

Seeking to Live the Life

by Charles Anderson

The Christian life is a battle against the devil, the world, and the flesh, but with God's help, we can overcome these difficulties and live a life pleasing to Him.

Scripture: Exodus 25:14, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:5-8, Galatians 5:16-26, Ephesians 6:12

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of the spies who were sent to explore the land of Canaan. The majority of the spies brought back a negative report, focusing on the presence of giants and their own insignificance. However, Caleb and Joshua stood up against the crowd, emphasizing that God was on their side and reminding them of the abundance of the land. The speaker also draws a parallel to the story of the Israelites' encounter with the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15, highlighting the importance of trusting in God's power and not being afraid of obstacles.

Transcript

I invite you to turn in your Bibles for a little Scripture reading as background for our thoughts tonight to the epistle of Paul to the Galatians, chapter 5. Galatians, chapter 5. And I wish to start reading at the 16th verse. Galatians 5, 16. This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would. But if you be led of the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, and revelings, and such like. Of the which I tell you before, as I've also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

That's the framework for some observations I'd like to make tonight. There are three main sources of nearly all of the difficulties that come to us in living, in seeking to live, the Christian life. The moment we

are born again, we discover the reality and the power of a very powerful foe, who maybe beforehand we had a tendency to dismiss as sort of a mythical character, or some make-believe kind of unreal entity, some kind of personality, the figment of somebody's imagination called the devil.

It isn't very long after one is born again before he discovers that Satan is a very real person, and he becomes the constant adversary of Christian living. That's his task, to seek to despoil everything that God is seeking to do in your life and mine. He will hinder, he will oppose, he's lost you already.

You were captured by Prince Emmanuel, and so you were delivered from Diabolos and his power. You've been translated into a new kingdom, you belong to a new master, and he doesn't give up on you just because he's lost you. He will do everything he can to thwart God's plan and God's purpose in your life, and you'll discover all through your Christian life that he's there as a very real entity and personality.

Just a couple of weeks ago, we had a brush with demonism, a new kind of thing for me. I believe that there are demons, but to actually come in contact with those who are demon-possessed is a frightening experience, let me tell you, and I brought home with me, I was just a little bit tempted to play it here in connection with a message that I had in mind, but I had not perfected that message enough yet to do justice to it, but I have on tape the actual struggle with a demon-possessed person, and we have the voices of demons, literally the voices of demons. Well, Satan is our foe, our adversary.

He's a great source of difficulty in the Christian life. The second thing that we soon discover is that the world in which we had all of our activities, where we found all our friends, and that once upon a time provided all of our amusements and our pleasures, that that world is an enemy to spiritual growth. As the old divines used to say, the world is no friend of grace, and so it isn't.

And early in a Christian's life and experience, there comes, oftentimes, a sharp and deep struggle with the world. There's a crisis experience sometimes that comes, and soon we discover that if we're going to walk with God, it is imperative that we separate ourselves from many of the things that used to fill up our whole life and interests. But, the world is always there.

It's an atmosphere that surrounds us. It's an air that we breathe, and there is a struggle that goes on to keep from being overcome or allured and won over by the world, its pleasures, its values, and more so, it seems to me, in these days, are we finding it more difficult to define what worldliness is. There used to be a time, some of you can well remember it, not so many years ago, when we thought that we had it all straightened out.

We had five or six cardinal sins, and if you were guilty of any one of them, you could be classified as a worldly person. But, you know, those things have been sort of adulterated a bit until now. It's quite difficult to really define what worldliness is.

I often ask people who tell me how it's perfectly okay for Christians to indulge in certain amusements, certain activities, certain entanglements of this present world. When they're pleased, I say, then, please, will you define for me what the Bible means when it says, therefore, if we are the friend of the world, we're the enemy of God? What does it mean when it says, friendship with the world is enmity with the Lord? What does it mean in the Bible when it says, love not the world, nor the things which are in the world? For if any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him. All I ask is for a sharp, clear definition of what you mean by worldliness.

It's exceedingly difficult becoming more so in this mixed-up society where there is mixture between black and white, and there's not much gray. But, nonetheless, the world still represents a source of difficulty in Christian life and experience. But, there's a third source of difficulty.

The most overwhelming discovery comes to us as the Bible begins to reveal itself to us that there's a treacherous, traitorous fifth column within our own breath, and with which we engage in a bitter battle all of our lives. And, it is denominated, it is called the flesh, the flesh. So, when you put these three together, the world, the devil, and the flesh, we have a powerful combination that defies spiritual growth, that dares you to try to live in spite of all of these efforts alike pleasing to God.

Now, sometimes the Bible outlines its great principles in direct declarations, but sometimes a principle is illustrated in the Bible by some, well, in some forms such as some historical incident, or some biblical biography, for instance. And, the study of either that incident or the biography will illustrate a great biblical principle. I think that's true of what you read in the 17th chapter of Exodus.

In that chapter, you have Israel freshly out of Egypt. They've already had some exciting experiences. Imagine what these people must have been thinking as they recalled Passover night, that miraculous night when God delivered them by power from Egypt's iron grip.

Then, they'd already experienced the thrill of the miracle of the rolling back of the waters of the sea, and then the crushing of Egypt's mighty military power in one fell blow. God destroyed Egypt, and incidentally, Egypt never again rose to any kind of prominence in world history from that moment until the days of Nasser in your lifetime and mine a generation or so ago. Well, all of this they'd experienced.

Then, they'd come into the wilderness. I don't know what they really expected. They had no way of really knowing, I suppose, how far it was from Egypt to the land of promise.

All they wanted to do, I presume, was to get out from under that awful galling bondage and get to a land that had become almost a mirage in their thinking that flowed with milk and honey. Maybe they didn't dream of all the difficulties that lay ahead, and if they didn't have any maps, they didn't know how far it was. I think of my dear mother who, some years ago, who had never traveled in her whole lifetime much farther than from any of you who know the state of New Jersey.

She was born in Millville, New Jersey, and she traveled as far as Camden, New Jersey. I'd say that's 35 miles or so all her life, and when my brother moved to California, we prevailed upon her and my father to go to California to see my brother. Now, my mother had no idea of how far California was.

They chose to go by greyhound bus, and the night before they left, she said to my father, now this might be a long bus ride, so I better pack a good lunch. I think she thought one lunch would last all the way to California. Well, I wouldn't blame the Israelis for being as ignorant as that, but they probably didn't.

It didn't dawn on them until all of a sudden they're in the thirsty, and there's no water, and there comes that awful moment when they begin to question Moses' leadership, and they blame him, and God has to do a miracle again. Rocksmith, there in the heart of the wilderness, gushes forth the crystal clear, cool stream of life-giving water. About this time, I suppose the Israelites thought it's great to belong to God every time you get into a mess, he performs a miracle and delivers you.

Who wouldn't want to be one of God's covenant people? There are some folks who think that's the way it works in a Christian life, you know. It's great to be a Christian because every time you get in a mess, the

Lord gets you out of it, until sometimes he lets you wallow around in your mess, and then you begin to realize that it's not all roses or peaches and cream, and they soon discovered that because there's a phrase that leaps right out of the divine record that is a most significant phrase. It's Exodus 17, verse 8. Then came Amalek, there it is, then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

And, all of a sudden, this people who know nothing at all about warfare are attacked by a warlike people. The Amalekites were desert rats, if you please. They were born to the sand.

They were nomads. More than that, they were bandits. They were bandits of the desert.

They raided the caravans that came up out of Egypt northward. They were accustomed to war. They knew how to draw bows and wield spears and swords.

They were a fierce, warlike people, and they attacked this people who knew nothing at all about warfare, whose hands have become clumsy from almost, well, 400 years of brick making, and their hands were stiff and thick. They knew nothing about instruments of war, and furthermore, this cowardly people attacked them from the rear when they least expected it. The Amalekites hit them where they were weakest.

Let's read what the record says. You know the story, how that Moses said to Joshua, choose out men, go out and fight with Amalek, and I'll stand on the top of the hill with a rod of God in my hand. Whenever he lifted that rod, there was victory down on the field against the Amalekites, and when his hands became heavy, and he lowered his hands, and the rod was lowered, then the tide of battle turned, and the Israelis were suffering defeat, and then there was created one of the grandest societies.

We have all kinds of societies in the church today. You know, we have the Berean society, and the Thessalonian society, and the eat a piece of pie society, and the ladies raid society, and we have all kinds of societies, but I've been longing to hear about the Aaron and Her society. What's the Aaron and Her society? The prayer society, those who hold up the preacher's hands in prayer, and that's what Aaron and Her did, and there was victory against the Amalekites, and the bible says, the record reads, and Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword, and Jehovah said to Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

That's a fierce sentence. Now, if you have any argument with it, argue with Moses. Don't argue with me.

I'm only God's Western Union boy. I only deliver the message that God has written. There's some people who argue about this.

What kind of a God is this? A God who seems to be jealous, a God who's vindictive, a God who takes it out on people. I'm not here to defend God. I'm here just to explain Him as best I can, and this is what God says.

It's a harsh sentence. I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. So, Moses built an altar, and he called it by a fresh new name for God, Jehovah Nisi, the Lord, our banner of war, for he said, because Jehovah has sworn that Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

Now, this was a strategic moment for this attack. Early in their experience, Israel had to learn that they were up against a formidable foe in Amalek, and he would pester them, he would perplex them, he would assault them all along the way, and they would never get victory over Amalek until they discovered God's

method of victory and employed it, because Amalek was a powerful foe. Now, I would like you to turn to another chapter.

One of the most important chapters, I think, in the Pentateuch is the 14th chapter of the book of Numbers. Numbers chapter 14. That's a great chapter.

It's a pivotal chapter. You see, it's the chapter that follows chapter 13. Now, that's a profound statement, I admit, but what I mean to say is that the events of chapter 13 are very important.

Moses selected some spies, some commandos, and he sent them up into the land, to spy out the land, to see what it was like, the lay of the land, and they were up there, as you know, for 40 days, nights, six weeks. Got to hand it to those Israelis, they're pretty sharp. Imagine a band of men, a dozen of them, undercover for six weeks in enemy territory, never got discovered, and they bring back their report.

You know the story. You've taught it in Sunday school, but you don't mind if I review it. I enjoy it.

I hope you do, too. They brought back a report. Now, I always say there had to be somebody in that crowd who was either a secretary or who had taken a course in homiletics, because the report was alliterated, you know.

Ten of the spies bring back a gloomy, doleful report. They say, it's all God says it is, but, and here's the but. They said, first of all, the proof to you that the land is the land flowing with the fruit and whatever, they brought back some grapes, and so you read in Numbers 13.26, they showed them the fruit of the land, the grapes.

Nevertheless, they said the people are strong who live in that land, and the cities are walled and very great, and, moreover, we saw the children of Anak there. Who's Anak? The giants, the big men, and so their second point was lands full of giants. A lot of grapes, but it's full of giants, and at the very end they say, verse 33, there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants, and we were in our sight as grasshoppers.

That's the third g. Grapes, giants, and grasshoppers, and that was their report, and they nearly swayed the whole crowd. You know, we, God isn't always on the side of the majority. Don't forget that the next business meeting.

He may be on the side of the minority. In this case, he was. The majority was wrong, and Caleb and Joshua stood up to quiet this crowd, and they said, hold it, we got one more g to add.

You fellas left out the fourth g. This sermon's got four points, not three, but four. Grapes, indeed. Giants, yes.

Grasshoppers, true, but God, if God's on our side, you know what that'll happen? Don't be afraid of them, for if you look over in chapter 14, in the speech they made, verse 8 says, if the Lord delight in us, then he'll bring us into this land and give it to us, land that flows with milk and honey. Let's don't worry about it. Don't fear the people, and right in the heart of verse 9 is an interesting phrase, they're bread for us.

You know how we put it today? Piece of cake. Ah, it's a piece of cake, you say. That means easy, soft stuff, against all these obstacles.

Don't worry, it's a piece of cake. God can give it to us. Come on, let's go.

But, they voted against it, and the rest of the chapter, you know, the back and forth stuff, and they complained so, and finally, Moses, verse 39 of chapter 14, told these sayings to the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. They rose up early in the morning and gapped them up into the top of mountain, saying, lo, we be here, and we will go up into the place which the Lord has promised, for we have sinned. Moses said, now why do you transgress the commandment of the Lord? It won't prosper.

Don't go up. The Lord's not among you. You'll be smitten before your enemies, for the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you'll fall by the sword because you're turned away from Jehovah.

Therefore, Jehovah will not be with you. But, they presumed to go up into the hilltop. Nevertheless, the ark of the covenant of the Lord and Moses departed not out of the camp, and this sad sentence.

Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites, which dwelled in the hill, and smoked them and discomfited them even unto Hormat. This is a bitter defeat at the hands of these ancient enemies, the Amalekites. Now, while you have your Bibles open, I hope you brought your Bible.

You feel a little lost here tonight, because I'm going from chapter to chapter. When you turn to the book of Deuteronomy, and this time I'll ask you to turn to chapter 25, I need only remind you while you're turning that these chapters of Deuteronomy contain all kinds of rules and regulations, do's and don'ts, that govern their lives, the social structure of Israel's life. And that's what chapter 25 is about, too.

And so you'll come on down, and it kind of routinely goes on to say in verse 14 of chapter 25, Thou shalt not have in thy house diverse measures, great and small. Thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have, that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously are an abomination unto the Lord thy God. And then, suddenly, without any seeming context or connection, hear this.

Remember what Amalek did to thee by the way when you were come forth out of Egypt. How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee when thou wast faint and weary, and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

Thou shalt not forget it." What a word! Why this injection at this point? I don't know, but God's got to get it in. It's almost as if he has to get something off his heart. He's saying, don't forget Amalek.

How do we say it? Remember Pearl Harbor, but we forget it so easily. But God is saying, don't you forget Amalek and what he did. Now, there has to be a reason why God feels like he does toward these people.

He has an attitude of animosity, of opposition. We might even charge God with some hatred of these people, for his words are uncompromisingly fierce. Well, I suppose, first of all, we ought to find out who this Amalek is.

So, will you go back to the very first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis for a moment, the chapter 36, and here's the chapter begins. Now, these are the genera... oh no, don't do that tonight, it's too late. One of those chapters? Now, these are the... well, hang in.

These are the generations of Esau, who was Edom. Who is Esau? Jacob's twin brother. They were related, Esau and Jacob, and it tells us about Esau's marriages, and his children, and so on, and then it

goes on to say, in verse 8, Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir.

Esau is Edom. Bible students have identified Mount Seir with present-day Petra, that rose-red, rock-ribbed city in the south of the deserts of Palestine, and on the route from Egypt on up into Palestine. So, Esau's relatives dwelt there, and we know from historical accounts, from there they issued forth in their raids against the caravans, and then retreated to their stronghold where they were... it was impossible to punish them, and so they grew fat and rich.

Nobody could do anything about it, and these are the generations of Esau, the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir. These are the names of Esau's sons. Eliphaz, the son of Ada, the wife of Esau.

Reuel, the son of Bathshema, the wife of Esau, and the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatham, and Kinas. These were all, by the way, heads of, progenitors of the Arab tribes, present-day Arab tribes, and Timnah was concubine to Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bared to Eliphaz Amalek. These were the sons of Ada, Esau's wife.

So, who was Amalek? He was a cousin to Israel. He was related to Israel via the flesh. He was a flesh relative, and that relationship must be one of the reasons why the Holy Spirit selects Amalek to represent, in illustrative form, this great principle that the New Testament talks about, the opposition of the flesh in our lives for spiritual growth and development.

Amalek, then, was related to Israel in according to the flesh, and perpetuated in Amalek was the profanity of Esau. You know, the Bible calls Esau a profane man. That does not mean that his language was violent.

No, no, no. It had nothing to do with his language, primarily. Profane was a Latin word.

In a temple, in a temple of worship, the fanum was the holy of holies, the sacred center of the house of worship, and everything outside the fanum was called the profanum. Therefore, people who ministered in that area were called profane people. Esau was a profane person because all his life interests were outside the circle of divine things.

He was a profane man. Flesh dominated him. That's all he was concerned about, the flesh.

Now, Amalek, then, I think, represents to us this principle of the flesh in us. You got any flesh in you? Some of you look a little uncomfortable when I ask that. You want some proof of some flesh demonstration? Watch what happens after church service when folks are trying to get out of a parking lot.

Some sanctified saints in the sanctuary who are so holy, if you touch them, your finger would burn. They get into their car, and some, I was going to say lady, but there's too many of you here. All right, some lady, she isn't looking, and she nearly clips this fellow.

It's a good thing the windows are up, if you could hear what he's saying about that lady and her driving habit, you'd recognize that it was not holy spirit vocabulary. It was flesh all along the line. Hey? Oh yeah, we're all, we all have to battle the flesh.

It shows itself in the self aggrandizement. Flesh, self, they're related to each other. The selfishness that marks us is a crying shame.

Is that why, um, when the food is passed at the table, you always reach for the nice rare piece? But I like my meat rare. So is everybody else at the table, but there's only two pieces of rare stuff, and you grab the first one. You're not selfish, are you? No, you just want your meat when you want your meat.

How come when you get into an automobile, you make it very obvious that you sit right in front of the air conditioning outlet, so it's nice and cool on a hot day? Why? Well, I don't like a hot automobile. Neither does anybody else. Everybody else riding in that car wants cool air, but you got it all hogged up.

You're breathing it in so fast, nobody can feel any cool air. What's the matter with you? I'll tell you what's the matter with you. You're a selfish Christian.

You're living according to the flesh. Oh, I could name a dozen other exhibitions of the flesh, but I'm afraid, because I'm here a couple more days. I really should have saved this for Friday night, shouldn't I? Yeah, oh, Amulet, how he conquers us.

Let me give you a couple of, I'll show you a biblical illustration of this. Would you please turn to 1 Samuel, chapter 15. 1 Samuel, the 15th chapter.

Where in the world is 1 Samuel? Oh, it's in front of 2 Samuel. 1 Samuel, chapter 15. Now, this is a very interesting chapter.

It's chapter 15. Samuel said to Saul, who was then king, the Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel. Now, therefore, hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amulet did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amulet, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. Stop! Why in the world does the Lord spell it out like that? Couldn't he have conveyed to Saul what he wanted by merely saying, go and smite Amulet, and utterly destroy all that they have, and don't spare them, period? Why does he say, slay the men and the women, the infants, the sucklings at the mother's breast, the oxen and the sheep, and the camels and the asses? Why spell it out? Well, you see, when God is giving us instructions as to how to be obedient to him, he knows our nature.

He knows how fickle we are, and how we will maneuver if we can. The flesh is so clever in us, Amulet is so smart that we can maneuver and find justification for incomplete and impartial obedience. Here's an illustration of this in our family.

We have four boys, and we've been trying to raise all our life. You never know when they're raised. They're all married, but I'm not so sure they're raised yet.

But anyway, one of these boys had high ambitions. One, the first one was he wanted to be a fireman. Well, that soon petered out.

So, the second thing, and this stuck on for quite some time, he wanted to be a cowboy. So, I decided I'd either cure him or kill him. So, I sent him to Arizona for the summertime to some friends out there, and he spent the whole summer in Arizona taking care of cows, and doing all the things that cowboys supposed to do.

And when he flew home, and he got off the plane, the first thing he said to me, the very first thing, was, Dad, do you know that cowboys stink? I thought that's the end of that career, I'm sure. So, then the next thing that he chose was, we got, in our town, we got some brand new garbage trucks, and these were the first ones that had automatic jobs. You just throw things up, and pitch them in, and ground them all up.

Boy, he was fascinated by that. So, his ambition in life was to be a garbage collector. He didn't want to drive the truck.

He wanted to be the fellow who threw the cans up like that. So, in those days, I would be traveling, doing preaching, teaching elsewhere, and I'd leave home quite often, and before I'd go, we'd have a little family gathering, and I'd parcel out the chores. I'd say, son, number one, your job is to do thus and so while I'm gone, two, you do yours, and so on.

I came to him, and I said, inasmuch as you're so interested in garbage, your job is to take out the garbage, okay? That suited him fine. So, I went off on a week or ten-day trip. I came back home.

First thing I came back, my wife says, wait a minute, before you settle down, we got problems. I said, what's the matter? She said, son, number so-and-so, he didn't do what you asked, what you told him to do. I said, you mean he didn't empty the garbage? She said, come out and take a look.

Boy, there it was, all piled up. I said, I saved it so you could see this is the job he did. The can was full, it hadn't been emptied.

Well, I used to have a simple principle with our kids. Whenever we had something that had to be settled, we didn't wait till morning, we did it right then. So, I went upstairs and got him out of bed, shook him three or four times to be sure he's awake and listening, and then I said, now look here, didn't I tell you to empty the garbage? Yes, sir.

Well, I said, mother says you didn't do it. He said, I did too. She says you didn't.

He said, I did. I thought, boy, I'm in trouble. Now I got a, you know, mother against son.

But, I said, she says you didn't. Well, he said, you didn't say empty it every day. Well, come to think of it, I hadn't said that.

I had just said empty the garbage. So, the smarty, he only emptied it one day out of the whole thing, and to him the job was done. So, then the second thing was, I said, she says you didn't empty the can.

You just dumped some of it out and you left some in the can. Well, he said, you didn't say empty all of it. Well, I thought, no, I guess I didn't.

I just said empty the garbage. So, he had me flat-footed. Don't empty it every day, because I hadn't said every day.

Not all of it, because I hadn't said all of it. So, I determined the next time around we'd straighten that out. So, a little while later, I'm off on another trip.

I called him. I said, now look, you got this assignment. Now, let me, just listen to me.

Listen carefully, very carefully. You are the official garbage man here. Not your brother, not brother one or two or four, you.

Get it? Yeah. And you're to empty it every single day. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

If there's any other days, I left out those days too. Every day. You're to empty the garbage.

You're to turn the can upside down, thump the bottom. I don't want to see an orange peel or an eggshell left in that garbage pail. You get that straight? Yes, sir.

And I'm sure if somebody were listening, they would say, either this man is a simpleton or he has an idiot for a son. Here I am spelling it out so specifically. But, you see, I knew him.

He had taught me how he could maneuver around my word and still be safely within somehow the precincts of some obedience. And God knew what Saul was going to do and how he would maneuver, and so he spells it out. Don't spare anybody or anything.

And Saul gathered the people together and numbered them, and so on, all the way down until you come to verse seven. And it reads, Saul smoked the Amalekites from Havalah to Valcomus to Shur. That's over against Egypt.

And he took Agag, the king of the Amalekites, alive and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword, except that Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, and the best of the oxen, and the best of the fatlings, and the best of the lambs. And all that was good would not utterly destroy them, but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly. What was the problem here? The problem here was that Saul presumed to tell God that he knew better than God what was good and right and what was wrong.

You know, we have a tendency to argue sometimes with God. God, you have any right to tell me that's wrong. There's nothing wrong with that.

Besides, other people do it, and they get away with it. Everybody's doing it, and so we go on with our rationalizations when God is saying to us, that has to be put to death. They spared the best.

When it comes to the flesh, you know, the flesh is a whole spectrum of things. The flesh is not only the wicked, vile, terrible things, but the needle of the spectrum of the flesh begins to float over until it comes into what we call the legitimate areas, too. I know some Christians who are so fleshly they don't steal, they don't commit adultery, they don't covet, but they're so full of flesh because the thing that occupies them is hi-fi, stereo, classical music.

What's wrong with that? I didn't say there's anything wrong with it. I just said that it can become so obsessive in your life that it can become an exhibition of the flesh, the dominance of amylose. It will supplant that good thing, sport some of you fellows.

You delay your reading of the word and study of the book and prayer life because you're obsessed with sports. Anything wrong with that? Oh, preacher, don't take away my sports. You're going to rob me of anything that's worthwhile in life.

Some of you ladies, your home, if there's a speck of dust to be seen anywhere that bothers you and you take care of that first. Oh, come on. Yeah, I know.

Come on. Our problem is we have no trouble. You know what we've read tonight in Galatians 5? They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and the lust.

Did you get those distinctions? Affections and lust. Lust may cover, indeed, all the things that are wrong. We don't have any trouble with dope addiction.

Fine. Here, I'll help you to drive the nails in. Here, I'll hold the bag.

Or, you want me to get the hammer? Bang, bang, bang. Give it to him. Yes, drinking, carousing.

Yeah, get the needle or get the stake in there. I'm glad to crucify that. That deserves crucifixion.

But, when I get to talking about some of these other things that are not necessarily in themselves immoral or wrong, that become somehow the thing that God says also is included in the spectrum of the flesh, and it will hinder you. It will keep you from growing mature in Christ. Put a nail in that.

Then we say we're sore. That's too good to destroy. I can't destroy that.

And so, we commit the same sin, Saul, that we spare the best when God says even the best must find its way to the cross when it comes from Amalek. It has no place in your life as a Christian. Now, how does Saul handle it? What happens to him? Well, it came the word of the Lord to Samuel.

He said, I've repented that I've set up Saul to be king. He's turned from following me. He hasn't performed my commandments.

And he grieved Samuel, and he cried to the Lord all night. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, he was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set him up a place. He's gone about, and he's passed on.

He's gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, Blessed be thou of the Lord. You know, I'm always suspicious of people who are hallelujah, praise God, amen, glory to God, praise the Lord.

Every other word. I usually put my hand on my pocket where my money is. I'm not so sure about such a person.

There is a place for a hallelujah, and there is a place for a praise the Lord. But, you know, when it flows out and gushes out at every turn of the conversation, there's something, sometimes there's something wrong. And Saul gets into that.

Blessed be the Lord God. Isn't it wonderful, Samuel, to belong to Jehovah? And Samuel said, shut up. I know that's not in the Hebrew, but it's in between the lines.

You just be quiet. What meaneth then this bleeding of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen that I hear? Those sheep are not bleeding with a Jewish accent. Where'd you get them? They sound like foreign sheep to me.

And Saul said, well, they have brought them from the Amalekites. And the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, and the rest we've utterly destroyed. And Samuel said,

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