

Temptation and Sin

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead's sermon explores the concepts of temptation and sin, emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life and the importance of maintaining fellowship with God.

Duration: 56:28

Scripture: Matthew 22:39, John 13:34-35, Romans 1:1, Romans 15:13, Galatians 4:4-6, 1 John 3:24, 1 John 4:13

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not giving any place to the devil, as stated in Ephesians 4:27. He explains that if we give the devil an opportunity, he will take it. The preacher uses the analogy of living inside a yard with a high-board fence to illustrate how we should protect ourselves from the devil's influence. He then shares a personal story of sassing his mother and how she reminded him of his Christian identity, highlighting the need for self-control and obedience. The sermon also briefly mentions the teaching and preaching of Charles Wesley and the theme of 'So Great Salvation,' touching on topics such as awakening, conviction, repentance, faith, the new birth, and the witness of the Spirit.

Transcript

I'm so delighted that Charles Wesley understood and shared the teaching and preaching of his brother John. And Father, Abba, Father, cry. We have the outline, number one, I'm going to try again, number one, awakening.

Number two, conviction. Number three, repentance. Am I going too fast? Number four, faith.

Number five, the new birth. Number six, the witness of the Spirit. All under the theme, so great salvation.

Now I want you to go with me just again back to that point that we were considering this morning, namely the witness of the Spirit. There are two or three things that I would like to have you see. Would you turn please to 1 John, chapter 3 and verse 24.

Earlier we saw Galatians 4, 4 to 6. Now I want you to see 1 John 3, 24. The first part of the verse, it really would have well been divided into two verses. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.

And hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us. He has given the Spirit of God in that gracious work of regeneration, bringing us out of life into death. And here is how we know that

he is in us, by the Spirit which he has given us.

Now would you turn to 1 John 4, 13, just in the next column. I want you to see. You remember the gospel of John was written that we might have eternal life.

And the epistle of John was written that we might know that we have eternal life. I've had great joy and delight in times past in bringing a series of messages on 1 John entitled The Evidences of Eternal Life. And I believe that this is one of the most important portions of scripture for the earnest servant of God to be totally familiar with.

Now in this 4th verse, this 13, 4th chapter, 13th verse. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. That's how we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

And it's the Spirit himself that bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Now would you turn to 1 John chapter 5 and verse 6. And this is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

Someone told me today at lunchtime that as a student back at the Baptist College in New York State, that the teacher said, now remember it is your responsibility to let the Holy Spirit tell this one that you're leading to Christ that he has been born of God. I'm so grateful that this is not some novel truth that I've discovered and am trying to sell. This is something the church has believed since the very beginning.

That the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of adoption, and he it is the only one that has ever been authorized to tell a human being that they have passed from death to life, and they've been brought out of darkness into light, and that they have been born into the family of God, and they can call Almighty God Abba Father. If you see this, well someone asked me a while ago, how has this changed your witnessing practice? When I was a student in Bible school here in the city, we used to have a report chapel on Mondays. And some of us got a little bit tired about not being able to report people we'd won to the Lord in the week.

And so I went with a friend who taught me how to do it. You take a handful of nickels, and then you go to a bus stop, and you talk to somebody there waiting for the bus, and you say, if you were to die today, would you go to heaven or to hell? Oh, I don't know. Would you like to know? Yes.

Well, how? Well, here. It's a free gift. If you'll accept Jesus Christ.

Well, I don't know, what do you mean by a free gift? Then you take out your nickel and say, here's a nickel, take it. In the same way that you took my nickel, now you take Jesus Christ. Well, you do? Sure.

All right, now say this prayer after me. Well, it was marvelous on Monday we could report how many people we'd won to the Lord. We should have reported how many nickels we gave away.

But we didn't want to get caught in that. Now listen, the only one in the universe that has the right to tell anyone they're born of God is God the Holy Spirit. He's the Spirit of adoption, and He's never abdicated that sovereign prerogative.

He's never turned it over to anybody else. You know, always we have to face the fact that there are two possible heresies. The one is the heresy of message.

And we are all very well equipped to detect that, or usually are at least. The second is the heresy of method. And that is the most subtle, and that is the most dangerous.

The heresy of method. Many times the message preached is orthodox, but the method is heterodox. I remember going into the home up in Little Falls when I was pastor there of Leo Link.

And his wife, Mrs. Link, said, had a book on the table. And I sat down, and people were coming in for prayer meeting. And they weren't there yet.

I was early. And so I picked up this book, and it said, Bible Doctrines Explained. And I started to read it.

I turned and opened it at John 3, 16, the new birth. And I was impressed. It was fine.

I read the page on the left hand and the page on the right hand. I turned the page. It was down near the bottom of the page on the left hand.

And I said, this is pretty good. And Mrs. Link said, where are you? She said, well, when you turn the page and read the rest of it, I'd like your reaction. So I read it, turned the page, and it was said, And when after you have had instruction from the local parish priest and you have been baptized, then you have the certainty of knowing that you too have experienced the new birth.

And I found out that it was one of the societies of the Roman Catholic Church. The message was orthodox. But in my book, the way I understand the word of God, the message, the method was heterodox.

Now we're striving for both orthodoxy in our message and in our methods. And therefore, the difference, the question I was asked was, what do you do differently than you used to do? Well, the difference is this. Now I try to tell people how holy God is.

And from the word, try to get them to see how sinful they are. And then try to show them what God has done in love and grace, justice, to make it possible for them to be forgiven and pardoned. And then what they must do.

And then I will have to tell them, Now look, when you do what God's word commands that you do, you will be born again. And when you are born again, you will have the witness of the Spirit. And when you know that you have passed from death to life, you come and tell me.

You see, I can't tell them. I stand outside. I'm easy to con, I'm easy to convince.

But the Spirit of God is truth. And He knows when one has passed from death to life. And so the only one that has the right to tell a person they're born of God, is God the Holy Spirit.

Now, I want you to notice something else. That is within. Someone says, is that emotion? No.

Is that feeling? No. That's knowing. The same part of you that knows you're here and not somewhere else, knows whether you're born of God or not.

If I say, are you married? You have to look to see if you have a ring on your finger or feel around for a wedding certificate. Then I think you have got a problem. If you don't know that you're married or not married, then you do have a problem.

Well, have you been born of God? And you're not sure. Well, you've got a problem. And it's a very important problem.

And one that if I were in your place, I wouldn't rest until I'd settle and found out exactly what my state is. Now, there is something else. Not only is it within where His Spirit communicates with our spirit.

We're the children of God. But there's another. Will you turn to Romans chapter 15 and verse 13.

Now, I'm asking you to do Bible drill because I think it's often very good for you to see the Scripture that's being referred to. And to mark it, to indicate that you've been there once before. Romans chapter 15 verse 13.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. And one of the blessed fruits of being born of God is joy and peace in believing. Not only the witness of the Spirit.

The witness of the Spirit is not joy. The witness of the Spirit is the witness of the Spirit. It's knowing.

But joy follows the knowing. And peace follows the knowing. Now, I want you to move on to the next line, the next section, which is number 7. And I have entitled this, Temptation and Sin.

Temptation and Sin. Born again, the witness of the Spirit to the new birth. Joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Let me ask you. What did you carry with you into the Christian life? Well, did you carry the same body when you were born again? Did you receive a glorified body like unto his own body of glory? No, you received the fact that you're going to have it, but you didn't receive it. If you had a scar from where you fell into the lawnmower and cut your knee, when you looked at your knee in the morning, you still had the same old scar.

You haven't received a glorified body yet. You still have the one you came with when you came to the cross. Well, what else that's old came with you into the Christian life? What about your appetites? Your drives? Your urges? Your propensities, if you please? When God made man, he gave to him an appetite for food.

Because that's how he was to be sustained. An appetite for knowledge. Because that's how he would learn, line upon line, precept upon precept.

An appetite for status, because he was to rule over God's creation. An appetite for pleasure, because God had given so many marvelous things for the one he'd made. Have you ever thought about it? Look at how he painted the sunrise in the morning and the sunset at night.

He didn't have to do that. It could have been just gray. But he gave us all of those marvelous colors and the ability to recognize and to enjoy them.

And then something else. Have you given much thought, meditation to the watermelon? Have you? You ever thought about it? We don't need it for nourishment. It's not indispensable for vitamins.

He just threw it in, gave it to us. Gave us the ability to enjoy the colors, to see the green and the white and the seeds. And to taste it and the odor of it and all.

Just an appetite for pleasure and then God just threw in so many extra things for us to enjoy. And then he gave us an appetite for sex. Because by this means he was to increase this family.

And he looked at the being that he had made and with all these appetites and urges and what did he say? That's terrible. Is that what he said? No. He said it is good.

There's nothing wrong with the appetites. And he gave adequate way by which they could all be supplied and satisfied within his will to the best interest of himself and others and each individual. And then he gave prohibition.

He said you don't satisfy your appetites this way. You don't do that. He established law and rule.

Now when we repented of our sin and savingly received the Lord Jesus Christ. Born of the spirit of God with the witness of the Holy Ghost that we'd been born again. With joy and peace and believing.

We're now inside the Christian life. And what do we bring? We brought an appetite for food. And for knowledge.

And for pleasure. And for status. And for security.

And for sex. All the appetites that we'd had we carried right with us. They're all there.

And what else did we bring with us? We brought with us all of the learned ways of response. Those habituated, if you please, response patterns that we developed in our days without Christ. And they've come.

Because we're told that when you do something over and over again you sort of put a path in your brain between the brain cells so it's a line of least resistance and it happens. Now here you are. You've been born of God.

You're only two or three weeks old in the Lord. You repented and you said, God I'm going to please you in everything. And if you forgive me I'll never do these things again.

My purpose is to please you. It was genuine and sincere. But what did you carry with you? You carried appetites.

And you carried habituated ways of response. Now what are you going to encounter? You're going to encounter temptation. Now we've got to stop for a definition.

When I use the word temptation, what do I mean by it? I'll tell you. Temptation is the proposition presented to the mind to satisfy a good appetite in a forbidden way. Now if you don't think I can back out of that garage and get in it again, I'm going to prove it to you.

I'm going to give you that definition again. Here we go. Temptation is the proposition presented to the mind or the intellect to gratify a good appetite in a forbidden way.

Now temptation isn't sin. Temptation is a proposition, an idea presented to the intellect. Our Lord Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

Temptation isn't sin. Temptation is the proposition, the idea presented to the mind to gratify an appetite in a forbidden way. But that leads us to sin, doesn't it? Now what's the definition for sin? You got it.

Here it comes. Sin is the decision of the will to gratify a good appetite in a bad way. It's not the gratifying of it, it's the decision to do it.

He that hates his brother, hatred is the intention to hurt and harm. He that has decided to hurt is already a murderer. He that has the mind to commit adultery is already guilty of it.

The decision to do it before the act is complete gives to the act the character of transgression. Sin is the decision of the will to do something. Opportunity may not have yet been presented, but the decision constitutes the essence of sin.

Decision to gratify a good appetite in a bad way. Now what takes place? Here you are, a new Christian, born again, and you're tempted. Maybe it has to do with some trait of your personality because you carried as a part of your baggage from the old life to the new was all of those traits and tendencies and attitudes that had characterized you.

Maybe, for instance, you found that you didn't like criticism and when anybody criticized you, you just gave them what for. And you're here, a Christian, and somebody comes along and comes up on your blind side and says something to you, and you turn and you just give it to them. Well now, that's part of the thing that you repented of.

You said to God you were going to please Him, and now here you've displeased Him. What is it? Well, you've responded. You carried these traits and tendencies and habituated responses, and you've done the thing you promised God you'd never do.

You've sinned. Now, there's all the difference in the world between sin in the life of a believer, born again one, and someone that's a spurious, counterfeit professor. A child of God that sins, did something he hates and doesn't want to do, but he did it.

He was overtaken in a fault, let aside by his appetites. Now, the Scripture is very practical and very direct and realistic, and if it says, if we say we have no sin or haven't done it, we're liars, because we have. And God wants us to be totally and completely honest with Him.

And God recognized this was going to happen. He realized we were back in the world where we were and were there as babes, and therefore, now we have done something, said something, that grieved God. And we have grieved us, because we told God we wouldn't.

Now we're going to look at it. What happens when a child of God sins? What's the result inside that child? What takes place? I've heard people say, well, I lose my reward. Honey, you're going to lose a lot more than your reward.

You better just face that. There's a lot of things going to happen to you between now and reward time, and you better get acquainted with them, because the Word's very explicit about what takes place when a child of God sins. The first thing that happened is fellowship with God is broken, interrupted.

He said in 1 John, that first chapter, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. But then it says, but if we walk in darkness, that fellowship is broken. And say we're walking in the light, we lie.

We do not do the truth. Fellowship with God is interrupted when a child of God sins. Now, we better know that.

We better realize it. But you see, friend, if we've never had the witness of the Spirit and joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Ghost, and if we're the products of easy believism, we're never going to know whether fellowship was interrupted or not, because we've never had any. Do you see why it's so important that people should start out right? They should understand that it's the Spirit of God that tells them that they have joy and peace in believing.

Why? Because that's their spiritual nervous system. And if they don't have that, they're like a leper that can put his hand in the fire and never flinch, because the nerves are dead. So, it's so very important that the child of God should have begun right with the witness of the Spirit and joy and peace in believing.

So, they know when fellowship is broken, when the Spirit of God is grieved. Now, the second thing that happens when a child of God sins is this. Prayers are not answered.

In Psalm 66, 18, David said, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord doth not hear me. It hasn't even gotten to my lips yet. It hasn't even gotten to my hand yet.

If I regard it in my heart, hold it there. If I've decided to do it and haven't had an opportunity yet, God won't hear me. Prayer goes unanswered.

And Peter said, Now husbands and wives, don't fuss with one another. Don't argue. You dwell together in peace, so that your prayers won't be hindered.

And how many families have had fussing, and then wondered why their children got all torn up by the adversary, and why their prayers for them weren't answered. Now listen, God said it because He meant it, and He meant it when He said it, and you better believe it, because if you don't, you're going to pay just as big a price as if you did believe it. And He said that if we regard iniquity in our heart, He won't hear us.

Now, the third thing that happens when a child of God sins is this. God won't use him. Oh, he may go on using God, and the people may never know the difference, but God won't use him or her, because the scripture says, Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord, and when we tolerate in our hearts and lives that which grieves God, whose name is Holy, and you can be sure of this, He won't use us.

F.B. Meyer illustrated it, in his little wonderful little book, *The Christ Life of the Self Life*. He tells how he bought the first fountain pen that came out in Britain, in England, London. He got one of them, thought it was a great idea.

He'd had to carry a little bottle of ink, and a little bottle of sand or a blotter, and a pen and some steel nibs, and there was a pen that had the ink in it, and he thought that was great. It was pretty good, pretty good idea. We don't carry many steel nibs anymore.

The only problem was this first pen, it got some ink out the point, but it leaked everywhere else too. And when he finished writing, he had fingers that were blue up to the second knuckle, and he just kind of said, that's not so good. So when another pen came along, he bought it, and he still kept the first one, put it in a drawer, and he said when he'd get ready to go on a trip, by this time he had quite a few pens, he'd reach in the drawer, to take the pens on the trip that he was going to make, for his writing, and he would feel that first pen.

Instead of taking it, he'd just nudge it further back in the drawer. And he said, if that little pen could talk, it might say something like this. I wonder what's happened.

Once, I always went with him wherever he went. Once I knew his thoughts before others. Once he used me to communicate with people.

Now I'm still in his drawer. But he doesn't use me. I wonder why.

And F.B. Myers said, oh little pen, little pen, I can't use you, because every time I use you, you get me dirty. Listen, God never uses the life that gets him dirty. You better believe it.

The third thing we find in Ephesians, fourth thing in Ephesians 4, verse 27, where the scripture says, give no place to the devil. Now, do you know why the scripture says, give no place to the devil? Well, I've got a secret for you. The reason is, because if you give place to the devil, the devil will take it.

Now, how do you give place to the devil? The word is so clear, isn't it? It says, the angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him. It's like living inside of a yard with a high board fence, and the dogs outside can't get in, because the fence is tight. The angel of the Lord makes a fence around the believer, the believers, the families, and the loved ones, and the work, and the ministry.

But we give place to the devil. Why? It's like going up to that high board fence and deliberately taking your foot and kicking until you got the board loose. And it'll swing on the upper nails, but it's loose at the bottom.

And the devil's dogs go sniffing around, and they find that loose board, and push it in, and push with their muscles, and they get in, and they tear up everything. Why? You see, the fear of the Lord is the basis of the angel of the Lord encampeting about us. But the fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

And when we come to the place that we don't hate evil, then we've given place to the devil. And when we tolerate in our lives that which grieves God, then you can just be sure that the devil's dogs are going to sneak in and tear up everything that's precious to you. Well, those four results of sin in the life of the believer, how does it sound? As though you can... Nothing to worry about until you get there to lose your reward? Sounds to me like you're in trouble.

We're in trouble already if we permit unconfessed, unforsaken sin in our life. There's a fifth one, and this ought to just tilt the balance if there's any question. And that is, if we permit sin in our lives, we fall into the chastening hands of God.

And I've been told in the Scripture that it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And I think I've got a few scars here that I could show you that confirm that. But you see, there's something marvelous here.

I've heard people say, you know, I know some Christians living in sin and they're not being chastened or dealt with by the Lord. No, you don't. All you know is some professors of faith in Christ who are getting by with it.

But here's the secret. God never lays a finger on the devil's family. But He chastens every child and scourges every son.

Why? Because with His own children, this is all the hell they're ever going to know. And when they die, it's going to be heaven forever. But with the devil's family, this is all the heaven they're ever going to have.

And when they die, it'll be hell forever. And if they've traded their soul for a mess of pottage, God doesn't go around throwing gravel in it to make their teeth grit on it. If that's what they want.

But you find somebody living in sin and not being chastened of the Lord, all you've found is someone that God says, well, he's not mine. He's not born in my family. So, you better look.

Chastening isn't pleasant, but I'll tell you, it's a kind of a frightening thing to have God tell us you're not mine. Dishonest. Well, these are the five effects of sin in the life of a Christian.

Now, what are we going to do about it? What are we going to do about it? I want you to go back to John 15 in verse 3, and I want you to look at a verse that is just wonderful. It's God's prescription for the problem we're discussing. John 15, 3. Now said the word, said the Lord Jesus, you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Clean through the word. Born into the Father's family. Something has come into the life that grieves God.

What are we going to do about it? And the Lord Jesus said, you're clean through the word. Now, what does He refer to? I think, and this is my opinion, I haven't any exegetical support for it. I think He's referring to the labor in the tabernacle in the wilderness.

Do you remember the tabernacle? Do you remember what you learned about it? That inside the gate was the altar of burnt offering, and off there was the tabernacle with the holy place and the holiest of all. But between the altar of burnt offering and the holy place was a laver. Now we don't know how big it was.

There's no dimensions given. We only know it's big enough for all the needs of all of God's children. And we know a little about how it was made.

It had brass, and then the inside was flat and lined with mirrors, and it was filled with water. Now it had a two-fold function. First, it was to show the Levites and the priests where the soot and dirt was on their faces, and secondly, it was to provide the means by which they could wash the dirt off of their faces.

And the Lord Jesus said, Now you are clean through the Word. So we expect the Word to have a two-fold function, to be a mirror to the soul, to show us what's in us that grieves God, and to show us how to deal with what we discover in us that grieves God. Now let's look first how we use the Word as the mirror to our hearts.

I want to give you just a few scriptures, and there'll be many, many others. I have a list of about 55, and I think these growth portions are going to be enough. Will you turn, please, to Proverbs chapter 6? Proverbs chapter 6, and I want you to see verses 16 through 19.

And remember, we're talking about this now as a mirror, a mirror to our hearts, a mirror by which we can see deep within us. It's an x-ray machine, if you please, to show us what's there. Now, the 16th verse begins by saying, These six things doth the Lord hate, and the seventh is an abomination unto him.

So you can know full well that if you have permitted in your life anything that God hates, or especially the one that God abominates, you're in trouble. Now let's look. A mirror will only show you what you got there.

The Spirit of God never wants to depress us, He only wants to cleanse us. And so, we look at this, and you might say, Well, there was a time when I had this in my life. Great.

It's not there now. The Spirit of God is going to focus on the thing that's there now, to be dealt with at this time. So, listen.

Look at it. It's a mirror. See if it reflects in your heart.

These six things doth the Lord hate. A proud look. God hates pride.

He hates racial pride. He hates facial pride. He hates financial pride.

He hates educational pride. And I think the one He abominates most is religious pride. The kind that wraps itself up and says, Thank God I'm not like others are.

He hates a proud look. And He hates a lying tongue. Misrepresentation and deception in speech.

And hands that shed innocent blood, the intention to hurt somebody. And heart that devises wicked imaginations, immorality on the mental level. Feet that be swift in running to mischief, gossiping, tail-bearing, back-biting.

A false witness that speaketh lies, misrepresenting the facts. And the one that He abominates about all others is He that soweth discord among brethren. Oh, that God could cure the body of Christ of that.

Now will you turn please to the 2nd Scripture. Romans chapter 1. First chapter of Romans. And we're going to look at the mirror again.

Look at something else here. In the 32nd verse, we're beginning in verse 29. It says, Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

So you know, that if you or I have permitted in our life anything that makes people worthy of death, these five things are already starting to operate in us. We better look at it. We're going back to verse 29.

It says, And here's the mirror. Look at it. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, that's meanness, envy, and murder, and argumentativeness.

Did you ever know that in God's eyes He can put murder right alongside of envy and argumentativeness? Well, He does. Deceit, malignancy, oh, here it is again, whisperers, and back biters. Right next to haters of God.

You'd think He'd have a little better discernment than to put the white ones next to the black ones, wouldn't you? But He didn't. He put them all together. You know, you can always tell you're in revival when you feel the same way about the things that only God hates and the community doesn't as you feel the same way that God has felt all along.

Now, that's when you're in revival. When the things that only God's concerned about concern you. You're right.

You're there. Now, look at it. Despitful, proud, oh, it came back again, didn't it? Boasters, inventor of evil things, disobedient to parents.

That's what God used to show me how lost I was. Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. Well, that's the mirror.

Let's go to Galatians, in chapter 5 and verses 19 to 21. Just take a quick look here at this mirror. Now, do you see how I use the mirror? You look at it.

You look at it. See whether it's there. Chapter 19 of Galatians 5. Now, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, which is the same as stubbornness, and witchcraft, which is as rebellion, hatred, variance, always fussing, arguing, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like, of which I tell you before, as I've told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

And we're to come daily to the mirror. And whenever we've sensed that we've grieved God, we're to come to the mirror of the Word. And to permit the Spirit of God to speak to our hearts and show us from the Word what it is that He wants us to deal with, that He has seen, which we must deal with.

This is what we're doing. Every day of our lives, we're walking through a wicked world, and we should come to the mirror, just as the Levites always went to the labor before they went into the holy place. You wouldn't think of going out to meet your friends.

People have known you for years without going to the mirror. You've got too much respect for them. You're not going to go out disheveled and unshaven and without proper preparation.

You just aren't. I was at the whole Mahaffey Camp meeting of the Christian Missionary Alliance in western Pennsylvania, and I made that statement years ago. None of you here, everyone here, went to the mirror before you came to church.

And when it was over, a little boy about 12 with a map of Ireland all over his face, he came up and he put his hands on his hips and he looked me right square in the eye, and he said, Preacher, you were wrong today. I said, well, son, I've been wrong before. Tell me, where was I wrong? He said, You said that everybody here went to the mirror before they came to church.

I haven't seen a mirror wash my face for two days. And I said, and I believe you, because I can see egg on your face for breakfast. He said, that was yesterday.

So I'd like to just make a general statement. I think all of you have been to the mirror before you came to church. But how long has it been since you've been to the mirror of the Word? And you've opened your heart to the Spirit of God to search you through the Word.

Now you are clean through the Word. And it's the Word that shows the attitude and the relationship and the action and the motive. Things we've said or done that grieve God.

It's the Word that reflects back to show us where our deed is. Once we've discovered what it is that God's dealing with, then what do we have to do? Well, again, it's the Word that tells us. It not only tells us what's wrong, but how to deal with what's wrong.

The Word's so explicit. First thing it says is this. Judge yourself that you be not judged.

For he that is judged is chastened of the Lord that he should not be condemned with the world. That doesn't mean you wait till somebody finds out and judges you. Because if you do, you're going to get a whipping.

And I can tell you that there have been some things happening around the country the last few weeks and months that indicate that when the whipping comes, sometimes God gets carried away a little bit. And there's a bit more than there might have been if it had been handled some other way. Now, he says, judge yourself.

Don't wait. Judge yourself that you not be chastened of the Lord. Now, what's it mean to judge yourself? Well, you've just gone to the laver, gone to the mirror, and you bring yourself up and stand yourself in front of you and you're the judge behind the desk and you're the culprit in front of the desk and you read the law to you and you say, look, according to the Word of God, this is what you did and you reply to you and say, yeah, I did it.

You've judged yourself. That's the first thing. Then the second thing the Scripture says is let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and return unto the Lord and he'll have mercy and our God will abundantly pardon.

So it means that you look at the judge and you say, and he says, what are you going to do about it? You say, I'm through with it. I'll never do it again. I'm quitting it.

I'm done. Alright, you've judged yourself. Now you've forsaken your wicked way.

Now what's it say to do about it? It says, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now, I want to tell you what confession isn't. Confession isn't when you're so tired you can hardly wait to fall into bed touching one knee to the floor lightly and saying, dear Lord, if I've done anything wrong today, please forgive.

Now that's not confession. To confess means to call, say with God what God says or to call it by name. That means then that you have got to call it by name.

I had the privilege some years ago being the evangelist at Houghton College. We were in revival meeting there and God visited us and it was a great time. And one evening, He gave an invitation and students came and filled the front.

There was one young lady that was over here at the end sitting on the front row of seats. Everyone else was pretty well dealt with and I went over and said, now how can we help you? And she said, well, I want to. And so we knelt in prayer and she told me, or first she told me that something had happened the previous summer and what it was.

And I said, well, let's just pray and you confess it to the Lord. And we got down there and on our knees and she started to lecture God and tell Him how holy He was and He knew that and how wise He was and He knew that and how people are weak and frail and He knew that and she was going all around Robin Hood's barn. I mean, she just traveling.

She was getting, and after a while I got tired. My knees ache and I touched her on the shoulder and I said, now anytime you finish turn the lights out. I'm going.

What's the matter? Well, I said, I know that it's probably very beneficial to you to lecture God on all of this, but we came here to pray and to confess. Well, I'm getting around to it. I said, awful slow.

And I said, you're not going to make it the way you're going. She said, well, why? I said, because you're not willing to confess your sins. She said, what's that mean? I said, to call it by name.

Oh, I couldn't do that. I said, you think God would be surprised? You don't think He was observing? You don't think it's surprising, do you? But she said, I can't. Not to God.

I said, well, good night. And she said, don't go. Please don't go.

I said, I don't want to go. I want to help you, but I can't do it unless you're going to meet God's terms. And he said, if we confess our sin, He's faithful and just.

And she started to sob. And she said, all right. And she got down there and she confessed.

And when she did, it broke up the fountains of the deep. She'd been praying about this for about six months. It had been eating at her.

It had been tearing at her. It had just been boiling over inside of her. But when she called it by name and then she knew that God had forgiven her and I'd forgiven her and the church had forgiven her and she was forgiven, I restored the fellowship again.

But it didn't come until she confessed it. And then we confessed it. Call it by its name.

He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Well, it has to be personal and I close with this. We were living up in Anoka County up toward St. Francis on Route 7th Avenue.

We had a farm up there. 360 acres. Across the road from our house was 60 acres of sand.

We were trying to grow corn. This was back in 1933. Now, any of you, none of you, most of you here won't remember it but a few of you will.

It was a year of drought. And I mean drought. It was so bad that we traded farms every weekend.

Our farm would blow away and somebody else's would blow in. Problem is we always got sand. We never got any decent soil.

I figured in one of those trades we ought to get something worthwhile but we never did. We had a four barbed wire fence at the edge of that field and the cows could walk over it and never trip, never touch it. And we were trying to grow corn.

And we got up at 2.30 in the morning. I'd go out in the barn, didn't even need a ladder. I'd harness old Granny and Topsy and would take them out and hitch them to the cultivator, fill my two quart mason jar with water and get out in the field and as soon as I could spy the little green corn plants I'd start down that field.

Six o'clock we came in. I milked six cows. Father did.

Hired man did. Then we went in to breakfast and we tried to get all that done and get back in the field by seven o'clock. It was 8.30 this day.

My team was so tired they couldn't, I didn't even tie them when I left. They weren't going anywhere. They had a chance to stand and they were going to stand until cows came home.

They were done. And so I just let them stand, took the water bottle, went up, came around and my mother came out of the screen porch and she said, Oh, Sonny, family nickname, I'm so glad to see you. I've got two little errands I'd like to have you do.

Now remember, I was 13 and I had been up every day, every working day at 2.30 and had been cultivating along with the other two and now Mother wants some errands. I did something I hope you don't know anything about. I sassed my mother and she drew back and she spoke again and I sassed her again and she spoke a third time and I said something cutting a third time and you know what she did? She looked at me and she said, Son, I thought you were a Christian.

And she turned and walked back in the house. I went to the pump filled with bravado and I put one pump on the handle of the windmill and I set the quart jar down, two quart jar down. I went out to the barn, down between the mangers, climbed up the ladder into the hay, threw myself down in the valley in the hay and sobbed like a baby because I'd just been born of God about six weeks earlier at Old Methodist Red Rock Holiness Camp meeting and I wanted to please God and I told Him I'd obey Him and the thing He used to show me was lost and I dishonored and disobeyed my parents and now I'd sassed my mother and after a while I stopped sobbing and in my ears I heard as it were the memory of a song we'd sung at camp meeting.

It was peace, perfect peace in this dark world of sin. The blood of Jesus whispers peace within. I confessed my sin over and over again.

God spoke to my heart forgiveness. I knew the blood of Jesus had cleansed me. I got up.

I went down. I asked my mother to forgive me. I did the errands.

I filled my jar. I went back to my team, a wiser young man than ever before because I realized I'd carried a traitor into the Christian life that would betray me. You know who that traitor was? Me.

Me. Nobody else. What happens when we're tempted and we're sinned? Whenever it occurs we have to do our first works again.

This is how He prescribed. Now you are clean through the Word. You come daily to the Word and whenever there's a need we have to judge it and forsake it and confess it and know the cleansing of the precious blood.

And we are to keep consciences void of offense toward God and toward men. Let us bow in prayer. O Father of Jesus, look down upon us here a company of men and women, young men and women, some old, some in youth, but all of us pilgrims to this weary land.

Most of us testified of being born again, having the witness of the Spirit to the new birth. But O Father, so many times something comes in that lies buried like an infection in our bodies. It infects our spirits and our minds and our hearts and it's so costly.

And so tonight we're asking this might be a time of cleansing, a time when we go to the laver and see, to the mirror and see and then we come to that fountain of cleansing. And so we would ask that everyone

here, that anyone here and everyone who may have sensed the Spirit of God speaking will recognize the wisdom of dealing with it now, not at some later time, in such a marvelous opportunity. And so we ask, Father, that the Holy Spirit will breathe upon us and that everything that you want to do will be done for the glory of Christ.

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