how I'd see it. You'd see it by even the person who plays softball and euchre and golf and basketball and rides bikes like I ride bikes. Whatever you're doing.

That's just a part of your life. The drive of your life is to know. See the difference? You can do many things, but you can tell what a person's drive is.

When your drive, when it's like, my meat. Jesus told His disciples, I have meat, ye know not of. I'm driven to do the will of my Father.

My meat is to do the will of my Father. When that begins to take place in our life, we're going to begin to pursue walking with the wise. Now, that is not an advertisement.

Okay, so what do we need to do now? We need to start calling Greg or calling Brother Allen. No. God has placed people in your life that know Him.

Okay? But there will be a pursuit of wisdom. And Jesus, even being strong in spirit, even being filled with wisdom, He still went and was found sitting in the seat of teachers, in the midst of teachers, asking questions, growing. And then, fully, with much wisdom already, He lived in a beautiful submission to those who were in authority in His life, His parents.

And that's all the way until age 30 when He shows up to be baptized. And get this, you know, how do we know that we've got it right in the eyes of God? That's it. He hasn't even begun His ministry.

He's not even begun His ministry and the first thing He hears vocally from Heaven is, this is My beloved Son. I'm well pleased. So do you realize that? Do you want to please God? It won't take you working any miracles.

You don't have to work a miracle. He hadn't yet. Preston, you can hear that.

Garrett, you can hear that. Austin, you can hear that. McKayla, you can hear that.

Same process. Any of us can hear that. And by simply submitting where we're supposed to submit.

Children, obey your parents. Wives, submit to your husband. Slaves, like some of us brothers are, unto our masters.

All of us submitting unto the higher powers. And all of us mutually submitting one to another in the fear of the Lord, which is our delight. This is a process of how we are taken from the world and begin to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Beautiful thing, isn't it? I mean, you know what this will look like for you mothers? You can hear the father say, this is my beloved son, daughter, in whom I'm well pleased. You know? Just simply delight to do what God has given you to do. Isn't that something? And continually seek Him for the wisdom to do so.

Delight to be a parent. Delight to be a father. Delight to be a mother.

Delight to be a brother. Delight to bear along with others. It's a beautiful thing.

Yeah, it says, in the tents of the righteous, there's abundance of joy. Joy resounds in the tents of the righteous. You know why? Because the righteous have gone through this process.

They've begun to live by faith. They begin to hear God's Word to them. It's bred to their souls.

It's their strength. It is their joy. And it's their delight to do that way.

To live that way. And so, I just want to encourage you as an older brother, that the Lord delights in a cheerful giver. So, those of us who are maybe further along in this process of being conformed to the image of Christ, our joy in serving the Lord should be so astounding that it's continually set before others in a way that they can see and know how to follow.

The one thing I didn't read, the last thing I didn't read is in Luke chapter 2 if you still have your Bible open, about what it says of Jesus. Before His baptism. Verse 52.

Will one of you read it for me? Luke 2:52. "...And Jesus progressed in wisdom and stature and favor before God's command." What word do you think I'm looking for there? Progress. He progressed. You know what Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:15? Read that.

1 Timothy 4:15. Be diligent in these matters. Give yourself holy... Ok, brothers, this is it. Do we have wisdom? Who is wise in understanding among us? Who is? Who is? What did James say? I mean, how do you answer that question? Let Him show it by His life.

By His deeds done in the meekness of wisdom. That His noble works are done actually in the meekness of wisdom. Alright.

So instead of living by the you ought to and you should, let's make sure we ourselves are making progress. And that our progress is evident to all. That we are growing in wisdom and stature.

And here's what it will produce. I've seen it true in my own life. It will produce favor with God and man.

My background has not been one in years back of the second half. I always told myself this because I was making progress in favor with God. And I clung to the other half of the verse that all the worlds hate you because of me.

But somehow, honestly, if we're really growing in wisdom and stature, it will be in favor with God and with man. It will be. That's evident.

I believe it should be even as a fellowship that it should become evident that we love one another. We're living in harmony with one another. We're doing nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

But in humility of mind, we consider others higher than ourselves. We stand firm in one spirit, one purpose. I mean, this will be the beautiful testimony before the world.

And it will gain favor with God and with man.

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