

# Being Spiritually Insensitive

by Peter Masters

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*The sermon highlights the problem of spiritual deadness and the need for spiritual sensitivity and awareness, emphasizing the importance of coming to know God and being born again through Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 35:31

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 29:4, Deuteronomy 30:10-12, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Spiritual Awakening", "Trinity Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing one's need for God and valuing what Christ has done for those who need Him. He refers to Deuteronomy chapter 30, verse 10, which speaks about hearkening to the voice of the Lord and turning to Him with all one's heart and soul. The preacher explains that Jesus Christ is God and part of the divine Trinity. He then discusses the spiritual state of the Israelites in the wilderness, highlighting their lack of life and consciousness in their souls, despite witnessing miracles and being part of a church for 38 years. The preacher warns that some individuals may be in a similar spiritually dead state and urges them to awaken and seek God.

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## Transcript

I'm turning now to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 29 and verse 4. Deuteronomy chapter 29 verse 4. These words, Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear unto this day. I'll read it again from verse 2 so that you see the context. And Moses called unto all Israel and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh and unto all his servants and unto all his land.

The great temptations, trials that is, which thine eyes have seen, the signs and those great miracles. Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear unto this day. And this is about being spiritually insensitive.

And this is really one of the most astonishing statements in the Bible. It is quite amazing. It's about spiritual deadness.

When souls are just asleep, motionless, they have not asked for spiritual life and spiritual blessing. This is about what happens when there is an absence of life in the soul. Now these people had been in that wilderness, you know, they came out of Egypt, they were delivered from Egypt by amazing miracles.

They were brought into this wilderness where they were for 38 years. Moses rounds it up to 40 years, quite reasonably. So in a sense, they were members of a church for 38 years, witnesses of amazing things that took place.

Yet they were still, or most of them, in this spiritual stupor, unconsciousness. As one might say, spiritually brain dead, unaware of everything that was going on and what it meant. No vital function at all in the soul.

This is amazing, surely. Imagine in our lives we lost vital functions. Imagine we felt no emotions at all in life.

We could neither love nor hate. We felt nothing about anything. We had no capacity for enjoyment at all in life.

We lost all feelings of any kind and then add to the picture that we lose also our sight and our hearing and our sense of touch. Well, what would be left? How would we communicate? How would we feel or respond? What an impossible situation that would be. And yet that is exactly the situation of these people when viewed spiritually.

This was true, not of their bodies and minds, but certainly of their souls, completely inert and lifeless, in spite of their privileges, in spite of all that they had witnessed. And we may be the same. There may be those here, and if you're described in terms of your soul, this is exactly the case with you.

There is a spiritual emptiness. There's spiritual boredom. It's hard work, really, to secure your attention to any of these things.

Because you're spiritually asleep or even dead, they bore you. Then you have no spiritual expectations. The only spiritual thing that happens to you and in your experience is from time to time your conscience is stirred a little, but usually it's quickly suppressed.

Perhaps there is some activity after all, but it's the activity of a delinquent almost. Towards God and spiritual things there is only fear or hostility, antagonism, ready to criticise, ready to put him aside, ready to find fault if you can in God and dismiss him. Even sometimes expressions of hate are heard.

That's the only sign of life concerning spiritual things. Viewed spiritually, the soul is like a fire that's gone out. We don't light fires in greats these days, but everybody knows something about bonfires, I'm sure.

And you know what it's like when it just goes out and all it'll do is smoke. And you know at this point somehow there's a certain kind of smoke. You know that that is not going to come back to life.

You've had it. It's dead, and that's us spiritually. No activity at all, like a dead torch.

Living death. Is that us? Spiritually dead? And yet, well, your soul is there and it can be brought back to life. And one day in that soul, in that spirit, you'll have to stand before God and give an account of what you've done with your spiritual faculties.

What does Moses mean when he challenges the people? Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, eyes to see, ears to hear. A heart to perceive. Well, an inclination to know, to find out about spiritual things.

That's a feature of being spiritually dead. We don't even want to find out. We haven't got any meaningful, really earnest inquiry at all.

Nothing registered with them. The astonishing things that happen. The provision of food, miraculously.

They couldn't get food in that wilderness. They didn't have to sow and plough. It wouldn't have led to anything anyway.

But it was provided for them for nearly 40 years. And yet it didn't register with them that God was doing this, that their Creator was involved, that this God of whom Moses and others spoke, who was taking them to a land, these things were mightily significant. They owed him their gratitude.

They could relate to him. He would bless them even more. Nothing registered.

They drew no conclusions at all. And it's the same with us so often. Is this the truth with you? Think of these things.

You have no gratitude to God. You wouldn't think really from your heart of thanking God for anything. Your soul is dead and asleep.

You're not sensitive to him. You have no sense of his being there, or perhaps just a little sense sometimes, but nothing realistic. You have no awareness of being watched by him, cared for by him, loved by him.

You have no sense of destiny. You cannot say, I know I am going to heaven. You don't know about those things.

There's no awe and wonder in you at the very thought of God. You don't know about his mighty attributes, what he's like, what he thinks, what he's going to do, what he's planned. No, he's not a mighty God in your estimation.

You have no sense of duty. You're not concerned about becoming a better person or acquiring holiness, to walk before him. You have no desire for him.

Desire for various things in this world, many legitimate things, desire for home and job and all this kind of thing, and well-being for the family, and perhaps this and that recreation, but no glimmering of a desire for God, and for fellowship with him, and for proving him. Well, this was true of them. Amazing when they had seen so much.

Why in verse 2, Moses refers there to the plagues that led to their deliverance, the plagues of Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the various trials they encountered to test their faith when God blessed them, and the giving of the manna, the food, and the provision of water in a wilderness, all these things. Well, they had seen these things, and they'd been preserved, and they'd been given some great victories when enemies would have torn them apart and destroyed them, and yet nothing registered at all with them that God was behind these things. Same with us.

This may be true of you. The wonder of our existence and our being, God doesn't come into our thoughts if we're dead in our souls. The testimony of friends, somebody says, I want you to know about the Lord, this is what he did for me, and you know that friend changed dramatically, marvelously, but it doesn't register with you.

This God is there. I've seen his handiwork in the life of another. I must think seriously about this.

Nothing of that sort. No inquiry. You don't want to know the purpose of life, the meaning of life.

You don't want to know anything. You've no eyes to inquire, says Moses. No ears, no understanding of God.

No heart, no inclination, no desire, no anxiety. That's what it is to be soul dead, and it may be true of you, and if it is, you're in real trouble. You're in trouble in life, and you're in trouble in eternity.

You're an unforgiven person before God. You have no standing with him. You will not have any guidance or help from him.

You'll lumber along in life, making mistake after mistake, as I mentioned the other Sunday, probably you'll make a dreadful marriage, and from that point all kinds of things will go wrong for you, and all the hope for happiness will go away. All kinds of things will go wrong, and you'll age one day without hope, and in spite of all the promises of God and the appeals to your soul, you've never responded. You're unforgiven, and your soul is dead.

It's a terrible tragedy. You'll never know the deep things of God. You'll never have any great discernment about this world.

You won't understand it. You won't know why people behave as they do. All these things are only explained from the book of God.

Any real understanding of man and his ways can only be obtained here by believing these things. You won't know God's plans for your future or for the future. You never asked, and you don't know these things because of the death of the soul.

How unreasonable this is. Oh dear friends, how unreasonable that you don't want to know about God, and you don't want to know about your soul. To have no interest in these things is astonishing.

What's wrong with God? What's wrong with him? The notion, if you like, that there is a creator and a God, and he can come into your life, and he can bless you. What's so terrible about that? Why, if you only think about it, it's the most amazing, astonishing, wonderful thing you could possibly imagine, that the creator of the universe would have his mind and heart upon you, and bless you, and provide for you. And yet, when your soul dead, you recoil away from these things, and you don't want to know.

Why snub the giver of life? Why think you can be happy without him? It's impossible to be truly, deeply, and consistently fulfilled and happy. Well, we have to give some reasons. Why can we be like this? Now friends, I don't want to offend you, and I don't want to insult you.

I'm now going to be walking a tightrope here, because I mean that sincerely. But I have to say some things which are pretty blunt. You may be 20, or you may be 80, and what I'm going to say could apply to you equally well.

One of the great reasons why we are soul dead, and we have no heart to seek, no inclination, is because we are immature. Don't be upset. It is, though, because we are immature.

In what sense are we immature? Well, we're like children. We live in a kind of envelope of unreality and vagueness. You understand it with little children.

They don't want to know how dad or mum can afford to put the food on the table. They're not involved in things like that. They're not involved deeply, in some homes a little, but not deeply, in housework and making things tick and go.

They're little children. They're unconnected with deep responsibilities. They don't bear these things on their shoulders.

In that sense, we are immature. We're like children when it comes to the spiritual dimension and context of life. We just sail along.

Everything's going to happen. Everything's going to come to us. There are no deep things in life to be concerned about or to worry about.

It's a kind of immaturity. We're like people who have no sense of direction. I can sympathise with this.

I don't have a great sense of direction, but I know people who are much worse than me. You put them somewhere, they'll never find the way home. We're like that almost willfully.

We don't know the way home to heaven, the way to God, the way to pray, the way to get forgiveness. We don't know any of these things. There are whole issues of life, and we just sail along unaware of them.

In the case of these Israelites, they had no recall of history. If they just sat down and thought, what's happened to us over 40 years? What have we seen? What have we observed happening? Why, the goodness and the power of God would have been so real to them, but they just sailed along oblivious, unaware. Life just comes to me.

It just happens. I don't have to do anything. We're not like that with material life, but we are with spiritual life, when we're soul dead.

You get this today, don't you? They tell us, the newspapers, that in various surveys and so on, where pictures are shown to people. Who's this? Who's this? Well, if the picture being shown is some show business personality, they find about 70% or plus. I don't know the precise figures, but you've seen it as well as me.

70% plus knows who that person is and can identify that person. Well, show a cabinet minister or somebody in high office of state, and only 2% know who it is. Isn't that amazing? People just sail along.

You can't blame people not being interested in politics. I appreciate that, but it's an illustration. We sail along oblivious, unaware of things which actually ought to matter.

Life is a dream. And in that sense, if you have no spiritual life, it is to a large extent due to a degree of immaturity in you. When it comes to real life, its significance, its purpose, its meaning, its destiny, switch off.

There's a bit of a child in every one of us. And don't be offended. We have to face it.

That's the truth. And so, because we're immature, we're ignorant of God. We couldn't name or list his mighty attributes.

We don't know there's a gulf between us and God because of our sin. We don't know the way that that gulf has been bridged by Christ and how we can come into communion with God. We don't know about grace.

We don't know about the blessings of the Christian life. We could be 50 and never have we inquired into these things, partly because of a kind of immaturity in us. Please don't switch off as though I'm being offensive.

Really, I'm trying to help. We have to face these things, I'm sure. And then here's a second thing which is closely related to the first.

We are spiritually dead because we are so preoccupied with the present. That's everything to us. We have limited horizons.

We're like fish swimming about in a small bowl. I've always been a bit worried about that. People welcome to do so, of course.

It's a very beautiful thing. The bigger the tank, the better, I think. Because if you see fish in a small bowl, do you? I always feel sorry for them.

That's their world. They're now limited. That's all they've got.

But that's just like us, completely preoccupied with life in a bowl of materialism. Nothing outside, nothing bigger, and yet we're so excited by it and so interested in it, chasing our dreams round and round. Well, it's a preoccupation with the present.

Strange contentment of the Israelites. What a strange contentment to be shut into that wilderness, not trusting the God who was providing for them to lead them out. And when he sought to lead them out the first time, though God knew exactly what would happen, believe it or not, they didn't want to go.

What a life in a wilderness. They didn't want to go to the place provided for them, because they were frightened of it, and they were frightened of what they might encounter. And exactly the same with us.

We won't break out of the present, the here and now, just material interests, because we're scared of God. And I'll come on to say why we've got this strange immaturity in us. We know that if we get involved with Almighty God, we're going to have to submit to his standards.

We know we won't be able to just indulge our lusts or do what we want to do. And this leads me, you see, to this third problem. We are so jealous for our self-determination.

This is the third problem behind our spiritual deadness. We'll pay any price for this. Leave us in the wilderness.

Leave us in our goldfish bowl. Leave us limited to material things. As long as we're doing what we want, we don't mind how limited it is.

But if we think our lives are going to be taken over by God, and we're coming under his rule or direction, and he will make our major decisions for us, and not us. No! Under no circumstances. And we'll pay any

price to keep our self-determination.

How suspicious those people were of Moses. How sensitive to every instruction. How unwilling to listen.

It's human nature. It's the same with us. I am not going to be dictated to.

Why, in our present day and age, we've got post-modernity. Isn't it great, you know? Not only is it, I will not do anything that anyone tells me to do. I want to have any opinion I want to have, whether it's right or wrong, it doesn't matter.

We're all entitled to do what we like, and to think what we like. However ridiculous it may seem to others. However untenable.

Why, we've advanced this self-determination today to this extreme point. And that's what it's like. Suspicious of authority.

You're talking about conversion? You're talking about coming to know God? What will this mean to me? What will this mean to my doing what I want to do in the way I want to do it? Now that's true. And I know this is offensive. But you know, if your soul is dead, you're like this.

These are the kind of things that keep you without any desire to inquire or to come to Jesus Christ to be a saviour and a lord. You'd have to conform to his teaching. And this is a deep-seated issue with us.

When we're spiritually dead and we're away from God, we'd rather have sin in the wilderness. We'd rather have sin with a very limited life. We'd rather have sin with discontent, unhappiness, disappointments, no God, no destiny, no heaven.

We'd rather have our self-determination. But we're so casual, aren't we? When we're spiritually dead, I know I was, no sense of danger. We're so vague, so reluctant to focus on spiritual facts, so afraid of this message of repentance and God changing us and making us different people and better people and taking over our lives.

Well, will you remain spiritually dead? Do you want to stay that way at great risk of eternal rejection by God? Do you want to stay incomplete as people, flesh and blood only, physical life only, no spiritual life? Do you want to stay unforgiven by God under his condemnation, no control over your sin, your do as you are tempted, physical life only, without knowing why you're here or where you're going? Really, do you want to stay in that state and condition? That's what this is all about. Moses saying to the people, yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear unto this day. What a sad, sad statement.

Isn't it awful? And yet it may be true of many in our congregation here tonight. But this is a chapter, and so is the next one, about covenant. It's a beautiful word in the Bible.

I'm not going into it in detail, but these are chapters about covenant, covenant as we find it in the Bible. It's about solemn agreement with pledges. It's about close relationship.

It means this, it's a chapter which is talking about closeness to God, being his children, being his subjects, being in his care, God pledging himself to our care and protection, and us pledging ourselves to him, becoming a member of the family, as it were. It's a wonderful chapter. It's about finding him and knowing him and belonging to him.

And this can happen because of Jesus Christ. We are condemned, but he came. Oh, dear friends, I try to put these things across week after week.

Who was Jesus Christ? He was God. In what way was he God? Well, there is one God, and the one God, mysteriously and wonderfully, has three persons in the Godhead, equally divine, sharing the same divine essence, equally eternal, equally powerful. One is called the Father.

The other is called, in this book of God, the Son, Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, but quite equal, not like a son in our reckoning, inferior, who once wasn't in existence, but then was born. Yes, he was born into this world. He took upon himself human flesh and personality, but viewed in eternity, he is in every sense equal with the Father.

And then there is the Holy Spirit. And in those, in the three members of the one Godhead, in what we call an eternal council, why it was determined that Christ, the second person of the Trinity, would come into this world in order to be a saviour and a sin-bearer for us, that he would represent us and he would be impossibly, horrifically punished. There would be laid upon him all the punishments, the eternal punishment due to us for our sin, that is, if we are those who trust in him and belong to him, and he would suffer on our behalf.

He would take that eternal torment that we should deserve, that we should take ourselves, so that by doing that, he would buy the right to forgive us and bless us and change us and make us his own people, bringing us spiritually to life. That was vital. That was necessary.

God cannot just say, I push aside that man, that woman's sin. I just will disregard it, because he is perfectly just and perfectly holy. He must punish the sin.

How then can he be a loving, forgiving God, and a holy and a just God at the same time? Oh, God has solved that problem by coming himself in Jesus Christ and taking that punishment on our behalf. Why we are so dead, we deserve nothing, we are immature and ignorant and foolish and opposed to God, but Christ, in amazing mercy, has come to make provision for our salvation. That is so astonishing.

That is so wonderful. How can I possibly go on in my immature way if I am unsaved, just sailing along oblivious concerning my soul and eternal life? How can I possibly cling on to my little bit of self-determination, rather than have God, when he has done such amazing things, in mighty love, to provide for me? Christ was moved at my situation and yours. Christ had pity upon us.

He saw our lives stretched out before us. He saw what we were doing to ourselves, and he determined that he would come and suffer great humiliation on earth and go to the cross of Calvary to take our punishment for us. He saw our years being wasted and our youth passing away, and he saw us going through the ageing process, lost, hopeless, unconnected with himself, with ever-hardening hearts, and he came in order to purchase our souls and die on Calvary for us.

When you read this, it is amazing. After all they had seen, no heart, no inclination, no desire for God, nothing, and yet God is still ready to pardon and forgive. You've got to see your need, friends.

You've got to inquire into these things. You've got to see the state of your soul, and you've got to value above all other things what Christ, the Saviour, has done for those who need him. This is the message that I have to bring before you this evening, and I'm going to move to conclusion with just some reference to the next chapter.

It's chapter 30. Look at verse 10. If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his commandments and his statutes, you can't do it, but that's what you want to do, which are written in this book of the law.

And if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul. I just picked that out of its context for a moment. How do I change all this? How do I find God? How do I come to him? How do I know the forgiveness of Christ and new life? If I ask him, if I begin to pray, is there any guarantee that he will hear me? Yes, he will hear if you really mean it.

If you've come to see your need and you desire this experience of conversion, communion with God with all your heart, there is no doubt about it. That's the secret. With all your heart, then he'll hear you and he'll bless you and he'll deal with you.

And I look at the 11th verse. For this commandment which I command thee this day, this is quoted by Paul in his letter to the Romans, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. We are not asking a difficult thing, says God, for you to desire conversion and forgiveness and new life and blessing.

This thing, just to come and repent and ask, it's not a hard thing to do so that you have to journey far and so on. Verse 12, it is not in heaven that thou should say, who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us? This blessing is so available. Verse 13, neither is it beyond the sea that thou should say, who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it.

It's not going to require you to make an international search or anything difficult, nothing like that. It's so easy to repent. It's so easy to turn to the Lord.

Verse 14, but the word, the word of repentance and yielding to Christ is very nigh unto thee in thy mouth and in thy heart that thou mayest do it. You've only got to say it and mean it. Lord, forgive me.

I turn over my life entirely. I believe in Christ and him alone. You've only got to say it and mean it.

It's in your mouth. It's in your heart. It's as easy as that, as long as you're sincere.

And I read verse 19, I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you these alternatives, life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live. This is the ultimate life and death matter, whether we turn, repent, ask God, trust in Christ and what he has done and yield our lives to him.

All that you may get at heart to perceive, a desire to seek God and to find him. If you can't feel, this is my closing advice to you, if you can't feel a need and if you can't feel any desire, is that the end for you? No. Here's the wonder of God.

Just ask him for it. Just find a quiet place, even tonight. Go and open your heart to him.

Say, Lord, I feel nothing. I'm just as Martin Luther would have said, a fool, an adult. Nothing moves in my heart.

Lord, open my eyes. Give me desire. Give me a sense of need.

Show me my sinfulness. Show me my temper, my selfishness, my evil thoughts. Show me everything that's wrong.

Bring me running and deeply concerned. Lord, give me this feeling that I need. Don't let me hold back any longer.

Lord, give me understanding and bless me that I shall come. I'm always saying this to people. You won't go down the high street and look in the windows of the shops and see a sign which reads, if you cannot afford this and you've got no money at all, just come in and ask us for the money and we'll give it to you, so that you can buy the goods.

You'll never see that, but that's exactly how God works. Ask me, call upon me, even for the right outlook and desire and understanding and feeling, the feeling of shame, so that I can repent. And if you ask him sincerely, he'll give you even that, so that you can close with him and go to him and seek him and find him.

Let's pray together. Oh God, our gracious heavenly Father, look upon us, every one of us. Thou knowest our hearts, thou knowest our rebellion, thou knowest our foolishness, yes, even our immaturity.

And oh Lord, we pray that thou will move our hearts now and draw us to Jesus Christ and bring us to him, that we may be saved and that we may know thee. We ask it in his name, for his sake. Amen.

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