

# Wednesday #2 Hindrances to Revival

by J. Edwin Orr

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*To see revival, we must begin with ourselves, praying for humility, confession, and change, and seeking to measure up to God's standards.*

**Duration:** 20:43

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:23

**Topics:** "Hindrances to Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the attitude of the 'now generation' that dismisses the importance of history. He emphasizes the significance of understanding and learning from the past. The preacher then discusses various topics such as repentance, the work of the Holy Spirit, forgiveness, and confession of sins. He highlights the importance of Christians living up to certain standards, using the Sermon on the Mount as a reference. The sermon concludes with a call for personal introspection and prayer for revival, acknowledging the need for humility, confession, and obedience to God.

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## Transcript

These days, we call them the now generation, when people can't be bothered with the past. Perhaps I run a risk talking about what God has done in the past. There are some people who think that history is a bore.

I think that people who think history is a bore are a bore. On Sunday night, I spoke to you on the subject of repentance. It means to change, to change your attitude, to change your lifestyle.

And then on Monday night, I spoke to you on the work of the Holy Spirit, who convicts of sin. And on Tuesday night, I spoke on forgiveness and confession of sin. In every great revival, Christians confess their faults.

Tonight, I thought I would speak on the standards that Christians must measure up to. We begin with that prayer, search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts.

See if there be any wicked way in me, then lead me in the eternal way. Now when I speak about double standards, I'm thinking of what our Lord Jesus Christ said when he spoke on the mountain. We call it the Sermon on the Mount.

Seeing the clouds, he went up into the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them in this way. First of all, we have the Beatitudes.

Now this is what came to my attention. Verse 21, chapter 5. You have heard that it was said to the men of old, you shall not commit murder. And whoever commits murder is in danger of judgment.

Was this new to them? No, murder was wrong to a Jew, murder was wrong to a Roman, murder was wrong to a Greek. Murder is wrong in the United States, murder is wrong in Canada, murder is wrong in Cuba. We all know this.

You have heard it said by men of old, you shall not commit murder. And whoever commits murder is in danger of judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother is liable to judgment.

What a comparison. He speaks of murder on the one hand, now he speaks of losing your temper. But when you realize that when you lose your temper, you are possessed of a desire to hurt, it's murder in the heart.

Perhaps you don't want to go to jail for it, you certainly don't want to go to the death chamber for it, but you'd like to hurt that person as much as possible. The quickest way is by losing your temper with them. With whom do we lose our temper? Generally with people who have to take it from us.

I have seen men turn down the window on the freeway and shot a stream of abuse at some other driver. I have never seen anyone do that with a traffic policeman. There was a sergeant in our outfit who had such a bad temper, the men said of him, when he spat on the ground, the grass burst into flames.

One day he came into an illicit man's mess hall, and somebody had put a vase with daffodils there. He thought this was sissy for soldiers. So he said, who put those flowers there? Nobody answered.

He said, I said, who put those flowers there? And the PFC said, the colonel put them there. The sergeant said, pretty, huh? The scripture says cease from anger and forsake wrath. A lot of people don't know that bad temper is a sin.

And here we have the standard. You have heard people say, don't commit murder, if you commit murder you are in danger of judgment. But the Lord Jesus says, I say, no murder in your heart.

Don't take it out on anyone. Yet lots of Christians think nothing, not using angry words. Here is what the Lord Jesus says, you have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery.

Was this new to them? No, no. Adultery was forbidden by the Jews, forbidden by the Romans, forbidden by the Greeks, forbidden by the Parthians. I don't know any society that encourages adultery.

It hurts the family so much. But then the Lord Jesus went a little bit further. He said, but I am saying to you, now to whom was he speaking? His disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them.

I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has committed adultery already with her in his heart. The same idea exactly. It's not enough to abstain from adultery, but don't have it in your heart.

I remember having lunch with a Christian man, and a rather pretty waitress came by. He said, boy, would you look at that. He said, that's the sort of dame I'd like to marry if anything happened to my wife.

What a thing to say. If your marriage is what God intended it to be, you wouldn't have time for remarks like that, let alone time to think about them. The scripture is very clear.

Not only keep away from sexual indulgence, but don't dabble in it in thought. No impurity of thought. Job said, I made a covenant with my lips, why therefore should I think upon a maid? Yet, of course, the society in which we live is full of tantalizing, all suggestiveness.

But a Christian should abstain not only from the sin, but from the thought of sin. Let's extend this a little further, take sins of wrongful possession. Everyone knows the scripture says, you shall not steal.

Well, the average Christian wouldn't be caught dead stealing, I mean, he'd be ashamed if he was arrested for shoplifting, or stealing something. But I find that Christians sometimes help themselves to things. It's funny, in every language I know, there's a word for this, the American word is swipe.

The British word is pinch. You know, Americans talk about pinching pennies, that means being careful with money. But to pinch pennies means stealing some child's money out of the piggy bank in Britain, to pinch money.

In Dutch, I think the word is fasle. Lots of us take liberties with things that don't belong to us. During the revival in Ireland in 1921, when God greatly used W.P. Nicholson, a Presbyterian minister from Glendale, California, there was such a movement with such restitution that Harland and Wolfe, the biggest shipbuilding yard in the world, they built the Titanic, put a notice on their gates, employees becoming converted and desiring to return stolen tools are requested by the management to keep the same at home.

We have no longer room to store them. So many workmen brought back tools they had taken home with them that caused a problem of storage for the shipyards. That always happens in times of revival, when Christians get concerned about swiping things.

I used to work in a large bakery of concern, in a clerical capacity. I always had a sweet tooth. The company had a practice of offering slightly damaged pastries at half price.

They didn't want these slightly damaged pastries to go on public view. It was understood we wouldn't sell them. So I'd go to the pastry room and say, any broken pastries, George? He'd say, well, look along there, there may be a dozen, pay me for six, and I would take home twelve almost perfect pastries.

But sometimes the men had been careful and hadn't damaged any. So while George wasn't looking, I went around and broke a few. You laughed? I laughed all the way home.

I thought that was smart. But if Mr. Dixon, the manager, had seen me do that, he could have dismissed me on the spot and I would have lost my first job with the stigma of having stolen. Therefore, we've got to be careful what we do with other people's property.

If your boss says we have a wide area telephone, you can use it any time of the day or night you like to, that's an added bonus, make use of it. But don't make long-distance calls and charge it up to the firm unless you've had permission. Stealing? A Christian can't be too careful in these things.

Maybe I've touched someone on a very sensitive spot when I say, do you have any books on your shelves that don't belong to you? The poor guy you borrowed that book from has forgotten to whom he lent it. I can tell you almost every week I meet some friend who says, you know, I lent that book out and I haven't the foggiest idea where it is. If you have it, you're a thief.

You may not like me for saying so, but aren't you? It's not yours. Take it back. What about sins of the tongue? Every Christian knows that it's wrong to tell lies.

Most Christians are ashamed to be caught telling lies. In fact, some will even tell a lie to cover up a lie so they'll not be caught in telling a lie. They'll lie their way out of it.

But generally speaking, most Christians wouldn't tell a lie. But let me quote Charles Finney, he says, what is lying? Any calculated deceit. If you try to convey an impression contrary to the truth, you lie.

Therefore, always speak the truth one with another. Better to say nothing than to open your mouth and say things that are not true. What about the sin of criticism? Now if you look up the dictionary, you'll find that the word is defined two different ways.

First of all, if you go to an art gallery, you can say, that's a real work of art. That just looks like the California desert. Then you say, now I don't like that, it's a little too glaring, and that's critical.

But it's constructive. For instance, my wife, every time I go away, she tells me, now don't forget to comb your hair before you go to the pulpit, don't forget this, that. She says, the first time she heard me preach in the Bijou Theater in Johannesburg, I looked as if I'd just gotten up out of bed.

I don't mind that kind of criticism, because I know her motive is love. Sometimes it lets you down a little bit, you know, it fills you with chagrin. But the other definition of criticism is unkind criticism, destructive, where it's said to hurt, and that's forbidden to a Christian.

But it's properly called malice. It's talking maliciously. Now these are the ordinary sins of the flesh, but I can tell you, as far as revival is concerned, what we call the sins of the flesh are not half as great a hindrance to revival as the sins of the Spirit.

Our Lord was doubly lenient with the poor woman taken in sin. He was trebly severe with the pride of the Pharisee. You look up, take the troubles, look up a concordance, look up pride or proud, and find how often it's condemned.

It says God resists the pride, but gives grace to the humble. You can cry out, Oh God, help me, and God listens to you, but if you're filled with spiritual pride, he resists you. It's the sin of Lucifer, who became Satan, the adversary.

There are different kinds of pride. Vanity is calling attention to oneself. There's also even inverted pride.

I noticed when I was in England, I heard of a man who had been influenced by the Oxford group movement, after what's called moral re-armament, and he thought, now they teach absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute truthfulness and absolute love. I think those are the four absolutes. He thought, now absolute honesty, I'm pretty honest.

I'll grade myself with an A. Absolute truthfulness, or the other one was absolute humility, I forgot that one. He said, I'm not such a bad guy, but purity, I'll give myself a B+, but I'm not very humble. I'll give myself a C. So he went to work on his pride, and did so well he finally raised his grade to A. That's a kind of inverted pride.

Some people who appear to be humble, but they take great pride in appearing to be humble. We should just be natural, that's all. Hypocrisy is another wicked sin on the side of God, to appear to be something

that you are not.

And then, of course, we have the sins of prayerlessness, the neglect of God's word, neglect of witness, robbing God, which is really a form of stealing. Now why do I say these things to you? We can talk until we're blue in the face about wanting to see revival, but in the last analysis, we've got to pray, Lord, send revival, and begin in me. There has to be a humbling and a confessing.

Sometimes God doesn't hear our prayers, because we refuse to obey him in the convictions that he gives us. Therefore one of the great prayers for times of revival is, Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts.

See if there be any grieving way in me. Do you remember the words of the Negro Spiritual? Not my brother, nor my sister, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. Not the elder, not the deacon, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.

It's me, it's me, it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. If we want to see revival in this part of Maryland or in the District of Columbia, remember it begins with us. We ought to pray to that end.

Let us all pray. We can't do better than to pray in the words of scripture, if they apply to our hearts. Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love.

Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions.

My sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done what is evil in thy sight. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Fill me with joy and gladness. Let the bones that thou hast broken rejoice.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence.

Take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. Uphold me with a willing spirit.

Then will I teach transgressors thy ways. Then shall sinners be converted unto thee. O God, help us when we pray for another outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a reviving of the Church, and an awakening of the people, to begin with ourselves, and to pray, Lord, send revival and begin first in me, for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Good night, and God bless you.

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