

Seven Solemn Subjects!

by James Smith

The Christian's greatest enemies are sin, self, and Satan, but through salvation, sincerity, simplicity, and superiority, they can overcome these enemies and live a life of holiness and usefulness.

Scripture: Galatians 2:20

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Holiness"

Description

James Smith preaches about the believer's struggle with sin, self, and Satan, emphasizing the daily battle against these enemies within and without. He highlights the believer's longing for salvation from sin, self, and Satan through the power of God's grace and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The sermon also focuses on the importance of sincerity, simplicity, and seeking a superior life in Christ, urging believers to examine their hearts and strive for genuine holiness and truth in their walk with God.

Transcript

1. SIN is the object of the believer's hatred, and the daily cause of grief; he feels it working within him, and discovers it in all he performs. Every thought, word, and action, is defiled by it--and he groans being burdened with it. He is delivered from its guilt by faith in atoning blood--but he wants to witness its uprooting by the hand of almighty power. He believes it shall not condemn him--but he feels it continually annoy him; it disturbs his peace, spoils his devotions, feeds his doubts, furnishes weapons for his enemy, and grieves him at his heart. It is always within him, and generally working to distress him; it is his bane, his annoyance, and his great stumbling block.

He hates it when he sees it in the world, more when he sees it in the church--but most when he sees it in himself! He rejoices that Christ removed it--but mourns that he was pierced by it. He longs for freedom from it, and often groans out, "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?"

2. SELF, is the Christian's daily cross, he is fastened to it, pained by it--and yet cannot get from it. Self creeps . . .

into every duty and spoils it,

into every privilege and perverts it,

into every place and proves an annoyance.

The more we see of the Redeemer's glory, aim at Jehovah's praise, and desire to live a life of holiness and usefulness--the more we find self to be our enemy! Its deceitfulness beguiles us, its wickedness burdens us, and fills us with shame. We sometimes admire it, hug it, and honor it--and then we are deceived by it! We at other times crucify it, deny it, and aim to be the death of it--and then we deal wisely with it.

Saintly self is too often mistaken for grace, and highly honored.

Wicked self is too often looked at as a proof that we have no grace at all.

But both are wrong. We require much wisdom and grace to live very near to the Lord in order to preserve us from deception in this matter. Self in a sheep skin is far more dangerous--than self in a devil's skin! The one may fill us with fear--but the other is sure to puff us with pride. The one may make us conclude we are less than the least of saints, and the chief of sinners; but the other will lift us up above our fellows, and persuade us to look down from our dangerous pinnacle and treat them with contempt.

Self is a dreadful perverter! It will pervert God's book, the Spirit's work, and the designs of a wise and holy providence. It will pervert all a man sees, all he hears, and all he feels; consequently we cannot but fear its power, hate its nature and practices, and pray for complete deliverance from it. Blessed be God, self in a bad sense--can never enter Heaven!

Self will be left behind,

When I to Jesus flee;

And I shall glorious freedom find,

Throughout eternity.

3. SATAN is another great foe; the two former enemies are within; this one is without. They are permanent residents in the soul; this is only a visitor. Once he inhabited, claimed, and wrought in us to the blinding of our minds--and led us captive at his will. But Jesus overcame him, cast him out, took the prey from the mighty, and the lawful captive was delivered. But he never forgets that I was once his palace, and is determined if he cannot re-possess, he will create all the annoyance he can. He is the public disturber of the soul's peace, and the determined enemy of its holiness and usefulness. He lays siege to every faculty, and endeavors by ever infernal artifice to lead astray from the simplicity which is in Christ. Every saint is his eye-sore; but a spiritual, simple minded, active Christian is especially so; he will pursue him in every way, and employ every means to corrupt his judgment by error, to alienate his affections from Jesus, to defile the conscience by sin, to fill the memory with carnality, and to lead out the will in the choice and pursuit of forbidden objects. He will twist the Scriptures, and put his hand to anything so that he may but beguile us, and lead us to dishonor Jesus, against whom his malice is chiefly vented.

A pious devil is the most dangerous devil, and he often comes in this character, and fills the mind with pride, conceit, and presumption; and then the mind is a miniature of himself.

A blaspheming devil is truly distressing, when he throws his horrid injections into the mind, and fills the memory with the very skimmings of Hell; but even this, dreadful as it is, is not so dangerous as the other. Well may Peter say, "Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour!"

Satan our dreadful foe,

Is ever on his rout;

And seeking to destroy our peace,

He daily goes about.

4. SALVATION from sin by the blood of the Lamb, from self by the power of grace, from Satan by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Christian's foes would make him the most wretched of beings, if it were not for his wondrous salvation.

To be saved from the guilt, power, and consequence of SIN by Jehovah's free grace, and to know and enjoy it under the sweet anointing of the Holy Spirit, is blessed indeed. To find what was once my delight, my pastime, and my element--become hateful; to loathe it, grieve over it, and rise superior to it through fellowship with Jesus Christ, is truly salvation.

To be enabled to look at SATAN, at his malice, his cunning, his power, his vassals, and innumerable instruments; and to know that the blood of Immanuel, the faithful promise of an unchangeable God, and the office, character, and work of the Holy Spirit are all combined to secure me the victory--is indeed a cause of consolation.

To look at SELF in its various forms, artifices, and designs; and to be assured that it shall be abased, conquered, rooted out, and destroyed--is truly a cause of gratitude.

To believe that I shall be delivered from everything injurious in its character, be raised above everything painful in its nature and tendency, and be introduced into the enjoyment of perfect holiness, uninterrupted happiness, and God glorifying employments--is certainly true blessedness! And all this is contained in salvation! Then I may sing,

"Salvation, O the joyful sound,

"Tis pleasure to my ears;

A sovereign balm for every wound,

A cordial for my fears."

5. SINCERITY. This the Christian prizes, seeks, and manifests. He hates the very name of deception, and would not deceive, or be deceived for the world. He goes to God with, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."

He searches the word of God, and examines his own heart, comparing it therewith, lest he should be deceived. He chooses and prizes a heart-searching and rousing ministry, and values searching books. He would be what God requires him to be, and appear what he really is. Not but he sometimes finds secret abominations working, which he would not have disclosed for the world--but he would only profess that character which he really is. He speaks what he means--and means what he speaks. Heart and lips go together, the one is the index of the other. He fears, he hates, he dreads hypocrisy; and longs to be all holiness, honesty, and truth.

If he swears to his own hurt, he changes not--but endeavors to perform his vow. He trembles at the trimming, shuffling, and deception practiced by many professors, and humbly exclaims, "But I do not act like this--because of the fear of the Lord." He sincerely intends when he professes, sincerely endeavors to be and to do what he has professed, and sincerely laments and mourns over all his short-comings. You may read his heart--in his life, see his uprightness--in his tears, and hear his sincerity--in his groaning confessions. Next to salvation by grace--he prizes sincerity of soul.

6. SIMPLICITY. He learns this of his beloved Lord, who tells us, "Except you are converted and become as little children, you shall never enter into the kingdom of God." Simplicity and godly sincerity go together.

It is manifested in reading God's word: he wants simply to understand the mind and will of God, to understand what God really intends. He does not want to form a system, or defend favorite theological points; but to find light, obtain knowledge, receive comfort, enjoy gospel peace, and walk in the ways in which his God would have him to go.

It is manifested especially in his prayers: he goes to God as a poor, dependant, unworthy sinner; he goes through Jesus Christ, he pleads mercy, grace, and promises; he does not attempt to compliment the Lord--but to obtain blessings from him, and enjoy communion with him. His language is the language of his feelings rather than his fancies. He is, or would be earnest, fervent, and importunate, as one who really needs and seeks.

It may be seen in his conversation upon spiritual subjects, there is a simplicity which strikes, pleases, and gratifies a spiritual mind. Simplify is one of the sweetest ornaments of Christianity; as sincerity is on of the brightest ornaments--the two united, adorn the Christian's character.

7. SUPERIORITY. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor." The Christian attempts to be superior to all those evil principles which regulate the worldling. He would live above the world--daily gaining victories over it. He would live above his self-seeking, flesh-pleasing carnal nature. He would live above the things of time--fixing his thoughts on eternal realities. He would be influenced by nobler motives; walk by holier rules; and seek a superior end--to the worldling. He would sustain a superior character, contemplate superior objects, live on superior provision, and anticipate a superior end! He is not--and cannot be satisfied with fleeting contemptible baubles--but looks for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Savior Jesus Christ.

O let superior motives rule my heart,

And may superior rules my conduct guide;

Superior consolations, Lord, impart,

Grant a superior end--my Savior's side!

Reader, are you acquainted with these seven solemn subjects? Have you ever . . .

felt sin,

seen self,

opposed Satan,

received salvation,
been made sincere,
evinced simplicity, and
enjoyed holy superiority?

Have you ever known these subjects separately? Have they all met in you experimentally? They are seen to most advantage when seen altogether: the three former, like the dark background in a picture--set off the latter. But remember...

sin must be hated,
self must be denied,
Satan must be resisted,
salvation must be realized,
sincerity must be experienced,
simplicity must be manifested, and
superiority must be discovered--or
you have great, very great reason to doubt your pretensions to real Christianity!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-smith/seven-solemn-subjects/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net