

The Natural, Carnal and Spiritual

by Mary Peckham

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth and maturity, and warns against the dangers of the carnal man and the natural state.

Duration: 31:24

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:1

Topics: "Spiritual"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the aggression and strife that can exist in homes and encounters with young people. They share their personal experience of how God brought peace and transformed their worship. The speaker then uses the analogy of a lamb following its mother to illustrate the importance of knowing where to go for spiritual nourishment. They emphasize the need for discernment in the church and express concern about the reliance on entertainment rather than deep spiritual feeding. The sermon concludes with a powerful example of young people in South Africa who found assurance and rest in the Word of God.

Transcript

If a woman cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness to him, absolute folly. They are pointless. Why, what's the point in living for God in this world? What's the point in giving up anything for God in this world? What is the point of this foolishness of God? Well, now, I don't know if that is applicable to any in this conference, but I wouldn't like to leave such a person out without assuring them that this is indeed their condition.

But we move on then to the carnal man. I couldn't speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. Even as unto babes in Christ.

Andrew Murray talked about people who had, in the spiritual realm, a protracted infancy and never grew. That's a sad situation, and that's a sad situation for you, Pastor, if you're still on the bottom. Yes, like I said yesterday, there was an experience, a way back there.

And sometimes I listen to testimonies and folks say, well, I had such a lovely feeling and I had such joy in my heart. But there is nothing on which to ground that joy and to ground that feeling. And how can you rest upon feelings? How can you rest upon the nice feeling that you had a way back there in a certain meeting? Salvation is not a nice feeling.

Oh yes, it's a nice feeling to be saved. But it must be grounded on the Word of God, what God spoke to me. Some years ago in South Africa, I was at a conference and a lot of high school lads were giving their testimonies, black boys and girls.

And they were each one, they were in a line by the side of the platform, and each one came up and gave their testimony. Each one carried their Bible, and each one carried an open Bible. And when they came to the rostrum, each one began their testimony in the same way.

And this is what they said. The Word that God has given to me to assure me that I am saved is and erect. And I thought, how wonderful.

They could teach some of us. Because they had a Word from God, and they were banking on that Word, and they were resting on that Word, and their assurance came from that Word. I'll be telling you this afternoon about that part of my experience, that part of my life when I didn't have a Word from God.

All the struggle and the stress and the striving and the longing. The carnal man is in a state of protracted infancy. The carnal man, I have fed you with milk, he says, and not with meat, for hitherto you were not able to bear it.

Neither now are you able. I can't even give you meat now. After all this time, you're still on the bottle.

After all this time, you're still on the milk. After all this time, you're only babies. Are you a baby? Have you grown? For what are the evidences of carnality? You are yet carnal.

And here it is. For whereas there is among you envy in strife and divisions, and one says, I'm of Paul, another says, I'm of Apollos, another says, I'm of Cephas, or Peter, another says, I'm of Christ. You see, they were centered in personalities.

They were depending upon personalities. They were elevating personalities. And there was strife among them and divisions among them.

Oh, is that not a picture of the church today? I don't know how it is in America, but I know that in Britain we're splintering off left, right, and center. All the time splintering off because of strife and divisions within the church. Are we considering that that is an evidence of carnality, not of maturity? Psalm 133, behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

It is like the oil that was put on Aaron's head that went down to the very skirts of his garments. It is sweet. It is indescribable.

It is wonderful when the people of God forget their denominations and forget their preferences on everything else and they're swallowed up as one in the things of God. By this said Jesus shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one towards another. But strife and divisions and dissensions and distinctions, all this evidences of carnality, evidences of spiritual babyhood, not signs of maturity.

Love covered a multitude of sins. Love overlooks so many things that could cause strife. Love gets over the racial barrier, the denominational barrier, the racial barrier, the age barrier.

But what has happened today? We separate the youth from the older people and there is that deep chasm between. I know it's so in our country. You say to a young person, would you like to come and hear such

and such a speaker? The answer would be, will there be any young people there? In other words, I won't come for the speaker no matter who the speaker is unless there are young people there.

How tragic. The church of Jesus Christ is one. We are members one of another and He doesn't say anything about age in it.

During a period of revival there is no age barrier. And our favorites as young people in the revival were the oldest Christians because they had the most to give us. They had the years of experience.

We used to go regularly to see a group of us converts. We used to go regularly to see a housebound lady who was 90 years of age. She was blind, if I recall.

And she was very deaf and I had a very clear voice so I would usually be the one chosen to read her the chapter. But it was very frustrating to read to her because she would be two words ahead of me in the reading because she had it off by heart. And I didn't feel then that I was doing anything great in reading to her.

But oh, the wealth of spiritual experience that she would pour out to us and the encouragement that she used to give to us as young people. We loved that old woman. And she used to say to us, I was saved, she would say, when I was 19 years of age and I wouldn't miss a meeting wherever that meeting was.

And she said, while you have your feet and while you can use them, run for the Lord and go wherever you can be fed. And there was no barrier of age. But nowadays there are barriers of age.

And there are these distinctions in the church. And there is a great emphasis made on catering for them. I remember one time Duncan Campbell saying, he was down in England at a meeting and someone said to him, but how do you cater for these young people who have come to Christ? And he said, cater for them.

He says they have three prayer meetings a week and they're at all the prayer meetings. And they're seeking God. I don't have to cater for them.

Have you ever seen a lamb born? Of course you city dwellers wouldn't have seen anything so wonderful as that. But I've watched them out in the moor in the island of Lewis and that's wonderful. You see that little lamb coming into the world and then struggles up to its feet, gets a little lick from its mother, and the mother is tired and weary and has been sick and is hungry, and the mother takes off.

And maybe a flock of sheep there, and they all look the same to you and to me. But that little lamb follows its mother. And not only that, but it knows it came into the world and it landed on the heather and it steps it out in a hovering way.

And then it goes exactly straight to the udder of its mother and it sucks away for all its worth. How did it know where the udder was? It didn't go to the wrong end of the heap. And so it is that when we are fed spiritually, we know exactly where to go to get more.

And you don't have to be entertained. But alas, in our desperation, we have resorted to entertainment in order to try and woo and draw them in. And then we have a problem because they want more entertainment.

And then you put on the prayer meeting. Duncan Campbell used to say that it was not the Sunday morning or the Sunday evening that was the gauge for the spiritual temperature in the church, but the

midweek prayer meeting, that that was the spiritual gauge of the church and usually it is the smallest meeting. You know that in the Hebrides, the membership of the church goes to the prayer meeting.

And if a member is not at the prayer meeting, they'll all think that that member is sick, that there's something wrong that has kept them from it. And even the unconverted people will raise their eyebrows if the Christians don't go to the prayer meeting. Well, that's where you find life.

That's where you'll be. But carnality, you must watch that time, carnality, envy, are you envious? Envious of others in the church? Oh, it's so easy. Is it not to become envious? Envy and strife.

We know a lot about strife these days, the strife in our homes. I was speaking to a pastor some time ago and he said Sunday morning was the worst time in their home. He's preparing himself, preparing to go into the pulpit, and oh, the strife among the kids.

And sometimes he wondered how everybody could stand up there and preach a sermon after the screaming in the car and after the bickering and the fighting among the children and so on, strife, carnality, strife between husband and wife. Do you profess to be a Christian? It's so wonderful when strife ceases. Before I was saved, if there was any strife in the home, it wasn't difficult to trace it to its source.

I would be at the center of it. And it was always bickering and fighting and aggression. You know that worldly attitude of aggression, you see it on the street.

You see some young folk walking down the street, you know, and you know exactly if you're going to come up against them and say anything, even if you ask the time, out come the bristles like a porcupine. And they're on the defensive straight away. And the aggression is there.

And it might be in your home, that aggression. And it certainly was in our home. And then God came.

And the strife ceased. And the peace of God that passes all understanding, and the worship which was always contentious. We had worship before my parents were saved.

It's a tradition in the place that the head of the family reads the Bible and leads in prayer before the commencement of the day. But it was always, there was no delight in it. And I used to, on my knees, count the protectors in my father's boots.

They used to steal protectors at that time. I wasn't listening to what was happening. And then God came, and the worship changed.

God saved my father during the worship while he was in the middle of his prayer. God came. And he wanted to get up and go out on the street in the village and say, I'm saved, I'm saved, I'm saved.

Didn't do it, of course, but that's what he felt like. And the worship became transformed. And we took part in the worship.

And it was a delight. We sang the Psalms together. But strife, strife.

You know anything about that? Babies. That's what Paul called them. You're just babies.

You're just crybabies. You're just on the bottle still. You don't know anything.

You haven't grown. You haven't matured in grace. If there is any evidence of grace at all.

Divisions. Are you not carnal? And then what about this, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephas, I'm of Christ. What strife exists sometimes in the church over personalities in the church? Can you hear them saying, I'm of Paul.

Oh, he was the great apostle. And I was saved under the ministry of Paul. There's nobody like Paul.

If I want to hear a good sermon, I'll go and listen to Paul. He can preach. Then someone else would say, I'm of Apollos.

You're Paul. Well, he said, I came not unto you with excellency of speech and of wisdom. Who is Paul? Oh, he was not good looking.

He had sore eyes. Had to have a doctor traveling with him all the time. But Apollos, oh, Apollos' silvery tones.

Apollos, when he got up to preach, he was an orator. And he mightily convinced the Jews that Jesus Christ was the Savior, the Redeemer. And if you've ever heard a good sermon, you go and listen to Apollos.

Oh, he's wonderful. Then somebody else, no, no, no, no. No, it's Peter.

I was saved under Peter's ministry. Peter was just one of us. And Peter was such an ordinary person.

He was just a fisherman, and he was just one of us. But, oh, could he preach. And I was saved under his ministry.

Then somebody else would say, oh, well, it's all very well, Paul and Apollos and Peter. No, I was saved through Jesus Christ. And divisions came in over this, both still and strife.

Are you carnal? Let me come at the last to the spiritual. I couldn't speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. And in verse 15 of the previous chapter 2, but he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

He judgeth all things. Does the spiritual man or the spiritual woman amongst you judge, speak about something that is displeasing? What do you say? Oh, you might be clever enough to say, you must, you can't, that's judgmental, you know. Judge not that ye be not judged, but with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye meet it shall be measured unto you again.

Why beholdest thou the mote that is in my brother's eye, and consider it not the beam that is in mine own eye? How can you say to your brother, let me take the mote out of your eye, and behold a beam is in your own eye? What Brother Ed was on yesterday. So how can we judge? How can we judge then? He says, he that is spiritual judgeth all things. What's he saying to us? Well, simply he's saying this, that the person who is spiritual is discerning.

And if ever we needed a gift in the church today, it is the gift of discernment. You know, if you are spiritual, God has put a spiritual mechanism inside you. And that spiritual mechanism inside you reacts to situations.

God in you reacts to situations. I sometimes feel sitting in meetings over in Scotland, in Britain, I sometimes feel absolutely victimized. I'm there and I would love to stand up and go out.

I'm getting nothing from what is happening. We have this syncopated singing and all the entertainment and untheological choruses. And sometimes you have to stand for 20 minutes and you're repeating the same chorus over and over and over and over.

There's a famine of verses to whatever it is. And it ends with just the one verse. And we repeat it over vain repetitions.

And whether we're trying to work up something, I don't know. But revival is not something we work up, it's something that comes down upon us. So you feel victimized.

There are occasions when I'm introduced to somebody, I've never seen that person, I have no reason whatsoever to have any adverse feeling in me. And maybe this person is portrayed as being very wonderful and very spiritual and very this and that, and great things they have done, and suddenly I find the curtain falls and I just can't find the wavelength. And sometimes I reprimand myself.

And I say, well, what is wrong with me? Why don't I rejoice? Is there something wrong? And then variably as time goes on you discover what is wrong. If we are saved, if we are spiritual, the spirit of glory and of God rests upon us. And if any man have not the spirit of Christ or any woman, he is none of his, she is none of his.

You know the story of the foolish virgins? They had the lamps, they had the invitation, they believed the bridegroom was coming, and all the rest of it was all right, excepting that they had no oil in their vessels with their lamps. He that is spiritual judges all things. That's not being judgmental.

That's in the wrong spirit. But it's been discerning. And God give us a generation of discerning Christians.

God give us discernment in our congregations, in our community. God give us that danger signal within when a thing is not of God. And God give to us the zeal to say so.

He that is spiritual judges all things. And here's something even more certain, because it says, yet he himself is judged of no man. Here is someone who is blameless.

And as far as consistency is concerned, in his or her Christian life, they cannot be judged. You remember the story of the woman of Shunem and Elisha? Elisha hadn't performed any miracles before her at this stage. He was just a man, tired in his journey, traveling to Carmel, a long journey of about 50 miles, and he didn't have a Mercedes either, nor a Jaguar, nor even a Lada.

You probably don't know the Ladas. He got a Lada, but he was very poor. But he walked, and he trudged, and he passed by continually.

And this woman, this great woman of Shunem, constrained him, begged him to come in. And she prepared for him, you know the story, she prepared for him a bed and a table and a stool. And he ate bread, and he rested and refreshed himself, and he went on his journey.

It doesn't say at this point what he said to her. I'm sure he expressed his gratitude. But there was something about Elisha that was different from everybody else.

And this great woman of Shunem said to her husband one day, Behold, now I perceive that this, this ordinary man is not doing anything spectacular, not at this stage, that this man, that, behold, is a man of God, who passes by us continually, a man of God. In other words, his whole bearing and his whole

behavior suggests God to me. He's got a spirit that is of another world.

He is different. There are many people that pass by us. But I just feel constrained to ask him to come into my home and to participate in my hospitality.

He may be a stranger, but somehow he inspires trust in me, and I can invite him into my home. Behold, now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God. Nothing else can describe this man, but he's a man of God.

Oh, that we would restore that to the Christian vocabulary in our congregations, not just call each other Christians. That can be very ordinary. That can be just nominal, just by name only.

But all of my life in my home, my behavior in my home, my attitude to my family, my attitude to my husband, that suggests to me another story from the Hebrides that I remember Duncan Campbell telling of this man and his friend coming home one night, drunk at midnight. And they're rolling their way home, happy with their drink. And as they came to John's house, John said to the other man, he said, Come in and Mary will make us a cup of tea.

But isn't Mary in bed? Yes, so yes, but Mary will make us a cup of tea. Oh, he says, My wife wouldn't do that. When I come in drunk, I've had it.

I've probably got a bit of cold tongue. That's all I'll get. But John said, No.

He said, Mary will make us a cup. And sure enough, when Mary heard the door, up she got, and she put the kettle on, and John went through to the barn to see that the cattle were all right. And she thought he was still awake, but he was back again and standing in the door, and he heard her say, You know, after the man said, the man said to her, How can you do this? My wife wouldn't do this for me.

Well, she says, as she was busy with the tea, My John, this is his heaven, and I want to make his heaven as happy a place for him as I possibly can, because there is no heaven for my John on the other side. He's lost. John heard it.

John came under conviction of sin. John was saved. He sought God.

What won him to Christ? His wife's life. His wife's attitude. Isn't that wonderful? A holy woman of God.

John didn't have very far to go to seek God. He had seen it in the life of his wife, and he sought her. And he sought her earnestly, and he found her.

Behold, now I perceive that this is a holy man of God. The spiritual man judges all things, and he himself or she herself is judged by no man. They cannot accuse her or him of inconsistency in relation to his or her profession, because they see it all there.

They don't need to turn to the Bible. It's there in front of them, a demonstration of the life of Christ. Oh, may God make us spiritual women.

May God help us today if we are still in our natural state and if we haven't moved into that supernatural relationship with God. God help us today if we are babies. Cry babies at that, but God lead us into this spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ, which is in evidence even when we are boiling the kettle.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24246.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/mary-peckham/the-natural-carnal-and-spiritual/>

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