

A Sound Mind

by Don McClure

Don McClure's sermon emphasizes the contrast between modern psychological principles and biblical teachings on self-worth and healing through faith.

Duration: 53:39

Scripture: Psalm 103:12, Isaiah 43:18-19, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 3:13

Topics: "Spiritual Freedom", "Inner Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the power of encountering Jesus and how it can transform lives. He shares a story of a woman who had a troubled past and was rejected by society. However, when she encountered Jesus at a well, she was completely transformed and became a witness for Him. The speaker also contrasts this with the teachings of Freud, who believed that people are shaped by their past experiences. Ultimately, the sermon emphasizes the importance of letting go of the past and finding freedom in Jesus.

Transcript

I turn to Philippians chapter 3 while I talk about the Sermon on the Mount. And I've decided to take tonight to kind of respond a little bit to some of the things that may be, a few things that have been spoken to me since I've started on the Sermon on the Mount. And perhaps some things that I think people are a little troubled with anyway.

And that are wise for us perhaps to look at it. Because I am fully aware that what Jesus is saying here in the Sermon on the Mount, particularly in the Beatitudes, flies right in the face of modern psychology. Modern psychology of course there tells us how wonderful we are and how good we are.

And the fact that somebody would come along and tell us that that's not true. When you pick up the Bible, essentially the Bible tells us we're too bad to be true. And essentially it tells us how hopeless we are outside of God.

And the love of God. And the redemptive work of Christ. And the only thing any good about any of us ever was initially we were just a hunk of clay that was filled with God in the first place.

And that's what made man anything at all. That's what made us in his image. And without him we're just a hunk of clay and worthless.

But in him the value is unbelievable. But I do know that in the sense of psychology, a lot of people struggle. Because I think even a lot of Christians, somehow or another we easily get caught up in there's a lot of psychological terms and things that we feel about.

And that I think sometimes it's good and I just want to deal with some things a little tonight in the sense of the issue of self. And that we have been discussing so much through the Beatitudes. Sociologists as well, they tell us that the age in which we're living right now, and of course I don't know if that's how accurate all these things are, but this one seems pretty accurate to me, is that they tell us that we're living in the age of narcissism.

And essentially that in what narcissism is, it's an age that's described as an excitement essentially about ourselves. And Narcissus if you're not familiar, but in Greek theology there's a beautiful young youth there who fell in love with his own image so much so as he's looking there in the water and he sees the reflection of himself. He literally pined away and more to emphasize into Narcissus and he just froze and there he was so hooked into himself and his own self-beauty.

Interestingly enough the word Narcissus in the dictionary is not only of course that which I just read from Greek mythology, but it's also interestingly enough it's known as a plant and known for its narcotic properties and it's also known as a hallucinatory experience with yourself. And essentially when somebody starts to, the ultimate hallucination I suppose is the ones that we oftentimes have about ourselves and how great we are and how wonderful we are and how good we are. But sociologists tell us that this is a characteristic of our age.

Unlike perhaps a generation or two ago when we came out of the war, of which I was born after it, but those that grew up under those that were in it, there was a selflessness about it and the determination there of whatever you had to do to serve your country and life was there. It was way beyond itself and the value of it. It was something there that, somewhat of there, the ability to surrender itself and there was a generation that understood that.

Following that we kind of went into a little bit of the hippie generation or the we generation and whether it was Martin Luther and we will overcome and a lot of the things within just the movements of the 60s and the sociological movements of people there in the love-ins and the hippie thing that kind of said we. But then it's kind of changed into a me generation. And we live in this day of narcissism and something that goes right along so wonderfully well with narcissism is modern psychology and humanistic psychology.

It caters to a narcissistic person tremendously. It just fits right alongside it. And I want to look tonight a little bit and deal with the Bible and its response to three major schools of humanistic psychology and what the Bible has to say about them.

Because we are certainly living in a world where Sigmund Freud, though he died, what I think in 1959 or something, but his effect has been tremendous on the world I suppose. But essentially if you're familiar with Sigmund Freud is that his psychology, his philosophy of life to me could be boiled down very, very simply and has been by many into just a very simple sort of a concept and that is essentially that you are what you are has been determined by your past. And essentially what it says is that whatever is going on with me, whatever is wrong with me, this psychology, Freudian psychology, it offers me and allows me the opportunity to continue on in this narcissistic feeling, in this self-love even because essentially no matter what it is that is wrong with me, I can blame all of my failures on something in my past.

And that's essentially what Freud had so much to say. And just to give you some of the terms that he really used and brought out to the forefront of psychology that's used so much today, but there's words like psychoneurosis, which is defined as a functional disorder in which the feelings of anxiety and obsessional thoughts, compulsive acts and physical complaints, but they're without objective evidence of disease. In other words, a person has all these obsessions and these difficulties and anxieties and compulsive things, but they can't find anything physiologically wrong with them.

And so it's psychoneurosis, it's a mental thing that is going on within them. Then of course there's psychosis. And Sigmund Freud, as you are probably aware, is the father of psychoanalysts.

But in psychosis, it's a mental disorder characterized by symptoms as delusions or hallucinations that indicate impaired contact with reality. And essentially they're a person that's in some form of psychosis, they're just, they're out of it. You know, they're walking around and they're carrying on some form of life or lifestyle or communication and they touch reality now and then, but oftentimes they go right back out of it.

There's paranoia, which is a mental disorder characterized by systematized delusions ascribing hostile intentions to other persons. And it's often intense with some sort of mission in life. And a paranoid person, they go around and somebody's after them, somebody's looking for them.

They may know who they are, they may not know who they are, but they kind of live under the hostility there that's after them and we call them paranoid. Then there's schizophrenia, which is a severe mental disorder associated with brain abnormalities and typically evidenced by disorganized speech and behavior and delusions and hallucinations. And a lot of these things are things that were pushed very strongly by Sigmund Freud.

And interestingly enough, some of the things that he said though were, a lot of people, they just don't know it. But one of his fundamental attributes of his whole thinking, of his whole philosophy in psychology, and these are his words, and it led to his analysis of dreams, they led to the discoveries of infantile sexuality in the so-called Oedipus complex, which constitutes the erotic attachment of the child for the parent of the opposite sex together with hostile feelings towards the other parent. And essentially, what he believed is rooted in the heart of every child.

And then this goes on, this is how life starts when you come into it, is that usually they're even in just a normal birth, that child has a sexual obsession with the parent of its opposite sex and it also has a hostility or a desire to murder the one of the same sex because they're in competition with them. Oedipus, he was a legendary king of the Thebes, a son of Laius and Jocasta, and he fulfilled a prophecy made at his birth by unwittingly killing his father and marrying his mother. And this was the root of essentially where Freud started so much of his psychology.

It started right in the fact that at birth there were these hostilities, and if somehow or another these hostilities are not dealt with during life, you will carry them over to other people. But this is the root, essentially, of what Freud had to say. This is what started his whole process of saying you are the result of what has been all that has been done unto you, but it started the day you were born.

And with this bizarre concept, now I'll tell you, I have a beautiful mother, but I never thought of marrying her, and I could see why my dad did, but I haven't wanted to compete with that, and I've never wanted to kill my father. Now there were times as a teenager, I wouldn't mind if somebody else did it maybe, but I grew out of that, but that had nothing to do with the way I was born, that had to do with my own rebellion to

him when I was a teenager. But there to start looking there and to essentially, he's now saying that we are spending so much of our life transferring all of these feelings and emotional processes that we start in childhood with in hostilities over to other people.

And we need to learn how to deal with these things, and this is what his psychology is so much in. And so essentially what Freud was all about, as I already said, is that people basically are the result of what has been. And he simply basically had, you know, his analysis was that how you were born and how you were raised and how you were loved, and if your mother loved you and changed you regularly and your father, you know, was there and you had food to eat and you had a relatively good home, and you had all of these sorts of things around, then you could be a normal person.

But if you had all sorts of bad things happening to you, and you had difficulties, and you had all, whatever it is that's happened to you, you are a product of what has happened to you. So whatever it is, it's now the result of it. It was interesting, last Sunday morning Chuck mentioned on how that when he decided to leave Corona and felt led to come down here, and Kay was so upset because the ministry in the church was going so well there, and why would he want to leave that to come down here to something struggling so much, and she set up for him to go out to lunch with a psychiatrist who took him out and wanted to know if, you know, if his mother loved him and he loved his mother and if he had a nice home and fed regularly and all that sort of thing.

And as I sat there and thought about it, I thought to myself, well that just goes to show that you can be fed well and have a good mother and a good home and still be crazy. But anyway, no, I'm just kidding. But we have these ways where we blame everything on somebody, on whatever it is that is going on within our lives.

That's what Kay told me, by the way, I didn't, there's none of my opinion on this. But essentially, one of the things that today is so prevalent in humanistic psychology is essentially that the result of this is that a person never has to stop loving themselves, never has to deal with his inadequacies, essentially, because they're all blamed on others in the circumstances that happened in their life. And however I grew up, it's my mother's fault, or it's my father's fault, or it's that person down the street that abused me, or it's that teacher that neglected me, or it's that person that turned me in the wrong direction at whatever time, and all of these other things that happen.

We have somebody to blame it on, as time goes on. But interestingly enough, even today's own world of psychology, who are promoting these very same things, are the people who are also realizing that they're in great trouble teaching these things. I say this because the American Psychological Association recently did an internal study on itself to evaluate its own effectiveness.

It was called the Maurer's Study of Emotionally Disturbed People. In other words, those people that have some form of psychotic depression going on within them. And this was done by the American Psychological Association.

This wasn't done by some outside group trying to analyze them. This was them analyzing themselves. But among the group that they studied, of those people that went to psychotherapy, 43% of them got well within a year.

Of people that went to clinical counseling, 49% of them got well within a year. Of people that went to visit a psychiatrist, 53% got well within a year. But those people that went to nobody at all, 63% got well within a

year.

In other words, the very people that were supposed to be administering the cure were actually contributing to the disease. They were prolonging it. And they were taking people into the analysis of themselves and of their life.

Being very narcissistic. Let's go back and talk about you and what has happened to you and where you have been. And who did these things to you? By the way, did you turn to Philippians 3? Did I mention that? Okay.

We're not going there yet. I just wanted to get ready. But the interesting thing is that when you do look at psychology and itself and the roots of what it is really saying, it's not doing a job.

I remember years ago when I was still on staff here back in the 70s, one day I had an appointment in my book with a psychiatrist who came to see me. And as he came in and sat down, he came in and he actually wanted to talk about a certain young girl that I had, quote, unquote, treated. And I thought, well, what do you mean? I don't know what you're talking about.

I don't treat anybody here. And he said, well, then he told me about this certain girl and her name. And as he talked about her, I realized, oh, I've met her.

I know who she is. She's been to the studies. And we got talking about her and I said, why? What is it? Why do you ask about her? And he said, well, I'm a psychiatrist.

And he said, I have been working with her for, I think it was close to two years and every two weeks. And here she has been coming in. I've been working with her and she is clinically schizophrenic, hopelessly schizophrenic.

And there is, I've been working with her for so long, but a while back, just out of, I don't even know why I said it was one of the weirdest things I've ever said. He says, but I just suggested to her one time when I'd virtually given up on all sorts of other things to say to her. I said, why don't you see if you can find God? And then we left.

And, you know, she went on about her business and a couple of weeks later, she came in for appointment and we talked and I realized she was doing much better. She just seemed to be having a very, very good day. I kind of thought and wrote it down, very clear thinking and, and one of those just great days.

And I noted that in the report. But then when she came to see me the next time and we sat down and we began to talk, I realized this girl was normal. There was, as I began to discuss and began to prod and began to do, to talk to her about certain things that had always produced certain behavioral patterns and memories and attitudes and problems.

They were all gone. She was entirely transformed. There was something about her.

And I finally asked her, I said, wait a minute, what, what is going on with you? What has happened? And she smiled and she said, well, I did what you told me. And he said, well, what was that? I said, I couldn't even remember it. She said, I found God.

He said, you did. Where did you find her? And he said, Calvary Chapel. And he's down there, you know, in the, and as he talked with her and met with her, he realized something unbelievably profound had

happened to her.

He'd never run into anything like this so much. So he's so moved by it. He came down and had to talk about it.

He ended up telling me a story, which was quite a long story, but essentially he himself once wanted to serve God, actually went to seminary and in the process of going to seminary, went to a very liberal seminary where they struggled so much with the Bible. He actually shifted out of their theology department and into their school of psychology. Graduated from there, went on and got an MD and then became a psychiatrist later on because he felt he could help people better.

But then he sat there and as he watched, he started coming to church here. And then he, uh, he had his wife that came with him. There was just this precious woman's first time she came, she received Christ.

She was just head over heels for the Lord. Just so thrilled. I'll never forget one day she picked up her Bible and she couldn't get enough of it.

And one day she came, she asked me, she said, I don't understand it. Can you please tell me what the book of Job is all about? And, uh, and I can remember him just smiling because he knew all of this. He knew how to pronounce the book of Job, but he's just smiling and realized she had more life in him than he'd ever dreamed or forgotten he could have ever had in himself.

But as he watched this whole thing, I'll never forget one day he told me, he said, you know, all these years I've been practicing and all of these years I've been working in psychiatry. And he says, I've come to the realization that all we really know how to do it very best is diagnosed, but we don't know how to heal. You know that.

So I don't know how to heal, uh, but I know who does it. And the wonderful thing is, is that the Bible has, you know, when we look at our past and all the issues of our past, the Bible has an answer about it. And that's why I've asked you to turn to Philippians and to find out what is biblical psychology if there is such a term.

But when you look at the past, what does the Bible have to say about me and my past? Philippians 3.13, Paul writes, he says, brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things that are before. Here Paul simply looked there and it's an amazing thing there that without a huge discussion about it, he simply looks there and he says, something has happened within the framework and the method of thinking within a born again Christian that they're actually capable of forgetting the things that are past.

Essentially the whole thrust of the New Testament is just simply tells us that our past has been done away with. Our sins have been forgiven and they're forgotten. Biblical psychology essentially, what it tells me to do with my past is to confess it and to bury it, to leave it behind.

And Paul is such an interesting person, when you stop and look at him, he had what a lot of people would call a pretty difficult past. We know from Paul's own testimony he was a killer, a murderer, caused tremendous pain and suffering in countless families. Acts 2.24, Paul says, and I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering unto prisons both men and women.

He said, I persecuted people to the very death, I killed them. And he says, and then I also delivered men and women to prison. In Acts 26.9 he says, I verily thought of myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Paul says, my life at one point I was adamantly opposed to the name of Jesus Christ, to living for him, to thinking about him, to surrendering him, I could care less who he was whatsoever. And he says, and the result of that in this rebellion from God, in this distaste for God, in this rejection of God, the things which I did in Jerusalem and the many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority of the chief priests. And when they were put to death, I gave voice against them.

And I punished them often and in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme. And being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them unto strained cities. Paul said, I couldn't stop running.

I hated Christians. I hated Christianity. I killed them.

I imprisoned them. I actually got people to blaspheme the name of Christ, to turn away from him. I was so hated.

I was so motivated. I was so destroyed. I was so rebellious, so far away from God.

I wonder in one sense, Paul, he says, I am the least of the apostles and am not the meat to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. Paul had essentially within his memory one that for a lot of us, maybe we've had difficult things and a lot of rebellions in our life, but I wonder how many people we would look and say I've murdered. How many people have we thrown in prison? How many families have we destroyed? Paul, he had done it to countless families and homes and marriages.

How many children's had he made orphans out of? A multitude of them. And yet at the same time, here Paul, when he came to Christ, rather than having to go back and go through all sorts of psychotherapy, you have to go through all sorts of things of what would cause you to do this? What was going on within you? How were you raised? What was, what are the compelling factors in all of this? And Paul was somebody there that he not only did a lot to other people, a lot of people did things to him. He said I, you know, more in stripes and labors, he says more abundant in stripes, he says above measure, in prisons, more often, frequent, in deaths, often.

Of the Jews, five times I received forty stripes, lest one, thrice I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered a shipwreck, a night and a day I've been in the deep. In journeys often, in perils of the waters, perils of the robbers, perils of my own countrymen, perils of the heathen, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, perils of false brethren, in weakness and painfulness, watching often in hunger and thirst and in fastings often cold and naked. Here Paul was a guy, you look back at his life and you look at what people did to him.

You look at the abuse that he had gone through. I mean, he's times literally stripes thirty-nine, you know, lest one. There are five times beaten with rods, in prison more time than he had a memory of.

Couldn't even tell you, you know, the prisons that he'd been in and how many times he'd been in them. And there are perils of his land, sea, countrymen, you know, Jews, anybody, everybody. Paul, you talk about a guy who could be paranoid and be justified.

It could be Paul, the whole world's after him. But yet at the same time, here when he came to Jesus Christ, essentially what the Bible has to say, essentially, is that no matter what it is that has happened to you, no matter what you have done to others, and I'm sure that there are many of us, when we look back, the things that we know that we have done, not just consciously or desire to do, but the things that we have actually carried out, the pain, the struggle, the heartache, the grief that we have brought people, the abuse, the outright wicked things that have done in our own hearts and lives and behavior, and they've got to be tremendous. And the things that have been done to many of us, some of us maybe growing up in homes where there was great abuse, great, you know, painful memories, extensive things that have happened, you know, to life, but essentially what the Bible has to say is that something in Jesus' past, in what he did on the cross, in what happened with him, it outweighs everything that is in my past.

It says there that what happens on the cross by Jesus Christ was so awesome and was so tremendous is that everything that I have ever done and everything that has ever been done to me has been entirely forgiven at the cross, and it outweighs the past, it overcomes the past, it transforms the past, therefore I don't need to deal with the past, I don't need even so much to discuss it. The cross of Jesus Christ is so total, it is so awesome, it is so all-encompassing, it is so overpowering that it covers the sins of the entire world, and all the sins that I've ever even done or had done to me. And here Paul, he looked at that, and when he saw the cross, it was so magnificent, it was so powerful, he could simply look and say, forgetting those things that are past.

And I think one of the most wonderful things that ever happens to a Christian is that when we're actually able to take all of these little things that we've held on to for all life, these hurts and pains that people have done to us, these things that we kind of hold on to like some sort of a little teddy bear, but you see this was done to me, don't you know what has happened to me, and this, and we remember it and we think of it and we concentrate on it, but the Bible has to say, I don't care where you've been, I don't care what you've done, you can drop that, you can forget what you have done, and you can forget what has been done to you. And you mean to say, in a sense, you can just drop it, exactly. You can forget it, exactly.

All it takes, I believe, is one look at Jesus. One understanding, one moment with Jesus, when you pick up your Bible and you look at it all and you realize how Jesus so often, he'd walk up and he'd find himself there with a woman who'd had five husbands. Can you imagine her memories? Could you imagine the things that she had gone through in her life? And there the woman, the husband she now had, the man she now had wasn't her husband either.

But here this woman who'd be out there getting her water at the middle of the day, she of course wouldn't come down when the rest of the women in the city would be drawing their water. And she had no friends, she had no relationships, she had nothing meaningful, she was lonely and rejected. She was known for who she was and there is, you can imagine all of it, but imagine there with all of these hurts and all of these rejections and all of these difficulties, one moment and seeing truly the face of Jesus, she was able to run to town and say, come see the man who told me all I ever did.

She was able to, and it says there at the end of the chapter that many of the men of the town believed on Jesus because of the testimony of the woman who said, come see the man who told me all I ever did. She was so free, she could actually look at her past. You would think if a woman came to town, this woman of all people, and looked at the men and said, come see the man who told me all I ever did, she'd say, you want to talk about that? Hello, what are you doing? But they saw in her obviously, it's as if that woman, it was gone.

She was somebody else that came in and she was so free from her past and all that she had ever done that the men of the town flooded out to see if such a thing could happen to them. And many of them believed because of the liberty that they saw. Can you imagine a man laying by a pool for 38 years, 38 long years, 38 long years of watching everybody else live and play and grow up and get married and have families and have businesses and have friends, productive lives.

Meantime, for 38 years you lay there, why? What have I done? What's been done unto me? And yet there a moment in the face of Jesus, it's all gone, rise, take up your bed and walk into wholeness of life. Oh, wait, I just can't move on. You mean, don't you know what I've been through? Don't you know what I'm troubled with? Don't you know what's gone on? But the face in the power of Jesus, a woman with an issue of blood, she'd spent everything she'd had in some 12 years victimized by this because of it.

She couldn't go to temple, couldn't go to worship, had to stay away from people, declare herself unclean. Everything she had, all of her wealth was gone, long since spent on doctors. Now there she is in absolute loneliness, nobody to help her, nowhere to go.

And with one last hope, after 12 years of this, she just dreams, if I could only touch the heavens garment, I've seen something in him so powerful, I believe it can deal with the past. And the moment she touched that, her life was changed, gone. A woman, you know, seven demons, years and years of being tormented, day and night.

Oh, the agony, oh, the insecurity, oh, what a story. One after another, as Jesus came along and touched them, but as soon as they saw who he was, it overpowered everywhere they'd been, everything that had been done to them. That's the message of the cross, and if we don't understand that, and we're trying to deal with our past with any other way, and we're going into the psychology or dealing with the past, it isn't going to work.

But here when people met Jesus, they're in his presence, it prevailed over all of the past, entirely. And as Paul says, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, and behold, all things have become new.

And the wonderful thing is that when we stop and realize that on one hand, psychology, it kind of looks and it tries to take people there to the healing of their memories. That was like in the 80s, you know, you've got to go back and be healed of your memories. And boy, that's a cesspool, why get into it? But the biblical Christianity essentially takes us to the healer of our memories, takes us there to a being who looks at us and transforms our life.

But Freudian psychology, it simply tries to deal with the past, but it's all by human effort. A second area of modern psychology, humanistic psychology, that has actually been around a lot, I think it's still growing, it's rapidly growing on the scene. It was actually started by a man named Edmund Hess-Searle, who interestingly enough was born the same year as Freud, died one year earlier than he did.

But these two men had two schools of psychology that were entirely opposite. Freud essentially was Freudian and humanistic, and you are a result of the past. But Edmund was a man that he was the founder of what is known today as phenomenology.

And it's essentially a radical alternative to Freudian psychology that says we're influenced by the past, but phenomenology, which is huge today, at least I'm sure as big as Freudian, but it is something that it

actually takes the exact opposite perspective, and it says no, you aren't so much influenced by the past as you are actually more influenced by the future as you believe it to be, than you are the past. And this is essentially what phenomenology is, and it's been around in various forms for a long time, but he really brought it all together. It doesn't say so much that you're not what you were, but you are who you hope to become, is fundamentally what he had to say, and that the real process is that how I perceive the future.

And many of us maybe grew up with little nursery stories that were kind of psychology based on phenomenology, you know, the little train, I think I can, I think I can, I think I can, you know, the little thing, you're going to do it, you're going to do it, I tell you, you know, and these wonderful little things that says you can do anything, and tries to get you focused. And Norman Vincent Peale picked up on phenomenology when, you know, essentially there when the power of positive thinking, and his thing was who cares who you were, it's where you're going, and when you let your mind get let loose on where you can go and you really begin to perceive the future, that's the thing, and Napoleon Hill grabbed onto it and took it, you know, with his think and grow rich, see yourself as a millionaire, you may be flat broke and lived in poverty, but that's not going to help you, and you can go back into that forever, but as soon as you begin to think, and you're rich, I'm going to be a millionaire, a billionaire, I'm going to run the world, and that's essentially, I mean he had the whole country reading his books. And then the church, of course, has picked up on it in positive confession, in this theology that comes along essentially, based just on phenomenology there, of I'm going to have this positive confession of what is going to go on, and what I have, and I'm going to be rich, and I'm going to be successful, and I'm going to be great, and it's just a rehash, essentially of all of these, you know, these other things.

And a lot of parents, I think sometimes we, you know, we're phenomenologists with our little children, you know, Johnny, you're great, you're going to be wonderful, you're going to do good, you know, and we keep telling that hope, and one day he kind of picks up on it, and I don't think you shouldn't, you know, it's not good to look at him necessarily and say, Johnny, you're too bad to be true, but the, but that is, that's a greater truth about Johnny than you're great. But the, but essentially, a lot of us, we're, we use a lot of phenomenology. To me, I mean, like when I play golf, I'm a phenomenologist, I'm definitely not a Freudian, I do not want to respond to how I played in the past.

When I get up to tee up that ball, you know, I mean, I'm a phenomenologist, I, hey, the future is greater than anything that's ever happened so far for this ball, I tell you. You know, I can get out on a golf course, and there can be a whole lake and a little teeny island out there for the green to shoot onto, and I'm a phenomenologist, I'm going to take the newest, most beautiful golf ball, because I'm, hey, if I, it's a negative confession, it's a fruit of the past, if I give an old beat up ball to that lake, I'm going to, I'm going to tell that lake I'm not afraid of it, I'm putting a brand new golf ball down there, and I'm going to hit it and watch it go into the drink with all the rest of them. But anyway, the, but so often, you know, we use a lot of this kind of thinking, you know, in our lives.

But essentially what phenomenology is, it kind of tells us there that it, that the things that we dream of, if we just focus on it regardless of where we've been, if we just focus our attention in the right way, if we look at the future better, if we learn to daydream about the future and think about the future and plan, it'll be much better. And on one hand, I understand that thinking as well a little bit. I can understand why psychology says you're a result of what happened, and yeah, look at all this stuff that happened, no wonder I'm paranoid and angry and hostile and frustrated.

You know, that explains it. And I see why humanists think this. Bible Christians shouldn't, but I understand why the world came up with it, and I understand why they have phenomenology as well.

I mean, a lot of us just think if tonight you could leave here and you could go down and you just knew, you could go into that store and buy a lottery ticket and you were going to win. You just knew it. You may have come in here kind of depressed and frustrated tonight, but if you just knew it, you'd be smiling at me and, wow, can we go now? You know, sort of a thing.

And we'd be immediately, you know, soon, however we perceive the future. If all of a sudden we may have had a tough past, but if something happened where I just believe I'm falling in love, I've met the girl of my dreams, the man of my dreams, I'm going to get the house, I'm going to get the car, I'm going to get the job that I've never ever had people finally realize my potential and they're now going to give it to me. And we have that regardless of whatever it is.

So phenomenology says, hey, who cares where you've been? It's where you're going and how you perceive it. And if you've got a good outlook and you've got to get this, then you're going to be great. Boy, if I could only get, that's what I need, a new house, a new job, a new wife, new kids, new whatever.

You know, if I could have it. And that's the way a phenomenologist essentially thinks. And my future is essentially as good as I believe it to be.

And essentially, I suppose biblical psychology does essentially say, I am affected by my past. And Paul, he could openly talk about his past, but he also, when he looked at his past, he looked at the greatest event, there was a part of his past and that was the cross. And that overpowered everything else.

That overtook everything else. And the interesting thing, I suppose you could say that a Christian could be a Freudian. And he'd say, I am a result of what has been.

I am a result. And I suppose a lot of you in one sense of people in the Bible were a little bit Freudian in a sense. They could look there and say, I was blind, but now I see.

They could say, this is what happened to me, but the wonderful thing that Christianity offers us, I had this, I was this, this happened to me. Yes, I was possessed. And yes, I was, you know, an adulterer.

Yes, I had all these husbands. But now something happened in their past that overcame everything else in it. That's what a Christian is.

And I suppose the wonderful thing as well, a Christian is also a phenomenologist in the sense that when you want to look at biblical psychology in a sense, stopping everything, when you want to stop and look at a person who hopes to become something, to think there's a lot of people out there that just wish, boy, if I could get a new house or a new job or a new car or a new this. And then they'd be happy with that. Well, if they'd be happy with that, how much more ought somebody to be happy with the thought of, brethren, if we had not appeared, what we shall yet be.

But when he appears, we, you know, shall be like him. Imagine that. The Christian is somebody that you might say is the phenomenist of all phenomenologists.

We are one that ought to be able to look there and say, you know, brethren, I do not know what I shall be, but this one thing I know, seeing him, I will be like him. I have the brightest future of anybody in the world.

Somebody else, they can get that house and they can get that car and they can get that job, but they'll also lose it when they die.

I've got something I'll never lose. I have a home in glory that outshines the sun. I have a future that is more wonderful than anything in the world.

So in Philippians 3 in verse 10, Paul says, Oh, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings. If that by any means I might be made conformable unto his death, if that by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after that which I am apprehended, that for which I am also apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, reaching forth unto those things which are before.

I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. In verse 20 he says, For our conversation is in heaven from whence we also look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned alike unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even unto subdue all things to himself. You see here a Christian there in his psychology on one hand, how does he deal with the, with the past, the cross? And what is his future? It's the coming of Jesus Christ to conform him into his image.

It's to take his life and to separate unto himself forever and ever. And to me such a person who is, who is willed above all else to be conformed into the image of Jesus, I believe they'll have a social and a psychological mindset that's unbelievably altered from any, anybody else. They'll have a freedom and they'll have a joy and they'll have a stability.

And he, no matter where they were in the world before and what's been done in the world, when I come to him and I realize who he is and what he has done, and to me our future, every one of us that's a Christian, if our future is to know him and it's to make him known, if it's to share his life and be in his power and in communion with him and to know his fullness, if it's this desire, I want to be apprehended by him by any means, whatever it is, I want to experience, I want to be made conformable unto him. And here when you look at these, you know, the worldly psychology, what do you do with the past? Freud has his opinions on that. And then what do you do with the future? That's phenomenology.

That's what it essentially says about the future and humanistic psychology. And then there's another aspect of humanistic psychology today, and that has a lot to do with Maslow. He was the father essentially of that department, you might say, and that is the issue of self-actualization or of self-expression.

Essentially there, one of the things that is taught now for the person when we're not looking so much at the past and we're not looking so much at the future, but the other thing is just who am I right now? And this is where another school of psychology essentially is. And you're essentially there in Maslow, and you've probably, you know, heard essentially, you know, what he had to say, but he was an American psychologist from 1908 to 1970. But essentially he gave us the basic needs that psychologically a human has to have of air and water and food and sex.

And then he had five broader layers of psychological needs, and that was safety and security and love and belonging, the needs of self-esteem, and then the highest of them all, and the most important of all of them was what he noted as self-actualization. And they started from one, but the highest form of psychological stability was in self-actualization. And essentially there, it was in the great issue there isn't

so much to deal with the past or even to be concerned about the future, but Maslow was one that says, who am I now? Who am I right now? And how am I dealing with my needs, whether, you know, when you get the air and the food and the water and the sex drive and these other things being met, and then there's safety and there's stability around, you know, there, within, there to function and to eat and sleep.

And then there, after all of that is done, I need to find myself. I've got to go on this great search, and I've got to find myself. And whatever it is, I've got to, to let self just go to discover itself.

The releasing, essentially, of the, of the flesh is what it is really all about. Then there, that the healthiest person in all, as far as Maslow is concerned, is a person who essentially just lets it all out. He just is finding, letting himself be himself without any restraint.

And this essentially is, you know, what, what Maslow's, you know, opinion was. And one of the greatest sins to, in modern psychology, is repression, is to hold these things in, that we have these things within us there, you know, and, and if we hold these things, this inner being trying to get out, it leads to all sorts of psychological abnormalities if I'm holding on. I, I've got to say it.

If I feel it and I don't express it and I don't do it, that is one of the worst of all. And that's why in a lot of psychology, humanists and psychologists, they're, they, they feel you're very negatively affected psychologically if you repress things. And so they have, you know, these therapy sessions where they just get it all out.

Everything you just say it. And you know, it's interesting, a lot of these things, they kind of work a little. Have you noticed about that? I mean, sometimes, you know, you can be uptight and you're frustrated, you got all this stuff and boy, you can just walk in the door or something and you just let it all, you know, boom, and you start saying it and you just let it all go.

And you kick a few things and knock something over and, and, you know, and next thing you know, wow, I feel good. Everybody else in the house now needs to go do the same thing back to you, but, or something for them to feel good. But essentially, there is something there to where it's just the whole thing is, I mean, literally, in some of these psychological thing, they give you a baseball bats, beat a chair, this was your father that did this stuff to you, or you got to get this stuff out of you, get this anger, get these hostilities, just yell and scream and do it all.

And, but interestingly enough, Paul's perspective on that in Philippians 3:18, he says, For many walk, of whom I have also told you often, and I now tell you even again, weeping, they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. Essentially, here is Paul looks here at these people, he says, you know, God essentially is their own feeling, it's their own inner needs, it's meeting their own inner needs, and here he says, their glory is their shame. They get their fulfillment, they get their release through the exhibition of self, through the release of self, they're relieved, and they feel better.

And I'm not, of course, saying for a moment it's good to hold these things in, and we're not, we're not supposed to repress them, and nor are we supposed to express them. Essentially, what a Christian, and there's one of these things that God offers to a Christian, biblical psychology gives that's, I suppose, uniquely biblical, but that is, is that there we can take all of these things that are going on within our life, all of our frustrations, all of our struggles, and lay them upon him, give them to him. His presence in our lives relieves all these hostilities, all this aggression, all this negative things that can be there.

Essentially, what happens is Paul there, he says, you don't repress it and you don't express it, you cast your cares upon him, for he cares for you. And we live in this day and age where people, the expression, you know, you look at some of these, you know, Clint Eastwood type of things out there, where you see this guy that kind of goes through real quietly, you know, stuff is happening, he's quiet, he represses, he represses, he represses, until finally, you know, all of a sudden he pulls out every weapon, make my day, I move from repression to expression, you know, or something there, and, you know, and I'm ready now to kill and to take on, you know, whatever it is. And here Maslow, he taught that this self-actualization, this self-expression is important for mental health.

But the interesting thing is, as far as the Bible is concerned, it isn't self-actualization at all where mental health comes from. Actually, it's just the opposite. Jesus, what he had to say is that the issue in life isn't finding myself, expressing myself, actualizing myself.

It's there, Jesus said, whosoever seeks his own life will lose it, but whosoever loses his life, for my sake, will find it. And so self-actualization essentially in the Bible never happens until you lose self, and then you find yourself, then you find your life, you find your identity. But again, every one of them, the answer, it isn't Freud, it isn't phenomenology, it isn't Maslow.

And all of these things that are out there, the issue is, is Maslow right or is Jesus right? And you realize there, no, Jesus is right. And to me, the wonderful thing is, is that you and I, you know, tonight, I don't know where you've been, and I just know we all grew up in a world that was far from God. But the wonderful thing is, regardless of what you've done and been done to you, I believe the Lord looks at us and, and he says, you can lose yourself.

You can lose the past in the cross. And all that's been done to you, if you will just see the cross, it will outweigh what you've done and what's been done to you. If it's something there that is, you look at your future.

The wonderful thing is, is maybe some, our future is bleak. A lot of things look difficult. The world looks difficult.

The, you know, what has been happening or where life may be seeming to lead us, there may be difficult. But the wonderful thing of a phenomenologist, he realized all I know is the road I'm going down to is that leads right into the face of my Lord, who, when I see it, I will be changed into his image. I will be like him.

This is what I have to look forward to. And then when I look at my life right now, Jesus said, lose it. Don't self-actualize it.

You don't have to try to find it. If you want to find it, you'll find it through, you know, through losing it. And the wonderful thing is that you and I, as we look at these things of the beatitude, when Jesus said, oh, how happy, you know, are the poor in spirit, are they who mourn, are the meek, and those who hunger and thirst after righteous, that is a man who has simply lost himself, and in the process found himself, found out who he really is.

And as we close tonight, I just want us to have a minute to be able to pray, but as we do, maybe some of you, you come in, you've got a lot of baggage that you're carrying with you. And it's almost some of those things, amazingly, as terrible and as painful and as hurtful they are, amazingly, our psyche and our mind has the capacity almost to take those and turn them into almost a little teddy bear that says, but we hold

on to it, because this is who I am. I hate it, but it's who I am.

But the thing that we can do tonight is come there and say, Jesus, I want to find out who I am in you, not who I am by anybody else that's touched me, and I've touched. I want to find out who I am by being touched by the cross, and I want to lay it there, and I want to leave it there. And maybe some of us, we look at the future, and the future troubles us.

And yet at the same time, when we stop and we look there, as Paul says, what you and I have laid before us is the most wonderful thing in the world. And maybe as we even look at our day right now, and there's tension, and there's struggles, and there's burdens, and there's difficulties, there Jesus says, cast it on me. I care for you.

I'm the eternal psychologist, the past, the present, and the future. And it works. The other ones don't.

The guy there that goes and beats up a chair or does whatever it is, you know, it's interesting to me. I mean, an adulterer is usually just, he's just a phenomenologist. I'm going to go out and I'm going to have a good time, but they end up condemned, don't they? A gambler is a phenomenologist.

I'm going to go out and get rich, and then he needs, you know, bus money to get home. He loses it all. You know, and we have all these different things.

I'm going to go do this. And we have no idea. But the one thing you can be assured on is to say, I am going to give my life to Jesus.

That's the one who knows whose image they'll be in, and he'll have it. Let's do this. Father, we thank you for your love for us, and we thank you, Lord, for your biblical psychology or whatever you want to call it, but Lord, I thank you that tonight I hope every one of us can just come and realize, yes, we have a past, and yes, we have difficulties, but Lord, we want to bury it, and Lord, we want to do it the same way they did in the Bible by just all of a sudden beholding the face of the Lord Jesus who gave himself for all of the sins of the world, and to look at him and say, forgetting the past, Lord, help us just to lay it down right now.

Help us to put it at your feet. Help us just to let these things go, the things we have done, the things that have been done to us, and say, Jesus, I am so grateful you have an answer to all of this. And Lord, maybe some of us, we look at the future and it looks bleak, it looks difficult.

We don't have much hope, but Lord, I pray that you would tell us, hey, you don't think you have a wonderful future? I beg your pardon. I have prepared for you a home and glory that outshines the sun. You will walk on streets of gold.

You'll be conformed into my image, and by and by we'll be together, I promise you. And Lord, may we look at that and become the most excited phenomenologists of all. And then, Lord, as we just look at our life right now, as we think of these three schools of psychology that the world lives with, may we realize that the issue isn't self-actualization.

It's the loss of self. It's the burying of self, the ending of self. To come to you and say, Jesus, would you just help me to reckon the old man to be dead unto self and alive unto God.

By the power of your love, by the power of your Spirit, may you do wonderful works in many of us, even now. For Father, we ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

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