

A Defensive Heart (Mark 8_34)

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the importance of overcoming defensiveness and being willing to let God bring a death to self in order to experience spiritual maturity and the benevolent heart of Christ.

Duration: 1:12:32

Scripture: Mark 8:34, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Heart", "Defensiveness", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. delivers a heartfelt sermon on the necessity of confronting our defensiveness and the barriers it creates between us and God. He emphasizes that while God loves us, He also corrects us for our growth and maturity, urging us to recognize and address the sins that hinder our relationship with Him. The message highlights the importance of vulnerability and the willingness to accept God's rebuke as a path to deeper spiritual fulfillment. Beach Jr. encourages the congregation to seek a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit by letting go of self-preservation and embracing the cross, which leads to true life in Christ.

Transcript

And I assure you that if I minister in tears, they're the tears of the Lord because it's tears of love. But I just want to be able to minister this morning a message that the Lord put upon my heart and the precious presence of the Lord this morning makes it more difficult to minister this message because it is a message from the Lord's heart helping us to understand why often times the power and presence of the Lord and the water that comes from his throne is withheld from our lives. And it's a very hard message to preach because we don't like to minister in a corrective manner but sometimes we have to.

Jesus said, as many as I love I rebuke and chasten. So I believe that the Lord is truly, truly moving in our hearts and he's moving in our lives in the most incredible ways. How many have testified to that? The most incredible and powerful ways.

But I believe that the Lord has an even greater and more abundant and more fuller outpouring of his spirit for you and I. Not just when we come together as a church but in our own private lives and in our personal lives. And I believe that this morning the Lord wants us to be able to understand what his chief desire is in our lives and in understanding it and in making it an issue of prayer. I believe that the Lord, and I assure you that if I minister in tears, they're the tears of the Lord because it's tears of love.

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So I believe that the Lord is truly, truly moving in our hearts and he's moving in our lives in the most incredible ways. How many have testified to that? The most incredible and powerful ways. But I believe that the Lord has an even greater and more abundant and more fuller outpouring of his spirit for you and I, not just when we come together as a church, but in our own private lives and in our personal lives.

And I believe that this morning the Lord wants us to be able to understand what his chief desire is in our lives and in understanding it and in making it an issue of prayer. I believe that the Lord can work in us something that can result in a greater receptivity to the moving of his Holy Spirit and to his will in an everyday experience and even in his will when we come together because the Lord Jesus is here and he wants to go forth into every seat and do wonderful things but many times he can and he won't. Because he waits.

He waits. Now, I want to first of all, before we're going to be reading in Mark, but I want to first of all, I want to just read a list of sins. I want to read a list of sins.

Now, I'm going to be mentioning these things in contemporary language and possibly when you hear the word you might not associate it with sin, the word sin, but these are sins. The Bible calls them sins. You know, for example, adultery is called now extramarital affair.

God calls it adultery. He calls it a sin. You see what I'm saying? Recall today, I have a little problem with my tongue.

The Bible calls it a gossip. You see what I'm saying? We've made things sound a little bit nicer in this day that we live. And unfortunately many times what it does is it takes away the power from the word of God.

But I want to read a list of several things that the Lord mentions in the Bible that we need to be aware of as Christians. You see, beloved, the Lord Jesus is such a wonderful Lord. Our God and Father, if we are truly children of God, He's a wonderful God.

He's a wonderful Lord. He has saved us with an everlasting salvation. But you know, there's a time in our lives when the Lord deals with us in a very loving and a very wonderful way.

But then there's a time in our life when the Lord begins to say alright now. We have to begin to deal with things. And this morning is one of those messages that the Lord put upon our heart that I would like to just present to you that we might consider this morning.

Now listen closely. I'm going to mention a bunch of things here that probably relate to most of us. Overprotectiveness.

Selfish human love. Tendencies to shelter a loved one from the real life. Complacency.

Apathy. Spiritual insensitivity. Hard heartedness.

Abuse of grace and liberty to the point of using it as a free license to the flesh. Disputing. Jealousy.

Envy. Contention. Sharpness of tongue.

Unkind. Unloving words. In relationships with husband, wife, children, employer, employee, friends, loved ones, relatives.

The tendency of preeminence of self. Self exaltation. Self promotion.

The vaunting of personality. A controlling, domineering, personality. Clicks with friends.

Exclusiveness. More special than you. More spiritual than you.

Our attitudes, ideas. A gossiping, backbiting tongue. Loss of the flesh.

Loss of the eyes. And loss and pride of life. Now we've mentioned an innumerable list here which can go on and on and on.

And these are sins of the flesh that each and every one of us have struggled with, are struggling with and often times constitute a great problem in our Christian life. The purpose of this morning's message is twofold. Number one, it is to identify these things as they are and number two, it is to present to you the biblical solution to these devastating destructive struggles.

Now the first thing we have to stop doing is we have to stop pretending that they're not there. Or we have to stop pretending that the Lord doesn't mind. Now understand that when God deals with his children I'm not talking about a sinner.

I'm not talking about one who has no hope. But when God deals with one of his children, one of those who are purchased by his blood, he does it for one reason. We mentioned it last Sunday, the last Sunday before.

It's for redemptive purpose. God deals with us in order to redeem, reconcile, in order to restore, in order to bring us closer to himself. And consequently in our Christian life there comes a time when the Lord will begin to minister to us individually and corporately as he did in the book of Revelation to the seven churches in a very clear and concise manner.

And basically what the Lord does is he comes to us in his timing, in his way, in his sovereign hand through the world, through circumstances, and he says, okay, these things that I just read to you, the Lord will come through his word and by the Holy Spirit and say, let's begin to consider these things. And let's begin to find in him and in his blessed, wonderful redemption, freedom on a continual basis. Now what we're going to do this morning is we're going to show how this list, okay, this list right here, is something that's right in the book of Mark.

Matter of fact, that's exactly where I got this list from, the book of Mark. Now, how many here can relate to these struggles? Okay, here's what we're going to do this morning by the help of God's grace. Once we relate to these struggles, we're going to begin to sow a seed in our heart.

The seed is the word of God. And here's what this seed is going to produce in every heart that receives the seed. First of all, we're going to become more and more aware of these sins as the very barriers that often times stand between us and the Lord in relation to that close relationship that we long for Him.

Now understand this, God gives a period of grace to all of His children. There's a period of grace and we're going to see that period of grace right in the New Testament here. Jesus, the way He dealt with His disciples.

And this morning what we're going to see is not only the benevolence and kindness of God in granting each one of His children a period of grace where in spite of these things God's rich and abundant blessing abounds and there seems to be an incredible unveiling of His glorious person to our souls in spite of this. But that's not the ultimate purpose of God. The ultimate purpose of God is to bring each child of God into what? Maturity.

Into adulthood. So what we're going to see this morning and we have seen for two years an incredible Savior who loves us in spite of ourselves. Haven't we? We've seen an incredible Savior who says there is therefore now no condemnation and guess what? That still remains true.

There's no condemnation. We've seen an incredible Savior that has come and poured out His Spirit and we say, oh my God how could you have done this to me with so many things that I find myself unable to overcome. Well see there's the goodness and benevolence of God and that'll never stop.

But now we see a Savior who says okay, now I want to show you how there's a time in every child's life when the Father says, let's put away the things that hinder and let's find victory over besetting sins and weights that so easily so readily and so quickly put us down. Now I want to ask you a question. How many here have attended now listen, I have to be honest I have to be honest this morning I wept I wept when God put this on my heart.

But now you pray for me because this is a struggle in my life and here's the struggle to obey God in everything. How many here have a tendency to be defensive? Defensiveness. This is something that we all can relate to.

You know defensiveness is so inbred in the human heart we many times don't even see it operating in our life. When God began to show me in the word the defensiveness was so bad. We're defensive with our wives when they seek the welfare of our being and possibly offer some corrective criticism.

Wives seek the defense to defend themselves from their husband. Children defend themselves parents defend themselves from their children's innocent accusation, don't they? Do you ever have a child come up and say in so many words, Daddy how come there's such an inconsistency in your life? You say one thing and you do the other thing. Well you're not supposed to ask those kind of questions.

You know, what a holy answer. I mean, that's something Jesus would say, isn't it? Or, Mom, how come you tell me not to raise your voice and I'm constantly hearing you scream at me? Well, because I'm the mom. Mom! You see what I'm saying here? Defensiveness.

Now let me tell you something. Do you know what it is to be an adult? Do you know what it is to grow up as a Christian? It's not to go to seminary and get a PhD. It's not to get a national radio program.

Become a famous evangelist. It's not to take a few courses on public speaking and be able to put a good homiletical sermon together. No.

You want me to tell you the root? Want me to tell you when you can know that you're beginning to grow up in God? When you let Jesus take the axe to the root of your defensiveness and you forever lay it down and become vulnerable to God. Now you want me to show you the scriptural term for this word defensiveness? Now it's going to shock many of us. Mark chapter 8. Please endure this morning.

Please endure. Before I even get into the message, I'm going to show you what we must pray and ask God to do if we are to enter into adulthood and put off the childish ways. Remember what Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 13? When I was a child, what did I do? Everything that children do.

But when I was an adult, what did I do? I put off the childish ways. I tell you, one of the greatest tendencies in the heart of a child, and unfortunately as adults, we never grow out of it. It's an immediate defense when anything will come and interrogate their life.

And this is the same thing that happens with us in God. But you know, I just, I don't see really young believers in the sense of weak in faith, but I want to say before we go any more, you have to understand, if you are not a child of God, I want to say to you with tears in my eyes, that there is no hope for you. There is no hope for you apart from Jesus Christ.

He alone provides forgiveness of sin. He alone provides a way out of eternal damnation. He alone.

The Bible says that if you come to Him with a sincere heart and call upon Him, inviting Him to become your Savior, acknowledging your wretchedness before Him, inviting Him to become your Savior, asking Him to save your soul, beloved, He will indeed save your soul from the damnation and consequences of sin. But apart from that, if you're here this morning and you know in your heart, maybe I don't know, and you know in your heart that you're not one of His, then I just want to encourage you, I want to encourage you to consider Jesus Christ. Now if you are a child of God, if you are a child of God, that is if you've been born again, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, doesn't matter if it happened at Dunkin Donuts this morning before you came.

If you know that you're a child of God and you've accepted Jesus and He's accepted you, then beloved, what is going to be said this morning is not intending to destroy you as a person, but to build you as a Christian. And whatever is exposed in the resources and in the reservoirs of your heart this morning, is not intended by God, the Holy Spirit, to come and condemn you and to bring you into a feeling of condemnation and hopelessness, but the exact opposite. It is to share abroad an abundance of hope in your life, so that you can recognize that though you may be laden with these things, through Jesus Christ and through the ministry of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, you can be free.

When God reveals to the child of God a wretched part of the heart, a pattern, and you see it for what it is, an evil, pernicious leaven that is destroying relationships with family, at work, when you see this, if you are a child of God, you see it being free from the fear of being condemned eternally because of this. You're saved. That's why Jesus saved you.

He saved you from the consequence of your sin. Now He wants to deliver you from the dominion of it. But you're free.

You're secure in Christ. You don't have to fear the wrath of God. God doesn't speak to His children in a corrective manner in order to threaten them, lest they come under the hand of His angry wrath.

No! That's the beauty of being a child of God. So please, don't allow the devil or your own weak heart to condemn you. Allow God to bring you to your knees and to work a greater brokenness in your life so that you can be honest.

When was the last time you said to somebody, I'm sorry, it's my fault, I was wrong and you helped me in this area of my life? Don't answer it. Just think about it. Hey, there's some maturity.

You show me a man that can come up to someone and say, I'm sorry, it's my fault. And I'll show you a man that I'll sit and talk to. Not because he's perfect, but because there's something in his heart that's been wrong.

When was the last time you hurt someone and instead of waiting six months to tell them you're sorry, your conscience was so sensitive, you went in tears to them and said, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. There's maturity.

I don't want to drown you again. I don't want to drown you. I don't want you to feel, oh my God, no.

No, just relax. Just relax and see the inheritance that is yet before us. You see, this is part of the inheritance.

Don't struggle. Just relax and say, wow, you mean this is what God has in store for me? Yes, it is. Yes, it is.

I don't know how I'm going to do it. Well, did you get where you are by your own doing? No. So, how are you going to get here? By His doing.

The only thing God's going to do in your heart is make you willing. But before we can become willing to be free from these wretched things, we have to realize them, and then the prayer. God makes us willing.

You know, when you meet a 22-year-old kid who's supposed to be an adult, but he acts like a 13-year-old, normally it's because he just never became willing to grow up and accept responsibility. And that's the way it is many times with the children of God. And one of the reasons why is because we fail to understand what we have to be willing to do, or what we have to be willing to let God do in order to become grown-up Christians in the Lord.

So that's what we're doing this morning. We're going to sow seeds into the Lord's vineyard, and then you know what? They're in His hands, and they're going to bring forth fruit 30, 60, and 100-fold. Mark chapter 8, verse 34.

This is the Scripture that defines not only the tendency to be defensive, but it also happens to be the root source that brings life to every one of these sins that I read a little earlier before. This is the root right here. If we if we suddenly walked into an office, and we saw on the door, counselor.

And we walked in as the counselees, and we sat down, and we waited for the counselor to come out. And all of a sudden, the door opened, and we saw this incredibly indescribable human being with a white robe. And he looked at us and said, you know who I am, and we realized it to be Jesus.

This is what I believe would happen in the office. Mark chapter 8, verse number 34. And when he had called the people with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, and the gospels, the same shall save it. And may I suggest that we reread verse number 35, but use contemporary language, not in any way to disavow the word of God, but perhaps it will click. For whosoever will be defensive in this life, and constantly be defending himself and denying, and not letting his heart and his mind and his motives become an open book to God, and to the circumstances and people that God brings into our life to accomplish that very thing.

This person shall lose his life. Lose his life, meaning, and this is how we understand Scripture, we interpret Scripture by Scripture. We don't need to guess, but what does Jesus mean? How can a Christian, here's what Jesus is saying, if a Christian is defensive toward the sovereign people and circumstances that God brings into their life, and seeks to save his own neck, so to speak, rather than to let God bring a death to self, that Christian will not know the depths of Christ's life in that area.

If I am unwilling to share because I am defensive, I am seeking to save my selfishness, then I will never know experientially though eagerly the benevolent heart of Christ who is willing to give his all. It was mine to know experientially because I'm a child of God. The inheritance is mine.

It's the hope of my calling. But if in the daily walk with God and the daily appropriation of this grace into my life, if I continue to be defensive and I say, no, I don't want to know Christ's selflessness. I don't want to know the benevolence of God.

If I seek to save my own selfishness, I will lose his life in that area. I will not know his benevolence. Now this is very simply what the Scripture means.

Galatians, be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. If we sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap destruction.

Now how many have seen that selfishness brings destruction to a person's life? It's not talking about eternal damnation when it refers to a child of God. We've been delivered from wrath. We've been delivered from the damnation of sin.

But we've not been delivered from the law of sowing and reaping. How many little children have to learn the bitter lesson? And if you're in a Christian home, what an object lesson you can teach your children. We enjoy teaching the little ones.

They have learned that when they are selfish, the blessing of the Lord oftentimes is withheld or limited. But when they learn to be benevolent and they give, God gives to them. So they have to face a crisis on a daily basis.

Children have to. And this is how you make the Scriptures understandable by little children. And Debbie knows that.

You've got to really break it up, don't you? So they understand. This is how you teach a child. You bring them to the Scriptures and say, Jesus said, if you seek to save your life, you're going to lose it.

In other words, if you continue to want to be selfish with your toys and not ask Jesus to help you know the joy of sharing, then you're going to lose that opportunity, at least for this moment. Now God might give it to you, but He might wait for two years. You see, you don't tell God what to do and when to do it.

God help me, I don't want to get too long and too in depth. But when God deals with His children, it's He's the one initiating. The old timers had this revelation.

They knew if God was stirring someone about a sin in church and they resisted, you might not be able to go to God at night and give that sin to Him. He might not be calling it. He gives the grace, He gives the power.

It's His choice. That's why it's so important when God moves to say, Lord, give me a responsive heart. Because see, it's the Lord who grants space of repentance.

Understand? I'm trying not to make it theological. Trying to bring it right down to where we are. For example, for example, if I am in my car ready to go and I'm going somewhere in the morning and in the evening.

Okay? And I say to my daughter, Christina, and I say, I'm initiating. I'm her father. I'm inviting.

I'm saying, Christina, would you like to come with me? And she says, well, maybe. I'm not sure. I say, what's wrong? She got into a fight with her friend and I said, oh, Christina, I'm sorry but if you want to come with me, you're going to have to make up with your friend.

No, I'm not going to do it. Okay, fine. I'm going to go.

Okay. She missed the opportunity that I gave her at that time. So I take off and all during the afternoon, she's struggling.

She's struggling. Oh, God. I should have, I should have, you know, I should have done it.

I should have made up with the friend. I could have went with Daddy. And then she's struggling through the day and all of a sudden, she comes to the driveway and she sees me in the car again.

And she runs over to me but she sees that I pull out and I just take off and she said, well, why didn't Daddy ask me to go again? You see, because I didn't invite her. I wanted her to go with me in the morning. See? So the idea here is when God stirs our heart, when God begins to stir our spirit, listen, He's merciful.

Oh, is He merciful. He's long-suffering. He never gives up.

He never gets discouraged. But let me tell you something. When God says it's time to grow up, His mercy's not cut off.

But you see a new side of your Father. You see a firm Lord. A firm God.

You see one that doesn't cut off His mercy but one who deals strongly and sternly. That's what you see. You see a Lord that says I stirred you on this day to drop it and you said no to me.

Two days later and now you're coming to me saying, Lord, give me that same anointing. Because you know that you can't let go of something unless God gives you the grace. You know it.

Unless God stirs the water, you could jump in as much as you want and you're just going to come out wet, not healed. You know the old saying. The stirring of the water is God's presence.

God initiates it. You could regret it and say, ah Lord, my, my, I should have done it then and you can come to God and say, alright Lord I'm ready now. God says, well I'm not.

What are you going to do? You say, well God wouldn't do that. He does. Now listen, He doesn't do it to be spiteful.

He does it to teach you a lesson. He does it to teach you you're subordinate to Him. He's not subordinate to you.

You see, you don't come to God when you're ready. Alright Lord, I'm ready for that that you talk to me about a couple of things. Now listen, God will deal with us in that manner when we're children.

See, because He knows we don't know any better. He knows we're children. He understands our frame is but dust.

That's why Paul was so compassionate toward the Corinthian believers who, they had gotten into such a mess, hadn't they? Ah, there were so many things going on there, but the compassion of the Lord was rich. Paul loved Him. He called Him His dear little children.

And God loves us and God considers us His dear little children. But God wants His dear little children to become mature sons and daughters. So some of you are experiencing the very things that the Word of God is speaking of this morning.

You've sensed almost a different kind of dealing in your life. You've wondered why God just doesn't work in the way He used to. You know, as young Christians, you could just ask God for just about anything and He'd give it to you.

If it was reasonable. Why does He do that? He builds your faith. He shows you how faithful He is.

He shows you how wonderful His love is, how it's so unconditional. He just pours out the blood. I remember as a young Christian, I mean, you know, praying to God to get money for a Christian concert and He'd give it to you.

Just to show you how much He loves you. But oh, the time of adoption comes. In the Bible, adoption was not taking a child that wasn't yours into your family.

It was taking your child and adopting him as a son. In other words, acknowledging his maturity. See, and this is what the Holy Spirit wants.

He's got wonderful children all over the world. But He's looking, He's looking to deal with His children as sons and daughters so they can grow and walk in union with their what? Elder brother. The Lord Jesus Christ.

And share in His sufferings. Share in His unreservedly, unreserved commitment. Not my will, but Thy will be done, Father in Heaven.

And walk away from that which we know God says no to. And follow the way of the cross. Being misunderstood, laughed at.

What's wrong? You know what I mean? What's wrong? Legalistic? What's wrong? Do you think that's wrong? No, I don't think it's wrong. The Lord blesses you. I thank the Lord that He's blessing you.

You know, but I just I just can't do that now. I have to do this. You know, all that God would be able to open our ears.

See, this is the call this morning. This is the call this morning. But whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, and the gospels the same shall save it.

Ah. Now we see the flip side of the coin. Whosoever shall be willing.

Jesus said in John 7, 17. If any man is willing to hear my word, the same shall know. Wow.

What truth. The same shall know whether the doctrine that I speak is of God, or whether it's not. Jesus brought the whole matter of being able to hear the word of God.

Not hear it, but hear it. He brought it right down to the heart. Do you want to hear it? Or are you resisting the Holy Spirit? If you are, you're not going to hear it.

You're going to hear what you want to hear. So when James says, be ye doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving yourself, what James was simply saying was, make sure that you don't allow yourself to stray so that you become unwilling or you become defensive because when you do, your eyes become blinded, your ears become stopped. And you hear the word and you don't.

You see the things of God, but you don't. See, Jesus brought it right down to a heart problem. You ever meet someone, I just can't see that.

And maybe you're confronting them about a problem in their life. The Bible says, if any man is overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. Be meek.

Be gentle because you're flesh too. I mean, don't correct a person as if you got your feet don't smell. You understand? Your feet smell just as much as theirs.

But did you ever try and correct a person, I just can't see it. I just can't see it. And the whole world sees it but them.

Okay, what's the problem? Here's what the problem is. They're unwilling to see it. That's what sin does.

It blinds you. It's self deception. See? It's the heart problem.

Again, it's a heart problem. Oh, now we know why there's so much emphasis in the book of Proverbs on the heart. Guard your heart.

Guard it. Paul told Timothy, guard the gift of God. Guard that work that God's doing.

Guard that intimate relationship, Paul's saying to Timothy. Guard that closeness that the Lord has in your life. Guard it, Timothy.

Guard it. That's precious. Paul's saying, that's a rare commodity, young Timothy.

And when you get a little bit older, you're going to see, as you expand your ministry and you go to and fro, you're going to see that it's a rare commodity for someone's heart to really be the Lord's. Because Paul was beginning to see the love of many was waxing cold. Insensitivity.

Hardness of heart. What's a hard heart? An unwilling heart. That's what it is.

Now, here's the icing on the cake. You cannot, independent of God, have a willing heart. You say, oh, I'm just going to keep a willing heart.

No, you're not. No, you're not. Here's how you keep a willing heart before God.

You stay before God. You stay before God. God gives you a willing heart as you stay before Him.

A willing heart is not sustained by willpower. A willing heart is sustained by a glance and a continual beholding of the Lord's glory. It's relationship with Christ that brings a willing heart.

Defensiveness. We're going to really break it down. Bird food.

Seeds. Defensiveness. Defensiveness.

No. I won't see it. I won't hear it.

I won't become vulnerable. I won't consider the possibility of being wrong. Maturity is characterized by men and women coming before God and saying, Lord, I'm a defensive person.

But I thank you that you love me even though I'm defensive. You don't condone my defensiveness, but you love me. I thank you, Lord, that your goodness and kindness toward me has prevailed in spite of my defensiveness.

But Lord, I want to grow up. And the main problem that will prevent me from growing up is defensiveness. Jesus was God.

And He just became vulnerable. Now watch this. Mark.

Mark. We're just going to read some scriptures now. Chapter 8. Mark.

Chapter 8. Beginning in verse 27. And Jesus went out and His disciples into the town's ossuary of Philippi. And by the way, He asked His disciples saying unto them, What do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist, but some say Elijah, and others one of the prophets.

And He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answered and said unto Him, Thou art the Christ. The Father made known to Peter who Jesus was, correct? Was it because his heart was mature and perfect in God's eyes? Nope. Okay, that's clear.

Peter saw the Son of God because the Father opened His eyes. Here's what grace is. God makes Himself known in spite of what lurks within.

So we have here a man that Jesus reveals Himself to. Verse 31. I love Jesus' teaching.

He never beats around the bush. He's concise, always loving, clear, and never makes a mistake. Now here's this man that God just revealed Himself to.

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and of the chief priests and scribes and be killed. Well, verse 32, and He spake that saying openly and Peter took Him. Huh.

Peter took the Son of God. Interesting. And began to rebuke Him.

Now that's a switch. Jesus rebuked God. We've done that, haven't we? But when He had turned around, now we know why Peter rebuked Jesus.

In another portion of Scripture we read that Peter told Jesus, Jesus, no way. No way. You're not going to be hurt.

You're not going to be killed. I'm not going to let this happen to you. Here's what Jesus said.

But when He had turned about and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter saying, Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. And then Jesus goes into this very interesting discourse that we read in the opening. What was Jesus introducing here? What was the principle that Jesus was introducing here? Okay, here's what it is.

Very simple. Jesus was introducing the principle of grace, I'm going to open your eyes and show you who I am. And then the cross.

Grace and then the cross. Grace, thou art Christ. Yet He had all of this stuff lurking in His heart.

The cross. Peter, I want you to become a man of God. And I want you to follow Me and lose your life.

Both physically and the inbred self-life. I want you to put that aside. I want you to follow Me.

I'm calling you to be a man. So we see here in the Word of God, right from Jesus' own lips, the unchanging fashion in which He deals with His own. He takes you from the glory of... Wow! How many have had that experience? Wow! God showed you something.

Wow! Thou art the Christ of... Wow! You're the God of all mercy, the God of all grace, the God of all comfort. To... Oh Lord. Lord, You're asking me to take up my... You're asking me to put down my defenses.

Lord, You're asking me to become vulnerable. Lord, You're asking me to... You're asking me to just put everything on the altar and let You just have open heart surgery. Lord, You're asking me not to get mad when people make fun of me.

Lord, You're asking me to accept a rebuke, even when it's not right, in a spirit of love. Lord! What are You saying? Adulthood. Adulthood.

Maturity. Being like Jesus. Putting the bottle down.

And eating the strong meat. We knew... We knew one minister. We knew one minister back in Phoenix, Arizona, who used to keep behind his pulpit a calf's bottle.

You ever see a calf bottle that the baby calves drink milk? It's about this big, big, red nipple. And he used to take it up and shake it like this and say, Time to get off the milk! It was funny. I have to admit it was a good illustration.

Good illustration. Wasn't Peter, wasn't Paul distressed? He was, over the Corinthians. He said, Listen, I want to feed you meat.

What's the meat? Hey, are we going to come out with some interpretation? Scripture interprets Scripture. What's the meat? Jesus said, I have meat that you know not of. See, the disciples when they were living in the realm of... Now, I don't want to be misunderstood.

In the realm of grace, we never leave grace, but when God was not requiring them to grow up. He was too busy convincing them of His character so that when God did deal with them as sons, they wouldn't despair because they remembered the foundation that the Father laid. And that never changes.

But Jesus said, I have meat that you know not of. What was His meat? To do the will of God. And what? Finish it.

Wow! How many would like the Father to start feeding you that meat? So that your whole purpose in living is to do the will of God. What's the will of God? The cross. Deny self.

Follow me. Lose your life. Find my life.

See, our life now is Christ positionally. God wants it to become a daily appropriation. So see, Paul was distressed.

Now the writer of Hebrews even suggested that it was time. The time had come when they should have been teachers, but they weren't. What happened? Did God make a mistake? Of course not.

See, the time had come. It says the time has come when you ought to be teachers, but rather need that someone teach you the first principles of the oracles of God. And I'll become need of milk and not strong meat.

What was the strong meat that the writer of Hebrews wanted the Hebrews to start digesting? The strong meat of losing their life. Practically speaking, what's it mean? Walking every day. Yielding what we are when it manifests itself to God.

So that His life might fill that void and blossom. That's what they wanted. The Corinthians, the Hebrews.

James was writing to people who were falling into this self-deception. They were hearers, but not doers. They were judging their brother.

They were getting carnal and jealous. They were accusing God of tempting them to sin. I mean, they were really getting off into some crazy doctrines.

They were, one moment, blessing God, and then another moment, they were cursing their brother. Then they had a problem with money. They were getting covetous.

James was burdened. James was burdened because those tribes who were scattered, listen, were losing sight of the purpose of God in their redemption. They were losing sight.

Listen, they started seeing the aspect of God will do for me in spite of me. And they got off on that and forgot that that's not why God saved us so we can look at Him as a Santa Claus in Heaven that's going to be good to me even though I'm just a terrible human being that's bound. No, beloved.

God's purpose in saving you was to reveal His Son through you. God's purpose in creating Adam was to reveal Himself. God's purpose in the eternal purpose in Jesus Christ was so that through Jesus God could reveal Himself.

And God's call to every child of God, every blood-washed believer in this hour that we live in is a call to proper perspective. And the proper perspective is God is the God of all grace, all comfort, all mercy, and once I am redeemed I know that my Savior will never leave me nor forsake me and He will reveal Himself. The very next Scripture is what? The Mount of Transfiguration.

Not only did Jesus show Himself spiritually to Peter, but then He takes him up on a mountain and He lets him see with His eyes the glory of Christ. It's like, wow! It's incredible! Why was God doing this? Revealing His love, His choice. God was assuring Peter, Peter, I've chosen you.

I love you. And I want you, I want you to understand. I'm going to read one more Scripture.

This is a Scripture that's been misunderstood by a lot of Christians. It brought a lot of grief, a lot of trouble, a lot of confusion. Some people wished it was never written.

I like to deal with these kind of Scriptures. John 3.16 is a simple one. Why can't you just stick to John 3.16? Mark chapter 9 verse 42.

You can't understand Mark 9.42 until you go way back to Mark 8.27 where we started out because it's one thought. One thought. Keep your finger there and just listen.

From Mark 8.27 all the way to Mark 9.50 Jesus was operating as He normally does, as a mastermind. Jesus was revealing in this small portion of Scripture the root problem to all of His disciples. And I guarantee that they remembered when He was ascended.

Mark chapter 8.27 through Mark 9. Yeah, Mark 9.50 is one thought. Jesus was saying this. By grace I revealed myself to you and by grace I'm going to present you to the cross.

And by grace you're going to know the cross. Jesus revealed in this small portion of Scripture the root of every human problem. Mark chapter 9.42 And whosoever shall offend the word offend, cast a stumbling block to wound.

Jesus was talking about offense quite a bit. The believers in 9.14 through 28 were unable to cast out a devil. Remember that? They were unable to cast out a devil.

But yet didn't Jesus give them power to cast out devils? How could that be? Here's how it could be. Jesus was teaching them the difference between grace and responsibility. They hadn't learned responsibility.

What was responsibility? Take up thy cross. See? Oh, God is so wise. In Mark chapter 9.33 to 37 they had an argument.

Guess what they argued about? I'm going to be the chief around here. And the other disciples said, oh, no you're not. You should have heard what Jesus told me last night when you weren't around.

And then the other one said, oh yeah, I laid my head on his bosom. Now how many of you have done that? And they got to a little fight. And Jesus wasn't near but he knew what was going on.

Can you imagine? Jesus, man, he must he was neat, right? He just knew everything, didn't he? And he approaches them and says, so what were you guys arguing about? You know what they did? They didn't answer him. They didn't answer him. What were they arguing about? Who was going to be the greatest? Huh? Then in verses 38 to 41, they thought that they were going to control God's work.

So they decided to go up to someone who wasn't following Jesus but who was casting out devils and said, now you stop that because we're the chief apostles around here and we got an inroad and they were operating in a way and Jesus said, hey leave them alone. Don't bother them. So the word offense in Mark 9.42, we've seen offense through this whole portion of Scripture but now Jesus is about to zero right in on it.

One of these little ones that believes in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck and he were cast into the sea. You see what Jesus is saying here? Hey, don't be so quick to go and approach someone and tell them what to do. Jesus was talking to them.

Don't you be rebuking someone if he's doing it in my name. And now here we go. If thy hand offend thee, cut it off.

It is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched. There's the hand now. Verse 45, if thy foot offend thee, cut it off.

Verse 47, if thine eye offend thee, cut it off. Now, how are we going to make sense? I'm closing. How are we going to make sense of this thing? Defensiveness, protectiveness, selfishness, apathy, complacency, abuse of grace, a license to sin, disputing, jealousy, husband, wife, quibbling, children, employee, employer, self preeminence, exultation, control, domineering, clicks, offensive tongue.

Your hand offending, your eye offending, your foot offending, my God, what's going on here? It's very simple. Jesus is saying here, it's all a heart problem. It's all a heart problem.

Do you remember back in Mark chapter 8, whosoever will save his life, in other words, whosoever will not cut it off. Now listen, you don't cut your hand off, your hand is showing you something. You got a problem with your hands, you got a problem with your eyes, it's showing you something.

It's not your eye, it's showing you something. It's your heart. Your heart.

Now remember, you can have a heart. Number one, that sees that Jesus is the Christ. God has revealed the Son of God to you.

You have assurance that your sins are forgiven. You have assurance that you've been declared innocent before God. Blessed redemption.

Innocent because of what Jesus has done. Not what I've done. Don't forget that part of redemption.

Because you'll never grow up if you do. You'll always be struggling and then you'll pretend that you've got things under control when you really don't. And God will send a bomb down and you'll see you don't.

Don't forget that part of redemption. But not only do we glory in the fact that grace has opened our eyes, but now God invites us to the cross. And the cross begins to deal with the hand that offends.

The eye that offends. The feet that offend. The tongue that offends.

The control that offends. And whatever else offends. And the conclusion of this whole message this morning, the burden of the Lord is very simple.

Jesus wants us to consider His invitation to discover the meaning of the cross in a way we've never known before. Thank Him for the glorious revelations. Thank Him for the manifestations of this wonderful person.

And now begin to thank Him for that cross. And begin to let Him work in you the power of the cross so that the heart problem becomes healed and Jesus' life begins to overflow. And the bad root is uprooted.

John said the root is laid to the acts of every trade. Well that's true for the believer too. The root, the acts is God's word, God's invitation, God's spirit.

The bad tree our life. That's not in obedience to God's word. The only thing that can cut off and cease from flowing through you is God's word and God's cross.

That's it. Remember defensiveness. You'll never cling to the cross with a defensive heart.

A defensive heart is an unwilling heart. An unwilling heart is a heart that needs to come before the presence of the Lord and be softened by His marvelous grace. So this morning we sat for 15 minutes and the Lord Jesus like always came.

My heart was so heavy and we so want a touch from the Lord, don't we? But how many have associated a touch with the Lord with this? Accepting responsibility and growing up. Some of you need physical healing. And you've got more desire in your heart for physical healing than you do for spiritual healing and because of that God says no.

He says no. I'll tell you the Savior was here and He could have touched and oh I'm telling you it could have been all over with friend. But He says no.

This is when sometimes it's hard. This is seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And He doesn't want us to seek healing.

He doesn't want us to seek make everything all better, Jesus. He wants us to accept this. Pray into our spirits.

Tear down defensiveness and unwillingness. Break us. And then He will heal us.

He will restore and He will do what He wants. And that's His burden for us and many others this morning. Let's just pray.

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