

Be Sure, Your Sin Will Find You Out

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of following Christ's example of selflessness and humility, rather than pursuing self-interest and worldly desires.

Duration: 1:00:42

Scripture: Proverbs 24:11-12, Malachi 3:8, Galatians 6:10

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of loving God with all our hearts and loving our neighbors. He shares the story of a man who questioned who his neighbor was, and Jesus responds with the parable of the Good Samaritan, highlighting the need to help those who are beaten down by the devil. The preacher prays for God to speak to the church and asks to be a vessel for God's message. He then transitions to the topic of sin and uses the story of Paul's shipwreck to illustrate the importance of listening to God's voice and finding peace in the midst of storms.

Transcript

This morning I'm going to continue with message number three in the series called The Corinthian Problem. And it's subtitled, The Roots and the Resolutions to Powerlessness in the Last Days Church. We are a type, as it is in our generation of the Corinthian Church.

We've already discussed that in previous messages. I'm going to ask if you'll turn to Numbers in the Old Testament, chapter 32. And we're going to begin there at verse 16.

Let's pray together while you're finding that. Now, Father, I thank you, God, that I can stand in this pulpit as an oracle of God. Lord, you know that I have no agenda.

All that's on my heart is to obey you. You've placed this word deeply in me, and I pray for the grace to deliver it in a manner, oh God, that will bring freedom and joy into the hearts of all your people. Set free those that are oppressed.

God, straighten things that are crooked. Bring down things that have exalted themselves above the knowledge of God. Let the way of Christ be clearly understood.

I ask your Holy Spirit for the grace to speak this and the heart to speak it. I ask, Lord, that I may have the privilege of standing behind the cross of Christ, that I may disappear, that Christ may appear. Lord, you've

got to speak to your church.

You've got to speak to your body, not only in New York, but worldwide. You've got to speak to your church in this generation, Lord. I pray that I might be one of those vessels that can stand and speak for you.

I thank you for this with all my heart. In Jesus' name. We're going to go to Numbers chapter 32.

The title of the message this morning, the third in the series, is Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out. Be sure your sin will find you out. Numbers chapter 32, beginning at verse 16.

And they came near unto him. That's Moses. He's now giving instruction to the generation that's going to go in and they're going to claim the promised land.

And they said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle and cities for our little ones. But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel until we have brought them unto their place. And our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

We will not return unto our houses until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance. For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan or forward because our inheritance has fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward. And Moses said unto them, If you will do this thing, if you will go armed before the Lord to war, and will go all of you armed over Jordan before the Lord until he has driven out his enemies from before him, and the land be subdued before the Lord, then afterward you shall return and be guiltless before the Lord and before Israel.

And this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord and be sure your sin will find you out. Now, folks, we use that text a lot in the context of somebody that's got some hidden thing in the closet and they're trying to keep it there.

And, you know, I've heard it preached and done it myself. Be sure your sin will find you out. But if you take this verse of scripture in the context of how it's written, it has quite a different application.

Moses is saying to the children of Israel, be sure that there's going to be a great personal cost to you if you pursue your own selfish interest while others around you have yet to come into their inheritance in the Lord. This is what the Lord is speaking through Moses. There was a certain number of tribes that had already received what they felt to be their inheritance.

I won't bother getting into the logistics of that. Just take that at face value. Yet there were others, they were their brothers and sisters in Christ as it is, that were going into the promised land to claim the inheritance that was rightfully theirs.

But there was an understanding that those who had already found what they were looking for would not settle in until others who had not yet received their inheritance had received it. I know I'm generalizing but that's essentially the gist of what is being spoken here. And this is what Moses is saying, or the Lord is saying through Moses to the people.

If you settle in and you just start focusing on yourself to the exclusion of all others that have not yet found their inheritance, that which has been promised to them in the promised land. If you let your brothers go in and struggle and in some cases perhaps even be defeated, those that are trying to find their way through as it is to what is theirs, promised to them in Christ. He said this is a sin that will find you out.

In other words there's going to be a great cost to you if you do this thing. Now folks, this is the dilemma that faces every generation, that faces us today as a church in a society that's really self-focused. In a church age that has turned inward to a very, very large extent.

People coming to the house of the Lord and saying, what's in this for me? And how can I better myself? Now this was the Corinthian problem, was that the focus of the society around them had not yet gotten out of the church. Now, Paul had founded this church in one of his missionary journeys and it's inarguably probably the most problematic church that Paul ever had to pastor. Zonder's Encyclopedia, Zondervan's Encyclopedia says it was one of the most strategically located cities in the ancient world.

Think of Corinth and think of New York City as I give this parallel. In Roman times the city was notorious as a place of wealth and indulgence. To live as a Corinthian was an expression among the society of that time and it meant to live in luxury and immorality.

It was a meeting place of all nationalities, all over the world, everybody as it is from the known world came there to trade and to live. It was a commercial trader that traded by sea and by land. At its height, its population consisted of about 200,000 people who were considered free and 500,000 that were considered slaves.

One of its main temples had over 1,000 priestesses that were engaged in prostitution as an act of worship. Can you imagine this? A temple in the middle of Corinth? Take a journey with me into Corinth and you see probably the most prominent place in that city, there's a temple. In that temple there are 1,000 prostitutes that are called priests of the Lord as it is.

An act of worship would consist of fornication in the temple. No wonder, no wonder these people, Paul said, you know there's sin among you such as is not, that you should be tragically concerned over, that a man should have his father's wife in that congregation. But he says you're not even concerned, you're even glorying in this thing.

I can understand now why the people were saying well it's not as bad as it is out there but folks it's not good enough just to live at a time or to have a spiritual temperament that says well I'm just, I'm better than they are out there. That's not the calling of the church of Jesus Christ. We're not called just to be better than the society around us.

We are called to be as Christ is. We are called to something so much higher, so much deeper. We're called to something of God that will bring us to a place of joy, not just on Sunday morning as you have experienced in the sanctuary but all throughout the day and the week and the month and the years ahead and throughout the rest of your life.

There's an inner joy that comes from the Holy Ghost when you and I are truly walking in Christ. Simply put, this church had to make a decision. They could either continue in the self-seeking ways of all the society around about them or they could follow Christ and be given not to themselves but for the betterment of all men just as Jesus Christ had.

It was a choice folks. We're living I believe at a time where we have to make a choice. Now sadly through history, I hate to go to the end while we're still at the beginning, but one of the church historians after the death of Paul wrote a document indicating that the Corinthian problem still existed after the life of Paul the Apostle.

Oh no doubt there were some that moved forward. There always are. There always is a remnant in the church that will move forward.

But the church as a whole didn't heed the words of the Apostle Paul. Would be to God they could see that they were resisting scripture itself. The words that Paul was writing were holy texts coming from the heart of God.

And they were resisting this because it just didn't fit the vision of what they felt their participation and what they should garner as it is from their association with the church should bring to them. And so they were opening their hearts to arguments against the authority of scripture. We're living in a day folks where there have been preachers brazen ungodly men who have stood before congregations and told them to close their Bibles.

He said, this is a new day. The spirit of God is doing something new today. Folks, I'm telling you how this is as dangerous as playing with the devil himself.

And here was a church age that were challenging the authority of scripture and they were challenging it simply on the basis of the fact and of the image of Paul, those that were, there were men standing in pulpits and they were saying, look at, yeah, we agree his letters are weighty, but his bodily presence is contemptible and his speech lacks the eloquence and the wisdom as it is that we are able to bring to you. And so they were challenging the authority and they were basically saying to the people, this following of Christ, when you look at Paul, is this what you want to look like? Is this what you want to be? This Paul that they considered nothing more perhaps than a vagabond traveling from church to church, working with his own hands, making tents as it is to supply his own needs. And they were standing before the people and saying, no, no, we're, this is not the calling.

We're called to reign now. Everybody's going to reign now. We're all going to be apostles and prophets.

Everyone's going to have a miracle ministry. We're all going to be successful and great and influential in our society. And they were standing and, and it was as if there was a contest in Corinth for the hearts of the people.

Paul wept many tears over this church and took journeys to Corinth and some of them, one of them at least seemed to go well and another didn't. And Paul, you can see he said, I, I, I love you. He said to the church, I'm fighting for you to present you as a pure bride to Christ.

And Paul knew that what the Corinthian church was embracing was an impurity. And this impurity was going to keep these people away from the testimony of Christ that God had desired to establish in them for their generation and even down to ours. Proverbs chapter 24 verses 11 and 12.

Let me just read it to you says these words, if you forbear to deliver them that are drawn to death and those that are ready to be slain, if thou sayest, behold, we knew it not, does not he that ponders the heart consider it and he that keeps your soul, does he not know it? And shall he not render to every man according to his works? Here's what the Lord says. If you forbear to deliver those that are drawn to death, if you draw back, if you knew or at least remotely considered what the calling of Christ is on your life as a follower of Jesus Christ, and you look at it, but you say, no, I don't want this. I want the cross for what the cross will give me, but I don't want the cross for what Christ requires me to give back to others.

I don't want to go this second mile as it is. And the writer of Proverbs says, if you forbear those that are to deliver those that are drawn to death and those that are ready to die, if you say we didn't know it, and a lot of people was just choose to live in darkness rather than to be confronted by the truth of God, thinking that one day I'll stand before the throne of God and say, well, I didn't know if I had known I would have gone. But folks, you know, and I know, and I believe that every man and woman has ever sat and with the Bible in their hands is without excuse before the throne of God.

Shall he not render to every man according to his works? Remember Moses said, if you don't go and fight for your brother, if you just sit here and build your own house and concern yourself with your own needs, if you don't go in, he said, and fight, be sure your sin will find you out. Be sure, Moses said, there will be a cost to this to you. Now, what are the ways that this sin, now this sin I'm talking about is the seeking of self.

It's to the exclusion and sometimes the almost total indifference to the struggle of others. What kind of a cost will this break to the professing church of Jesus Christ? What will we have to deal with? Now, first of all, in second Corinthians, if you go ahead with me there, chapter 11, second Corinthians chapter 11 verses 19 and 20, firstly, it will open the door to corrupt leadership. Now hear me on this one.

If you don't want to walk with God, the Lord, I could prove it to you. If we had the time, I could go into the old Testament with you and I can show you clearly that the Lord says, I'll give you leaders after your own heart. You don't want to walk with me.

Then it opens the door to corrupt leadership. Listen to what Paul says in chapter 11, verse 19, for you suffer fools gladly seeing yourselves are wise for you suffer. In other words, the word suffer means you open your heart to it.

You allow it. If a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. Now Paul is speaking to the Corinthian church and they're caught in this indecision of which way they're going to go.

And Paul says, you have opened the door of your heart to fools. People who bring you not into freedom, but into bondage. They ensnare you again with the things of the world.

The thinking of a rebellious society that lives for itself and apart from God. You were free, Paul said, you had escaped them, but now they're entwining you in this thinking again. And they come in and devour you.

They have an advantage because they're naturally gifted speakers and they can move you in the realm of emotions. And then they make you cry hot tears and they bring you up to the mountain and take you down to the valley. And then at the end of the message, they move their hand around to your purse and pocket and take from you.

He says, Paul says, you suffer them if they devour you, if they take from you, if they exalt themselves. See the Corinthians had division in the church based on the theologies or personalities as it is. And which means their hearts were open now, even if it started out as what seemed to be legitimate spiritual preferences, their hearts were now open to charlatans that would stand and exalt themselves.

We have not only embraced charlatans in the church of Jesus Christ, the professing church of Christ in America, we have exported them by the dozens all over the world and the risk guided theologies. If a man smite you on the face, Paul says, if a man just simply slaps your simplicity in Christ as it is, this, the

innocence that you brought into the kingdom of God, Paul remembers this Corinthian church when they received, he remembers the tears, no doubt he remembers how they turn from idols to the living God. He had to have remembered the original, at least initial sincerity in the hearts of these people to go as it is all the way with God.

Paul was their spiritual father initially. They saw this man who had counted everything but done that he may win Christ and had left off all of the accomplishments and accolades of this world to follow a path of rejection and follow a path of peril and poverty and all the things that he had suffered to come to them with the gospel of Jesus Christ. They initially at least had an image of what a man of God looked like, what a spiritual father should look like.

And then they had traded that image off now and they had gravitated to what was all around them in society. This love and lust for the image of man. It was still very much in the hearts of these people.

They hadn't made the break from it. Now Paul says in Galatians, let me read it to you. Chapter 6 verses 7 and 8 he says, Be not deceived, God is not mocked.

Whatever a man sows that will he also reap. And he that sows to his flesh, that means to satisfy himself, shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he that sows to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

Now it's a sowing and reaping law in the kingdom of God. Whatever you plant that's what's going to come back to you. If you plant to yourself, he says you're going to reap corruption.

Now this is written, this whole text in Galatians chapter 6 verses 7 and 8 is written in the context of restoring those who have fallen. Galatians chapter 6 verse 1, bearing one another's burdens. Galatians chapter 6 verse 2, doing good to all men especially those who are of the house of faith.

Galatians chapter 6 and verse 10. He's exhorting the church of Galatia, go to those who have fallen and bring them back to the knowledge of Christ. Bear one another's burdens.

Don't live for yourself. Don't be a self-seeking person with quick and easy answers to every situation. Try to find out things around you and move to helping those who are under a burden that perhaps you don't understand yet.

Do good to all men. Go out and let that be the practice of your life even to the unthankful and the unholy just as your father in heaven is a blessing to all those and especially those who don't even thank him. Go with me to Jeremiah please in the Old Testament.

In Jeremiah chapter 5 we see Israel coming to a place of judgment. The one thing I've heard it said and I agree that we learn from history is that we never learn from history. We don't seem to learn from what has gone before us.

We don't seem to understand that things repeat themselves. And here are the people of God on the very brink of the judgment of God and in the house of the Lord there are now all these good time voices that have risen up. This is what Jeremiah says in chapter 5 verse 26.

He says for among my people are found wicked men. They lay wait and see that such snares. They set a trap.

They catch men. Now you've got to understand this is a season where judgment is at the door folks. And look at what's happening in the house of God.

As a cage is full of birds so are their houses full of deceit. They have become great and waxen rich. They are waxen fat.

They shine. Yea they overpass the deeds of the wicked. In other words these are the spiritual leaders.

They're not challenging sinners in the house of God anymore. They're not going to the core issue of what separates men from God. They judge not the cause.

Which cause now? The cause of the fatherless yet they prosper. And the right of the needy do they not judge? In other words their theology is not focused on others. It's focused on themselves.

They don't have a heart for the fatherless. That means those out there that don't have any direction or guidance. They have no voice to speak to them.

They don't know what the future for them holds. They don't speak about the needy. They don't move the people in the direction of human need.

In verse 29 he says shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means. That means they're leading in the flesh and my people love to have it so.

And what will you do in the end thereof? Jeremiah says this is a terrible thing. It's beyond thinking. The prophets are standing and not speaking for God.

They're full of themselves. They're speaking a message of comfort to a people who are about to go into disaster. They're not warning the people of the days ahead.

They're not dealing with issues of the heart. The priests are leading through their natural minds. Everything is a strategy now.

Nobody's talking about leaning on God, going into the prayer closet, finding out what God is saying and moving in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. It's all naturalness now. It's all how do we reach the community? What kind of a survey are we going to come up with next to get people into the house of God? And he says but what will you do in the end comes? What will you do? Folks we had a taste of it when the towers were struck on September in 2001.

We had a taste of the panic. We had a taste of what the Bible says is going to come to the whole world in a moment of time. I don't know if it's going to be in our generation, but what if it does happen? What if all hell does break out in our generation? Where will all the prophets of success and prosperity be then? Where will their message be? Where will their people be? Jeremiah says yeah, you love to have it this way.

A gospel that just focuses on yourself and builds you up and makes you feel good. And you walk out, you feel like you're a king. You feel like you're reigning with Christ whether you are or not.

But then what will happen when the end comes? What will happen if you've not really been in the scriptures? If you've not really been walking with God? What will happen when the end comes? Or difficult days. It wasn't the end as it is for Jerusalem. It was just the end of a season.

It was the end of a certain moment in their history. Something was finishing and something else was beginning. But it was an end that was coming with difficulty to these people.

And Jeremiah said what will you do when this end comes to you? Peter says in 2 Peter, if you'll go ahead with me in your Bibles to 2 Peter chapter 2, he talks about the last days. That there are going to be the same voices, the same types of voices are going to be raised up again. It's always a sign of judgment folks when you see the good time prophet arise.

It's really time to dig into the word of God like you never did before. It's time folks, it's time. One of the deepest signs that I've seen that we're living in perilous days is these voices that have been raised that don't know God and they are just mesmerizing speakers but they don't really deal with anything of Christ in the cross and what it really means to be part of the bride of Jesus Christ.

Listen to what Peter says in chapter 2 verse 1, there were false prophets also among the people even as there shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresies even denying the Lord that bought them and shall bring upon themselves swift destruction. What it means when he says denying the Lord that bought them, it means they deny the lordship of Christ over the believer and his right to use our lives as he sees fit. They will deny the Lord, the lordship of Christ, the right of Christ, the fact that we are bought with the price, we're not our own anymore.

That we are called to glorify God with our body and with our spirit which are right. That we are called as the scripture says to give our lives as a living sacrifice for God which is our reasonable service. But they will deny this Lord that bought them.

They will deny his right of ownership over his church. And many shall follow the pernicious or the crooked ways by reason of whom, verse 2, the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. Now this is the way of the cross.

It's the way of the church. It's the way that God has called his church from the time that Christ walked on the earth to our present day. This way will be evil spoken of.

And through covetousness shall they with feigned or pretended words make merchandise of you whose judgment now of a long time lingers not and their damnation slumbers not. Go to verse 18. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lust of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escape from them who live in error.

While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption. For of whom a man is overcome of the same as he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

For it is better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it's happened to them according to the true proverb, the dog has turned to his own vomit again and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. I don't know how it can be said any more simply.

Peter says there's a true Christianity, but then there's another one that comes and it is governed by pulpитеers as it is who through unsundered personal lusts draw the people back into what they had left behind and ensnare them into thinking that satisfaction in the Christian life comes from the things of this world and the things of this life. And the scripture, if you had the time to go to 1 Timothy 6, it calls these, Paul calls these men absolutely destitute of the truth. Men who suppose that godliness, you read it for yourself in 1 Timothy 6, they suppose that godliness is a means to financial gain.

It's right in the scriptures, folks. How's anybody ever going to stand and say, I didn't know this. I wasn't aware of this.

Peter said it's better for them not to have known than to turn from the holy commandment. And I took time to research these words, the holy commandment. And the word holy means separation from the earth's defilement.

And the word commandment means the whole moral law of God. The whole moral law of God requires us to be separate from the thinking of this world. Paul says we're in this world, but we're not of this world.

We're not walking through the day, looking at people as if they are trees walking that we can harvest for some new furniture or some new advantage in our lives. No, we're to ask God for his touch so that we see people the way Christ sees them. Eternal souls, beings created in the image of God that will have an eternity in hell or heaven depending on the choice that they make for Christ on this side of eternity.

We're to see with the eyes of God what is truly valuable, folks. The souls of men are valuable. We're to see that we're not called to live for ourselves.

We are called to follow our savior. We are called to be an extension of the work of our Christ. The things that he did on this earth, the manner in which he lived and preached and moved, we are to do as well in our generation.

Praise God. The holy commandment, the whole moral law. Now, Peter was there in John 13 when Jesus said, listen to what he said.

Now, perhaps he was referring to this. Jesus said a new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples.

If you love one another, if you have love for one another, a holy commandment. Peter could have said to us today, I was there. I saw him when he sat at the table and we knew there were 10 commandments, but now God in the flesh who created the universe said, I give you a new commandment.

It's really the 11th commandment. He says, I'm calling you now to love one another as I have loved you. Amazing.

Now they may not have fully understood this, but they were going to understand it in the not too distant future. They were going to see the son of God given in full measure for our need and their need. They were going to understand the pattern of a savior who'd come to this world, not to live for himself, but for the will of his father and the will of his father.

Christ said clearly is that not one created in the image of God should perish. He was, they were going to know that in their failing and in their frailty and even Peter himself who cursed himself with an oath that he never knew this savior would find this mercy, would find a savior that was always there. Even in the time of his deepest need, a lawyer came to Jesus and he said, master, what is the great commandment in the law? What's the great commandment? What's, what's the one that stands out above all the rest.

Jesus, without hesitation says, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. This is the first commandment. He said in the second is like unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

And he said on these two commandments, you can hang all the law. If you're going to put a string through your Bible and hang it on a hook, he says, you can hang all the law and all the prophets. Everything that's taught in this book is taught in those two things that you love God with all your heart.

And this love is manifested with the love for your neighbor. You remember this one man who thought he was smart then. And he said, well, caught in his own words.

He said, well, who is my neighbor? You see, I'm studying this and you know, when I figure it out, I'll really move to it. But I really, at this point, don't know who my neighbor is. Jesus gives him an illustration of a man who was just beaten up on his journey and left for dead.

Now, how many people in this world does that apply to today? How many people have been beaten up of the devil on this journey, left on the side of the road for dead. And this man went to a person who was in this condition and did what he knew to do to bring him to health and healing. And he said, now go and do likewise.

That we live and move in compassion towards others. That's the holy commandment. And Peter said, it's better to have not known Christ.

It's better to have not ever heard the gospel than to turn from this holy commandment. Than to turn from this sense of separation from the thinking of the world. Now, folks, I know I'm speaking not just to Times Square Church, but I'm speaking this morning to much of the church in the Western world.

And tragically, we have exported it to the far reaches this false concept of Christianity to the far reaches of the world. It's tragic. I've been in Africa where the people come in, the poor come in, the fatherless come into the house of God.

They don't even have shoes to wear. Only to have preachers who've gotten a theological training in America standing there and ripping them off for the last cent that they've got in their pocket. It's tragic, folks.

It's absolutely tragic. And I remember the last time I was in Africa thinking, God, how long is it? How long will it be before you judge this? Lord, you've got to judge this. You've got to show people in the world that what we have exported to them is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It's a self-seeking, self-indulgent, self-moving, loathsome focus in the house of God, all using Jesus Christ for its own advantage. Peter said, no, this is not the gospel. And Paul was pleading with the Corinthian church because we're living in the Corinthian moment, folks.

I stand here as just a voice. I have no axe to grind. I've got no soapbox to stand on.

I'm under the mandate of the Holy Ghost and I'm standing here just with a burden in my heart, saying if we're reasonable, we've got to consider these things now. We've got to consider what it means to be part of the church of Jesus Christ in our generation. Be sure, Moses said, your sin will find you out.

Firstly, it opens the door to corrupt preachers. Secondly, it gives the people or leads them to an inability to look within. Paul is saying to the Corinthians, he says, there's fornication among you that should really be breaking your heart.

There are divisions and these divisions have gotten to the point where you're all openly fighting with one another. And now over trivial matters, you're taking one another to court before the unbelievers. Now, I'm not talking about serious matters.

There are seasons and times, even Paul himself had to appeal to a judicial system. There are times, I'm not even remotely suggesting that the woman who's being beaten in the house by her boyfriend or husband not seek legal protection. That's not what I'm talking about.

I'm talking about trivial matters, times when we could take the injustice, as Paul said, or the loss and brother is taking brother to court. There are divisions. There is open and unconfessed sin among the people and everyone is indifferent to it all under the guise of, well, at least we're better than people out there.

And nobody really cares because it's not about the purity of the church. It's about what can I get from Christ? And so nobody really cared that this man is sitting there and he's taken as a sexual partner, his own mother, or is at least his mother, his stepmother. And nobody really cares.

It says, well, it doesn't affect my life, but it does affect your life. Whatever is allowed in the house of God that is an abomination of Christ does affect you, whether you think so or not. Paul said, I'm writing to you Corinthians, and I'm not telling you to disassociate from every fornicator and liar and thief.

If you did so, you'd have to leave the world. He said, no, but I'm telling you not to eat with a brother who's a fornicator. Somebody who's confessing Christ and is unwilling to turn from their sin is willfully a thief, willfully a liar, willfully covetous, willfully mocking in a way that you know is, he said, if you're going to go to a restaurant, Corinthian church, go with somebody else.

Don't eat with these people. Folks, the sinner must never become comfortable in this church. I'm talking about the willful sinner.

I'm not talking about the struggler. I'm talking about the willful sinner should never become comfortable in the church of Jesus Christ. If you're sitting here today and you know that you're living in willful sin, God help me.

If you ever become comfortable in this church, there's a principle that's shown to us in Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament. I'm just going to share it with you. Chapter three and verse eight.

God said to the people through the prophet, you've robbed me. You've robbed me. And the people said, where in have we robbed you? What have we done? As far as we know, we're coming to the temple.

Now I use the illustration of tithes and offerings, but there's a principle here that I want to speak about. He says, you've robbed me in failing to surrender to me what I asked of you. You've changed the requirements as it is for attending my house.

You've changed the requirements for coming in and calling yourself by my name. And that's really a lot of what's happened in this generation. The requirements have been changed.

A lot of churches now they've eliminated the cross from the theology. They eliminated the blood from all of their hymn books, or if they even use such a thing anymore, all the songs. Now you've changed the requirement to come into my house.

You've robbed me. And really what hurts the heart of God most, he says, you've robbed me of your heart. You've robbed me of the full-hearted surrender that I was looking for in you that would have allowed me to fill you from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet.

I would have brought you into a life. Oh, Israel, he cries out, if you only would have known what I was willing to do, if you would have turned to me, one of you would have sent 10,000 to flight. I would have done something so miraculous if you would have just turned to me with all of your heart.

And I feel that in my heart today. I feel the cry of the Holy Spirit to this generation. I feel Jesus one more time standing outside the gates of a religious system that has largely locked the life that he wants to give people out, saying, oh, Jerusalem, if you would have known what I wanted to do, I wanted to gather you and draw you close to my heart.

I wanted to do something in you that would have so revolutionized you. You would have lived such a profound life in the midst of a self-seeking generation that you would stand out as lights shining in a darkened world. We're not called to look like the world.

We're called to look like Christ. We're called to live like Christ. Lastly, when Moses said, be sure this self-seeking sin will find you out.

The Corinthian church were noted for their confusion. In chapter 14 of first Corinthians, they were using spiritual giftings for self-glory. And the end result was disorder.

Think about it. Think about it for a moment. If you and I could just translate back in history and walk into a Corinthian service, everybody is speaking in tongues at the same time.

Prophets or so-called prophets are trying to prophesy over the top of one another. Can you imagine? Can you imagine in this church if we allowed seven or eight or ten of you to rise at the same time and you're all just shouting at the same time and the loudest guy trying to, you know, be the one who has the preeminent voice? Can you imagine what some of the women who are not allowed to, in those cultural times, sit in the same location of the church as the men are shouting questions across the aisle to their husbands? What does he mean by that? And chaos and disorder is everywhere. And Paul says to the Corinthians, if people come in here, they're going to say you're mad.

We've had what's supposed to have been a charismatic revival for the last 15 years in the Western world. I want to suggest it's been a Corinthian moment. I want to suggest to you folks, it's been nothing but confusion.

And it's the result of a self-seeking. It's the result of people flying all over the world, from Europe to America and all over the place saying, what's in it for me? I want one more touch for myself. I want one more thing.

I want one more gift. Oh, I want more. I want just more for me, more for me, more for me, more for me.

Just fill me with more. And I want to suggest it's been nothing but charismatic confusion in the church of Jesus Christ. The unsaved looking at it and saying they're mad.

Paul says, no, you're not to use the giftings for yourself. The giftings are to edify others. And folks, the moment it's in our heart to use what we have and what we do for others, there's a divine order comes into the house of God.

Confusion is the result of the exaltation of self. It's a simple principle. Hey, look at me, look at me, look at me.

To the exclusion of the outsider, to the exclusion of the man or woman that's coming in, looking for God, looking for help, looking for hope. The end result is just a hodgepodge of spiritual nonsense. And Paul was hearing of these things.

People shouting across the aisles, prophesying, everybody speaking in tongues. And Paul says, will the people coming in not say you're mad? He said, I'd rather speak one word in a language that some stranger seeking God can understand than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue. The focus, it's all about the focus.

The focus comes with order, divine order, and divine order comes with hearts that are focused on others and not on ourselves. So many people today are confused. They're afraid to look within, holding back something that God has asked you to lay down.

And that's really what brings the confusion, folks. I know there are people here today, you're confused. You've come here looking for a word, but really what you want is something supernatural that will just alleviate the problem.

God says, no, I have a word for you. You're holding back something that I've asked for from you. I want something deeper than where you are now.

I want you to walk with me where I walk. I want you to do what I do. I want you to see people the way I see them.

I want your hands to become mine. Want your voice to be speaking my heart. I want your eyes to see what I see.

I want to give you a life that you can only dream about, but you've got to let go of what you're holding on to. And so many people in Corinth were holding on to an image of themselves, of what they felt their life should be and how God could help them attain it. And all it brought was confusion.

Paul is standing before the people saying, you have many instructors now, but you only have one father. Be followers of me. Now that really required something of the people because it was, if you read Paul's testimony to them, he said, I've been in perils of robbers.

I've been days and nights in the deep. I've been five times beaten with rods, 39 stripes. I've been in prison.

I've been this, I've been that. And then he says, follow me as I follow Christ. And so many today have trouble knowing what is the voice of God.

It's because so many are looking for something to confirm their direction. I had a young lady and I don't know why I'm always drawn back to this, but it, it's so troubled me over the years and who came to Christ and so excited about Jesus Christ. So alive in God and just a worshiper, extraordinary in this, in this church.

And she was part of one of the Broadway shows here on, on Broadway and came to see me back behind the platform one Sunday and said, it can't be, it can't be that God has asked me to give this up. My career. She said, I've lived my whole life since I was a little girl for this.

It can't be, it can't be. And she wanted me to tell her it can't be us. We've never, I never said anything to her.

I said, well, I don't know what the Holy spirit's asking you, but all I can tell you is when God speaks to you, you should obey him because something much greater for your life awaits you down the road than what you think your life should be. I watched her over the weeks because I knew the struggle and I watched her start sitting closer to the back of the church. No offense to those that are in the back of the church.

I know you may have just gotten here late. She just started moving down the rows, came to see me maybe three times. Can't be.

She kept saying, and then one day she came and said, Oh, the Lord's told me that I, uh, I can keep my career. And, um, she's shortly after that left the church. Went to Starbucks one day across the street to get a coffee and she used to be so excited when she'd see her pastor coming and she turned her back and pretended she didn't see me walk in.

It's bothered me for years, really. Corinth. Corinth is looking for something that confirms its image of itself.

When the Lord says, no, if you want to hear my voice, you've got to walk with me. First Corinthians 14 33 says, God is not the author of confusion, but a peace. There's a Psalm that says, if you mark that person in whom the work of God is perfected, you'll see peace in that person's heart.

Their course in life as a Christian may not look to be the most desirable. I spoke to you two weeks ago of one of our translators. She was now in Northern Africa, in Morocco and in the Islamic area of the world.

And he says, I'm so happy. I'm so happy. Furniture salesman, New York used to translate here in the church.

Now he's in Morocco. Spirit of God came on him and he just obeyed God and just went where the Lord was leading him. He says, I'm so happy.

I'm so fulfilled. He said, I live in the supernatural. God provides for me every day.

He tells me what to do. He tells me where to go. He tells me how to speak.

I'm so happy. The only thing I can say today to you and to anybody who's listening is get up, get up and move towards the work of Christ. And everything in your life will start to come into its rightful focus and its rightful place.

Just move. Now you've got to get through a gauntlet of religion to get there. Every half-hearted Christian you'll meet along the way will try to turn you back.

But you just move to what God is speaking in your life. And for some of you, it's across the table. That's where it's going to start.

You've alienated from your own family. And that moving to Christ is just moving across the table and becoming vulnerable again. And walking humbly and asking forgiveness and saying, I've done things right and I don't know how to do it right, but I'm trusting God.

You see, that's where it starts. And then once that beachhead is established, then it moves. You see, that's the denying of self.

Then it moves into the neighborhood and across the hall to this struggling family or maybe this young boy or girl that doesn't have a father or mother. And it's the lady that goes across the hall and suddenly takes an interest in a child that's not her own. And it's a man who does the same.

And it's this living outside of oneself. That's where it starts. The next thing you know, you're doing a Bible study in a community center in one of the areas, maybe one of the tougher areas in the city.

And the next thing after that, you're going on a missions trip and you just don't know where God's going to lead you. But the true Christian life is found in looking outside of oneself to other people. And it's the toughest battle you'll ever fight in your life.

Coming to Christ, you thought that was tough. And you thought giving up smoking and drinking and gossiping was tough. And some of these things are for many people.

I'm not making light of these things. But now comes the final step in the journey. It's to be given even to people that hate you.

That's the final step in the Christian journey. There weren't many in Corinth that heard the words of Paul. But there were some.

But you know, when it's all said and done, Paul had peace in the storm. He did, didn't he? When the whole ship is falling apart and they're distributing help to try to get through this thing, there was one man who stood up there with a smile on his face. And he says, well, you should have listened.

You didn't. But be of good cheer. I've been with God tonight.

He told me that if you'll listen, you'll all be safe. And this one man starts distributing food and he starts giving out sustenance and directions. I've never preached this sermon, but it's stirring in me.

He's, what would I call it, from captive to captain in a day. But you have to be willing to be captive. Ah, everybody wants to be captain.

But you have to be willing to be the captive. And he was captive for the sake of other people. Praise God.

If that's in your heart, I know God will give you peace in the storm. And you know that God's speaking to you this morning. I don't have to work up your emotions and convince you.

You know that God's speaking to your heart. If the Lord is speaking to you to move towards the work of Christ, wherever that starts, whether it's getting rid of known sin, just in your own home, walking humbly in the workplace, starting to obey God. And it's never too late.

This is a word for young and old. If it's in your heart and you want to be free, let's stand. And as we worship, just come to this altar, please.

In the annex, you could stand between the screens. And we will just pray together and believe God. You're going to have peace in the storm.

That's the only promise I can give you. You'll have peace in the storm. If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, just slip out of your seat.

Make your way here. I'm speaking to all those that want to go that distance. You just simply want to go the distance and say, Lord Jesus Christ for others.

This altar call is for others, not for me. It's for others. I give my life and my future into your hands.

Just come, join these that are coming. The Holy Spirit told us this year, the leaders of this church, that we were not to go out on any major crusade this year. That this was the year that the Lord was going to draw us to himself, speak to us about some things that we needed to hear.

And then we'd be recommissioned because ultimately the call of God on this church body is to go to the nations. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

Beginning in our own backyard and among the believers that are gathered here, and then into our city and beyond our city. Thank God. Lord, help us to see things the way you do.

Help us to live outside of our own needs. Help us to live in our own struggles, situations, Lord. There's so many that have not found their inheritance in Christ.

Lord, they, and if we don't go, how will they hear? How will they know? I pray, Lord. God, I give to you my future. I give my family to you.

All my dreams and plans, I give it all to you, Lord. And I just ask you one more time, just take me and use me as you will for the rest of my days. I do ask, oh God, that you give me, give this church a heart, Lord, a compassionate heart for all men.

Help us to look beyond the circumstances and situations and see deep into the heart of all men. I ask, Lord, that we can be compassionate as you were. Lord, even those that were about to and had crucified you, Lord, you said, forgive them.

They don't know what they do. Oh God, I ask for the heart that can only come from the Holy Spirit to be planted so deep in this congregation that when we do go out, there'll be no casualness. There'll be no self-seeking.

There'll be something so deep, so implanted of God, so given to us of the Holy Spirit. I pray, Lord, that you help us in our day-to-day journey to see differently than we do now. Take us deeper, oh God.

Help us to see the needs of people around us. Help us to be sensitive to giftings, the words of knowledge that you give us in the workplace for people who have a deep question. Lord, you're the one who answers it and you know what the question is.

Help us to be sensitive and not to use what we have for ourselves, Lord. Help us to see that we're an extension of Calvary, Lord, this reaching out of God to a fallen world. I thank you for it, Lord, with all my heart.

I know that seasons of shouting will come again in this house and it's unspeakable joy, but this moment, you're calling us and saying, let us reason together. I thank you, Lord. I thank you for giving us the courage to listen to your word, Lord.

Guide us into the future. Help us, Lord. Help this country.

I pray, God. I pray, Lord, for there's such evident division in the country. I pray, God, that you would make us agents of healing.

Every one of us, Lord, that we'd not join our voices with the chorus of discontent, divided people in this society, Lord, that we would have another voice, that we speak healing, not division. I pray, God. I pray that you help me understand the struggle of different people groups in this country.

Lord, I don't want to have just a slight and a casual answer to every situation. I pray, God, help my heart to understand. I want to understand, Lord.

I want to see what you see, Lord. I want to feel what you feel, Lord. I want to make a difference, Lord, for good.

I pray my hands be extended in kindness even to those who may not appreciate it. I pray that be the testimony of this church, Lord. Help us, God, in the workplace to make a difference.

Lord, I thank you for purity of heart. I pray that you break every besetting sin in this congregation. I speak now to those that are captivated in their mind.

In the name of Jesus, I command these prison doors to open and to release you. Father, I thank you that you give courage to those to take this freedom while there is a moment to do so. I thank you, God, that you're going to break all the bondages in every heart that would make us, give us the appearance of being no different than the society around us.

I ask, Lord, that out of our mouths would flow sweet water and not bitter. I pray, God, there be tenderness in our hands and not closed fists or pointing fingers. I ask, oh, God, that there be something so different, so different, Lord, in this season from your church.

I pray we not be satisfied until we have seen souls come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, until we've reached out. I ask you, Lord, especially give us a heart for this young generation who are so confused, so been lied to, so fatherless and motherless. I pray, God, give us a heart for these kids.

Help us, Lord. Help us, God. Father, I thank you, Lord.

I thank you for drawing us to this season. I thank you, Lord, for bringing us to this place where you are speaking directly to our hearts and preparing us for the days ahead. I thank you, Lord, God, that we will go out again, but we'll be renewed.

There'll be something different and deeper in us. I thank you for it, Lord. I praise you with all my heart, oh, God.

Oh, Jesus, I thank you, God, with everything in me, Lord. I ask, Lord, that you would ordain and anoint this day, oh, God, at this altar, evangelists, teachers, pastors, ministries of compassion. You give giftings of the Holy Ghost, Lord, to those who use these for the edification of others.

Father, I thank you for it, God. I thank you, Lord. I thank you that there are many things being given.

Even this very moment as we pray, Lord, there are many giftings being given, oh, God, of the Holy Ghost, but for the right reason. I thank you, Lord. Oh, God Almighty.

God Almighty, help us to be vessels and agents of healing in this city, Lord. We thank you, God, with everything in us. In Jesus' mighty name.

Now give him praise. Just give him thanks. Lest you feel bad after this kind of a message today, I want you to know that it is such a privilege to be a pastor in this church.

It's such a privilege to look out and see genuine spiritual hunger on so many faces. Thank God. Thank God.

Thank God. Thank God.

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