

Satanic Bondage In The Local Church

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon delves into the topic of satanic bondage in the local church, emphasizing the ongoing spiritual battle Christians face against evil forces seeking to disrupt their fellowship with God. It highlights the need for believers to be vigilant, maintain spiritual disciplines, and resist the schemes of the enemy to protect their relationship with God and uphold their testimony.

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Scripture: Luke 13:10, Ephesians 6:12, Ecclesiastes 10:8, 2 Corinthians 10:3, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8, Romans 8:1, John 8:32, Ephesians 1:13, Ecclesiastes 12:1

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Description

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Transcript

Read from the Scriptures, if you would turn with me to the Gospel according to Luke, Luke's Gospel and chapter 13. All right, in verse 10. Now he, that is Jesus, now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

And behold, there was a woman who had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, Woman, you are freed from your disability.

And he laid his hands on her and immediately she was made straight and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue was indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. And said to the people, there are six days in which work ought to be done.

Come on those days and be healed and not on the Sabbath day. Then the Lord answered him, you hypocrites. Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day? And as he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame.

And all the people rejoiced at the glorious things that were done by him. Amen. I'm sure at one time or another I have stood here and had something to say about synagogues.

The concept of a synagogue emerged during the period of the Babylonian captivity. And of course at that time the Jewish people were separated from the temple and you know that broader story there. And so it was as they found themselves in this strange land that they did that which was I suppose just so obvious really.

They needed a place where they could gather together and pray together and read the scriptures together. And hence the concept of synagogues came into existence. And of course synagogues plural.

And so we can say and perhaps just a further comment there. It's interesting as we move on into the New Testament and in particular reading through the Gospels and on into the book of Acts and so on. That the word synagogue appears more than 60 times.

And so it had quite a focus in the developing story in the New Testament. But what we can say this morning with certainty that what the synagogue is to the Jews the church is to Christians. In other words the synagogues were like local churches if you will.

Local gathering places where the people of God gathered at that time. I'd like to give a title to what I'm talking about this morning that came to my heart very clearly a few days ago. And it's this.

It's satanic bondage in the local church. Satanic bondage in the local church. I don't think that this is a subject that is likely to be announced in very many of the mainline churches this morning.

I may be wrong. But supposing that that is true. I wonder to myself how many people who read their Bibles who attend the mainline churches.

And smaller ones for that matter. Really pause and give any thought to this as to why this would not be a focus in the teaching and preaching in the local church. And I've thought about this.

My best guess really is that this teaching would not contribute positively to the popular concept of church growth. I think I'm right. But there may be other reasons as well.

So I'd like for us to spend a little time to look at this topic here this morning. I'll also make another comment which is quite separate from the material we're looking at this morning. And that is just to point out the fact that the camera which is videoing this message is in direct line between me and the clock.

And I cannot see the clock because of the video. And so a choice has to be made between the two. I was standing here earlier on this morning when that struck me.

And the second thought that went through my mind was probably Norman will move the clock later on. But there you are. I think before we can really begin to understand anything from this section of scripture, we need to remind ourselves and to make clear to ourselves in a fresh way what the actual true identity of freedom really is.

Because we'll never understand anything about bondage if we don't understand what freedom is. And I do know, although I've never actually seen this, but I'm led to believe, and I've seen photographs of this, that the verse of scripture, actually the words of Jesus from John chapter 8, are emblazoned or chiseled into stone somewhere near the entrances of many of the large universities in the United States. And the

words, of course, would be, You shall know that the truth shall make you free.

I took a look into a dictionary. And the dictionary definition of freedom that I read was, The power or the authority or the right to act or to speak or to think without hindrance or restraint. Now that's certainly true, and I agree with that completely.

And it's true and has very real significance within the context of our culture and in our society. And I'm sure you'd agree with me without any hesitation that there's a sense in which that is very welcome. You know, there's that freedom for people to think or to act or to speak without hindrance and without restraint.

It's quite a popular topic right now, one way and another. But that, while maybe true within the context, or we would want it to be true within the context of society, there clearly is a deeper significance to freedom. And there's another level altogether, and that level is spiritual.

And for those of us who read the Bible, of course, this is certainly the case. And we know that when Jesus made that statement in John chapter 8, I'm tempted to turn and then read it, but I think you're very familiar with that statement. He was clearly addressing himself to the inner spiritual lives of men and women.

Not merely academia and being instructed in academics in one way or another, but he said he'd come to bring the truth. He said, I am the truth. He said, you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

Or this translation says, the truth shall set you free. And clearly he was addressing his words and his idea and focus was on a deep level. That level of the human heart and the human spirit.

You shall know the truth. And clearly this was something which, of course, there's information. The whole gospel has its own unique information.

We need to hear the information, the preaching, the presentation of the gospel. But the issue with the things of the word of God is that we must hear it, not merely with our physical ears. Do you remember some of the things that were being said earlier? But we're to hear it with the ears of our heart.

And we're to see these things not merely with our physical eyes. We thank God for our eyes. But with the eyes of our hearts.

And that idea comes up time and again through the scriptures, as many of you will be aware already. So we're here, we're thinking about freedom being something that takes place on the inside of us. I think it's also a fair comment to suggest to you that this freedom is not something which is merely the possession of people who would call themselves Pentecostals, or for that matter, Charismatics.

And I know they use that word a lot. And that idea would come up in many different ways, about being free and being set free, and so on. But I think in many cases, I'm not making a universal statement, but I think it may be true that in many cases, that freedom which is being talked about, and perhaps even flaunted, has more to do with the style of our meeting, or the style of our worship.

I'm not making an absolute statement, I'm saying I believe in many cases. That would be true. When we sing together, as we do from time to time, I'm free, I'm free, praise the Lord, I'm free.

And there's more words to that, of course. My question really would be, well, what are we thinking about at that time? Are we just simply mouthing words to a happy little tune? Or do we have any deep understanding of what it is that we should be thinking about when we turn our attention to the word and

the idea or concept of freedom? This true freedom that we're focusing our attention on, which is the right and privilege of every child of God, necessitates regeneration. It cannot happen, it cannot be our experience.

Unless and until a miracle takes place, a miracle that is a work of God, takes place in that inner sanctuary, that inner area of our lives. We know very well, because it's talked about quite frequently here, that regeneration is really another word for the new birth. The concept of new birth comes from the Greek words translated as regeneration on one or two occasions in our Bible.

It was actually, we've been thinking about Tony Seton and Mary Seton recently. It was actually Mary Seton who I first heard many years ago, just play a little with the word regeneration. I've used it once or twice over the years, perhaps more than once or twice.

But it was hearing Mary that triggered this idea to me. It only works in the English language. But regeneration, regeneration.

It's being regenerated. It's God divinely, sovereignly doing something on the inside of men and women that if you like, regenerates us. It changes us, it alters us dramatically.

If anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. It is imperative, it's imperative that we each and everyone experience that new birth. This is the only entrance way into the family of God.

It is completely false for people to say that all men and women are the children of God. In the context and in the light of the teaching, particularly of the New Testament, becoming a child of God is only made possible via a new birth, where a man or a woman is born again or regenerated, or yes, regenerated spiritually by God. And the primary evidence, I'm not saying this is an exclusive list, but the primary evidence of that regenerating work of the Spirit of God will be that he creates a freedom within us inwardly and that freedom primarily will be manifested in the area of sin.

Jesus talked about this plainly. We could look at his words. They're not far away from us here.

And he talked about sin. He that commits sin is the slave of sin. But, Jesus went on, Whom the Son, that's the Son of God, Whom the Son sets free is free indeed.

Free from what? Free from slavery to sin. And, of course, this is the greatest need that men and women have in the whole world because this is fundamental to our relationship with God and becoming transformed and brought into fellowship with God. So, really, if we just dig a little deeper here, this fundamental freedom is freedom from the wrath of God because the wages of sin or the result of sin is death, the Scriptures say.

Not just physical death, but spiritual death, eternal death. And the Scriptures are teaching us this is the natural guaranteed consequence of being born into this world and never being converted or regenerated. And so a man or a woman remains in that condition.

And so our fundamental freedom by becoming a new creature in Christ is to be set free from the wrath of God. We don't talk about that so much, but this is absolutely fundamental. It is the rock, the basis upon which every other aspect of Christian teaching has any significance, relevance, meaning.

It all starts here because man is out of sync with God from his birth. And the only way that that state can be altered is through the redeeming work of Christ and a man or a woman putting their faith solidly, completely and utterly in that finished work, that completed work of Christ at the cross. And at that moment, not to make this complicated because my goal here is to be very simple, there's at that moment a man, at that moment of placing faith in the finished work of Christ, he is or she is justified before God.

We're freed from condemnation at that point in time. Now we know from continued reading in the Scripture that that's not the extent of significance to the word and the idea of freedom. It's freedom from the wrath of God.

It's freedom from the consequences of sin. But I love these words. I'm reading them from the book of Romans.

I think most of us know them off by heart. I do. But I'm still turning here because I'm in a different translation here.

I'm in chapter 8, and I read here, There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Now we fully understand what that means. We've just been reminded of what that means.

There is now, now at this present time, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, those who put their confidence, their faith in his redeeming work. And then he goes on, The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. That law of sin, in other words, that inherited inward law that prohibits a man and woman from getting free from their slavery to the habit of sin.

So now we're saying we're freed before God from condemnation because of the finished work of Christ. But here the emphasis of the apostle in this chapter is on the spirit of God working in the lives of redeemed men and women and making this then become an experience that we enjoy where we're set free from the domination of sin. There are other scriptures that we can gather to support this.

This is not some isolated teaching by any means. So this true freedom is a freedom that necessitates the new birth. It's a freedom which brings about in my relationship with God a freedom from his judgment, from his condemnation.

It's a freedom that is provided for me where I can become now free from my slavery to sin. So I'm not a slave, I'm not a pawn of sin because whom the Son sets free is free indeed. We're interested in this free indeed concept here this morning.

And I am set free, as far as it's my experience, same for you. I am free to walk in fellowship with God while I continue to live in this world. I'm free to do that.

I was not free for that before. But he set me free that I can know fellowship with him. He's brought a synchronization.

He's brought me together with himself into fellowship. And what's more, I am free by the grace and by the power of God to express this indwelling life of the Spirit of God within and then through my mortal body. Isn't that a wonderful thing? This is true freedom.

I'm free to be a man of God. In fact, I like to change that word around because it somehow has a deeper, sharper cutting edge to it to me. I'm free to be a godly man.

And you, insofar as this is your experience, you are free to be a godly man and a godly woman. This is the normal Christian life. This is what God had in mind when he sent his Son to Calvary.

Amen. I believe certainly there's a consummation of this in what the Bible teaches as my glorification when I enter into his immediate presence. But this is the down payment, as Paul calls it, writing to the Ephesians.

This is the down payment, the earnest money, if you like. He said, down payment of my redemption. It's that which I am able to enjoy and experience to the praise of his glory while I now live in this world.

Anticipating that which yet lies ahead. And we sang about that earlier on, didn't we? And so on. Thinking about walking in fellowship with God and expressing his indwelling life.

I know this, it was sin, and it always is sin that hinders and prohibits men and women from experiencing those two things. But God has provided a way to deal with it. So there's true freedom.

Obviously more could be said. But then I think we're in a position to say, well, what is bondage then? How are we to think about bondage? What is satanic bondage? Well, my answer to that is all bondage is satanic. All bondage is satanic.

God is a God of salvation, of redemption, of bringing freedom and release. And thus then joy to men and women. Satan's work has ever been to do the complete opposite.

To close us down. To oppress and to bring ruin into the lives of men and women. The apostle Paul refers to the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

And you know, I read this and I printed it out for myself here this morning. I can't tell you who wrote this. It's something that I came across and it's wonderful.

I think to do justice to this, I'm going to ask you just to turn to Romans chapter 2. Will you do that if you have your Bible open? Let me just read a couple of verses from the beginning of chapter 2. And you were dead in trespasses and in sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air. That's satanic. And Paul here is making a universal statement.

He's talking about every single man and every single woman that's ever born into this world. He says, you were dead, all of you, everyone, in trespasses and in sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

Of course the next two words, if you're watching in your Bible, are these, but God. So there's the universal state outside. Here's the article I mentioned.

Once walked. Okay, so where that comes from now, at the beginning of chapter 2, verse 2. Once walked means it should be different for those who are made alive by Jesus Christ. Keep listening.

A dead man feels comfortable in his coffin. But if he were to be made alive again, he would instantly feel suffocated and uncomfortable. There would be a strong urge to escape the coffin and leave it behind.

In the same way, when we were spiritually dead, we felt comfortable in trespasses and in sins. But having come to new life, we feel we must escape that coffin and leave it behind. And that's what the apostle is talking about.

I think that's an excellent presentation there to describe this. Amen. This is that spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

You see, this is, I don't know whether we've thought this through very much, but this is where every single man and woman starts out in life. They may be, you know, choice and attractive and clever and all the things we can say that would be held in high esteem. But the apostle is teaching here through the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

And he says there's a spirit that's working behind the physical, behind that natural dimension. There's a spirit that's working. And to put it a different way, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, he talks about the fact that this spirit being or spirit beings have blinded the eyes of men and women so that they cannot see.

These are they that have not yet come to enlightenment and faith in Christ. He said their eyes are blinded. This spirit blinds men and women from the truth of Christ.

It's playing out all around us in our society at the moment, as you know very, very well. And so here's a reference to demonic spirits. We're talking about spiritual bondage in the local church, I remind you.

He's talking about demon spirits which each and every one are anti-Christ. They're anti-Christ spirits. And their domain is darkness.

In fact, we're told that they're chained in darkness. They cannot exist in light. They belong to a different realm.

They belong to the darkness. And the apostle, by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, I remind you, is saying that that's the natural state of men and women. We're chained in darkness.

We can't see. We have no way out. We're totally helpless to do anything about our situation or our condition.

We need outside help. But God, Paul added, didn't he, and so on. And so their whole operation functions within the dimension of darkness.

And I believe it would be true to say that their mission is certainly to maintain this blindness so that men and women are unable to believe in and of themselves and to, in one way and another, to eradicate from men and women whatever residue of the image of God still remains in them insofar that God created men and women originally in the image of God. And we know that sin has brought its own consequences to that and so forth. But what we're reading about here, whether you like to think about it and face it or not, is the fact that there's a spirit power and evil spirit entities that are working in complete opposition to Christ and to complete opposition to the Christian gospel.

And their work and mission is to bring chaos. It's to bring greater darkness to men and women. And to cause any trace at all of God's own identity to be erased from us completely.

And once again, I'm seeing this and you're seeing this being played out in what's going on in our society around us, whatever we may be thinking about ourselves. We're seeing it being played out in a big way

where clearly there's a hatred, not just for religions, but for Christianity and for the Christian gospel and the words of the gospel and any idea that is associated with the name of Jesus. The only way they're happy with the name of Jesus is when it's used as a curse word.

The world hates it. It's the spirit of darkness that's working in the lives of men and women. I think the classic chapter of Scripture, at least section of Scripture in the New Testament that highlights this, and I'm thinking in particular in the gospel story, is the so-called Gadarene demoniac.

You remember him and his condition where whatever's been going on in his life, he's chained out there in some kind of cemetery area. And he has supernatural strength. He can break the chains and so forth and cut himself.

He's into self-destruction in a massive way. And it turns out in the end that there are so many evil spirits inhabiting him that there are a sufficient number to actually inhabit a whole herd of pigs, which when those spirits enter into them, they continue their same mission there and drive the animals to run off the edge of the cliff and bring them to destruction. You say, well, that's insanity.

Yes, it is. But this is the story that is playing here. And of course there are people today, perhaps there are some of those preachers I was thinking about at the outset, who would not focus in on this particular topic here.

And I know from my own experience, and forgive me those who've heard me say this before, but I know from my earliest days, in the assembly I went to, we claimed to believe the Bible from cover to cover. We were supposedly, in our own minds, the elite. But in any event, if you had asked myself or any of my colleagues back then, I had some good friends, about evil spirits, we would not have, all we could have done was quote perhaps that story I've just referred to, about the Gadarene demoniac and so forth and so on.

We would be compelled to acknowledge, well, Jesus certainly encountered these spirits, but well, what about now? What about today? Well, we do hear from time to time, some of our returning missionaries talk about some strange things that happen in some dark land somewhere far, far away. Now, first of all, there is no biblical basis whatsoever to stand on and make that claim. There's no scripture that says all demons are all gone now.

No, not at all. I hear the Apostle Paul saying, that we're involved in a conflict with principalities and powers, evil dominant powers, that are actually controlling the environment and the world in which we live. And there are other references too, that remind us that we're involved in a conflict, as soon as we take this stand now, via the regenerating work of Christ, and we're in the family of God, and bear the name of Christ, it's as though we go around with a target on our back.

I said this in a meeting just the other day, I have a target on me, I don't know if it's on my back or on my front, I think it's all over me, I am a target for the enemy. And if you're truly a man of God, or a godly man or a godly woman, same's true for you. And so to suggest, well all this has just gone away, is foolishness.

If ever there was a day when we need to wake up to this reality, and search the scriptures thoughtfully, and prayerfully, what does this mean? You know, what foolishness, what blindness, what heresy, what deception has descended like a fog upon us, that has kept us away from facing the reality, that yes, there are still demons, and yes, they hate Christ with a vengeance. And they hate you, and they hate me in the

same way. And it's not just me trying to be a Christian, and trying to live right, and respond right, and so on.

Those factors are certainly true, but there's this dark dimension, of powerful activity, that is more powerful than I am, and of my own natural strength. I'm no match for them, and neither are you. I need to tell you that, these evil spirits are gatecrashers.

There's nothing polite about them. Think of some, don't think about this too long, but just think of some evil, I don't know, some evil ISIS people, whoever they are, who are totally brainwashed with their agenda, and so on, until they cease, it seems, to even be human. Talking about the image of God being erased.

These people, to even compare them with animals, seems to be still complimenting them. Because animals wouldn't behave the way they do, for the most part. Isn't that true? They're just filled with evil.

This is it. We see it. It's happening around us, certainly.

And it's these powers, not sort of a sophisticated version of them, it's these same powers, that cause men and women, to do these outlandish, horrendous activities, without feeling at all, that are seeking to gain entrance, into my life, and into your life, right now, as a Christian. And cause havoc, that come to steal from you, whatever God has entrusted to you. And to kill, to kill off that life, if there's any possible way, that they could do it.

And to destroy your testimony, once and for all. This is the goal. This is now.

This is you. This is me. This is what's happening.

And this is what the Bible is teaching. And these powers, they are gate crushers. They're not looking, they're not tapping on the door.

No, no, they're looking for any chink. I'm thinking back to the earlier testimony. They're looking for any chink, any opportunity, for even the latch, to be just the lock, to be moved, never mind anything else.

There is some area, somewhere, a possibility, that they can get into your life. And it's not necessarily, always going to be obviously evil. In many cases, they come through the area of your, what you call your common sense.

When you think you're doing the right thing. And if it's not right for you, it's for your children. And lo and behold, you've opened the door up.

And they will come into your life at that point in time. There'll be a consequence, to your life and to your testimony. I'll tell you more about that right now.

It kind of works like this. You know, this is something we can understand. When we come into our meetings, and we talk about the message of the Bible, the message of the Gospel, and the need to respond to the Lord.

Well, how do you do that? How do you do it? I mean, maybe you come out to the front and kneel, and you ask for prayer. Or maybe it's while you're just sitting there. I mean, how do we do this? Is it not true, that responding to the Word of God is something that is intangible, fundamentally? We may make some outward responses that seem appropriate.

But really, it's something that happens on the inside. I think it would be true to say we dispose ourselves toward God. We embrace His Word.

We make ourselves available to Him in some way. It's hard to pin it down, isn't it? It's just something that happens inwardly. But we all know what we're doing, and why we're doing it.

But for us to describe or define it, well, that's very difficult. Well, that's exactly what we're talking about. We know that there are people who engage in very obviously evil activities.

But that doesn't need to be described, because it speaks for itself. It's so obvious. I mean, if you play with Ouija boards, you are going to have trouble with demons in your life, and there will be consequences.

If you, and so on, we could make a list of things. But it's this other list, if you like, if it's things more complicated than two lists. But it's the things that don't appear to be evil.

But here's the point. So far as the Bible is concerned, never mind what the psychologists and everyone else are teaching us out there, and all the brainy people, the fact is there are only two realms, according to the Bible, and it's light or it's darkness. It's life or it's death.

So we say, how will I know what belongs where? Well, if what I am engaged in is clearly taught in Scripture, it is right, it is of God, it's according to righteousness, then I'm safe. But there's no in-between, there's no sort of neutral area, we've got darkness over there and light over here, and this is where most of us live our lives. No, it's still light or darkness, always.

Whether it makes sense to us or it doesn't, it's either light or it's darkness. That's how important it is to read our Bibles. And so on.

I think I'm trying to decide how to limit myself here. I think I wanted to sort of say more about this, but let me just make an encapsulated statement. Encapsulated.

Encapsulated. Sometimes there may be need for outside help to get free from some of these things. By saying only a few words, I'm going to misrepresent what I'm thinking about here.

But I just want to go on record as saying that that very need, that very requirement, if you will, can sometimes lead people further down the dark alley. Because not everyone who is promising to be able to provide help here necessarily is able to help us. Because I think, I don't know who said this, I picked this up decades ago, someone said at some point that there are those who are trying to cast out what needs to be crucified, and there are others trying to crucify what needs to be cast out.

And there's another category, you just don't know anything about any of those things. They're just ignorant of both categories. And I think that's a common situation.

I'm going to stand aside. Yes, I can see the clock then. I'm almost, time to close down.

Let me just say this. What about then, we're talking about bondage in the local churches. So are we talking about Christian people here? Would be a reasonable question.

Are we talking just about people who wander in who obviously are not converted? Well, yes, we would hope that they would come into their local churches, certainly with their problems. We would hope and trust that they would allow God to meet those problems. But the question raises, how should we view this

when we're talking about Christian people? That there's a broad teaching within our evangelical churches that when a person prays the prayer, you know, when they make a response to the Christian gospel, that they somehow at that point they become immune to this whole category of trouble.

And I suppose if they're doing some Bible searching to find support, then they might abuse a statement of the apostles to the Ephesians where he talks about us then being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. So the imagination at that point is, well, we're sealed. Well, the Holy Spirit lives in me and that just finishes it.

That seals it. There's no way that I need to fear about this. And I believe that is entirely wrong.

You know, can a demon have a Christian? Can a Christian have a demon? Interesting ways of looking at some of these things. So the presumption is that, well, because we claim to have received the Holy Spirit, that's why we're not seeing much of this activity going on. But what about Ecclesiastes chapter 10? The eighth verse says this, If you break the hedge, the serpent will bite you.

Yes, it will. Yes, it will. And the fact of the matter is, regardless of whatever great testimony any one of us have of how God has met us and changed us and brought us into his family, I continue to be the target of evil powers who hate me to my core and who will take full advantage of every situation that is permitted to exist in and around my life.

Whether it's things that are outside of my ability to control or whether they're things that are definitely the result of bad decisions that I may make, there will be consequences as the result. To me, this in no way diminishes the gospel. Not at all.

I think I'm doing justice to the whole counsel of God which cautions me continually to be watchful in prayer and to be diligent in the way I conduct my life. Why? Because otherwise there'll be a negative and perhaps very serious consequence if I'm foolish in my behaviour, in my responses and the way I choose to live my life. The fact is, if in whatever way, in whatever area it may exist that I embrace darkness, rest assured the gatecrasher will take advantage of that and he will, at the very least, he will break your fellowship with God and he will commence a work which can only end up with the destruction of your testimony.

It will happen. It does matter how I live my life. It does.

It matters what I allow my eyes to see. It matters what I allow my ears to hear. It matters the way I conduct my life whether I live it carelessly.

And perhaps for those of us who are older as well this doesn't diminish. I was saying, I didn't develop the point very far but in the men's meeting a few weeks ago where Paul is saying to Timothy flee youthful lusts and I don't know if I made the point very well at all but in context, which in the last men's meeting he's now saying was so incredibly important the context that Paul makes in that statement is not sexual sin. He's talking about careless talking and so on which is interesting.

Not that youthful lusts have nothing to do with sexual sin but the fact of the matter is whatever is natural and inflamed and on fire in the heart of a young person stalks you for the rest of your life and the possibility of making a terrible, terrible decision later in your life exists for every one of us and I'm a fool if I ignore that. The devil, he has a heyday. He has a heyday.

When he sees a sign I remember coming out of an airport in the United States and I won't tell you who it was about but I came out of an airport and there the newsagents place whatever they would call it in the United States there was a paper which was announcing the latest headline and it was about a well-known evangelist and you can guess the rest of the story and it's like a sword goes through it's like hearing that your father's committed some terrible sin you're let down. It's horrible. The testimony is brought down.

And if there's any rejoicing going on in hell and in the domain of darkness I think that's what happens. And the devil wants to bring every one of us down. This is not a sad story.

This is a sobering story that reminds us of my responsibilities as a man of God. If I give place to the devil and I'll say it as though I'm talking to you which I am if you give place to the devil in one way or the other he will seriously interrupt your fellowship with God. The first thing that will start to go is your prayer life and right behind that your Bible reading and right behind that your interest in sharing the gospel with anybody.

Clear signs of serious trouble on the inside which amounts to exist under the heading of spiritual bondage. You've been brought into bondage. You've lost the enjoyment of true freedom.

And so there is this tremendous challenge being extended to each and every one of us to seek that we maintain our experience of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit the purifying work of the Holy Spirit and surrender myself and yourself continually to the spiritual disciplines of the Spirit of God. This is not legalism. There are disciplines and they're not heavy they're not imposed in that heavy cruel way.

It's in my heart. The law of the spirit of life is working in my heart. It's like me having a mother and father.

I think what best way can I illustrate this that instead of being so godly in their lives and they've loved me and they've helped me and been so wonderful they've trusted me they've believed in me they've led me to Christ and so on and so on. Isn't there a moment somewhere when temptation of some thought comes along that I would think of my mother and father? Even. I'm just keeping it on a human level.

I don't want to let them down. I'm thinking of a little segment of a Christian film that was shown recently not quite so recently, forgive me but we were exposed to it and this one scene I know for both she and me made such an impression on us was a man who was married and here now an opportunity for adultery has presented itself he's there, he's on the spot he's claiming to be a Christian he goes to the bathroom and he vomits what a powerful scene why? why would he do that? because something on the inside was reminding him this is evil this is darkness this is wrong and he rejects it and walks away that's the way we're to live our lives and there's ever such a lot more I wanted to say I wanted to talk about the woman and her bondage and so on I'm going to have to leave that maybe tonight, I don't know but let me finish by quoting Spurgeon can I do that? he once said this writing to Christians of course he said, beloved we are still tempted by Satan but we are not under his power we have to fight with him but we are not his slaves he is not our king he has no rights over us we do not obey him we will not listen to his temptations let's pray

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/A3bhvoW_yWA.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/fred-tomlinson/satanic-bondage-in-the-local-church/>

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