

# The Great Deception

by Denny Kenaston

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*The great deception is self-deception, and it can lead to a gradual departure from the truth and spiritual destruction.*

**Duration:** 1:15:24

**Scripture:** Psalm 8:2, Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 10:12, Galatians 5:1, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:25

**Topics:** "Great Deception"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of dealing with sin early, comparing it to a serpent that can lead us astray. He shares a tragic story of a young man who rebelled against God and ended up in a dangerous situation in the army. The preacher warns that self-deception can occur when we hear the word of God but fail to respond to it. He encourages the congregation to seek freedom, liberty, and power in their lives by diligently keeping their hearts focused on Jesus.

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## 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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Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, God has perfected praise. Thank you, Brother Larry and your family. Thank you for being brave soldiers.

Well, it's been a joy to be here already this morning. My heart has been blessed and edified. We just magnify the Lord for all the beautiful things that He's doing.

We magnify the Lord this morning for the privilege we have to gather together like this. We thank God for the singing. We thank God that He loved us so much that He inspired thousands of songs that we can sing.

And though we don't have a hymn history on all the songs we sing, you can be sure the ones that we sing, if you knew the history, you would see beautiful marks of inspiration on every one of them. Because it's God. It's God gifting us with precious hymns.

So, we just thank God for every part of the service. And we thank God for this part of the service, for the preaching of the Word this morning. My heart has been refreshingly remembering the wedding yesterday.

I know that not all of you were here at the wedding, but it was a real blessing to witness the vows of Brother Lee and Sister Sarah, which took place here yesterday. And we thank God for the sweet, simple, holy wedding that was here yesterday. Blessed be God.

The title of my message this morning is, The Great Deception. The Great Deception. We live in dangerous times.

It seems there are deceptions on every side. False teachers abound. There are so many of them in this our day, that at times it causes our hearts to tremble that there are so many false teachers that have gone out into the world.

There is a deluding mixture of truth and error, even in the churches today. And the world is even calling to us in the name of Jesus. Now many things that were unholy in days gone by, have been sanctified with the name Christian.

We live in days of deception. When Jesus, our Lord, walked upon the face of the earth, He warned us of the deception of the last days. Those were some of the last words that He said to His disciples.

Take heed that no man deceive you. Now I'm greatly concerned about all of these deceptions, which we find in our world today. And I know that not a few of us, we tremble at times as we see the deception and read the warnings in the Bible, and even hear words like, if it were possible, they would even deceive the elect.

These kind of words cause us to tremble, as we look ahead and wonder, sometimes even saying the words, Lord, how will I make it? If He didn't make it, how will I ever make it? I'm greatly concerned about all of these deceptions, and yet I would have to say that as a pastor, I'm praying continually to know, how? How do you guide the flock through all of this deception? Through these, what 2 Timothy calls, perilous times. How do you guide the flock? How much do you say? How specific do you get? How strong do you make the warnings that you give to the sheep? All of these things, you know, they go through the heart of a pastor. And as you move around, you see this slide that is taking place, and I must say, it's a slide that is happening everywhere.

Every major denomination is being affected and infected by this slide that is taking place. And, you know, as a pastor you think, now God, what counsel can you give to the people? How do you guide them in such a way that they will not also be caught up with that same sliding that's taking place into the world around them? But as I ponder all of this, this end-time deception, God brought it to my heart, some of the best counsel that I can give to you is to warn you and alert you to the dangers of self-deception. The great deception this morning, brothers and sisters, is not the Antichrist, though he is a deceiver and will be a deceiver, and many shall yield to his deceptions.

But this morning, brothers and sisters, the great deception is not the Antichrist. It is not the false prophets who have gone out into the world deceiving and being deceived. It is not the TV evangelist, my brother,

my sister, who wears a \$1,000 suit and has a \$5,000 diamond ring on his finger.

These are not the great deceptions that we live in today. It is not the religious, worldly mix of pseudo-Christianity. This is not the great deception.

The great deception, my brother and sister, is self-deception. Self-deception is the mother of all other deceptions. And as I ponder that whole thing, and I think about it in my own heart, and I agree and my heart unites with some of the thoughts and words that many of you have said from time to time, how will we ever make it? I think maybe we might have an answer here this morning.

Self-deception is the mother of all other deceptions. And the cause of them all. So this morning I feel led of God to give you some counsel on self-deception.

And I believe it's some of the best medicine that we can take in order to alert ourselves, in order to immune ourselves, in order to cure ourselves of the deceptions of this land that we live in and the age that we live in. I'm reminded of the words in Jeremiah that we all know very well, but let me read them to you this morning in Jeremiah 17, where Jeremiah in the middle of one of his sermons, one of his prophecies said these words, The heart is deceitful above all things, above the antichrist, above the false prophet, above the worldly, mixed up Christian church today. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? The answer to that question is found in the next verse. I, the Lord, search the heart. I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

Yes, the heart is deceitful above all things. Who can know it? And I'm sure that every one of us have had those times in our life, those times of self-revelation when we had to say those very words and say, Ah, I didn't even see it. I didn't even know my heart.

I can't believe that. How could that have happened? Ah, the heart is deceitful above all things, desperately wicked. Who can know it? Who can know it? God knows it.

God knows it. And you can know your heart if you open your heart to the revelation of God and allow Him to try it and prove it. You can know your heart.

Oh, that God would grant us all the humility to acknowledge this verse from the depths of our own souls. Yes, I know, we can all acknowledge it in our head. We can all shake our head to that and say it's true.

But oh, that God would grant us the humility to acknowledge this verse from the depths of our soul. My heart is deceitful. And I don't know it.

I think this morning of the illustration of the Corinthian church. There they were. Had some good things going for them.

Blessed times of the Spirit of God. They had gifts in the church. God was bringing forth prophecies in the church.

There they were, glorying in the things that God was doing. There they were, rejoicing. They were zealous about their gifts and assuring their hearts that all was well.

That's the Corinthian church. Yet, while all of that was taking place, and they were rejoicing, and they were shouting, and they were blessing God for all of His goodness to them. There was division among them.

There was carnality among them. There was fornication among them. There was brother going to law against brother among them.

There was distorted communion among them. And there were false doctrines among them. To the point where Paul had to say these words to them, Your glorying is not good.

Your glorying is not good. Paul was saying to the Corinthian church, You don't see yourself right. You do not see yourself right.

He had to admonish them to repent. And we thank God for the record that is written in 2 Corinthians, as they responded to the fatherly challenge and rebuke of their apostle Paul. They took his letter as a wake-up call.

They grabbed a hold of his words and his challenges. They opened their heart to the reality of where they were really at and acknowledged their transgressions and broke their hearts to such a place that Paul could say to them, they had godly sorrow not to be repented of. Beautiful words there in 2 Corinthians 7. That was Paul's encouragement to the Corinthian church because they received a baptism of honesty when they read his letter and said, you are right and we are wrong.

I think of the book of Revelation there and the letter that was written to the church, the church at Laodicea. And I want you to note this morning that it was a church. This wasn't a letter written to the heathen, although one would feel a bit like it was written to the heathen when you see the deception that they were under.

But it was not written to the heathen in Laodicea. It was written to the church at Laodicea. There in Revelation 3 and verse 14, And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

I know thy works. There it is again. God is the one who knows.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth, says God.

I will, church at Laodicea, spew thee out of my mouth. Why? Because you are lukewarm. Why are you lukewarm? Verse 17 gives us some insight into why it was a lukewarm church.

Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Now if you study the history of the Laodicean church and the history of the city of Laodicea, you will find out that they were not just saying, I am rich.

They were rich. They had money in their back pocket. They had all the things they needed.

They had a well-padded billfold. But God said, you just think you are rich. You are not really rich.

You just think you are increased with goods, but you are not increased with goods. You are not seeing your life or your heart the right way. And God gave counsel to the Laodicean church in verse 18 and said, I

counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire.

Throw your gold away and get some gold that's tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich. And buy of Me white raiment that thou mayest be clothed and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. And anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see.

Now, God is challenging them here on their spiritual perception. He is telling them, you've got the thing all wrong. In your heart, you are the epitome of self-deception.

You've got money. You've got your clothes. You've got all kinds of nice things.

You are increased with goods and you're sitting around patting each other on the back for the nice and soft and beautiful life that you have. And you think that you have need of nothing. But I'm telling you this morning, you have great need.

You are poor and rich and naked and blind. Now, that's quite a different evaluation than they saw in themselves. I just cite this as an example of the great deception which is self-deception.

They were deceiving their own hearts, weren't they? They were deceiving their own hearts. We are rich. We are increased with goods.

We have need of nothing. We are pretty good. God help us.

May God help us and deliver us from any attitude like that as a congregation. May God help us. May God have mercy on our souls.

I know, it's alright to be excited about church. It's alright to be excited about your church. It's alright to want to come to church.

It's alright to rejoice in the good things that God is doing. Oh, may God deliver us all from the self-deception, the corporate self-deception of somehow thinking we have arrived. Oh, we have not arrived.

We have not arrived. What does it mean to be deceived? The word means, the word deceived is to believe what is not true. To believe what is not true.

And when you believe something, you put your confidence in it. And imagine putting your confidence in something that is not true. Deceived, it means to roam away from the truth.

To just kind of roam and wander away, little by little, just wandering away from the truth. That's what it means to be deceived. I want you to notice that.

Nobody just runs away from the truth. No. We wander away, little by little, a step here, a step there, a little compromise, another one over here, a little blinding of the eyes, and then some seeing, and then a little more blinding of the eyes, and staggering a little further away.

And soon we find ourselves five years later in a different place. It means to be misled by dishonesty. It means to slowly seduce out of the way.

To be slowly seduced out of the way. To be tricked or cheated. Now that's what the word deception means.

And it's easy for us to look at those definitions and say, yes, yeah, the spirit of antichrist, that's what he will want to do. That's what he will try to do. Yes, false prophets, that's what they will try to do.

Yes, I can see how a worldly church would try to deceive me and get me to believe that which is not true. But may I just propose to you this morning and consider how easily the heart, the self-deception of our own heart, fits every one of these definitions. It is very easy for our heart to believe that which is not true.

Amen? How many of you have done it? I've done it. And afterwards thought, how did I? How did I fall for that? It is very easy for our hearts to roam away from the truth, prone to wander, says the song. Some people changed the song.

They didn't like those words. But the fact of the matter is that many of God's people are prone to wander. It's easy for the heart to be misled by its own dishonesty and slowly seduced out of the way.

And we've all experienced it. So how does this great deception happen? Up until this point, we've just been speaking in generalities, kind of as an introduction to the message. But God doesn't leave this matter of self-deception in lofty generalities that float around up here and have no meaning to us people who live down here on this earth.

God doesn't leave it that way. We want to look at several clear areas in the Scriptures where this deception can take place and, yea, does take place probably more often than what we would like to admit. The first place where we'd like to look is in the book of Hebrews.

If you'll turn there, Hebrews chapter 3. We have one of God's revealings of the heart's ability to deceive itself. In Hebrews chapter 3, and verse 12 and 13, we find these sobering words. Take heed, brethren.

Take heed. Lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

How does this great deception take place? First of all, it takes place through the deceitfulness of sin. God clearly reveals to us here that sin is deceitful. Like the little song says, sin will take you further than you want to go.

And it will. It is deceitful. Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 22 speaks about being led by deceitful lusts.

And that's quite a description of how our own hearts can lead us into paths where we don't want to go. Because we have deceitful lusts. And those lusts deceive us.

Our heart, through those lusts, deceives us and convinces us that it will be okay. It will be okay. Oh, it won't be that bad.

Oh, it will just be once. But sin and our own deceitful hearts will trick you and cheat you and lead you where you don't want to go. Sin does that.

Sin, not dealt with. Brothers and sisters, clouds and quiets the conscience. It will cloud the conscience so you can't see clearly and quiet the conscience so you don't hear that voice so clearly.

Sin does that when it's not dealt with. Then sin, not dealt with, will allow more sin to come into the life and more sin clouds the conscience and quiets the conscience and it's a never-ending circle that takes place. And it can end in absolute misery and even destruction for any of the people of God.

It can end there. Sin says, You can play with me and not get burnt. Sin says that.

You can play with me and not get burnt. Sin says, You can experiment and you'll be able to stop once you've tasted a little bit of me. But sin is deceitful and sin will take you further than you will go.

I promise you it will. Sin is deceitful. It will encourage you to go a little further and then you'll be able to stop.

It will encourage you just one more time and then you can quit. But the bottom line, fact of the matter is, you will go again, and again, and again, and again. All the while, while sin is telling you, It's alright.

You can get right later. Just one more time. And all the while, while it sings its sweet song to your soul, it becomes a cord that binds you tighter, and tighter, and tighter, and tighter.

Oh, how well we remember the little children's lesson. I've seen it a couple of times and I saw it over in Africa also, where one man takes a rope, no, not a rope, a piece of thread, just a piece of thread, and winds it around, an individual with his hands like this. Oh, the lesson is so good, you know, you can wind it around there three, four, five, six times and that person will break those threads so easily.

But as you go around, and around, and around, all of a sudden you find yourself bound. That's what sin does. It's the great deception, brothers and sisters.

We should fear it more than the Antichrist. I guarantee it. It's the great deception.

I think of the deception of Samson this morning. We've been groaning our way through the book of Judges in our family devotions. And all the confusion, and all the mixture, and the flesh, and the deception of the book of Judges.

And every man did that which is right in his own eyes. But in the middle of that context, we find the example of Samson who had a call upon his life, whom God called to deliver the children of Israel out of the hands of the Philistines, who was deceived by his own self many, many times. And his life ministry ended in the great deception.

There he was, laying his head in the lap of Delilah, letting her sing him to sleep while she cut off his hair. And when he heard those famous words, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson, he jumped to his feet as other times, but he found out that time there were too many threads around him and he couldn't do anything. The great deception in Samson's life was self-deception.

And they poked out his eyes and made him grind in the mill like a mule. He jumped up and wist not that the Spirit of God had departed from him. Pretty sobering word, isn't it? I just encourage you, brothers and sisters, let us deal with sin early.

It is a serpent. In the end, it pitheth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. And it will take you where you don't want to go.

I just heard recently of the sad, sad story of a young man who walked away from God in his rebellion. He thought he's gonna have a fling in the army. He thought he's gonna have a little fling in the army.

Try it out. Right, boys? Just try it out. Today, he finds himself on a convoy in Iraq.

The tank in front of him, blown to pieces. The tank behind him, blown to pieces. He gets out of his tank and goes over to the other tank and sees his best friend laying there.

No head and no arm. It pitheth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. But all the while, it says, You can do it.

It'll be all right. You can do it. Don't worry about it.

It'll all be okay. No, it won't, my friend. It will not be okay.

How does this great deception happen? Number two. James chapter one, if you want to turn there, tells us, By hearing the word and not responding to it, this great deception happens in our own hearts. By hearing the word and not responding to it.

Now, this point is not for the rebel who thought he's going to go out and have his good time. It's not for the rebel who decided they're going to go out and sow their wild oaks for a while. No, this one is not for the rebel.

This is for the good church member who sits in a good church and hears a good word on Sunday morning. By hearing the word and not responding to it. In James chapter one and verse twenty-one, Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, And receive with meekness the engrafted word, Which is able to save your souls, God says.

But, while you are receiving the engrafted word, Which is able to save your soul this morning, my brother, my sister, Be ye doers of the word that you hear, And not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. There it is. Our own heart.

We deceive our own heart if we place ourselves under the sound, the sound word of the word of God, and listen to it, and go our own way, and not respond to that which we've heard. We deceive our own selves. We are walking down a path.

We are slowly wandering our way out of the path of truth, and moving slowly, wandering, meandering our way away from that which is right. We don't realize that it's happening because we're still hearing the good sermons. We don't realize what's happening because we're sitting there saying, Amen.

But it's happening. That's what the Bible says. Deceiving your own selves.

For if any be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. Hearing the word of God and not responding to it has a dulling effect upon us.

Imagine that, that the word of God, the word of God, the holy word, the pure word, the quick and powerful word, that word, that life-changing word, which is able to save our souls, can have a dulling effect upon us. And may I say it this way? Can I be so bold to say it this way? If you're just going to sit there, it'd be better if you just didn't come. But God would have us respond to the word of God.

God would have us receive it with a ready mind. There is a danger of deceitful emotional repentance that doesn't change the life. You know you can do that.

We kind of set the stage for some of that, you know. We give invitations and you can go to the front, or you can go downstairs, but let me warn you brothers and sisters, there is a danger of the deceitful emotional repentance that doesn't change the life. We can say to God while we're listening to a sermon, Oh God, I see it.

I see what you're saying, God. Yes, I see it. And walk away and not change.

This is not good. It is not wise to do that. You can be on that yo-yo for years and years.

We deceive ourselves. We can say amen to the sermon, rejoice over it, and even discuss it on Sunday afternoon, and not change. Imagine that.

The words ring in my ears, grievous words, spoken by many a father after a sermon on the home, after his twentieth sermon on the home. Yeah, well, it's good for us to be reminded of these things. You know, those can be grievous words if we always have to be reminded of those things.

When will we get it? Verse 25 gives the opposite of the great deception, the great self-deception, and that is freedom and liberty and power in your life. Which one would you like? Freedom and liberty and power? Or wandering and stumbling away slowly from the truth and being dulled by the life-quickening power of the Word of God? Which one do you want? Freedom and liberty and power in your life? But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, well, it's good for us to be reminded of it again. He being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

This man shall be blessed. I wonder if this isn't the answer or one of the answers to stunted growth and many of the struggles that people seem to have in their Christian life. You saw.

You agreed. And you walked away. Number three.

Galatians. I'm going to turn over there to the book of Galatians. These are all in the Bible.

Just following a little concordance study here. You can do the same. How does this great deception take place? Galatians 6, verses 1-3, through pride.

Through pride. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. Now that's a good verse that we could put alongside or cross-reference back to Revelation 3. There was a whole corporate body of believers who thought themselves to be something when they, in fact, were nothing. He deceiveth himself.

We deceive ourselves through the pride of our hearts, forgetting the words of the Lord Jesus who said, for without me ye can do nothing. Nothing. Now it's true that we can do lots of religious things without Jesus.

You can come to church this morning without Jesus. You can put on the right clothes this morning without Jesus. You could read your Bible this morning without a vital reality in Jesus.

You could even sing the songs this morning without Jesus. But Jesus said, without me ye can do nothing. And all the self-deception and the pride of man's heart who would go through all those motions and convince his own heart that everything is okay when we know in the depths of our being that there is no vital connection between me and Jesus for, who knows, a day, two, a week, but yet, somehow we console ourselves by going through the motions of all the things that we have learned to do.

This is a self-deception, brothers and sisters. When we lose sight of the reality of Jesus, we fall into the self-deception of pride. 1 Corinthians 10, Paul says these words to us, Let him that standeth take heed, lest he fall.

And I believe the admonition that God gives to us here in this point is that we recognize the danger of pride and how pride twists our view of how we see. Do we ever get completely free of this self-deception of pride? I don't know. It seems like it's in all of our hearts.

But I believe the greatest thing that we can do to stay away from this is just to acknowledge how easily we can get lifted up and start thinking, you know, doing pretty good. Things are, yeah, I can do it. I think the greatest thing that we can do is to open up our heart and humble our heart and acknowledge the fact that we can easily be lifted up in pride.

All of us. Pride is a self-centered view of oneself. And humility is a God-centered view of oneself.

That's a nice, simple way to put it. Pride is a self-centered view of myself. And humility is a God-centered view of me.

And I think that's a good way to describe it because I don't believe that God wants us to walk around through life dragging our chin around, saying that I'm no good and I never amount to anything. That's not humility. But oh, the beautiful balance that comes into view when we see through the eyes of God who we are and why we are what we are.

There's a beautiful balance of humility there and confidence in God, not in me, in God. May God give us eyes that we may see. And by the way, one of the greatest gifts that God could give to every one of us is a good, old-fashioned dose of self-revelation.

That's one of the greatest gifts that God could give you. If you find yourself in the dust on your face and you're saying, Woe is me! Woe is me! You are blessed! Treasure it! Go for it! Number four. How does this deception take place? This self-deception? This great deception? The time factor in sowing and reaping deceives us.

We deceive ourselves because there is a time factor in the process of sowing and reaping. Galatians chapter 6 verse 7 says these words, Paul writing to the Christians at Galatia, Be not deceived. God is not mocked.

For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we fade not. Look at that verse there. Oh! And be not weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we fade not.

But we deceive ourselves because there is a gap between the sowing and the reaping. If the reaping were immediate, whether it be on the positive or the negative side, if the reaping were immediate, well, we would be right on it, wouldn't we? But the reaping so many times is not immediate. God has put that gap there, my brother and sister, to prove us, to see who we are, to see what we will do, to see our character, to see do we love Him with all of our heart.

God has put that gap there to prove us. And that gap deceives us if we're not careful. You know, if the first time we got angry with a young person in our home, they packed their bags and left.

Oh! We would... Oh! That would shake us. But the reality is it happens again, again. Then all of a sudden, because God has put a gap in there, our own heart takes that gap and deceives ourselves.

But God says, be not deceived. God is not mocked. What you sow, you will reap, both on the positive and on the negative.

Both are there before us. If it were immediate, our hearts could not deceive us. But it always takes time.

And we think, Oh! The reaping has not come. It won't come for me. It didn't come yet.

It must not be so bad because it's not coming. And so, we go on and on in our way, which is a wayward way, not realizing that the plants are growing and soon there will be a crop. And as is all God's laws of sowing and reaping, you sow little and you reap much.

You sow little, you reap much. The law of sowing and reaping will always bring us back to the crushing reality that we do reap what we sow, every one of us. It will always bring us there.

Sow to the wind, reap the whirlwind. Sow hateful words, reap the loss of a marriage partner. Sow lustful thoughts, reap adultery.

Sow neglect, reap rebellious children. Sow rebellion, young people at home. Reap a miserable marriage when it's your turn.

And on and on we could go this morning in giving illustrations. But the point is, this gap in sowing and reaping is part of the great deception. Our heart is deceived by that and we think, it's not gonna happen to me.

It's not gonna happen to me. But it will. It will.

Number five, through the use and abuse of the tongue, this great deception takes place. Through the use and abuse of the tongue. James chapter 1 again.

If you'll turn back there. The tongue, a member that we use more than any other member. The tongue.

Think about it. We use it more than any other member. And God says these words in James chapter 1 and verse 26.

Sort of like a preliminary prompting to our hearts before we get to James chapter 3 where God dedicates a whole chapter to this one subject. God kind of preempts us a bit here with this one verse and says, If any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's

religion is vain. He deceiveth his own heart.

Somehow he thinks, it's okay to do this one. I don't drink and I don't smoke and I don't chew and I don't run with those that do. I'm a pretty good fellow.

But if the tongue, which is a deceitful member in our body, if the tongue is not being bridled, God's not impressed with the fact that you don't smoke and you don't chew and you don't run with those that do. We can deceive ourselves through the use and abuse of our tongue. When are we going to call the use and abuse of the tongue sin? Sin! When will we stop slandering and gossiping and tearing people down with our tongue? This man's religion is vain.

The word says, it's empty. There's nothing in it. There's nothing in it.

We need to acknowledge that the tongue will defile the whole body. And that's what it says in chapter 3. The tongue, the use and abuse of the tongue will defile the whole body. That's what the word says.

We need to acknowledge it. We need to see it. You know, we see it in other areas.

You know, he that is joined to a harlot sinneth against his own soul, sinneth against the Spirit of God. We see that. But we don't see that the use and abuse of the tongue also can defile the whole body.

The use and abuse of the tongue will drain away your spiritual life. I wonder how many times we have been seduced into speaking evil or just foolish nonsense after we have been strengthened through a sweet time in prayer at a prayer meeting or in our closet or after a beautiful Sunday morning. I wonder how many times we have been seduced into speaking evil or foolish nonsense out of our mouths and drained out everything that we got from God.

It does do that, doesn't it? How many say, Amen, let me see your hands. It does, it does. It drains it all right out of us.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue. And your life is in the power of your tongue. And mine.

And lastly, and I'll be finished here. The great deception is self-deception. How does this happen in our lives? Number six, we deceive our own selves in the subject of salvation.

In the subject of salvation, we deceive our own selves. Our heart will deceive us in salvation. You're okay.

Oh, how the heart will convince itself on this point. Oh, you're okay. You're okay.

You prayed. You've been baptized. Over in Matthew 7, we find these words.

Chapter 7 and verse 19, In every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them, not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord.

And I put that emphasis there on purpose because it will be a plea just like that. It won't just be, Lord, Lord. It will be Lord! Lord! Have we not prophesied in thy name? Have we not cast out devils and in thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Oh, but I thought, Lord, I this, I that, I went there, I prayed, I this, I that. Then will I say unto him, I don't know you.

I don't know you. Oh, you went to the church. Oh, you listened to the sermons.

Oh, yes, you even said all the right things. But I don't know you. We don't know each other.

The heart in these cases has deceived itself. And the subject of salvation. The heart will do that.

Like one dear lady said last week up in Vermont, who just got born again because of a baptism of somebody else who just got born again. She said, I almost had myself deceived into thinking that I would be okay. I'm alright.

I've been baptized. Or, this is a good one for the young ones, God didn't call me yet. Oh, really? So, you just go on your merry way, living your self-centered life, and God didn't call you yet.

I warn you, young people, God is calling you. He is calling you. Don't sit there and wait for God to come stand next beside you and say, okay, it's your time.

God is calling you. If you know the condition of your heart, if your heart is miserable, if you're miserable to live with, God is calling you. Come and be delivered from your selfishness.

If you're miserable, God is calling you. You don't have to wait for Him to come and stand beside you and cover you and overshadow you with an auron. You don't need to wait for that.

If your life is miserable, and you're making everyone else miserable, the invitation of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is given to you this morning. That could be a self-deception, by the way. I'm waiting for God to call me.

And in the meantime, I'm going to be, live it up and live my selfish life the way I want. Make things tough for Mom and Dad and everybody else around me. That can be a self-deception.

I wouldn't, if I were you, I wouldn't play games with the conviction of God. He does not always strive with man. Oh, how the heart will find one of these or others to rest on.

It's just kind of that way. It's the natural tendency to rest there and console itself, but instead of humbling yourself and repenting and giving your all to Christ, it's interesting to watch this whole thing happen up in Vermont up there. They're falling like dominoes one by one.

I think they've had about 10 or 12 baptisms now. Adult baptisms. And it all started with one clear conversion.

And the outflow of the testimony of that clear conversion of one person who thought they were going to be okay. But when they came face to face with the reality of what a Christian is supposed to be, they found themselves wanting. And they were wise enough and humble enough to take an honest look at the reality of their heart, and they said, I don't have it.

And they were born again by the Spirit of God. And there was a baptism the next Sunday. And they stood and gave their testimony of the freedom that they have in their life now and the bondage that it was before and the dry bones that they found Christianity to be.

But now it's real. And one by one, they fall like dominoes. Another one just this week.

We got an email last night. One more. The self-deception of salvation.

You'll be okay. That's just their personality. That's why they're so happy.

And who knows what else our own little hearts tell us to console us that we're going to be okay. Now, please don't misunderstand me. I don't want to shake anybody's true faith here this morning.

That's not my desire. But, oh, listen. Better to get an examination this morning than to get it before God someday and find yourself wanting like these here in Matthew 7. Better to get a bit of an examination this morning.

Can you see now, my brother and my sister, that this counsel is the best warning that I could give you against the deception that is in this world and that is coming upon us. This is the best counsel I could give you. And all you need this morning is just a good dose of honesty.

That's all. Honesty. You don't want to be deceived? Be honest.

You don't want to be deceived? Love the truth. The truth. And the truth about me.

That's how you will not be deceived. Let's bow our heads and close our eyes for a moment. I'm going to give an invitation this morning.

I know it's a quarter to twelve, but I'm not sure what to do. We trust the Lord in all those things. But I sense the Lord saying, don't just go sit down this morning.

I have an invitation. We're not going to sing a song. We don't need to sing a song.

You don't need to hear the music and feel moved emotionally by the music. But I'm just opening the altar up for anyone right now. You have a need, you just come.

Just get out of your seat and come up here to this altar. You need to deal with some issues in your life. I want you to come.

You do that right now. Hear the Lord this morning. That's all I'm asking.

Just hear the Lord. Are you lost? The greatest self-deception is to sit through a message like this. Having lost your way and not to budge.

That is a great self-deception. Oh Father in Heaven, we acknowledge your voice this morning. We acknowledge your word.

We acknowledge your leading. We have done what we're supposed to do. We have said what we're supposed to say.

Oh Father, please lead this congregation, God. Deliver us from deception, God. As individuals, but also as a congregation, oh God.

Sometimes I tremble, God. I just tremble, Father. Don't let us go astray, God.

I pray blessings upon these that are at the altar and all the rest also, God. Oh, just continue to work in our hearts, Lord. Whether it's here or whether it's home.

In a child's heart, Lord. With a father and a mother tonight or whatever, God, I pray. Your Spirit, roost upon these people.

In Jesus Christ's name, I pray. Those of you that have responded, you can rise to your feet and make your way to the basement if you desire counseling. A few brethren can go along down.

A few sisters. A serious message for the church this morning. A needed message for us to hear.

Needful for this soul to hear this. A word again today. For me, when the sermon started and Brother Denny started speaking of the great deceptions, right away my mind went to this one and this one and this one.

And I wondered, which one does Brother Denny see as the great deception? And he said the words, self-deception. I thought, could it be? Could it be that I guard myself against all these deceptions of the world? I guard myself against all these deceptions and in the end my own heart takes me to hell. Could that happen? Could that happen? I believe that it could.

I believe that it could. I needed this warning this morning of the great deception, self-deception. And I believe it was for every one of us today.

The one verse that our brother quoted, Ye that think, ye stand. Take heed, lest ye fall. That gives it to every one of us from the very front bench to the very back.

This message is for all of us this morning. Let us take it to heart. Consider the Word.

It's come to us this morning. Lay it before the Lord. But how? Do you know? Proverbs, I believe, tells us to keep our heart with all diligence.

Keep our heart with all diligence. How do we do that? How do we do that? It's Jesus, as our brother Daniel said this morning. A relationship with Jesus.

So let us be ever mindful of that. Stay close to our Lord and Savior. Walk with Him day by day.

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