

Weary Christians or Wary Christians

by Dan Mast

As Christians, we must be aware of the dangers around us and strive to live a life of faith and obedience in order to avoid falling into deception and to live above the devil and sin.

Duration: 1:22:21

Topics: "Spiritual Complacency", "Gods Promises"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the danger of becoming complacent and comfortable in our earthly environment as Christians. He compares this to being locked up in a pen with a serpent, unaware of the danger. The preacher urges Christians to be alert and not to become like the duck that was so used to the snake's presence that it could be devoured in a moment. He then goes on to highlight the sure promises of God, emphasizing that God has not failed in any of his promises and will not fail us now. The preacher also warns against the danger of becoming like Pharisees, thinking we have it all together when we actually need God. He encourages believers to be filled with love and to be comforted and united in love.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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It looks quite different than it does on those meetings when it's all full of chairs and people and you can hardly find your way around. Praise God this morning. It's good to be here with you.

It's good to see some faces I haven't seen for a long time. And there's also many here that we haven't, that I don't even know. So, trust that God will be with us here this morning and bless us.

Maybe we could all stand. We have a word of prayer together as we stand. Shall we pray? Lord, this morning, we do thank you for your love to us through Jesus, for being merciful to us, for being kind to us.

Lord, we thank you this morning that we can look up in faith to you and know that even though we live in a sinful world, we have a hope which is laid up in heaven, a joy that is set before us. We have a race to run. We have a goal to reach.

And we don't walk this path alone, but we have you, Jesus, to go with us. We thank you for that. We trust you this morning.

We just pray that you'll work in our hearts. Work in our midst this morning. Touch our hearts with your Holy Spirit.

Show us our needs. Bless us with conviction. Bless us with purpose.

Bless us with life. Bless us with eternal life in Jesus Christ. Lord, we look to you in faith, trusting you.

In your precious name we pray. Amen. You may be seated.

I, too, want to greet each of you in Jesus' precious name. What would we do without Jesus? It would be a hopeless world, wouldn't it? We have a lot to be thankful for, a lot to be grateful for. This past week, I don't know why this keeps going through my mind, but I was reflecting on a little experience, I guess, in Paraguay.

We went to visit the falls down there. And it's also at close to the same place there's a hydroelectric plant that is one, I guess it is the world's largest hydroelectric plant. And at this plant they had a falls or a little zoo there.

It was free. You could go in and walk around and see a lot of animals that you normally wouldn't see at a common zoo up here in the States. We came to this one cage.

And in this one cage, at first I just saw a duck in there. I didn't see what was all in that cage. But I saw this duck.

There's a puddle of water there and there's this duck there close to the water, just relaxed and sticking her head in the water and just enjoying herself. But then we looked over on the side and there was a big snake. I mean, it was probably, it was stretched out, I don't know, it might have been 12 feet long.

And it was probably, I would guess, about the size of a 4-inch pipe, plastic pipe at the largest. And it was stretched out there, just laying there as quiet as could be. You hardly would have noticed that it was alive.

If you look close you could see its eyes moving a little bit. And then back behind the snake there was a log, a hollow log. And in that log you could see some little rabbits in there.

And I thought, we were talking about it there and wondered why would there be a snake with a duck and some rabbits together in a pen like that. And then we were told that the duck and the rabbits, those little baby rabbits are there for feed, to be food for the snake. And I don't know, I looked at that poor duck and I thought, I pitied that duck.

I suppose if I'd had a way to get a hole in that cage I'd probably let the duck out. But I was hoping that somehow that duck, it had wings, I thought maybe it could fly up. But that snake didn't look at all like it was very dangerous, it just laid there so calm.

Finally it wiggled its way over, it was back about six feet from the duck and it wiggled its way over just slowly, real slow. You could, it just, by the water where the duck was. Finally the duck was only about two feet, three feet away from the snake's head.

And I was just hoping, oh, I hope that snake isn't hungry right now. And that snake went down into the water, curled around the water, slithered around in there. Came back out again, went back, just laid there so quietly.

The duck seemed very unconcerned. It didn't hardly notice it. Now I don't know how that duck was in the beginning when they put it in there.

I would imagine that maybe that duck was a little bit wary of that snake in there. And maybe whenever that snake moved, that duck watched it. But it didn't seem to be real concerned about the snake.

It probably had been in there for quite some time. And the rabbits were just sitting back in the log in their nest, having a quiet time there. Somehow I kept thinking about that duck and that snake.

And I still pity that duck. I don't know. If there'd be some way I could figure out to get that duck out of there, that would have been my delight, to rescue that duck.

I'd rather see the snake die than to eat that duck. And as I was meditating on that, I began to think about our life here on Earth. I wonder how many of us are the duck.

We're just like that duck. We get kind of used to the snake. The snake don't move much.

It's wary. Eyes are looking around. And I wonder how many times people don't realize that that snake is right beside them.

Could devour them at any moment. We're not for the grace of God. We're not for the mercy of God.

We'd all be devoured in a moment. The title of the message this morning is... I didn't know what to call it, but I thought I'd call it Weary Christians or Wary Christians. Wary Christians.

You know what that means? Christians that are aware. That know what's going on. That are alert.

Can you picture this morning? A wayward soul. And I've seen this. I've seen this happen.

A wayward soul. Someone who once knew the Lord and became wayward and drifting slowly away. Little by little, the eye of that enchanting evil one Watching that poor duck.

That poor soul. Fastened upon him. He's looking for a meal.

He's looking for a meal. Once they were saved. But today they're not aware at all of the evil serpent that lies out there.

To snatch them. I wonder if there's anyone here this morning that is becoming a prey to the evil one. Like that.

This made me think of what our brother shared. It just made me wonder. Is there someone who doesn't realize it, but you're locked up in a pen with a serpent.

And you're not aware. You've become used to the environment. We, as Christians, sometimes we get so used to our environment here on earth.

And we're not aware of the danger of that old serpent. The devil. If he'd come out and really show his face and stick out his tongue, we'd probably run.

But we won't run. Because we're used to it. We're used to it.

We see things happening today that would have scared us ten years ago. And we're used to it. We're getting used to it.

Will we survive that cunning old devil? Will we survive him? I believe the Lord will give us wings to fly high above him. That he cannot get to us. But we need to be weary Christians.

Weary Christians. And I believe this morning that I'm talking to people that are Christians. For the most part, you know the Lord.

You've been saved. You've found Him. And you're delivered.

You've been translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. But will you make it? That's the question. Will we make it? And I'm not here to try to say that God's grace is just barely good enough to make it.

Or just enough to get us through. You know, we read that verse where it says, The righteous scarcely be saved. Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Well, when it's talking about scarcely, I don't think it means that it's just barely enough grace to get us there.

But I believe there is abundant grace for us to come and be saved. And to make it. To make it through this life that we will inherit eternal life in the life to come.

But there's abundant grace for that. But I do believe that we can't be careless. Or we can't be half-hearted.

Or we can't be just a little bit. You know, enough religion to get us through. There is no such thing.

It's either all or none. If you're playing with the idea that you can live both ways, like our brother shared, that's deception. You are beguiled by the devil, if that's your thought.

If you think this morning, you can live with some hidden things in your life, that you've just, nobody knows about it. You've been beguiled by the devil. And you will be deceived by him.

And you will end up a meal for him. You will. It's that way.

Jesus said, Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. You know, it wouldn't be so bad if the Bible wouldn't teach us that once we're saved, we're always saved. It doesn't matter what happens.

But that isn't what the Bible teaches. It teaches us that we can fall from the place we're at. We can fall.

And that we need to beware of that enemy who is out to destroy us. Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. Another interesting verse, is when Jesus talked about the ten virgins, he said there were five wise and there were five foolish.

But it's interesting to note that he says they all slept. They all slept. Slumbered and slept.

You know, there's in a sense I believe that even as Christians, we are not aware. We are often not aware. We slumber and sleep and we're not aware of the dangers around us.

Many times. We're not as wary as we ought to be. And I'm talking to myself as well as you all.

Ephesians tells us, Awake thou that sleepest. Arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light. Wake up.

Your redemption draweth nigh. Look up. Wake up.

You know, there's a lot of calls in the Bible that tell us to wake up. How comfortable are we in this world? How comfortable are we with deception? How comfortable are we with backslidden lives? How comfortable can we be when we're backslidden in our Christian life? Have we lost our weariness of the evil serpent? In 2 Corinthians chapter 11, the Bible tells us that Satan transforms himself into, or is transformed into an angel of light. You wouldn't expect that, would you? You wouldn't expect that the devil would actually come.

I mean, if I see an angel of light, you and I would stand up and take note, wouldn't we? But here he says, they're transformed into an angel of light. He says his ministers will also be transformed into ministers of righteousness. Can you imagine that? Satan's ministers will actually, I believe that's saying that they will present good things.

They'll present right things. They will say some truth. But do you know when they tell you the untruth? Are you aware? Do you just come to church? Let me ask you this question.

Do you come to church and you never open your Bible? Or maybe you sleep through the service and you don't, you think you've done your duty by coming to church and you feel pretty comfortable that way. Or do you listen closely? Do you understand what's being taught? Do you understand? Can someone tell you an untruth from the pulpit and you don't even catch it? You don't even know that that isn't what the Bible says. Let's beware.

Let's wake up. Let's be wary of these types of things. Because Satan comes as an angel of light.

There's a lot of people go to church and they sit down and they listen to false teaching. They listen to teaching that is not the truth. And they'll believe it.

Because they don't know what the Bible says. They never study the Bible. They don't understand it.

You better find out what it says. You better know if he's telling you the truth. Or you will be deceived and you'll be just like that duck that gets used to it.

You just get used to it. And there's many, many false teachers out. The Bible warns us about that.

If you didn't know that, read. The Bible warns us over and over about that. There are many false teachers out.

I would like for us, if you would, turn your Bibles to Colossians. I want to, by the help of God, go through some of Colossians 1 and 2. I'm always blessed with this chapter. Or these Colossians, the book of Colossians.

I find so much encouragement in there. I begin to read here in verse 10. Paul writing here to the Colossians, that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us, praise God, He hath delivered us from the power of darkness, hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Do we catch the vision here this morning? What he's saying here? He has translated. If you've been saved and you've been converted, you have been translated from the powers of darkness into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. When there we have our redemption, there we have salvation and redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

You know, we've been called out. One of the things that I believe dulls on us sometimes is the fact we live in this world and the world has a way to wear us down, but we forget that we have been called out. We are called out people.

We are to be different. We are to live different because we have a different One living in us. We have Christ in us.

We have the hope of glory. We have Jesus Christ. We have joy unspeakable.

It says, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. There is abundance of power available for us, I believe, to live above the devil and live above sin. We don't have to live that close to Him.

Matter of fact, we don't even have to be in the pen with Him. We can get out of the pen. If you're in the pen this morning with the old serpent, you can get out of there.

There's a key that will unlock that door for you. You don't have to be a sitting duck for the devil. There's redemption for you and me.

Who is the image of the invisible God? Talking about Jesus, the firstborn of every creature. For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven, and you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death

to present you holy. Oh, praise God.

To present you holy, unblameable. You won't have to be a duck anymore. You can be unblameable.

The devil can't even blame you. And unreprouvable in His sight, if ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature, which is under heaven, whereof I, Paul, am made a minister. It says here, if we continue in the faith, not drift away into doubt, sometimes we start off in faith, but we drift away into doubt, and we wonder.

And you know, when we start doubting and wondering, is this really true? Am I really saved? Am I really a changed person? We can be changed and know that we're changed. God doesn't want us to live in doubt. He doesn't want us to live in doubt.

We don't have to live in doubt. We can live in confidence. Complete confidence.

And we need to continue in that. It's the only way we have salvation, is to live in complete confidence. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church, whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you to fulfill the word of God.

Even the mystery, which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles. What is this mystery? Christ in you, the hope of glory. The devil won't like you.

If Christ is in you, the devil won't like you. Whom we preach, warning every man, teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. Accept the warnings.

It says, whom we preach, warning every man. Brothers and sisters, the preachers get up sometimes and you say, well, they're pretty critical. They're always pointing out my fault.

Please, let me tell you something. Accept their warnings. You know what they're doing? They're awakening you to that old serpent that's laying by your side.

They're awakening you to his tactics. They're awakening you that you become aware of what's going on. Because we all tend to be like those foolish virgins who slumber and sleep.

And we need one another. We do. We need one another.

You know, that's why we need to come to church, to be together with believers, true believers. We need to get together. We need to stir each other up.

We need to warn each other. There's people today that get offended, you know, at the church, at people. And so they move off, maybe go to another congregation where nobody will touch them.

Or maybe just sometimes it goes to the place where they don't even fellowship with anybody. But they are making themselves a prey to the devil. They're becoming like that duck.

It tells us in Hebrews that we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Why? Because we need to provoke one another to love and good works. That's why we meet together.

We need to be provokers. Praise God. Sometimes it doesn't feel good when someone provokes you.

But it's alright. We need it. We need it.

You thank God this morning if you have a preacher that provokes you sometimes. He kind of gets under your skin maybe even. That's alright.

Because we need it. We need to be aware. So accept the warnings.

Lose not the fire, whereunto I also labor striving. Striving. That's talking about being zealous.

That's talking about doing it with all our heart. Striving. We've got a goal.

We've got something God has called us to. We want to fulfill that calling that God has given us. Don't lose the fire.

Don't let it go out. We need to stir one another in those things. Chapter 2, For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you.

That's carrying a burden. Are you carrying a burden this morning? Yeah? It's alright for Christians to carry this kind of a burden. A burden to care for each other.

Bury one another's burdens that way. Conflict for... He said, For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you. I believe that that drives people to their knees for one another.

Oh, that that would happen among God's people. That it drives us to our knees for one another. When we see someone... I have to think about people that I knew in the past.

That once walked with the Lord. Slowly, slowly, slowly. They're becoming unaware of where they're at.

And you try to... You try to... If you would try to point out to them, they would say, Oh well, we're okay. We're Christian. But they've drifted.

You can tell. You can tell. And they won't see it.

Until that snake bites them. They won't see it. They won't see it.

I believe that is so deceptive. That we often times can't see ourselves. And we may sit here this morning.

And we say, well we're okay. We're on top of it. We're... We're not like those people.

We got our eyes open. But I'd just like to tell you that... The Bible tells us that he who think as he stands, take heed lest he fall. We need to be aware.

Sometimes we can be great Pharisees. And don't even know it. We think we have it all together.

And we don't even know it. But we're nothing but a bunch of Pharisees. That think we have it together.

We need to realize that we don't have it together. We need God. We need the Lord.

Chapter 2, verse 2. That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love. Unto all riches of full assurance of understanding. To the acknowledgement of the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ.

Be filled with love. Carry a burden. Now it's be filled with love.

We might be comforted together. Knit together in love. Oh, the love that we... When that love, when that wax is cold.

Doesn't matter how well we perform. When the love isn't there. When the love isn't there.

Something's missing. When the love isn't there. Whether it's a preacher.

Whether it's a brother, sister. When the love isn't there. There's something wrong.

There's something wrong. And all those things make us unaware. When we lose that love.

Then we also become unaware of that serpent. Who is there. Trying to deceive us and destroy us.

Number 7. Don't be deceived. It says here. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

In Christ. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

This I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. Don't be deceived. Be aware.

For though I be absent in the flesh. Yet am I with you in the spirit. Joying and beholding your order and steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

As he have therefore received Christ the Lord. Christ Jesus our Lord. So walk ye in him.

Rooted and built up in him. Established in the faith. As he have been taught.

Abounding therein with thanksgiving. To be safe from that enemy. We need that.

We need that. To be rooted. To be built together.

To be built up. And established. To be solid.

To know where we're going. Safe. In the arms of Jesus.

That's who he's talking about. He's talking about Christ. Being built up in him.

We need to encourage each other in those things. To be built up in Christ. We can have a lot of religion.

We can do a lot of things. But we can do it without Christ. But only Christ will shut the serpent's mouth.

Only Christ will save us. Only Christ will satisfy us. Only Christ.

There is hid all the treasures that you're looking for. Let me tell you. There are hid all the treasures that you're looking for.

We are looking for treasure. They're hid in Christ. In him we find it.

In him we have it. We're satisfied. We're safe.

We're secure in Christ. I believe in eternal security. Yes I do.

But it's only in Jesus Christ. And we are safe in him. Beware.

Beware. Verse 8. Lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. Here he comes again.

He's talking about men who deceive. Men who try to make you comfortable through philosophy and through vain deceit. There's a lot of philosophy floating around today.

Yeah. I'd like to talk a little bit about some of those philosophies. A lot of these philosophies have a root of deception in them.

And we need to see those things. We need to see those things. There's a lot of times people go to church and they can become part of a church without ever being converted.

Do you know that? You don't have to be converted to be a part of a church. There's plenty of churches you can go to that you don't have to be converted. I hope this church isn't like that.

But there are a lot of churches that it's that way. People will come and they will... I recently heard where there were some young people who wanted to join church and all they needed to do was come to the instruction class. And they would instruct them and baptize them.

They were never asked whether they were converted or not. They were never asked if they ever had their sins under the blood, if they were ever saved. They never asked questions like that.

All they needed was to be able to say yes to the right questions and they were included in the instruction class. Deception, that's what it is. It's giving people comfort in their sin.

It's deceiving them. Woe unto preachers that do that. Woe unto a church that will deceive its people.

And some say, well, I've done good. I'm better than most people are. If you think that way, you're deceiving yourself.

Sometimes people say this one. I don't need to confess every sin. It's okay.

God knows. It's between me and God. Nobody else needs to know it.

But you keep it hid in your life. You don't get rid of it. And you carry that along.

And you are a sitting duck for the devil. We become a sitting duck for the devil. The devil looks for that kind of thing.

Because that keeps him in the pen. It keeps you in the pen when you have sin in your life. It keeps you in the pen.

And the devil is looking for his lunch. I'm offended at this church. This is another philosophy.

I'm offended at this church. So I'll go find another one that will put up with me. With my offendedness.

But you never will get away from that offendedness. You'll take it to a hundred churches. If you have a wrong spirit in your life, and you don't deal with that thing.

If you have bitterness in your life against a brother or sister, and you don't deal with that thing in your life. You'll carry it along to the next church. You'll carry it along to the next church.

You'll be offended to every church you go. And you're deceiving yourself. Because you probably think that, well, if I go over there, it'll be better.

It'll be better over there. And you'll find out you have the same problem there that you had over here. And finally, you come to a place, well, I'm not going to church anywhere.

It's sad to say, but I know a lot of families like that. That have gone that route, and they're not going anywhere. They're all by themselves.

And I don't know where to put all that. But I do know that we need each other. We do need each other.

If you're a true born-again Christian, you need the church. It doesn't matter what I believe, as long as I'm sincere. That's another common one.

It doesn't matter what I believe. As long as I'm really sincere, then I'm okay. You're in a pen with the devil with that one.

There are people who never had a believer's baptism. And I'll mention this because I believe that baptism is a part is a part of believing. If you believe you need to be baptized, as Jesus taught scripturally, you need to be baptized.

But there are people who get converted, and I think they do get converted, but they never want to get baptized. They don't go far. And you will go back into that same pen with the devil.

You will never get completely free. I know people who have gone from one church to the next, and they're running from that thing, from that very thing. But they will not find it until they obey God.

I'm convinced of that. Because it's the step that opens up the way that God can pour His Holy Spirit. I believe that God wants to give us His Holy Spirit.

He's ready to pour it out upon us. He's ready to give us fulfillment in life. He's ready to pour grace down from heaven upon us.

And it will come when we obey Him. He will give the Holy Spirit to them that obey Him. And it's just another step that God wants us to take to be obedient to Him.

And He will give us the Holy Spirit. Those are philosophies. I don't know how much you have to do with them here, but they've been common.

They've been common, at least in my experiences. I can be buddy-buddy with my old buddies and still be a Christian. If you had bad buddies and you can be a Christian and you be a Christian and they don't know it, once they find out, they either change or you have to leave.

You can't be buddy-buddy with the world. You can't be buddy-buddy with ungodly men. Joking around, having big parties with them and this type of thing.

It will drag you down. It will drag you down. And you'll get in the same old pen you were in before.

What about some of the new theologies that have come out? Philosophies about morals? The world is changing on what they call moral and what they call immoral. America especially. I'm amazed there are some of these other countries that are more sound in some of those things than the Americans are.

But today, it seems like it doesn't matter. America is trying to say that it's okay for men to marry men, women to marry women, homosexual marriages. I'm glad our president doesn't think so.

But we shouldn't think so either. But you know that if we live among that thing long enough, we're going to get used to it. It's wrong.

We need to open our mouth against those things, I believe. Do we accept the ideas of the apostate religious world and blend in with their traditions and cultures that are wrong? We talk about culture a lot. I've heard quite a bit of teaching on culture and traditions.

And sometimes, matter of fact, it talks here about it. It says, Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men. After the tradition of men.

And we think about tradition of men as only being Mennonite tradition. I mean, that's the first thing that comes to my mind when I think tradition of men. I think Amish tradition or Mennonite tradition.

But there are many traditions. The world has many traditions. They have many customs.

Hollywood has designed many of the customs that the world has. I don't know who's behind all of Hollywood, but I know that those customs are not godly customs. But some of us are adopting to that kind of custom.

I don't know where some of these spirits... I was amazed already at some of the things I see in professing Christians. How they comb their hair. What kind of haircuts they get.

What kind of beards they have. What kind of clothes they wear. You say, well, boy, you're... But it comes from that fashion that's designed in Hollywood.

It comes from the old serpent. The old serpent himself has designed some of that stuff. I think that's who's behind it.

And not all those traditions... Maybe you can put so much oil in your hair and it's okay. You know, there's some that have to put so much oil in their hair that maybe you have a dry scalp or something. I don't know.

But if you do it because of the fad and the fashion of Hollywood, you're in the pen with a serpent. So beware. He says, don't let any man spoil you.

Don't let Hollywood spoil you. Don't let them influence you in those things. Just because they shave their heads doesn't mean that God didn't design you with hair on your head.

Now, I don't have much. But I don't shave it off. I'd like to have more, thank God.

But I don't think that it's right for us to follow those things. If you're following that kind of thing, I don't know where you get it. But you must be getting it from videos, movies or something.

Or you get it through the TV or something. I don't know where people get that influence. I know it's all over the world.

But I see it in the churches. I see it in Mennonite churches who are strict on standards. And they wear a straight cut coat.

But underneath that coat, there's something else. There's something else amiss under that coat. Don't let anybody spoil you.

Don't let any man spoil you after those things. There's better things. We're called out of darkness to walk in His marvelous light.

We've been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. God has called us out of those things. Praise God.

If you're not experiencing that, praise God in your soul today. Brother, you're in the pen. You're in the pen.

We can be set free from that old pen. We don't have to be a duck in there waiting to be devoured. Oh, some of these things, these philosophies and these traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ, it says, you know, the devil would want to spoil us.

There's men out there that try to spoil us and detour us away. They try to spoil us. They try to get us away from Christ.

There's churches that try to get you away from Christ rather than to lead you into Christ. God forbid. Christ should be the center of this church.

Christ should be the one who is lifted up and exalted and glorified. And every eye ought to be looking to Jesus. For in Him, for in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

If you have Jesus, you've got God. If you've got Jesus, you've got the Holy Ghost. If you have Him in your soul, if you have the love of Christ in your soul, you've got all you need.

It says here, you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power. The Bible talks about perfection. And that means the same thing.

You're complete. You're perfect in Christ. Praise God.

In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Spiritual surgery. Oh, praise God.

We need to have a cutting away. There needs to be a cutting away, a spiritual circumcision, cutting us loose from the fleshly sins that imprison us. Are we struggling with fleshly sin that imprisons us? It keeps us from following God.

We can be cut loose from that. He says here, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him, buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead. Baptism.

Immersed. It says, buried with Him in baptism. Immersed in baptism.

Now, I don't think he's talking about water baptism here, but I think he's talking about being immersed in Christ. Overwhelmed in Christ. Have you been buried with Him? If you've been buried with Him, if you have been overwhelmed and buried in Christ, you will also resurrect with Him, like it talks about a little later here.

And you being dead in your sins and uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him? Excuse me, I think it's in verse 12. It says, through the operation of God who has raised Him from the dead. There it talks about the resurrection.

But, it goes together. When you get buried with Him, you also get resurrected with Him. Praise God, are you resurrected this morning? Having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, nailing it to His cross.

And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over Him. Praise God, He made a show of them openly. He triumphed over the old devil.

He triumphed over that old serpent. He opened the door that you and I can get out and be set free. We don't have to be in that old prison house no more to be devoured by that old serpent.

Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of a new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come. But the body is of Christ. I like that.

The body is of Christ. Again, He says, don't let any man beguile you of your reward. Hold to the head.

Don't let anybody beguile you. Don't let anybody trick you. You find out what God has promised you.

You find out what He has in store for you in the Bible. You study it. You find out, because there are men who will try to steer you away, to follow after them.

But don't do that. Follow after Christ. Don't be beguiled by men.

Don't be beguiled of your reward. In involuntary humility, it says, in worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which He hath not seen, vainly puffed up by His fleshly mind, and not holding unto the head. There are men who get puffed up.

They have big ideas. And they have much religion. And they try to beguile people.

But He says, don't let anybody beguile you away from Christ, not holding to the head. Because Christ is the head. Today, the church, the true church of Jesus Christ, I believe, is clinging unto the head.

The body clings to the head. If Christ isn't the head, it's not the body. It's not the body.

But if Christ is the head, it says, from which all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment, ministereth and knit together, increases with the increase of God. Wherefore, if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of this world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances, touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and neglecting of the body, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh? And I believe there, He's saying, the important part of this, why are you subject to these types of things? Why do you base your religion on the clothes you wear, the shoes you have on? Why do you base your religion on the food you eat, on things that will perish with the

using? You must cling to Christ. And Christ, who is the Head, will show you.

Christ, who is the Head, will guide you by the Holy Spirit. He will teach you what you shall wear. He will give you what you shall wear.

He will tell you. Christ, the Head. You know, I think what He's saying is, there are people who go back in the woods or something like that, or they try to deny themselves of this and of that and of the other thing, and try to say that this is religion.

That is not. That can be a false religion. And I'm not saying that we shouldn't deny ourselves from the things of this world.

I believe that God wants us to not go after those things, the rudiments of this world. But, we are not to put our worship on those things. I don't know if you understand what I'm saying or not, but we're not to put our worship in those things.

But rather, hold to the Head. Hold to Christ. Hold to Him who saved us.

Hold to Him who can break the bondages of sin. Hold to Him who can open the doors of that prison house, who can set us free. Hold to Him.

Hold to Him. Because only Him will deliver us from the serpent. Well, this morning, I don't know what time it is.

It seems like it's time for me to close here. I feel like we need to be aware and not get used to those types of things. Not be sitting ducks.

I see too much. Since I've been back, I've seen too much of people who are weary. They're weary Christians.

They're sleepy Christians. They're not alert as to what's going on. I wonder how many times we even think about it that the Lord could come.

He could come today. Do you know that? The Lord could come today. Did you think about that? He's going to come in an hour that we think not.

Are you ready? Are we ready to meet Him? When He comes, are we aware? Are we awake? Are we alert? Or are we like that duck? Only that snake could have devoured that duck in a moment. It was getting so used to it. The old duck.

The old viper. Well, I'd like to give us, before we close, I'd like to give us some things that are sure. Some things that we can cling to that are absolute.

We have some sure promises. I have seven promises here, verses that I'd like to share. The first one is, we have sure promises.

Blessed be the Lord, in 1 Kings 8, verse 56, it says, Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There hath not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised by the hand of Moses, His servant. He hasn't failed one word of all His promise.

Do you think that He will fail us now? No, He won't fail us. He will not fail us. We have sure promises.

He has called us out of darkness. He has translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. He has given us sure promises.

He will sustain us. He will satisfy us. He has given us those promises.

He has given us sure foundations. Isaiah 28, verse 16 says, Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay it in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation, that he that believeth shall not make haste. A sure foundation.

Are you on a sure foundation? Are you on a foundation that you know is going to take you through to eternity? Are you confident in that? He has given us a sure reward. Matthew 10, verse 42 says, Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water, only in the name of the disciple of early, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. Now, if even that is rewarded, He has rewards for us.

And they're sure. They're promises that are absolutely sure. John 6, verse 37, talks about assured acceptance.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. I thank God for that. It doesn't matter who you and I are.

He will not cast us out if we come to Him. He will be there. He will give us... He has promised us that He will accept us if we come to Him.

He has promised us divine love. In Romans 8, verse 38, For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. There's nothing can make us, can come between us.

Nothing can come between us. Praise God. I'm persuaded, Paul writes here.

Are you persuaded this morning? Are you on that solid foundation? Are you convinced? Is your eyes open this morning? Do you know the difference between light and darkness? Or are things kind of gray? Assured immortality. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 1, For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, which it will be, it's going to dissolve, we know, he says, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Do you know that this morning? Do you know that there God has a place for you in glory with Him? Do you know that? Are you assured of that? We have that.

It's a promise. Eternal anchorage. Anchored eternally.

Hebrews 6, verse 9, Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. We have that anchor. We have that hope.

We have it. Praise God. We are not in the cage.

If we are in Christ, we're not in the cage. There was a fence between me and that old serpent, praise God. I was on the other side of the fence, praise God.

At one time, I was in the cage with him. In a spiritual sense, I was in the cage. Not anymore.

I'm on the other side of the fence. Which side of the fence are you on this morning? Do you know? Do you know which side of the fence you're on? Do you know? If you're on the wrong side of the fence, you're going to be meat for him. You're going to be meat for him.

You better make your calling and election sure. You better know where you're at this morning. If you're playing around with the world, thinking you can play with that kind of thing, he's going to get you.

You better make it sure. You better make your calling sure. You better know.

Let him that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. The Lord knows them that are His. He does.

And the serpent knows it too. The serpent knows it too. May God bless you.

Amen. Thank you, brother. Thankful that God blended the messages right together.

Did you notice that? Just kind of went right along with each other. Thankful for that. For His Word.

I just want to take a little bit of time here this morning and allow anyone that has anything to share to add to the messages or confession or testimony. I know some have been praying. Maybe there would be something you would share with the congregation.

Or just if you have something to share, that would be a blessing to add to the message. Then you raise your hand and we'll get a microphone to you. I was very blessed with the message today.

And I want to say thank you to my pastors and to those that watch over my soul. I have never said thank you to them. I love them and appreciate them and see who they are more and more in my life.

As I read something here in Exodus, it says, you know, Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial. And I was just thinking, you know, he had two stones on his shoulders. On each stone was written six tribes.

And he bore those stones upon his shoulder for the children of Israel. And he also bore a breastplate of judgment where there were four rows of three stones where the twelve tribes, where he also bore them upon his heart. And I am so thankful that God has opened my eyes that my ministers are not here to condemn me.

They are here. They love me. And I am so thankful that I know that they bear me upon their heart and that they have prayed for me and that they watch me.

And I have learned to appreciate that and to realize that I can run to them and they are like my father. They will help me. They will keep me.

They will protect me from Satan. And I always want to have my heart open. There was a time when I pushed the blame on somebody else and when I was in trouble.

But I don't do that anymore. And I think we should be like Aaron and like her, upholding the hands of our ministers and loving them and pouring blessing into their life and not like Achan and destroying our church and despising our ministers. I was really blessed with the message today.

Amen. Thank you, brother. God bless you.

I want to say amen to that. In that scripture that Brother Rick read there in Joel 2.17, it says that they wept between the altar and the porch. And it blesses me to hear that the men who serve at the altar are weeping, but that also puts a responsibility on the rest of us.

Those that are in the inner court and the outer court, even on the porch, should all also be weeping. Amen. I was blessed this morning also with the messages and blessed with the response.

This past week, the Lord had laid Joel on my heart also. And I had read through that very same passage and those passages. And if I may take the liberty, I'd like to just go back a little bit and read a couple more verses that I think really apply very well.

Just starting in verse 11. And I'll just touch on some of it here. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible and who can abide it? And we're all going to be faced with that day.

It will be a terrible day for the Lamb does have wrath. Therefore, also now saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning and rend your heart and not your garments. And you know, at that time, it was a custom when a man repented, he confessed, and one way he did that was to sit and to rend his garment or to sprinkle dust upon his head and everyone that passed by would see that that man is in repentance.

But God is saying, yes, confess, come to the altar, but rend your heart. He says, rend your heart for I am gracious. He said, I am gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and I'll repent of my evil if my conditions are met.

And who knoweth if He will return and repent and leave a blessing behind Him, even a meat offering and a drink offering. He gives us that grace and He gives us that faith to come to Him with our honor and with our respect. And I just wanted to tie that in with the temptation of Jesus.

You know, there's only two kingdoms and we're either in one or the other. And Satan said unto Jesus, all these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me. And Jesus saith unto him, get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve.

And so we have to consider that when we say, no, Lord, I won't worship You, who are we worshipping? We actually expect God to turn His heart to us. Or if we can say no to God, who is our Creator, and we're expecting Him to turn His heart to us. And so the question was raised in the second message, which cage are we in? Anyone else have anything they need to share this morning? Yeah, I want to also thank the elders for the messages and want to echo Marcus's thankfulness to the pastors, the elders.

I can echo that, that I do see that desire to be there for us. I see it in your hearts and just the time that you spend. So I do thank you for that.

Just desire more of Christ. It sounds funny to say I really like where I'm going. I don't like where I'm at.

And so I do ask your prayer for more victory over sin and to have more courage to understand my role as a brother in this fellowship to get more victory over the world. There has been more, but I do confess I still have times where I'll take brief steps. And so I acknowledge just to be single-minded.

And I don't want to say this lightly. I also wish to say to the youth out there, maybe you might be experimenting in music or some other part of the world that may seem kind of new to you, but just being in

my unconverted state years ago and even with my time as an evangelical, I took in just thousands and thousands, for example, of songs. And yes, there is repentance, but I've still got that library in my mind.

And even though it's fading, you can't totally get rid of it, I don't think, as far as your memory goes. Your heart can change. I've experienced that.

But most of you have just been blessed with that sheltering. And if you step away from that, I believe God showed a lot of mercy to me because a lot of what I did was in ignorance. I question whether or not God would show that same mercy to you that have been given so much.

So if there's any question, I encourage you to go to your parents, to your elders, and don't count on being able to repent later on. Be diligent now. Amen.

Thank you for that word. And Lord, in the past couple of years since you've been here, Brother Mark, we do see growth and victory in your life. We want to encourage you.

God bless you. Amen. Did I miss another hand? Are we done? Okay.

Alright. There's one here in the middle. I just want to thank God this morning for His ministers and the way they minister to us.

This morning through the first message I was sitting here trembling within. I've been receiving a lot of counsel from people in the past week. My parents have been pleading with me because I haven't been heeding counsel, if I can put it that way.

I've been not receiving instruction like I've been counseled. Just having very much of a non-caring attitude about anything in life really. As Marcus was saying, he thanks God for his ministers.

I just also want to thank God for my parents. I don't know that I've ever really done that. Thank God for my parents.

But this morning I want to publicly thank God for my parents and for the gift they are to me. But also I want to ask people to pray for me that I could walk that out in a day-to-day life, accepting them in a way that they can see that I'm accepting them. I can say with joy that I was able to enjoy the second message this morning.

I came out feeling like a different person. I went in trembling, and this morning I think I can truly say I enjoyed the second message. But I just want to continue asking people to pray for me as the road ahead is not going to be an easy one.

As I've set it up for myself. They told us when we were back there that if you sow the world in your mind, you'll eventually reap the world. And I've been doing that.

And I just want to ask your prayers that I could continue to weed out the weeds and let the wheat grow.

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