

Adam's Conversion

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon explores the concept of conversion, repentance, and the faith-love relationship, emphasizing the importance of dependence on God and the sovereignty of God in human life.

Duration: 56:19

Scripture: Isaiah 14:12, Romans 8:1-3, Romans 16:17-18

Topics: "Conversion"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher describes the human spirit as a royal residence created by God. The human personality, consisting of the mind, emotion, and will, is compared to a music room with a console. When God dwells in the royal residence, the soul is in harmony with Him, and the body becomes an amplifier of God's perfect melodies to the world. However, when Adam sinned, the devil took over the console of human personality, leading to the distortion of God's intended harmony. The preacher also discusses how emotions can lead to destructive actions, but the mind and will should be guided by rationality and self-control.

Transcript

I'm glad to welcome you here again tonight. We shall read together a few verses from the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Romans chapter eight. Commencing with the first verse, as I mentioned last night, where I deviate from the King James's version, it will be to the Amplified New Testament.

Romans chapter eight and verse one, therefore there is now no condemnation, no adjudging guilty of wrong for those who are in Christ Jesus, who live not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, the law of our new being, has freed me from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law could not do, its power being weakened by the flesh, that is, the entire nature of man, without the Holy Spirit.

Sending his own Son in the guise of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, God condemned sin in the flesh, he subdued, overcame, deprived it of its power over all who accept that sacrifice, so that the righteous and just requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who live and move, not in the ways of the flesh, but in the ways of the Spirit. Our lives governed not by the standards and according to the dictates of the flesh, but controlled by the Holy Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh, and controlled by its unholy desires, set their minds on and pursue those things which gratify the flesh.

But those who are according to the Spirit, and controlled by the desires of the Spirit, set their minds on and seek those things which gratify the Holy Spirit. Now the mind of the flesh, which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit, is death, death that comprises all the miseries arising from sin, both here and hereafter. But the mind of the Holy Spirit is life and soul peace, both now and forever.

That is, because the mind of the flesh, with its carnal thoughts and purposes, is hostile to God, for it does not submit itself to God's law, indeed it cannot. So then, those who are living the life of the flesh, catering to the appetites and impulses of their carnal nature, cannot please or satisfy God, or be acceptable to Him. But you, and of course he's writing to the Christians in Rome, are not living the life of the flesh, you are living the life of the Spirit.

If the Holy Spirit of God really dwells within you, directs and controls you, but if anyone does not possess the Holy Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. He does not belong to Christ, he is not truly a child of God. God always adds His blessing to the reading of His own precious Word.

Now, to pick up the theme where we left it last evening, which was the opening session of this particular series of meetings, but it may well be that some have joined us tonight for the first time, and may I reiterate what I said last night, and that is that my primary concern these days will be to lead you through the Word of God into that appropriation of the truth that reestablishes man in his right relationship to God in such a way that God is enabled to fulfill His redemptive purpose in the life of every forgiven sinner. And that doesn't mean get that sinner from hell to heaven. The redemptive purpose of God is infinitely beyond a change of destination.

The redemptive purpose of God for you and for me is a change of destiny. And if your conversion hasn't changed your destiny and has only changed your destination, heaven instead of hell, then it means that you're still a baby, spiritually. You've never grown up.

You've been born, but you're still on the bottle. You haven't begun to become spiritually mature. Unfortunately, there are all too many truly converted men and women and boys and girls in the churches today who've never got beyond that initial crisis which is described as conversion.

Because unfortunately, the gospel so often has been preached as though that's all there were to being saved. All you have to do to be saved is to receive Christ as your Redeemer, full stop. And after that, you're saved.

And so many adopt a sort of attitude, what do you want with me now? I've done all I've been asked to do. I've put my hand up or I've been to the front or I've stayed at the back or I've signed on the dotted line. I know my sins are forgiven.

I'm converted. And now I'm inoculated from any further demands that may be made upon me. I'm converted.

I'm saved. I'm a redeemed sinner. I'm on the way to heaven.

Oh now, isn't that a pathetic concept of the Christian life? That may be just a little bit exaggerated, but not much. Now what we're seeking to discover this week is what it really means to be a Christian. What it really means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

What was the ultimate purpose of God in the cross? A little word of recapitulation is in order. Last night we began to discover the true nature of man. And there was a certain principle that we enunciated, which we shall continue to enunciate night by night.

Here it is. Man is man by virtue of what God is in man. It is only what God is in man that makes man, man.

And the moment man loses God, he ceases to be man as God intended man to be. He becomes subhuman. Now that is fundamental to your understanding what it is that happened when you were born again.

If you don't understand that, you may know that you're born again, but you won't know why or what has happened since you were born again. We discovered that God created man, not just a vegetable, not just an animal. He made man differently from both vegetables and animals.

He created man with a human spirit. He had a body like all other forms of created life, vegetable or animal. He has a soul like all animal forms of life, a capacity to think, a mental capacity to react, an emotional capacity to decide, a volitional capacity, mental, emotional, and volitional.

In other words, a motivating mechanism. That's how he functions. That's how you function in the area of your soul.

And you'll function in the area of your soul, whether you're spiritually alive or spiritually dead. Whether you're on your way to heaven or whether you're on your way to hell, you will function within the area of your soul. Somebody gets frantically angry with me, highly excited, it might well be that their emotions would say to their will, hit him.

Well of course, if for some reason their will were captured by their emotions, that's precisely what they would do. They'd hit me. Point of fact, that is how often murder is committed.

In one blinding flash of emotion, a bottle flies through the air or a knife is plunged into a man's back, or the trigger is pulled on the gun, and a man lies dead. Because for some reason a person's will has been captured by his emotions, it may well be because his mind, his counsellor, his calculator, has been rendered inoperative by drink maybe, or drugs, or some other factor. But normally when a person gets angry with me, they don't stab me in the back, or even throw a bottle at me, because the calculator comes into operation.

And although the emotion says to the will, hit him, the calculator, the mind says, I shouldn't do that if I were you, he's bigger than you are, he'll hit you back, or he'll ring up the police, or whatever it may be. But that's how you and I function. We exercise our will under the influence of our minds and our emotions.

Now of course, God gave us both mind and emotion, and he gave us our will. This is what is described as a human personality, if it belongs to a human. Could be a dog's personality if it belongs to a dog.

Dogs have personalities, you know that, so do horses, and mules. Very often a dog's personality is much more pleasant than a man's. Sheep are quite pleasant to live with, but all people aren't.

Human personality is centered in the area of the soul. Now that is your heart, and we were discussing last night what your heart was, why Jesus Christ lives in your heart, and I asked you whether you really knew what you meant by saying that Christ lives in your heart. It may be a surprise to you to discover as we go

on talking together that it's possible for you to be a regenerate sinner without Christ even dwelling in your heart.

And it may not always be true, even if you're a Christian, to say that Christ dwells in your heart, because it may not be true. He should do, but he may not, because your heart is your soul, your human personality. The innermost being is your human spirit, and it is possible for you to be regenerate in that the Holy Spirit has come back to live in the human spirit without allowing the Holy Spirit in the human spirit so to invade the soul, mind, emotion, and will that Jesus Christ has the right permanently to dwell within your heart, your human personality.

And a Christian who has the Holy Spirit within the human spirit but does not allow Christ to exercise jurisdiction in the area of his mind, emotion, and will is a carnal or Christian. He has the Holy Spirit in his human spirit, but he doesn't have Christ in his heart. Now that may confuse you at first, but I trust it won't later, and I might just put this little word of warning.

If some of the things that I say to you initially confuse you a wee bit, don't worry, keep coming, and I'll confuse you some more. And then suddenly, it'll click over, and it'll all make sense, and I'll tell you this, that once you've discovered the true principle of what it really means to be a Christian, your Christian life will never be the same again. Some of you are going to make a revolutionary discovery this week.

Some of you are going to discover that you've only been paddling in the shallows of your salvation, and it's going to be a wonderful discovery. So man has a body and a soul, his human personality, that which makes him tick or function. But as we discovered last night, to have a body and a soul only puts you into the animal classification.

It is the fact that God has given to you what he's neither given to vegetables nor to animals that makes you man, the human spirit. That capacity that God built into you, as we are told in Zechariah chapter 12 verse 1, to receive what God is, and enjoy what God is, and release what God is, in terms of your behavior. God, dwelling by his Holy Spirit within the human spirit, imparts to man a quality of life which is eternal, spiritual, divine.

But only by virtue of what God is in man does man possess divine or spiritual or eternal nature. He doesn't have anything spiritual within him apart from what God is in him. And the moment man loses God, he loses that quality of life which is eternal, spiritual, divine.

But God created man to be inhabited by God, for God. And that is why he gave to man the human spirit. And we saw last night that the human spirit is likened in Proverbs 20, 27, to a lamp.

The spirit of man is the lamp or candle of the Lord, and a lamp is created simply with that capacity to receive that upon which it is totally dependent for the performance of the purpose for which it was made. And the moment a lamp ceases to receive that which it is capable of receiving, it ceases to function. And you could have a thousand lamps hanging from the ceiling here, but if they didn't receive that for which they were created, this room would be as dark as the night outside.

And the human spirit is that capacity within you that enables you to receive what God is. And it is only what God is in you that makes you function as man. Now, last night I said we were going to talk about the conversion of Adam.

You see, the word conversion simply means a change of mind, a radical change of mind, a change of mind upon which you act, that's conversion. A Jew can be converted to Christianity without being converted to Christ. A conservative can be converted to communism.

It's a radical change of mind upon which you act. In the spiritual realm, it's a radical change of mind in the moral and spiritual realm upon which you act. When you and I are converted, in point of fact, we're reconverted.

It's perfectly legitimate to call it conversion, because that's the expression the Bible uses. But in point of fact, when a man, a woman, or a boy or a girl is truly converted toward God, it is a reconversion. It's a repudiation by deliberate moral choice of a deliberate moral choice that was made by the first man when he fell into sin in repudiating God.

Adam was converted. It was made abundantly clear by God to Adam that he functioned as man only by virtue of what God was within him, that he lived spiritually only by virtue of the life that was in him by virtue of God being in him. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In him was life, this life was the light of men. And without that life, the light goes out. And as some of us were discussing at midday today, the enjoyment by man of God was to be dependent upon a moral relationship.

A moral relationship which God could not compel by virtue of the fact that he created man to love him, and not to be an impersonal robot or impersonal cog in a machine, for love cannot be compelled. And God made it abundantly clear to man that he would enjoy what God was in him only by an attitude of total dependence on God called faith, which he would exercise in expression of his love. And just so long as man loved God, he would depend on God.

And just so long as he depended on God, he would enjoy God. And God would exercise his authority through him. So it is a faith-love relationship, freely entered into, and which can be freely broken.

And that is why God gave to man not only the capacity to choose, but a point at which choice could be exercised, and that is the spiritual significance of the tree in the garden. It was the point at which man's capacity to choose could be exercised in repudiating God. Without which moral capacity man could never love God.

And man walked with God in the garden in the cool of the day. He enjoyed sweet fellowship with God his maker. His whole human personality was willingly placed at the disposal of the God who dwelt within him and expressed himself through him.

And that is righteousness. God is the source of absolute righteousness. And there is no other source of righteousness.

Any quality of righteousness that does not originate in God himself is simulated righteousness, is purely an imitation of righteousness. God is the only absolute source of righteousness. Now that's an important principle to remember, for there is a counter-principle that we shall discover to that.

God is the only absolute source of righteousness, and righteousness on earth is what God is in terms of human behavior, placed wholly at God's disposal to be in terms of man what God is. That's righteousness. For God interprets what he is in terms of your human character, in the measure in which your personality,

mind, emotion, and will is placed unreservedly at his disposal.

And when the Holy Spirit is allowed wholly to invade the human soul, monopolize completely mind, emotion, and will, that is a man filled with the Holy Ghost. And a man filled with the Holy Ghost is man as God intended man to be, man in his normality. That is why the fullness of the Holy Spirit is never optional to a Christian, it's a command.

That's why the fullness of the Holy Spirit is not an ecstatic experience that you may have at your will, as a sort of luxury now and again, when it's not too inconvenient, or when it doesn't deny you the privileges of self-government. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is man as God intended man to be. And a Christian is not just a forgiven sinner on his way to heaven, a forgiven sinner filled with God, functioning on earth as man was created to function, and that is the purpose of the cross.

And there is no other purpose in Calvary but that man should be restored to his true humanity right now, on earth, on the way to heaven. Anything less than that involved in conversion is a parody of the real thing. I don't have the right to invite men, women, or boys and girls simply to come to Jesus Christ for the convenience of having their sins forgiven, to escape from hell and get to heaven.

I don't have the right, because that isn't the gospel. God commands all men everywhere to repent and be converted. That is to say, to look sin in its face and recognize sin for what sin is, and repudiate completely what sin is, which is the usurping of God's sovereignty within the area of human personality.

And a man who truly repents and converts toward God is one who steps out of the independence into which Adam stepped, back into dependence from which he stepped. So that true repentance is a maintained attitude of dependence, and the measure of your dependence upon God as the sovereign ruler of your life is the measure of your repentance toward God. And if you're living your life in anything other than dependence, you've never repented.

Not yet. Adam knew this. He knew this.

He knew that his relationship to God was dependent upon an unrelenting attitude of dependence. But he attended some holiness meetings. Very famous preacher, his name was Lucifer, he was a very fine speaker, fair words.

He's a minister of righteousness. I don't know who ordained him. It's a pretty strong denomination, such are false apostles, deceitful workers transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

No marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness whose end shall be according to their words. Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

I always used to imagine as a small boy that the devil had horns, that he had a little curly tail that stuck out of very tight red pants, that he breathed fire and brimstone, you could smell him a mile off. Well, it isn't true. The devil's a very charming individual, very charming indeed.

I beseech you, Paul writes in the sixteenth chapter of the epistles of the Romans, verses seventeen and eighteen, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. They are the emissaries

of the devil himself, who by good words and fair speeches is always willing to deceive the hearts of the simple.

And that's what happened. Lucifer came, and he conducted some special meetings. We ought to know a little bit about his background, where he got his theological training.

Isaiah fourteen, verse twelve. What was his aspiration? Isaiah fourteen, twelve. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning? How art thou cut down to the ground which did weaken the nations? For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will also sit upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like thee most high, I will be like God.

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. That's Lucifer. His great ambition was to be like God, and when he conducts his special series of meetings, it's always to offer men the possibility of being like God, being God-like.

He determined that he would be God-like himself, and he tells men how to be God-like. Two, without God. Genesis chapter three.

Now, the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. He said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? That sounds a bit mean, doesn't it? Now, of course, that isn't what God said. God said you may eat of all the trees of the garden, but then that's how the devil always twists the word of God.

God said you may eat of all the trees of the garden, but not that way. The devil came along and said, Has God said you may not eat of all the trees of the garden? Very subtle. And so the scene, a sense of injustice, that God was mean and niggardly, that he was holding man in a theocratic tyranny, he was making him servile, it made man grovel.

The woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said you shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. You see, that tree is the point where we express our love to and our dependence on God. And God says that any day that we want to cease to love him or be dependent on him, all we've got to do is eat the fruit of that tree.

And the serpent said unto the woman, You will not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. You'll be like God. God knows that the moment you do that, you'll discover, having done it in defiance of what God said to you, and what God has said to you is this, that you will lose what makes you man.

But if you only have the moral courage to do it, you will discover that you'll lose God and lose nothing. That you're man by virtue of what you are as man, and you're not man by virtue of what God is in you making you man. And the moment you repudiate God, the moment you have the courage to kick over the traces, you will discover that you have been kept in a theocratic tyranny, and you will be free.

You will step out into a new emancipation. You'll be master of your own destiny. You'll carve your own future.

You'll be your own king in your own kingdom. You can be good without the need of having God. You can be morally adept without ever needing to be spiritually alive.

That was his message. That man can be man by virtue of what man is apart from God. That he doesn't need the spiritual content of what God is in man to make man man.

That is the basic lie. The basic truth is this. Man is man by virtue of what God is in man.

It is only God in man that makes man man. The basic lie is this. Man is man by virtue of what man is apart from what God is in man.

Lose God, lose nothing. That's the basic lie. And you will discover, no matter where you turn in your Bible, those are the two opposites.

You will discover all down history that these are the two principles that stand in contradistinction the one to the other. You will discover that this today in our 20th century is the essential difference between 100% Christianity and 100% dialectic materialism or international God-hating, Christ-rejecting communism. For as the centuries pass and the sands of time begin to run out, we discover that the issue between God and the devil, between right and wrong, between good and evil, is being crystallized until at last we shall find it consummated in the person of the man of sin, who is the final masterpiece of the devil himself in demonstrating that man can be man apart from God.

And you and I are living in the last days when the only reasonable, rational alternative to being 100% Christian is to be 100% communist. And if you're not one, you ought to be the other. If you've got anything to think, that's why in these days a sloppy, half-hearted, skin-deep, sentimental Christianity is utterly useless, earns only the contempt of the enemies of the cross of Christ.

That's primarily why the communists aren't the slightest, slightest bit afraid. I tell you this, and I know it's true, they're not the slightest bit afraid of the average church member or the average church congregation or the average church denomination. Not the slightest bit.

They don't worry one tiny bit about you. Not a bit. Because they know they've beaten you hands down already.

Because they know the average church member doesn't even know what he believes, can't explain what he believes anyway, and in any case doesn't intend to act upon what he believes. So why should the communists worry? Because a communist knows what he believes, believes what he knows, and intends even today to act on what he believes. So why should the communists worry about the Christian church? They laugh at it, and spit.

But I'll tell you what, communists are desperately afraid of 100% Christians. In Western Germany, they were sending infiltrators to become members of certain vital Christian organizations to attempt subversion in their midst, and they lost so many casualties, they gave it up. And now they keep them home.

But there's only one thing a communist is afraid of, and that is a Christian who is 100% Christian on God's terms. They don't give a tuteny rat for the rest. Christchurch will bury them with the rest.

Well, under the subtle preaching of Satan, when the altar call was given, up went Adam's hand. He was converted. He went out to the front, and he chose to be man by virtue of what he was as man, apart from

what God was in him, making him man.

He believed! Because a man always behaves ultimately what he really believes. What you do is what you believe. Whatsoever man thinketh, that is he.

There's always a philosophy behind human action. The Bible says the just shall live by faith. The just shall live by faith.

The just will not only just come to life by faith, that's the initial regeneration, but the just shall live from the crisis of regeneration into the process of living, moment by moment, day by day. The just shall live as a process by faith, in an attitude of unrelenting, moment by moment, step by step dependence. That's the just.

But the unjust die by faith. Not only did Adam step critically out of life into death by faith, but he maintained an attitude of death by faith. He died by faith.

He believed, and he acted upon what he believed and died. The devil said, lose God, lose nothing, and he believed it. He acted in faith.

The only trouble was that the object of his faith was a liar. He believed a lie, and he died by faith. This is the faith of the damned.

This is the creed of the lost. And every unconverted man or woman, every man, woman, child who's not yet born again subscribes to the creed of the damned. If you're not yet converted, if you've never been to Christ and claimed Him as your Redeemer and been cleansed in His precious blood and restored to your true relationship to God, if you've never repudiated the Adamic lie and stepped back out of death into life as He once stepped out of life into death, then you subscribe to His beliefs and you will die by faith.

You always act what you believe. For years now they've been teaching boys and girls in America that boys and girls don't commit crime. Juveniles don't do anything wrong.

They're just a little overexpressive. That's a fact. They've been teaching that for years.

Juveniles just don't do anything wrong. They deviate. They just deviate from the moral center.

That's all. And when they deviate this way, you just push them back a bit. They deviate that, push them back a bit.

But you mustn't be too rough. Otherwise they'll get warped. What they need is getting spanked.

That's why in California, 45% of all boys at the age of 15 and 16 have been in the hands of the police. I was speaking in the mayor's parlor in the city of Los Angeles where I've had the privilege of speaking on several occasions to some of the civic authorities. And the deputy sheriff in charge of juvenile delinquency in the city of Los Angeles, a city of 4 million people, invited me to speak to a committee of young people appointed from every strata of the juvenile population with immediate direct access to the highest civic authorities in an attempt to combat juvenile delinquency.

He drove me through the city and I had the privilege of speaking to these youngsters, two Jews, two Protestants, two Catholics, two of this and two of the other. On the way he told me the nature of the problem. He said in the city of Los Angeles every single 24 hours at least 1,000 schoolboys and girls are

arrested by the police.

And every 24 hours at least 400 of those 1,000 are retained in custody every 24 hours charged with every crime nameable up to murder. Why? Because they've been taught for years that boys and girls don't commit crimes and so they don't believe they can. Like a small boy, you probably saw a report in the paper a few days ago, a boy of ten who murdered a girl of nine.

He said, it's all right, I can't go to jail because I'm not 21. Just before I left California a little while ago a small boy of 15 shot his mother and his father. Dead.

Had every reason to. They wouldn't let him drive the family car. Well, any parents that don't let their boy drive the family car deserve to be shot.

That's all there is to it. That's just a slight deviation from moral sentiment. That's a little over-expressiveness.

And of course, you ought to give them another mum and dad to shoot. And if he shoots them, give them another. After all, if you don't, if you don't let him express himself, why, he'll grow up warped in personality.

He won't be a balanced citizen. Hm. Nonsense.

This is as old as the devil himself. That man can be morally adult without the need of being spiritually alive. That he has it within himself.

The devil gets you to believe that. He's got you right underneath his thumb. Just where he wants you.

And this is the adulterated nonsense that so often is preached even in the name of Christianity. That all that man needs is an ideal. And the moral spark within him will be fanned into a flame.

In the day that Adam was converted, he repudiated his love to war and he repudiated his dependence on God. And he lost God and he lost everything. And he became totally destitute of that divine content which alone enables man to be man.

God withdrew the Holy Spirit from the human spirit and his understanding was darkened through the ignorance that was in him because of the blindness of his heart being alienated from the life of God. And that is what is described in the Bible as the natural man, the animal man, the subhuman, the abnormal. You, my friend, if you're not yet converted.

And if you want to know, if you're not yet converted, why the world today stands upon the threshold of bloody, devastating nuclear annihilation, it's because of folk like you who insist on remaining subhuman. And you've only got yourself to blame when the newspapers are blown through the empty streets of Adelaide where all signs of life have ceased to be. The government reported while I was in New Zealand a week or two ago that it would take six nuclear bombs to obliterate all forms of life in New Zealand.

Just sit. The amazing thing is that those six bombs and thousands more are already in the hands of men capable of using them. Those of us who live in the British Isles have been warned that we have four minutes to live when wars hit here.

For there will only be four minutes warning. America's lucky, they've got fourteen minutes to live. It's doubtful whether the bombs will drop on Australia.

It'll be the atomic fallout. It'll take a day or two, perhaps a week or two, before the cloud rolls over the continent of Australia, leaving total and absolute death in its wake. Because, you see, Adam was converted.

He believed the devil's lie, that man is man by virtue of what man is in the past. Not what God is. He could be like God.

And the result is this, that the human personality that God gave him, his mind, his emotions and his will, wonderfully, highly developed for a man who was designed by God for God to be a spiritual and a moral being, this, his genius today is at the disposal of a subhuman so that he does not have either the spiritual nor the moral capacity to use intelligently the child of his own genius. All he can do is destroy himself. Because Adam was converted, he believed a lie.

Now that would have been bad enough, for that in itself would only have reduced man to animal. It would simply have made him empty of God, uninhabited, and as I have mentioned already, as an animal man might have been just as pleasant as the sheep on the hillside. But unfortunately that isn't all that happened when Adam was converted.

And in these last few moments before we have to close tonight to pick up the threads again tomorrow, I just want to hint at what it was that really was so utterly devastating in man's fall. Not just that he forfeited the divine content, not just simply that the human personality became uninhabited by God because the human spirit was empty of the Holy Spirit, physically alive, soulishly active, but spiritually dead. But this, don't you see, left man available with vacant possession for the invasion of his soul by Satan himself.

That's what made the fall of man so devastating. For in the absence of the divine agent there was established within the soul of man a satanic agency called the flesh. Maybe you've sometimes been a little bit mystified, bewildered by this term, the flesh, in the Bible.

It occurs so often. The flesh, or carnality, or the carnal mind. What is the flesh? Well, one thing it is not.

It is not your human body. There are, unfortunately, one or two occasions where the translators have used the same word for two different senses. For instance, in Galatians 2.20, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me.

And the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself to me. In that particular sense, it doesn't mean the flesh as a satanic agency, it simply means the human body. The life that I now live in this, the house that God gave me to live in.

Beautifully, wonderfully made, for there is nothing intrinsically sinful in your human body. God gave it to you. My hand may be stretched out to raise a little child that has fallen, or the hand may grasp a dagger and plunge it into a man's heart.

There's nothing wrong with the hand, simply about the way I use it. The body is not sinful, it is simply the instrument of sin if it is being abused by a usurper. And what happened when man was vacated by God, he was invaded by Satan.

And there was established within the human soul a principle which is called sin, or the flesh, or the carnal mind. And the carnal mind is hostile to God. It does not submit itself to God's law, indeed it cannot, because it's in league with hell.

It is what is mentioned in the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, I beg your pardon, in the second chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, where Paul says this, he's speaking to Christians who have already experienced the regenerating power of God the Holy Spirit, by whose re-entry into the human spirit they have been raised from out among the dead, even while still in the body, on earth, on the way to heaven, alive, who were dead. He says, you have he made alive. When you were dead, slain by your trespasses and sins, in which at one time you walked habitually, you were following the course and fashion of this world, you were under the sway of the tendency of this present age, you were following the prince of the power of the air, you were obedient to him, you were under his control, the demon spirit that still constantly works in the sons of disobedience, the careless, the rebellious, the unbelieving, who go against the purposes of God.

He's talking to the Christians in Ephesus, describing, reminding them what they were. Unregenerate sinners, inhabited only by Satan himself and uninhabited by God, the demon spirit that now still works in the children of disobedience, the sublime genius of hell. That's why so many unconverted people are baffled at their own behavior.

And that is why alas, all too many Christians are baffled at their own behavior. Romans 7, 15, I do not understand my own actions. I'm baffled, bewildered.

I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing that I loathe, which my moral instinct condemns. Verse 17, However, it is no longer I who does the deed, but the sin principle which is at home in me and has possession of me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is in my flesh.

I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out, for I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds that I do not desire to do are what I am ever doing. Now if I do what I do not desire to do, it is no longer I doing it.

It is not myself that acts, but the sin principle dwells within me, fixed and operating in my soul. Yes, there is a usurper, there is a villain of the peace, there is an agency of hell itself, the devil's substitute, who came to usurp the sovereignty of Christ, so that in the area of man's soul, his human personality, instead of mind, emotion, and will, being under the Christ rule, they come under the flesh rule. And we follow the instincts and obey the dictates of the flesh.

And the body becomes the instrument of sin instead of being the instrument of righteousness, and this is the opposite principle. For if there is only one absolute source of righteousness, which is God expressing himself for what he is in terms of human personality placed at his disposal, there is only one absolute source of sinfulness, and it is the devil himself, and sin on earth in terms of behavior is what he is interpreted by virtue of what you do. Righteousness is what God is interpreted in terms of your behavior.

Sinfulness is what the devil is interpreted in terms of your behavior. And that is why 1 John chapter 3 verse 8 tells us this, that he that committeth sin is of the devil. All sin is of satanic origin.

And we shall discover definitions of sin which go far away beyond your present concept of what sin is. For whatsoever is not of faith is sin. So that if you like to go up in a pulpit with a Bible in your hand and preach a nice evangelical sermon in anything other than an attitude of absolute dependence upon the Christ, who in you alone makes you man, the very act of preaching the gospel becomes sin.

And there's nothing that delights the devil more than to keep you Christian friends or me for that matter busy in everything other than dependence upon Christ. Because he then knows that we shall accomplish precisely nothing. For the flesh, upon which alone we can depend when we're not depending upon Christ, profiteth nothing.

And the flesh will volunteer for everything, including the mission field, and for the ministry, and for the building committee, and for the Sunday school superintendency. The flesh will volunteer for everything. It'll give tracks away on the street.

It'll witness to its neighbor. The flesh will do everything as the price of survival. But so far as God is concerned, the flesh profiteth nothing.

You see, here is the royal residence, the human spirit, the place created by God for God. Here's the music room with the console, the keyboard, human personality, mind, emotion, and will, the human soul, the heart. The music room, beautiful, beautifully made by the creator himself, who by his Holy Spirit lives in the royal residence and comes to play upon the console and produce out of this beautiful musical instrument of human personality that matchless music, which is that of a soul in harmony with God.

And the body, which is the loudspeaker, the amplifier, whereby the world around can have reproduced to it the perfect melodies of a life in harmony with God. This is man in his innocency. The royal residence, the human spirit, the music room with the console and keyboard, the human personality, and the amplifier to the world around.

And then Adam got converted, and God vacated the royal residence. The right man was no longer in the music room. But the villain of the piece, the usurper of God's sovereignty came in.

He took over the console of human personality and prostituted it to his own wicked ends. And instead of the perfect harmony of a life in tune with God, all the discourse of hell itself amplified in terms of the human body now made an instrument of unrighteousness to the world around. Not only is the right man out, but the wrong man's in.

Now you will see there's something infinitely more in the cross and God's purpose of redemption and getting you from hell to heaven. The purpose of the cross in God's eternal economy is not only to get the right man back, but the wrong man and off the keyboard so that your human personality may once more be readjusted in its true relationship to God under the Christ rule that produces that soul harmony which God in his word calls peace. The peace of God that passeth all understanding.

The question is how can God give the right man back and the wrong man off the keyboard? We can discover that. We have discovered the secret of the victorious character of the Christian life. And it's worth discovering.

Now we bow our heads and pray. Again we bless thee, dear Lord Jesus, tonight for thyself for thou art far more precious to us than thy blessings and all thy gifts for thou art the blesser and the giver. We thank thee for having gathered us tonight.

We thank thee for thy Holy Spirit and for the measure in which he has been enabled to enlighten our understandings. To see the issues more clearly and we pray that as day succeeds to day we may enter into all the fullness of that lavish provision that grace has made available. And above all we pray that we may have the desire morally to obey truth revealed.

To thy praise and for thy good. Amen.

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