

# Beware of Dogs - Part 2

by David Wilkerson

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*David Wilkerson's sermon warns against the futility of relying on human effort for holiness and emphasizes the necessity of faith in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 15:04

**Scripture:** Romans 7:18

**Topics:** "Faith Alone", "Overcoming Sin"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the futility of trying to please God through human effort and self-righteousness, highlighting the need to surrender our fleshly desires and trust in Christ's righteousness. It addresses the struggles people face in battling sin, condemnation, and guilt, urging them to give up on self-improvement and rely on God's righteousness by faith for true deliverance and freedom.

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## Transcript

Now I don't, I don't like to see women all looking like street people. And I believe that when you have the Holy Ghost and you really trust Jesus, you get into the Word and the Holy Ghost begins to teach you. These things begin to drop off.

But you see, that has nothing to do with your salvation. Paul preached, we who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, we have no confidence in the flesh. No confidence in the flesh.

And Paul goes on and says, no man tried in the flesh to please God more than I did. Nobody. He said, there's not a man alive today in my generation that hasn't put forth more effort in my flesh to try to get to God than I have.

This man of God could look in the eye of every circumcised Jew, every converted Hebrew, every believing Pharisee, every Jewish convert who's struggling and striving to please God by the deeds of the law, and he could say, I've been there, I've done that. He could say, go ahead and tell me about your burning desire to please God. Tell me about all the promises you made to God that you wouldn't do that evil thing again and you failed and went back and did it.

Tell me about your zeal to please God with your long hours of study, your forced discipline, your repetitious prayers. Tell me about the hypocrisy of looking holy on the outside but knowing personally inside that there's wickedness. Tell me about all your hopeless efforts, how you sweat, trying to be

righteous and good on your own power and strength.

Tell me about all the fears, the failures, the struggles, the useless efforts. Tell me all about it, Paul says, and I'll tell you that I tried harder than you did. I've been through the circumcision route, he says.

I tried to no avail to cut off my lust, all the evil thoughts. I've been down the Benjamin Hebrew pride road. He said, I'm a Benjamite from the root, the Israel.

He said, I'm the real proud thing, I'm the Benjamite. I've been down that proud route that I can do it in my own strength. He said, I'm that proud Hebrew, I know what independence is and self-pride.

I know what it is to boast, I can do it, I can put my mind to it, I'll change my ways. He said, I've been down the Pharisee path, that strict discipline, studying the Scripture to try to cleanse yourself without trusting in Jesus. He said, all these things I have done, I was totally blameless concerning the law and keeping all the do's and don'ts, but I missed Christ.

In spite of my efforts, I missed Him. And no wonder, Paul, now tells us that I've determined to know nothing among you save Jesus. Christ did Him crucify.

He said, I've tried it all. There's nothing as pathetic as the flesh trying to be holy. The devil's behind it.

And he's back there cheering, he's saying, try harder. And when you fail, he said, you know your problem? You didn't try hard enough, now get back in there, grit your teeth, go at it again. And he's back there laughing at your foolishness.

Pathetic. The devil knows that walking in the Spirit is walking in total dependence on the Lord, trusting the Spirit of God to produce the righteousness of Christ in us. So he tries to go about and abort this process.

And he's going to try to get you to fight your own temptations and the power of your flesh, independent of the work of the Holy Spirit. And he's going to try to tell you that walking in the Spirit is simply doing your best not to sin. And that's not walking in the Spirit.

Paul said, as many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. You know what Paul's saying? He said, these people who come around and tell you that you can kill and mortify your own flesh if you just try hard enough.

He said, they've tried and tried, and what they're trying to tell you to do, they haven't done. He said, they don't have victory in their life. They still have these lusts and sins in their life.

They've not mortified the flesh. They've been circumcised in their flesh, but their hearts have not been circumcised. He said, they're preaching something they don't practice.

They want you to think they are holy, but they're fighting a battle you know nothing about. Paul gives us his secret to knowing and winning Christ. Look at chapter 3 again, Philippians, verse 7 and 8. But what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ.

Yet doubtless I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I've suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ. He's not talking about boats and ships and food and houses and lands. He's not talking about that loss.

No, no, no, no, no. He said, all these things that are dung, all these things that I have given up, is the striving of the flesh. I'm giving up my Benjamin pride.

I'm giving up my Hebrew efforts. I'm giving up all of these things that I've outlined that I did in my flesh. I have given up on the flesh.

I have once and for all for my lifetime given up any hope of pleasing God in my flesh. I've suffered the loss of that. I've given up on it.

And folks, that's the beginning. You cannot know Christ in fullness and intimacy until you once and for all give up this concept that you can dig in and try harder and get the victory of your sin. You can't do it.

It's not in you. God will not accept your flesh even if you can accomplish it. He won't accept it.

Because he said the flesh cannot please God. It's enmity toward God. Oh, praise God.

Paul knew that he'd never know Christ until he got rid of this hindrance. And that hindrance that had to go, he said all this flesh stuff is going. I can never know Christ intimately until I repudiate my human gifts, all my human abilities, all my self-righteousness, my strivings to please God.

I can't. All these fleshly things is done. They're garbage.

Where are you on this matter? Have you suffered the loss of all your confidence in your flesh? Have you come to this place like Paul came to where you say, I repudiate, I will no longer try to work my fingers to the bone to try to get God's favor. I'm fighting lust in my own strength. I'm fighting sin in my own strength.

I'm fighting a battle in my home and my marriage in my own strength and it's not working. Until you've come, you have to give up the hope of ever improving your flesh. It's impossible to improve your flesh.

It has to be crucified with Christ. I tell you again, your flesh cannot be improved. Flesh will always be flesh.

That's why I've told you once, I'm never surprised by my flesh. An evil thought comes, that's my flesh. You've been that way ever since I came into accountability.

You'll be that way until I die. I'll be 99 years old and you'll still be talking like that. You're flesh.

Are you surprised by your flesh? You shouldn't be. I know it embarrasses you and I know it condemns you, but it's still flesh. Paul says this hindrance has to go.

I give up trying to improve my flesh. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, are going about to establish their own righteousness, having not submitted to the righteousness of God. And the first step to submitting to the righteousness of God by faith is to quit trying to produce your own.

I can't produce my own righteousness. And that's where you begin. You submit then to the righteousness of God by faith.

Hallelujah. Now the apostle can say, Now that I've repudiated my flesh, I have no confidence in my flesh to please God. Now I want to be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Now folks, I want to talk to you about this. Righteousness of God which is by faith. Are you tired of sinning? Confessing? Sinning, confessing? Sinning, confessing? The merry-go-round? Are you tired of it? Well, we've got a few honest people here.

If you're tired of temporary deliverance, the despair of always giving in to a besetting sin, tired of living with fear and guilt and condemnation, I've got good news for you. Before I go into that, let me tell you about some of the battles that people fight. Just a couple letters from the many thousands that were received.

Dear Pastor Dave, I was once so in love with Jesus, about three and a half years ago, God was working in me so wonderfully, I lived in sweet communion for about a year, I got so popular in our church for being close to God. They even asked me to preach. Time after time, I preached, and I preached the love of God, but my sermons went unheeded.

Nobody was listening, so I stopped preaching. And something happened to me. I lost communion.

I want to seek God so bad now, and I'm going crazy. About two years ago, the presence of God diminished in me. Ten thousand times, I've asked myself why, and I don't know.

I got tempted by a sex sin, and I gave in. I hate it so much, but when I'm alone, it's like I kind of love it. Yet often, I do hate it.

I've bawled like a baby when I'm doing it, asking God to help me not to do it anymore. I trust in God to deliver me, just like Paul says in Romans 7, and I love God with all my heart, yet I feel like somehow I'm doing everything all wrong. Maybe I'm not trying hard enough or something.

I've contemplated suicide, but I know that won't end my torment. All the while, everybody at the church has no idea what grace and mercy is about. They condemn the one who's having a problem, and they look favorably on people with willpower.

He said, I can't escape the fact that I--the Holy Ghost. I hate it that the Holy Ghost doesn't come to me anymore, and I don't like what's happening to me. He said, I'm in desperate straits.

Here's a letter from a married woman. She said, Pastor Wooks, I fell in love with a man that's been a friend for years. We used to go to church together, with him and his wife and children, and he backslid when his wife went wild and abandoned him and his children.

I've always been there for him and helped him and prayed for him, and his marriage ended in divorce. We were shocked and couldn't believe it, but then it went from shock to an involvement. We got involved.

He told me that he loves me very much, and he's never seen me do anything wrong and always seen me do right, and he knows he's going to hell, but he doesn't want me to go to hell because he knows I'm a Christian, and he knows it bothers me going to church and then trying to do right, trying so hard to please God. I pray for deliverance now. I've repented over and over, and I've asked God for strength, and I've made vows to God to be strong, but then when I see him, I fall right back down to this thing.

She said, I read your newsletters on sex sins and pornography. It scares me terribly, and I repent again and again. I keep rededicating my life to God.

I even prayed, cast out demons that might be in me because of this sexual thing. I feel so doomed. All the scriptures I've heard race through my head.

You're a reprobate. People can pray, and then there's no hope. Once God's spirit leaves you, you backslide, and then you can't get back.

Willful sin cuts you off. Because Saul lost God's spirit, didn't he? Didn't it say that the sword never left David's house because of the wages of sin and spiritual death? Oh, Brother Dave, I brought this on myself. I'm so full of guilt and fear and panic and disgust.

I'm so doomed, so alone. I'm so detached from life. What you fear does come upon you, doesn't it? How people knew God one time, but they wouldn't retain it.

The Bible says, so God turned over a reprobate mind. Maybe that's my problem. I read my Bible, and I ask God to help me, and I go to a prayer line to be prayed for.

I desire so much to get to God. I feel so lost. I'm so alone.

I'm cut off. For the past two months, it's like a bad dream. My head's in turmoil.

It's in a fog. People notice I can't even function at home or with my children. I'm irritable and scared.

There's nothing left for me.

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