

The Cross in My Life - Part 2

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince teaches that we must be delivered from the law and live by faith in order to experience the powers of the next age and become mature sons of God.

Duration: 28:26

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:4, Hebrews 6:4

Topics: "Living Under Grace", "Spiritual Deliverance"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of the evil age we live in, where Satan blinds minds to delay the end of the age. It emphasizes the need for the church to hasten the close of the age by not being deceived by the cares and riches of this world. The message also explores the deliverance from the law through Christ's death, highlighting the transition from living under the law to living under grace by being led by the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Now, let's explain why it's an evil age. 2 Corinthians chapter 4, and verse 4. You need to read verse 3 to get the context. Paul says, But even if our gospel is veiled or hidden, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the God of this age has blinded, who do not believe, etc.

Who is the God of the age who's blinded the minds of these people? Satan, that's right. So you understand, Satan doesn't want the age to end. You know why? Because as long as this age continues he's a god.

When this age comes to an end he ceases to be a god. So he is doing everything in his power to delay the close of the age. And the church should be doing everything in its power to precipitate the close of the age.

But if Satan can blind the minds of the church, then the church will not do what God expects the church to do to bring about the close of the age. And then in Hebrews chapter 6, verses 4 through 6, the writer of Hebrews speaks about people who've received a series of experiences which I think most of us here have received. Hebrews 6 beginning somewhere in verse 4. People who, and you'll notice there are five experiences, who were once enlightened, have tasted the heavenly gift, have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come.

Notice that when we taste the Holy Spirit we taste the powers of the next age. We are, as it were by that experience, lifted out of the present age into the next age. And we begin to experience in a little way what it will be like to be in the next age.

I'll give you one illustration which is a little difficult to explain. But, Paul says the body we have in this age, that's in 1 Corinthians 15, is a soulish body. In other words, it's a body which only operates as the soul directs it.

So if my spirit wants my body to do something, my spirit has to work through my soul. Like David wanted to praise the Lord with his mouth so his spirit spoke to his soul and said, Bless the Lord O my soul. But, the spirit couldn't start blessing the Lord without the cooperation of the soul.

You see what I'm saying? That's called a soulish body. But the next age, Paul says, we'll have a spiritual body. What does that mean? As I understand it, and I could be wrong, time will show, it will mean that our spirit directly controls our body.

We don't have to persuade our soul, if I want to fly to the next planet I just take off. I don't have to argue with my soul about the rights and wrongs of the journey. Well, you see, what I'm leading up to is, when you're baptized in the Holy Spirit, you taste the powers of the age to come.

Because when you speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives you utterance, for the first time probably your spirit is directly controlling your tongue. It doesn't have to go through the bottleneck of your silly little mind. You see that? That's one reason why this is such a tremendously significant experience.

Because for most of us it's the only way at present in which we can experience what it will be like to live in the next age. I don't have to think when I speak in tongues, you understand. Now my soul has to consent.

If my soul says no and a lot of people's carnal mind says no, I don't want to speak in tongues, I don't understand what I'm saying. So, if your soul holds out you can't do it. But my soul has capitulated.

So when I want to speak in tongues, I can. I don't know what I'm saying, but I know it's good because the Holy Spirit gave it. When you speak in the Spirit, your tongue does what it's always supposed to do, it glorifies the Lord.

You'll never say one wrong word as long as the Holy Spirit is controlling your tongue. So, anyhow, what I'm trying to convince you of is there's going to be a different kind of way of living in the next age. Our spirit is going to be in direct control of our body.

We won't be limited by our silly little minds, our souls. Okay, and then, going back to Matthew 13, we find another problem connected with this present age. Matthew 13 and verse 22.

Interpreting the parable of the sower, Jesus speaks about the kind of seed that fell on rocky soil. And He says, Matthew 13, 22, Now he who received seed among the thorns, is he who hears the word, and the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. So this age has cares.

I think both the NIV and the NASB use the word worries. I think another good word is cares. When you are too preoccupied with the things of the present age, that preoccupation makes the word of God unfruitful in you.

It chokes out the word of God. Thank God we can be delivered from this present evil age. You see how necessary it is.

And then in Romans chapter 12 and verse 2, Paul has another statement. Romans 12 verse 2. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Don't think the way the people of this age think.

You've got to learn to think differently. I'll tell you the main difference. The people of this age are essentially self-centered.

That's one almost universal description. Their attitude about anything is, what will I get out of this? But the person whose mind has been renewed, thinks differently. What will God get out of this? His own life is no longer the center.

His life is God-centered. And then finally, and really this is tragic, terribly solemn, a faithful servant of Christ cannot love this present age. 2 Timothy chapter 4, one of the most sad statements in the writings of Paul.

Here he is at the end of his life, in prison, awaiting trial and probable execution. He has just a few faithful co-workers that are stuck with him. And one of the ones he is counting on is named Demas.

And then he says, and he says it all in one sentence. 2 Timothy 4 verse 10. Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present age.

See, in the long run, if you love this present age, you cannot be faithful to God. As they say, when the chips are down, you will take the wrong direction. Very, very searching thought.

Let me ask you this question. Are you in any way in love with this present age? Are you living as if it was going to go on forever? Have you got all your eggs in the basket of this present age? Because one day the whole basket is going to drop and all the eggs will be smashed. All right.

One second deliverance. We move on now in Galatians to chapter 2 and verse 19. And this is probably the hardest one for Christians to understand, according to my observation.

I have spent many, many hours trying to persuade Christians of the reality of this. And I just don't know how far I've been successful. Paul says in Galatians 2.19, this is the second deliverance.

I call it deliverance from the law. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. Why does he say I through the law died to the law? Because the law inflicted on me the death penalty.

It was the law that caused me to be put to death. And when I was put to death, that was the end of the law. See the last thing the law can do to anybody is put them to death.

Once that's happened, they're clear of the law. It doesn't matter whether you've committed one murder or sixty murders. If you're executed, that's all the law can do to you.

See, there is no other way out from under the law. Death is the only escape. The marvelous mercy and grace of God is the execution took place nineteen centuries ago.

When Jesus died, I died in Him. He paid on my behalf the final penalty of the law, that I might be clear from the demands of the law. In a session yesterday, I pointed out that it says in Colossians chapter 2 that the law is nailed to the cross.

It doesn't go beyond the cross. It can follow you up to the cross. It can pursue you, it can hound you, it can accuse you, it can condemn you.

But once you get beyond the cross, you're free from the law. There's no more condemnation. It's all over.

Now Paul says, I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. If you analyze that, the meaning is clear. If you're living to the law, you're not living to God.

If you're living to God, you're not living to the law. You cannot have it both ways. You can't combine the two.

This is one of the clearest and most repeated statements of the New Testament, and yet I find that basically Christians are completely unfamiliar with it. And it shocks them. As I said to a group of people sometime recently, and I was quite casual, I mean I wasn't trying to shock them, but I said Christianity is not a set of rules.

And their faces registered dismay. I think if I'd said there is no God, they would have been less shocked. See I have dealt with this, I think because of my background as a philosopher, immediately I was saved.

I began to see in the New Testament this is probably the most decisive single issue, is the relationship between the law and grace. And it's not altogether simple. I think the difficulty is because we're not used to thinking God's way.

I don't think it's very complicated, it just means a total adjustment of our thinking. I can see some of your faces now. If you could see your own faces, you'd be shocked.

All right, look in Galatians 3, verses 11 and 12, and you understand this is the end of this passage about being under a curse because they've been bewitched. And it says, but that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident. For the just shall live by faith.

Now I happen to be able to read the New Testament in Greek. I started learning Greek when I was ten years old and I learned it for sixteen years. And what I want to say, you can check if you have access to the original text.

In most of the places in the New Testament where it says the law, the original says law. And it makes a difference. This is one of them.

Let me read it the other way. But that no one is justified by law in the sight of God is evident. Now Paul means primarily you'll not be justified by keeping the law of Moses.

But he doesn't stop there. He says you cannot achieve righteousness with God by keeping any law. It's ruled out.

It's impossible. Don't waste time trying. Then Paul goes on in verse 12, yet the law is not of faith, but the one who does them shall live by them.

If you can keep the whole law all the time, that's fine, you're righteous. But nobody ever has, you see. And if you can only keep a little of the law some of the time, it does you no good whatever, from the point of view of achieving righteousness.

So there are two alternatives. You're justified by the law or you're justified by faith, but you cannot mix them. Is that clear? A little later on Paul uses a little parable from the family of Abraham.

And he gives the example of Ishmael, who was the child of the slave woman, who is a type of the product of the law. Because Hagar, he says, corresponds to Mount Sinai where the law was given. And then, Sarah is a type of the Spirit, a supernatural birth which brought forth Isaac, who's the child of grace.

But, Paul points out, when Isaac came, Ishmael had to go. They could not coexist in the same family. And he quotes the statement cast out, and the statement is by God Himself, cast out the bondwoman and her son.

Not only do you get rid of Ishmael, you get rid of Hagar, see. So you have to choose, whom are you going to have in your house? Are you going to keep Ishmael, or are you going to make room for Isaac, the child of grace, the supernatural? See Ishmael was the best that Abraham could do by his own efforts. But it wasn't good enough.

And the best you can do by your efforts is not good enough. You can keep on trying, and sweating, and working, and even praying. But it's not good enough.

So, if you want grace, you've got to say no to law. You understand? This is so vivid that most of us would like to hold on to both, see. A little bit of grace, a little bit of law.

God says it won't work. I don't accept that. If you can't trust grace wholly, then you aren't trusting grace at all.

If you have to help grace with law, you're not really experiencing grace. Now let's turn to Romans chapter 6 and verses 6 and 7. Here is the deliverance. Knowing this, do you know it or do you not know it? Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Where was our old man crucified and when? When Jesus died on the cross. That's a historical fact. You can't change that.

But knowing it and believing it will change you, you see. We're dealing with facts. You have to know the whole Gospel is based on facts.

Historical facts. Unlike almost any other world religion. I don't know of any other world religion that's based on facts.

There are systems, there are theories, there are revelations untied to any particular period of history. But the Gospel is based on historical facts. It's either true or it's false.

Personally, I believe it's true. Now, Paul says until this old nature, this Adamic nature, this rebel that's called the old man, has been put to death, we'll be the slaves of sin. The only way out is to deal with the old man.

He's a rebel. As I've said many times, God's solution is execution. He doesn't improve him, he doesn't send him to church, he doesn't teach him the golden rule.

Execute him. But the mercy of God is the execution took place when Jesus died on the cross. That's God's mercy.

All right. So, Paul goes on to say, and this is the next verse. For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Now that's the translation that's followed in almost every version. But the word, if you look in the margin, if you have a margin, it means has been justified from sin. Because once you've paid the last penalty, you're justified.

The law has nothing more to say to you. It can do nothing more against you. Death is the way out from the dominion of the law.

It's also the way out from the dominion of sin. Going on in Romans chapter 6 verse 14. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Which are you under? You can't be under both. If you're under law, you're not under grace. If you're under grace, you're not under law.

And Paul very clearly implies, if you are under law, sin will have dominion over you. That astonishes people. But that's the way it is.

Because while you're under law, you're doing the best you can with your own efforts. And they're not good enough. They're like Ishmael.

They never earn God's favor. And then in Romans 7 verses 5 and 6. For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. Did you hear that phrase? The passion of sins which were aroused by the law, were at work in our members.

Paul explains a little further on, I can't go into detail, he said I didn't know what covetousness was until I encountered the commandment, thou shalt not covet. But when the commandment came, covetousness rose up in me. Have you ever experienced that? It's when you're told not to do something that it really gains dominion over you, see? So the sin is actually stirred up by the law.

As long as we're relying on our own efforts. You have to read the whole of Romans chapter 7 really to get there. But Paul says, the next verse, but now we have been delivered from the law.

Delivered from what? From the law. I must explain we're not talking about secular law. That doesn't mean you can break the law of the government by any means.

We're talking about law as a means of achieving righteousness with God. I believe Christians should be law-abiding persons. Now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Paul uses a picture in the previous verses which is a little complicated so I'll try to simplify it. He gives the example of a woman who's married to her husband. As long as her husband remains alive, if she marries another she's an adulteress.

But if her husband dies she's free to marry another man. The application is, through the law we were married to our fleshly nature. We were absolutely committed to do what we could in our flesh.

As long as our fleshly nature remained alive, we were not free to be married to anybody else. But on the cross our fleshly nature was put to death. Can you say praise God? So that we are now free to be married to another.

Who's the other? The resurrected Christ. You see, when we were married to the flesh, what we brought forth was the product of the flesh. Now we're married to the resurrected Christ, what we bring forth is the product of the Spirit.

You see the picture? All right, let's go on faithfully, plowing ahead. Second Corinthians 3.3, Paul says to the Corinthian Christians. I love this statement, because Paul says in effect, if you want to know my theology, go to Corinth.

You'll find it written there in the lives of the people I've ministered to. I like that kind of theology. Paul says, you want to know I believe? Go to Corinth.

You'll meet people who are fornicators, adulterers, pimps, homosexuals, drunkards, extortionists, living godly lives. That's my theology. There my letter.

If the ancient world wanted to know what Paul believed, he says go to Corinth. I don't want to put it down in a theological treatise. And then he says this, you are manifestly an epistle or letter of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God.

Not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of flesh, that is of the heart. Here is the difference between law and grace. Law is tablets of stone outside you that says do this and don't do that.

And you say that's right, I'll do this and I won't do that, and you fail. Because there's a rebel inside you that doesn't cooperate. But grace doesn't hold something up outside you and say do that.

Grace by the Holy Spirit writes the laws of God on your heart. And when it's in your heart, that's the way you live, you see. Solomon said keep your heart with all diligence for everything in life comes out of it.

So isn't that a marvelous thought? You see, I can't write what I'm trying to communicate on your hearts, but if the Holy Spirit is here, He'll write on your hearts. None of us, by our own efforts and theology and ministry, can change a single person. But if the Holy Spirit works, He can write on the hearts of those to whom we minister and they become changed.

That's the difference. Law is external, grace is internal. Going on with these Scriptures, Romans 8, 14.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God, mature sons. What do you have to do to become a mature son of God once you've been born again? You have to be led by the Holy Spirit. There is no other path to maturity.

And you see, it's like this. God says you've got a journey to take, you've got two options. Here's a map, it's perfect.

Or you can have a personal guide. The map is the law, the personal guide is who? The Holy Spirit. That's right.

So, you're young, strong, healthy, you've got two degrees from university and you say give me the map. I can read maps, I'll make it. About 48 hours later, it's the middle of the night, it's raining hard, pitch dark and you're on the edge of a precipice and you don't know whether you're facing north, south, east or west.

And then a gentle voice says, can I help you? The Holy Spirit. Oh, Holy Spirit, I need you, help me. Well you get out of that mess, you get onto the road and the sun begins to shine and you think, well I was pretty dumb, I didn't have to get so panicky.

I think I'll have another look at the map. And you do. And when you look up, your guide isn't there anymore, you see.

And so you carry on with the map and about two days later you're in the middle of a bog and every step you take you're sinking deeper. And you think, what do I do now? I can't ask the guide back. But he comes back.

He says, let me help you. That really is the story of the Christian life. Now, how many times do we have to go back to the map when we've got the guide? You say, but I'm afraid I'll do the wrong thing, without law.

Let me tell you one thing for sure, the Holy Spirit will never lead you to do the wrong thing, okay. If you are truly led by the Holy Spirit, you'll always do the right thing. You cannot rely on your own efforts.

But God has made a way for you to escape from the obligations of the law, through the death of Christ on the cross. Our old man was crucified. That's a general statement, Paul makes it specific.

I through the Lord died to the Lord that I might live to God. We have to take the general and by our confession make it specific. Would you like to do that to close this session? Say those words after me, if you really mean them.

And if you don't mean them, don't say them. I through the Lord died to the Lord that I might live to God. Do it once more.

I through the Lord died to the Lord that I might live to God. Now see the deep sigh and say, thank God.

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