

Effectual Prayer

by Alan Martin

Effectual prayer involves a righteous man's walk and God's will, resulting in confidence, boldness, and openness in prayer.

Scripture: Acts 4:13, Romans 12:1

Topics: "Effectual Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being serious and alert in our relationship with God. He warns that Satan will not bother with someone he is not threatened by, so we must be diligent in our pursuit of God. The speaker also highlights the significance of being transformed by the renewing of our minds and studying the words of Christ. He encourages consistency in our walk with God and warns against hypocrisy and double standards. The sermon references Acts chapter 4, where Peter and John's boldness and association with Jesus were evident to others.

Transcript

In James 5.16, one of the things we talked about is, and you can turn there if you're not familiar with it, but most of you would know that and be able to quote it, that the effectual fervent prayer of Avelis much. And we talked about there's two things that causes prayer to be effectual, and we talked a little bit about those last week. I asked a simple question last week, and if you were here, you can't answer.

Let's see what those that weren't here would say. What's the main purpose of prayer? So if you were here last week, you can't say that. A simple question, what's the main purpose of prayer? It's so simple, you may think, I'm looking for something more.

What would be the main purpose of prayer? It would be nice, not God. What if He's not listening? See, that's the assumption. The main purpose of prayer is to be heard.

We talked about that last week. God does not automatically hear prayer. David all the time would say, Lord, hear my prayer.

Hearken unto my voice. And you see, here it's saying the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man Avelis much. Is that saying that a prayer of someone not so righteous is not very effectual? Well, y'all answer me.

Are all prayers heard? No. Look in Proverbs 27. We talked about this last week, Proverbs 27.

This is just a little bit of a review. Actually, Proverbs 28. Proverbs 28.9. Someone read that for us.

Good and loud, if you would. Now, I guess if you wanted to be technical, God could hear that. You have to be able to hear something you hate.

But to be heard in the sense of received and welcomed? No. If someone is ignoring God's Word, according to God's Word, he tries to pray and God can't stand what he's saying. There's another place.

Look in Proverbs 15. We also looked at this verse last week too. Proverbs 15.

Someone read verse 8. Okay. Combine James 5.16, what we heard. The effectual prayer of a righteous man Avelis much.

And here it says the Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases Him. What characteristics are similar in these two verses? The condition of the man praying. In one place it says he's upright.

The other place it says he's a righteous man. And this is what I said last week. Effectual prayer, to be effectual, involves two things.

First is the man's walk. And the second is God's will. The way you walk affects the way you pray.

A man who's not fervent himself doesn't pray fervently. Does that make sense? A man who doesn't have a fervent hunger for God does not pray fervently. Okay, so he does hear, but it's not always what he wants to hear.

What you're saying basically. I mean the Lord does hear the prayer, but it's not always words He wants to hear. Psalm 66, verse 18.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. We looked at that verse last week. So if a man knowingly has sin in his heart that he is not turning away from, will God answer a prayer from him? No, that's what he's saying.

And we need to understand that's kind of the element in the word hear. We're not talking about is God aware someone's trying to get in touch with Him. God hears the phone ringing.

God can hear the sound, but God's not moved by it. See, we're talking about an effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man that may less much. It has power to move God.

And we want to know that our prayers God receives and He responds to them. Because the way a man walks really does make that different. Like for example, turn to Daniel.

I believe it's Daniel the 9th chapter. Daniel chapter 9. Yeah, thank you. Can you read that brother? Kenny? I haven't got that yet.

Okay. Yeah, 9.23. Daniel was praying and fasting and waiting on an answer from God. And he says in verse 21, I'll read verse 21.

While I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen early in the vision, came to me in the swift light about the time of the evening sacrifice. And did someone read what Gabriel tells Daniel in verse 23? So, is the angel telling Daniel, your prayers carry much weight with God because God highly esteems you?

That's what he's saying. It's plain English.

God esteemed Daniel's walk. God was there when Daniel decided not to defile himself with the king's food. God was there when even in the midst of the law against praying, Daniel goes and opens his window to the east and continues to pray three times a day as he'd done before.

And Daniel's walk, God highly esteems him. And God hears his prayer. And as he starts, he knows what's coming.

See, that's because, Kenny, the man who walks well, walks well because he knows God's will. So he knows God's will well by his walk, he knows what he's asking. It's just one flows right into the other.

A person who's not walking well is because he's not fully conscious and confident in the will of God. The walk will precede the other. It is a combination, we can call it heads or tails, but this is true even of persons before they're saved.

Can anyone tell me an instance from the Word where the actions of a man caused God to hear him before he was even saved? Cornelius. Yes, Acts chapter 10. Look in Acts chapter 10.

Look in verse 4, someone read verse 4 for us. Now, this is, Cornelius is not even saved, dear. But let's back up and see why his prayers may have been heard.

Look at the testimony that's spoken of in verse 2. Someone read that. You see why his prayers came up as a memorial offering? We've read in several scriptures the way a man walks shows his true heart attitude towards God. Now, this is probably best illustrated in the Roman centurion that had the paralyzed servant that was suffering intensely.

Remember the one we mentioned last week when Jesus said, You know, gee, I have not found anyone in Israel who is so great in faith. Remember last week, what did the Roman soldier indicate? How could Jesus tell that this Roman soldier had more faith than anyone he'd met in Israel? What did he show? Remember we said last week, he showed an understanding of something. Authority.

He showed an understanding of God's authority. He said, I am a man under authority, and I have men under me. And when we understand God's authority, what do you think it affects us? Right here.

You know, the word obey in the Greek means to hear under. Hupo akouo, to hear under. You're recognizing God's authority.

Now, how does this affect your prayer life? Let's say you're tempted. You choose by faith to hear under. And what do you do with the temptation? You take that thought captive, and by faith you overcome.

And you walk right. You know, the scripture says, God's faithful. He's not going to let you be tempted above what you can bear.

Never has, and never will. Not one of you here will ever be tempted above what you can bear. Never.

So you've never sinned because you couldn't resist. Never. And you never will.

Every single time, God provides a way of escape. And you find that way of escape by faith. And by faith, there will be a truth there for you to latch onto.

And by submitting to that truth, you won't give in to that temptation. And so, think of what you're doing in your spirit, and just simply walking uprightly. What are you exercising? Faith.

Faith. Faith. What? The faith you've been exercising in your walk helps you stand.

When you come to pray about God for something, and the enemy is there to battle you, you've been practicing exercising faith in the way you walk all throughout the day, and you're able to stand and believe God for His will, just like you walk. And so the way you have submitted to God's Word, that flows right out of your life into your prayer life. And your prayers become effectual, because you're praying in the same kind of faith you walk in.

It's quite simple. You ready? You've got a long time. Your heart's right with the Lord, and you're praying for something.

You've been praying for something for two years. All of a sudden, it happens. Yes, darling? The Lord was leading me at a time in my life, and this was before I was penitent.

I believed that He was leading me, and I didn't realize it until after. I believed that He was leading me toward Him, because my heart and my mind was open to Him. God leads all men towards Him.

Yes. My heart and my mind. The heavens declare His glory.

Why do the heavens declare His glory? So that men will see and understand. He said He assigned men the places where they would live. Not only the places, but the seasons.

Why did He assign where we're going to live and where we're going to live? He said He did this so that all men might seek Him and find Him. Although He's not far from any one of us. So yes, God does that with you and many others.

Now, I'm going to ask you a question. What if the walk is not well? Let's look and see what the Scripture says. What happens when we go to pray if our walk is not well? Can anyone think of a Scripture that talks about the effect that happens to your heart when you try to go and pray, and you have your own heart saying, Mm-mm, buddy, you're not doing well.

Can you think of a Scripture? Maybe I haven't really taught long enough. It's 1 John 3. You find it. 1 John 3. Look toward the end.

And see if you see it. What if your own heart is actually working against you? Did you see it there? Yeah, it's this section. Read with me.

Someone read with you from verse 18 to 22. Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him.

And whatever our heart condemns us, our God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart we have confidence to also. We receive for Him because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

So do you see here what happens when you're not walking well? What's the problem when you're not walking well when you go to pray? What does the Scripture say? Your own heart. Now, condemn is really the wrong word here. I shouldn't say that.

I take that back. I'm not going to say the wrong word. That's not a word I want to choose.

But when you think of condemn, you think of judging. And usually, the Greek word for condemn is katakrino. Krino is the word for judge, and kata is against.

But here, it is kata, it's against, and it's a form of gnosko, to know. It's saying your heart knows against you. Your heart knows.

I mean, look, your heart knows every thought you've had all day. Your heart knows when your eyes lingered too long on a billboard. Your heart knows when you spoke those words about someone that you should have shut off.

Your heart knows. And you go to pray to God, and your own heart is sitting there with that knowledge. And your heart knows something.

He's holy. He's not just the corner drugstore man that you walk in and say, I'd like to place my order. That's not really an understanding of God.

He's holy, and your heart knows that we must approach Him, and that if there's something wrong, we have to take care of that first. And it actually says it several times. Do you see it? It says in verse 19 in this, we know that this is how we know that we are of the truth, and we shall assure our hearts before Him, or persuade our hearts before Him, for if our heart condemns us, God's greater than our heart.

He knows everything. If your own heart knows it, He certainly knows it. He knows more than you know about yourself.

And this is why it's important. Now, this word, know against, to know against, it's used in one other place. It'd be interesting for us to just peek.

Look at Galatians 2.11. See about a... This is kind of... You'll get the idea of what we're talking about here. This is not some simple error. Your heart... This is talking about an area where you're doing something you really know you shouldn't be doing, and your heart knows it.

This same word is used in Galatians 2.11. And that chapter talks about a righteous judgment, judging righteously. We know that. Okay, someone read verse 11 of chapter 2 of Galatians.

When Peter came to Gideon, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. I guess from your version it would say, because he was clearly in the wrong. And it's interesting, in the Greek construction is, he knew against himself.

My Bible says it's used in the condemned again. Yeah. Do you remember this situation? Peter was there in Antioch, and he had become comfortable welcoming Gentiles.

He was sharing meals and fellowshiping with Gentiles, and he heard some pretty strong believers. Some brothers from Jerusalem were coming down, but they were kind of of the Jewish flavor. They were mixing with the Gentiles.

They were coming from... And it took a while for that to happen there in Jerusalem. So, Peter got to thinking, maybe I shouldn't... Maybe it would be better for me to just kind of back away from my Gentile friends, and that will put me in a better position to receive these brothers that are coming down from

James. And I'm not saying James was the fault.

That's just what the story says. Some brothers were coming down from Jerusalem. And so he withdrew from these Gentiles.

And how do you think that would have made him feel? And it says, not only he did, but those who were with him also followed him. And even Barnabas, the person who ended up going on the missionary journey with Paul, was even led astray to do this. And I'm sure when Peter did it, as he was doing it, he knew better.

This is something he knew better. And so we're talking about situations that if you're doing something, and your own heart knows better, before you even attempt to pray, you better humble your heart. Or at least begin your prayer by getting right with the Father yourself.

You know, when the priests were told... Well, you know the way the temple was set up. Probably most of you are at least familiar. When the temple was set up, what were the priests supposed to do before they came into the temple? They had a big tub of water.

And they were to wash themselves, take off their normal clothes, and put on their priest clothes. When you come to approach the presence of God, you need to stop and really make sure you're clean. You need to have cleansing and renewal.

You need to lay aside the old man. We've been talking about that as a fellowship. You put off the old man, and what do you put on to come to the presence of God? You put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

You clothe yourself with Christ, and you approach the Father on the basis of Christ. But you're not doing it casually. Oh, I'm okay, I don't have to think about my life, I'm covered by the blood of Jesus.

No one approached the Holy Father that way. It was a holy, sacred thing. That kind of attitude, I don't even worry about that, I'm covered by the blood of Jesus, that's treating the blood of Jesus as an unholy thing.

That's treating it as something common. That attitude is going to send more people to hell than many other things. What does it matter? I know I shouldn't do this, I'm going to do it anyway.

It's under the blood. That's it. That shows no appreciation for what Jesus really went through.

What, Jason? No, that's... Oh, you're just saying... That's not an understanding of what it cost Him. He became sin for us. How did He become sin for us? You know what He went through.

And to not treat that as holy and precious, is just not what we want to do. But yes, even at our best, we still need the righteousness of Christ, and the blood of Christ to be able to come boldly to the Father. And then what happens, go back to 1 John, when you really have made things right with God, and when you are doing well, this is what gets to happen.

Back to 1 John chapter 3, right where we were, back to verse 21. What happens when your heart does not know against you? When your heart knows your walk, you've done what you could. Again, remember we said this, and I'm going to say this again for the benefit of the new people here.

I'm not talking about it as a matter of being absolutely perfect in every single area instantaneously. That's our goal. Let me give you an obvious example.

It's one thing for me to stumble going this way, and doing my best. It's another thing for me to just stumble going this way. I'm pursuing Christ, and pursuing the knowing.

Yes, I'll stumble along the way. James says we all stumble at many points, but I'm stumbling this way. That's a whole other direction.

That's when we head up. That's really when we can take the blood of Jesus Christ, confessing our sins, knowing what? He's faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and not just forgive us our sins. To cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And if you're purified from all unrighteousness, you've come before the Father. What does your heart know against you? Nothing. And what happens in verse 21 when your heart doesn't know anything against you? Confidence.

You have confidence before God. The word there is *parousia*, and it can be translated boldness. You have boldness.

Another way, the actual word has more to do with openness. You're open. What did it make you think of? What's the first thing Adam and Eve did when they were conscious of sin and they heard the voice of God? They hid.

You know why a lot of people don't have intimacy with God? Because their heart knows against them. And they knew if they really drew near Him, He would peg that. Right off the bat, He would peg that.

You're not going to be able to bring sin into His presence. When Isaiah, a prophet of God, when Isaiah saw the Lord high, and I saw the Lord high and lifted up, and the training of His robes filled the temple, what did he cry out? Woe unto me. I'm a man of unclean lips, and I dwell amongst the people of unclean lips.

He saw Himself. You know how that is. My house looks pretty good.

Until we change the light bulbs. You know, when you approach God and He shines a revelation of who He is on you, you'll see. And if your heart does not know against you, you have this boldness before God.

Look in Acts chapter 4. Currently I'll find a couple of references. You can see this word used. The first place to look is in Acts chapter 4. Someone read verse 13.

When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled, and they realized that they had been like Jesus. What's it mean here? I think I'm picking on somebody who won't mind. He's a precious brother here, and yet I've seen him growing in this.

I remember the first time Randy got up and he was going to do just a greeting. Some people, just in front of others, are just so self-conscious. So can you imagine these untrained, ordinary fishermen? And here they're in front of all these scholars that have memorized the first five books of the Bible, for the most part to be in the Sanhedrin, to be a part of this, and a good part of the Mishnah, the oral traditions.

They have all this training, and here's this untrained fisherman, and he has no fear. And he is openly, openly calling unto repentance. With power.

With power. Completely open. Not afraid.

Not watching his words. Letting his words, if it will cost him his life, he's going to speak. When they observed his openness, what did they remember? There was one who was like this before us before.

Jesus was like this with us. Were men like this, you're saying? Were men like this? Yeah. And actually, this boldness, I want you, don't leave too far this chapter.

Turn to verse 29 of this same chapter. Verse 29. The high priest and them threatened the apostles, and so they went back and assembled with the believers.

And this is something the believers prayed for. We need to learn to pray for. They prayed for it.

We need it. Especially in our country, Christians are being intimidated about sharing their faith. And we need this in our day.

Someone read verse 29. Now Lord, consider their threats, and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Openness.

Fearless. And this does not mean cocky, arrogant. It just means open.

I'll tell you the truth. This is the truth. And we're not ashamed.

Because when you fully identify with Jesus Christ and His righteousness, in our society, in some places, not in every place, you're going to be considered a bigot, or a fool, or a religious nut. Jesus freak. Jesus freak.

They're one of your greatest testimonies. Absolutely. And you're just not ashamed.

This does not, you know, I don't know how it will mean in every single relationship. God will work through your personality, and the friendships you have, you will have your specific calling. The one thing will be common.

You will not have shame about your faith. You will be free, and you'll have freedom to share your faith. My heart goes out to the young Christians that face the job, and fellow employees day in and day out.

I'm not putting down evangelistic aspirations. And if you're not consistent in your walk in that area, you're going to get eaten alive. Because if you walk in hypocrisy, and you have double standards, it's right to be eaten alive.

It's right. I mean, we need it, and God will let that happen, you know, just to teach you a lesson. But you know, sometimes that opens doors and opportunities also.

I mean, it could go, I mean, out of those people that we're talking about, you know, this person might touch just one, and he has just touched and gained one. Out of all those people, I mean. There is, and Christians, the way we treat other people makes a big difference.

If there was a man in India, and I think if you're older at all, you'll recognize his name, who read the Bible, and was very fascinated with the teachings of Jesus Christ. So he visited a Christian church in India. And when he came in, he was not well received.

He was shown, he experienced prejudice, partiality, and he was asked, actually, to leave. You know, his name was Mahatma Gandhi. A man quite willing to live for his convictions.

Quite dedicated, but the lies of what the Christians claimed, didn't end. And I think it's Zac Poonen that makes this statement, he says that someone from India says this about Christians, you Christians make such extraordinary claims, but live such un-extraordinary lives. And you know, that we can't, that our walks, you know, that's what we're talking about tonight.

That this aspect of how our walk affects our prayer life. And again, now let's turn it back to the positive. But when, by faith, and God's discipline, and mercy, and training us, we are learning by faith, to bring our own thoughts into captivity.

And submit ourselves to God's Word. Walking by faith, learning by faith. We're strengthening just the ability to submit to God, draw to God, walk in His Holy Spirit.

As you're growing in that, growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, being strengthened in the faith with all power, according to His power which so mightily works in us. When that's happening, and you're becoming rooted and established, the overflow of that is, when you go to the Lord in prayer, you come strong in faith. And it says, you come as a righteous man.

How does a righteous man live? The righteous shall live by faith. You're walking by faith. Then, you're praying as a righteous man.

So, the place we really start for effectual prayer is self-examination. Examine yourself, Paul says, to see whether you'd be in the faith. And then, make sure, until your heart knows nothing against you, until the Holy Spirit has revealed sin to you, you confess that sin, He's faithful and just to forgive you that sin, and cleanse you from all unrighteousness, then your heart knows nothing against you, and you draw near to God, and you can begin to seek the very thing from God you need.

And this is where, when you begin to walk this way and live this way, what's the other part we talked about? That affects effectual prayer? Not just how you walk, but it's the will of God. You're seeking Him for His will. What did Jesus say? If you abide in Me, that would be what? That would be our walk.

And my words abide in you. See? You see how this would affect this? Before we go to another verse, turn to Ephesians, fifth chapter. Brother, I have a question real quick before.

Okay. I had someone ask me, just here recently, you know, someone kind of has an attitude, a cruel attitude toward me at times. And so I have had to turn my cheek many times.

And so this person asked me, you know, why, when you know it's going to happen, why do you go, why do you keep going back? How many times are you supposed to do this? How many times are you going to keep turning the other cheek? I'm going to ask you that question. Seventy times seven is 490. And turning a good cheek is a good start, but you bless them.

You're good to them. Yes, every time. And pray for them.

You know, and show them, you know, you're not just unlovable. Why over and over? And the world doesn't agree. Over and over again.

Because it's the right thing. Because I'm walking with God. And be sure and you check out to see, make sure you're not doing something to get slapped.

You can only do the same thing to the right. Exactly, exactly. Here in Ephesians, in the fifth chapter, look in verse 17.

Someone read verse 17. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord says. So, do you just understand God's will automatically? Do you? No, you don't.

You see, so, what if you don't know God's will very well? What's a verse all of us should think of when it talks about, then you will know what God's will is. James 1. That's a good one. I know what you're thinking of.

And then you shall know. I'll put it more in the King James. Then you shall prove what the will of the Lord is.

His good and pleasing and perfect will. Where is that? Ephesians 5. No, that's not there. That's a good one.

Proving what is pleasing to the Lord. That's there. I'm quoting the second half of a verse.

I'll jump ahead. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, whole and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be ye not conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by what? The renewing of your mind. And then you shall be able to prove what God's will is.

Now what if a person is being lackadaisical about being transformed by the renewing of their mind? They're not, the words of Christ are not abiding in them. They're not hungering and thirsting after righteousness to be filled. They're not diligently studying the words of Christ.

God has left us His words that His Son has spoken. We have the record of them. We can know what God has spoken on the earth.

We have a record of what the apostles thought. We can know them. What if you're counting on the fact that Brother Allen knows them? And he'll tell us.

Well, is Brother Allen going to be there in your prayer clothing too, reminding you? Okay, now. I don't think so. If where we're failing in making sure we're not foolish, but we're striving to know the will of God, we're undermining our own effectiveness in prayer.

So as we know what God's will is, and this is what's good for me. I know what God's will is for me. And therefore, I have a great confidence before God.

You know what I know what God's will is for me? I know what God's will is for you. I pray for you as well as for me. It's God's will that you be filled with the Holy Spirit.

That's the will of God for you. It's the will of God that you stand firm in all His will, mature and fully assured, epiphraed. If you look there in Colossians, flip over to Colossians, that's what he prayed for people all the time.

He wrestled in prayer for that. In Colossians 6, verse 12. Someone read that.

No, I'm sorry, there's not 6, there's 4.12. That's a piece. Colossians 4.12. See, there's that word mature. You know, you guys have heard me talk.

What have I been talking about for the last three and four months here at Whitewater? The need to be mature. Why? I know that's the will of God. That's the will of God for us.

It's not His will that we just be saved. This is the... Did y'all hear that? No one shocked, no one gasped. I'm going to say it again.

It's not His will that we just be saved. The Bible says, for God's will that all men to be saved and... Finish that please. Yeah, you're right.

Go on, say it. To come to the knowledge of the truth. Yes.

It's God's will for all men to be saved and to come to the... In the Greek it would be full knowledge of the truth. He's not just trying to get men saved. He's trying to get them saved and then conform to His image.

That's why He said we should be teachers. Remember the writer of Hebrews? By this time, you ought to be His teachers. But see, if you've not walked well, you won't know the will of God well.

I have complete confidence before God to say, fill me with your Holy Spirit. It's His will. I don't want to sin.

I want to walk in the Holy Spirit. It's God's will that I be filled with the love of Christ. Because I know when I'm filled with the love of Christ, guess what I'm going to do? I'm going to obey the Word.

The Bible says if any man obeys the Word, in him is the love of God perfected. And when people are not being filled with the love of God, you know what happens? Lawlessness abounds. Due to the increase of lawlessness, the love of many waxes cold.

But when you love God, love does what to the law? Love fulfills the law. So when you're being filled with the Holy Spirit, when you're filled with the Holy Spirit, what do you get along with that filling? All the... It's another F word. All the fruit of the Holy Spirit is going to fill your life.

Then you'll be filled with love, filled with joy. Well, what's the joy? What's the joy of the Lord? You feel weak? Well, be filled with the Spirit. Be filled with the joy of the Lord.

And the joy of the Lord will be your strength. And you'll be filled with love, joy, then you'll be filled with peace. What does the peace of Christ do? Transcends all understanding.

And it guards your heart and your mind. See, this is the will of God. This is the will of God for you.

This is the will of God for me. And when you walk that way, and you pray that way, you know the beautiful thing about this? Back to 1 John, and then we'll try to wrap this up. It takes more than just an evening to grasp this.

We can plant, though. We can plant, we can plow. And if you'll nurture this, this is what's beautiful.

If you're confident of what the will of God is, turn to 1 John chapter 5. 1 John chapter 5. Back to the word confidence. Someone read verses 14 and 15. So how do you have confidence? Wouldn't that be sweet? You know it's His will for you to be filled with all love, joy, and peace.

You know that. And if you know it's His will, what should you fully know? You should have confidence He's going to do this in your life. Of course He's going to do this.

Do you think He wants you to walk around stumbling and bumbling and sinning and the only thing you can really say is well, praise God, He's just so merciful and He forgives me all the time. I'm not saying that's a bad testimony. That's part of it that's good.

But He wants you to go from being an infant to maturity, strong, consistent, stable, established, Godly, ordered, virtuous. That's His will. And He's given you the Holy Spirit.

You know, do you remember what Jesus said? If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children. So which of you, if your son asked you for a fish would give him a snake? Or if he asked you for an egg would give him a scorpion? Well, if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your Father in Heaven not give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? You need the Holy Spirit. You need to be filled with the Spirit.

It's not one time experience. It's not I got the Holy Ghost 10 years ago. It's, is He filling you now? Are you walking in Him now? Are you keeping in step with Him now? Are you being led by Him now? Those who are led by the Spirit they're the sons.

They're the grown ones. They're the stable ones. They're the mature ones.

The ones led by the Spirit. Yeah. Back to Colossians 2 again.

Paul talks about all by the joints and bands and knit together increases with the increase Growth. You know, when things are right growth should happen. And the Greek word is oxalinoid.

We get this word to augment. It should be augmenting. We should see this kind of increase when things are right.

Increase of the plant. Now, let's try to deal with real quickly an old myth that's very subtle in dealing with the warfare trying to prevent you from really laying hold of how much God wants to fill you with the Holy Spirit. What if your conscience and your heart knows against you right now that that's not how you've been? What if that's the case? I didn't catch the first part.

I said, what if let's deal with an old myth that the enemy uses to try to prevent you from having confidence before God because God wants you to have the Holy Spirit and to be filled with the Holy Spirit now. The myth is you can't have that because you're not right. See, this is something that took me I was tripped up on a while thinking, I really can't I shouldn't be expecting this now because I don't have it together.

The truth of it is until you begin to receive this you'll never have it together. You receive the Holy Spirit in order to walk better. In order to be strengthened.

In order to have boldness. In order to have love. When you're being filled with love you begin to fulfill the law.

When you begin to be filled with joy you begin to be strong in the Lord. So the filling of the Holy Spirit makes your walk. So it's kind of heads and tails.

I spent the whole time saying your walk affects the way you pray but you know how you should begin to walk? Pray. We could be asking God to That's exactly right. God didn't kill the lions or make the king change his mind, did He? He planned for Daniel to have victory in the lion's den.

So, you know, we're not going to ask God to turn off the furnaces. The furnaces are out there. The real testimony is not that oh boy, can you see would we even know the story if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego didn't end up in the furnace? No, what made it an awesome testimony is that everybody expected them to be destroyed.

But they were not only not destroyed in the furnace, they came out not even smelling like smoke. Not even having any hair sands. And people said, man, look what you've gone through.

You're perfectly preserved. When we're being strengthened by the Lord and we're going through the trials He allows to come our way and people see, wow, you're still full of joy. You're still okay.

You've kept your faith. They marveled. And that's just to make sure that people knew the fire was really hot.

There was no mirage, you know. So, let's wrap this up and say this, your heart knows how you're walking. It knows.

You know, I may not know, others may not know, but your heart knows. And this is where, that's why the scripture says, if your heart knows against you. You know what the good news is about that, brothers and sisters? It doesn't say if brother Alan knows against you.

What if you're perfectly right and I just think you're wrong? That shouldn't hinder you a bit. It shouldn't hinder you a bit. It's not if I know against you, it's if your own heart knows against you.

If your heart knows against you, you could have a million people saying you're wrong. See, so it's just, make sure your heart is right. And you'll have confidence before God.

I heard someone, I can't take credit for this, you know, the Lord let Satan touch everything. You know, Job lost his sons and daughters one day, his camel, his donkeys, his sheep all in one day. Why didn't the Lord let, why didn't Satan take Job's wife? Think about that.

So she'd say to him, why don't you just curse God and die? Boy, some help she is. Listen, what I'm saying, and so he had everything against him except his own heart. And he stood.

He learned more of God. Even in the end, he saw himself even less than he did before, but he stood. So this is something, and let me tell you something, if we are really going to move toward effectual praying, I'm just going to tell you ahead of time, batten down the hatches.

Think Satan's just going to sit there and say, let him roll out the secret weapon. Let's just relax. If you really begin to get serious with God, just be sober.

Be alert. Why should the enemy mess with someone he has not threatened with, you know? He'll leave you alone. Get serious.

Be careful.

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