

The Dangers of Self Deception Part 5 - Evil Association

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the dangers of evil association and the importance of living a life of separation from evil influences in order to maintain moral character and spiritual maturity.

Duration: 1:16:26

Scripture: Psalm 1:1-2, Proverbs 13:20, Matthew 7:13-14, 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, 1 Corinthians 15:33, 2 Corinthians 6:14, Galatians 5:9, Ephesians 5:6, James 4:4, 1 John 2:15-17

Topics: "Deception", "Self-Deception", "Evil Associations"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the dangers of self-deception, particularly through evil associations, urging believers to recognize how their company and lifestyle can corrupt their moral character. He highlights the importance of being vigilant against influences that lead to spiritual decline, reminding the congregation that even a small amount of evil can have devastating effects. Beach calls for a return to God's Word and a commitment to living according to its truths, rather than succumbing to societal pressures. He encourages the church to mourn over sin and to seek a deeper relationship with God, emphasizing that true followers of Christ must prioritize His teachings above all else.

Transcript

Thank you, Lord. Oh, dear Lord, we're so aware of your presence this morning. We thank you for your faithfulness.

Lord, our hearts are before you, Lord. How we ask you, Lord, to change our hearts and give us the capacity, Lord, to truly, truly hear your words as they are written and as you speak them to us, Lord, and. Be changed, oh, God.

We look to you, Lord, we look to the power of your word this morning. We pray, oh, God, that in your presence and by your word, you would speak to our hearts and you would transform us and change us and that you would shine light into areas of darkness and deliver us from areas of self-deception, Lord, and that you would enable us, oh, God, to walk in the light of your word. Being empowered by the precious Holy Spirit.

Following you. Ordering our life and our lifestyle and all that we do and everywhere that we go, according to. Your divine order, Lord.

Free us, Lord, from being so weak in our faith and so intimidated that we have to act like the world in order to get their acceptance. We have to act like the world in order that we don't stick out as different, when in fact, Lord, you've called us to be different. You've called us to be a peculiar people, a strange people, a different people.

That we might show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. Oh, dear God, we ask that you would wash us by your word this morning. Free our minds from the traditions of men, from the doctrines of men which render your word ineffective in our life.

Let us hear your word today, we pray. In Jesus name, amen. And amen.

Now, I'd like to invite you, if you would, to turn your Bibles to First Corinthians chapter 15. This is going to be the last scripture that we will deal with in this series of self-deception. As you're turning.

We invite you to take a few adults only, please. The children have already. Taken these things, which they really shouldn't be doing and turning them into fans and things like that, but you might take some of these and pass them out after a long season of prayer and waiting on the Lord.

I've decided personally to go back out on Main Street and to preach. We did this at one time back in 1979, and then we did it back in the late 80s, and now the season has come again. So we're looking forward to it.

We're looking forward to the fruit that God will bring. We would covet your prayers and also you're welcome to come and to be a part. Bring lawn chairs, whatever.

All right, First Corinthians chapter 15. Verse number 33. This is the third, the last.

Scripture that deals with self-deception, and as you remember on the board last week, we showed the four categories, the four areas of our life where self-deception can come in. The first area is with our words, the second area is in our actions, the third area is the opinion that we have about ourself, and now this is the last area where self-deception can be present. Now, I want to strongly encourage you this morning to let the Holy Spirit search your heart because this particular area of self-deception is running rampant today in the church.

It is running rampant. This area of self-deception has come into the Christian home and it's resulting in spiritual decline and deficiency. So please be very, very attentive and ask the Lord to speak to your heart through his word.

First Corinthians chapter 15, verse number 33. Be not deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners.

Evil communications corrupt good manners. Now, the word communication there is a word that means both the company that you keep, the company that you keep, as well as your lifestyle, the company that you keep as well as your lifestyle. So, having learned that, we can say, be not deceived.

I'm going to make this a paraphrased version now, be not deceived. If you hang around with evil people, if the company that you keep is evil, or you have an evil lifestyle, then the good manners that you have

learned or are learning are being corrupted. The word corrupt means to destroy, to bring to ruin.

And the manners there refer to a habit or a custom. Your moral. Character.

And the ethics that you've learned. Those things that are good, those things that are wholesome, those things that reflect the godliness of Jesus Christ, those things that reflect ordering your life in accord with the truth of God's word. So, your character, your ethics, your morals will be corrupted if you associate in an intimate manner with evil.

Now, I want to read an email that was sent to me a number of weeks ago, which I believe will adequately portray the truth of this scripture. Now, remember, beloved, listen carefully. Self-deception is present in your life.

If you believe that your moral, ethical, righteous character and the things that you're learning from God's word will not be affected by the kind of people you hang around with or the kind of lifestyle that you live, you are self-deceived if you don't believe that there's any connection there. We've heard it many, many times today. Oh, it doesn't matter.

We're not under the law. We're not in legalism. We're Christians.

We're free. We can basically do what we want. Well, hopefully, we're going to see from God's word today that that very philosophy is a lie.

It's a result of a lying spirit. Now, listen carefully to this little story that was sent to me. Many parents are hard pressed to explain to their youth why some music, movies, books and magazines are not acceptable material for them to bring into the home or to listen or to see.

One parent came up with an original idea that is hard to refute. The father listened to all the reasons his children gave for wanting to see a particular PG-13 movie. It had their favorite actors.

Everyone else was seeing it. Even church members said it was great. It was only rated PG-13 because of the suggestion of sex.

They never really showed it, though. The language was pretty good. The Lord's name was only used in vain three times in the whole movie.

The teens did admit that there was a scene where a building and a bunch of people were blown up to pieces, but the violence was just the normal stuff. It wasn't too bad. And even if there were a few minor things, the special effects were fabulous and the plot was action packed.

However, even with all the justifications the teens made for the 13 rating, the father still wouldn't give in. He didn't give his children a satisfactory explanation for saying no. He just said no.

A little later on that evening, the father asked his teens if they would like some brownies he had baked. He explained that he'd taken the family's favorite recipe and added a little something new. The children asked what it was.

The father calmly replied that he had added dog poop. However, he quickly assured them it was only a little bit. All other ingredients were gourmet quality, and he had taken great care to bake the brownies at the precise temperature for the exact time.

He was sure the brownies would be superb. Even with their father's promise that the brownies were of almost perfect quality, the teens refused to take any. The father acted surprised.

After all, it was only one small part that was causing them to be so stubborn, he was certain they would hardly notice it. Still, the teens held firm and would not try the brownies. The father then told his children how the movie they wanted to see was just like the brownies.

Our minds are tricked into believing that just a little bit of evil won't matter. Just a little bit. Won't.

Matter, be not deceived, evil communications corrupts, destroys. All that you are trying to do in your children's life as well in your life. You spend a life praying and weeping and teaching your family God's word, but just a little bit will corrupt it.

Our minds are tricked into believing that just a little bit of evil won't matter, but the truth is even a little bit of poop makes the difference between a great treat and something disgusting and totally unacceptable. The father went on to explain that even though the movie industry would have us believe that most of today's movies are acceptable, fair for adults and youth, they are not. Now, when his father's children want to see something that is of questionable material, the father merely asked them if they would like some of his special dog poop brownies that closes the subject.

First Corinthians 15:33, be not deceived. Uh oh. Uh oh, beloved.

How many have fallen prey to self deception in this area of your life? See, it says, be not deceived. But how many of us have bought the lie of society of the generation that we live in that's telling us, hey, it's okay, everyone else is doing it just a little bit of evil, just a little bit of corruption, just a little bit of promiscuity, just a little bit of lying, just a little bit of stealing, just a little bit of rebellion, just a little bit of watching children talk back to their parents, just a little bit of violence. It's not going to hurt.

It's not going to affect them. It's not going to affect me. Be not deceived.

God is not mocked. Be not deceived. Evil communication will corrupt good manners.

Brothers and sisters, we need to get a revelation from God's word this morning and see that just a little bit is enough to corrupt and defile. You say, well, brother, I don't want to be weird. Then don't follow Jesus if you don't want to be weird.

Well, brother, I don't want to get radical, then stop following Jesus. If you don't want to get radical, I would that you were hot or cold. But because you are lukewarm, I will spew you out of my mouth.

That's what Jesus said. That's what he's saying to me. That's what he's saying to you.

That's what he's saying to the entire church in America. I would that you were hot. That is, you were on fire for me and radical, or I would that you were cold, that you would just downright backslide and deny me and go out and and and make love with the world.

But don't play. Don't play. Don't teeter totter in between.

You see. Yeah, but brother, you don't understand. If I if I if I if I believe what you're saying.

It's going to make my children really upset. Yeah, it's going to make my kids mad at me. My friends are going to think that we're we're weird.

My friends, my friends are going to talk about us and say, boy, aren't they radical? Aren't they legalistic? Aren't they excessive? Do you see what's wrong with that kind of thinking? What's wrong with that kind of thinking? And what does that kind of thinking reveal? Who am I concerned about? I'm concerned about myself and I'm concerned about what everyone else thinks. Do you see what happens as soon as we hear the Lord's word? We think this way. Well, what's so and so going to think? What does it matter what so and so is going to think? What does it matter what Aunt Susie thinks or Uncle Ralph thinks? Or Pastor Luke Warm thinks.

What does it matter? What should matter is this. What does God think? What does God's word say? You see, brothers and sisters, it is my belief and I feel that I can substantiate it from the scriptures that we are in a crisis right now, the church, and that the call of the spirit is simply this. Who will you serve? Who are you going to devote yourself to? Either modern Christianity or the word of God? Because modern Christianity is in opposition to the word of God.

I'd like to invite you to turn your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter five. And I'll show you that this, in fact, is something that's taught right in the scriptures. Evil communication corrupts good manners.

Evil. Habits. The company you keep.

Listen, the things that you let affect your mind. The things that you let affect your heart. Listen, the things that you look upon.

Brothers, this isn't a legalistic code. This is life. This is God's word.

We're I'm not trying to set up laws here. We're preaching the word of God. It's the word.

But listen, most Christians and I'm not making a law out of this. I'm simply stating a fact. Most Christians need to flush their homes from most magazines they've got.

Because those magazines are corrupting the good ethical manners that God wants to build in a life. Most magazines promote covetousness and greed. Most magazines that feature models and modern dress destroy the Holy Spirit's ability to produce contentment in your life.

You'll never be content if you're reading and feeding and looking and meditating upon the trash that they're putting in magazines today. You'll never be content. You'll never have a song in your heart.

You'll never be content with what you have. You'll never be content with how God made you. You'll never be content with God's provision, because God doesn't always provide you with the clothes they buy on in New York City.

But if you're set in your mind that you've got to have this kind of a lifestyle and this kind of a standard of living, you could just say goodbye to God's provision. You'll despise His provision. You'll despise it.

See, evil communication corrupts good manners. We've been trained to expect a certain standard. And if we don't get that standard, we get mad or we strive after it.

Oh, brothers and sisters, may the Lord give us a hear an ear to hear what His Holy Spirit is saying. First Corinthians 15. It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you.

Now, this is not a letter written to unbelievers. This is a letter written to people who were professed Christians. Listen to what Paul says.

It's common that there's fornication among you. Now, the word fornication there means impurity, sexual impurity of any kind, which includes pornography. You say, well, they didn't have that back then.

Oh, yes, they did. Yes, they did. They had that back then.

Let me tell you, the city of Corinth was like Manhattan. The city of Corinth was like Manhattan. It was a happening place.

People from all over the known world would come there by means of water. It was a trade zone. And so, listen, they lived in the same kind of society that we live in today.

And this is what the Spirit of God is crying out to you and I today. And such fornication is not as such named among the Gentiles that one should have his father's wife. And you are puffed up and have not rather mourned.

You are puffed up and have not rather mourned. In other words, one of the signs that these Corinthian believers were being seduced, they were, listen, they were self-deceived. Was that even though there was an, listen, an evil influence in their midst, evil, it was evil.

Fornication is evil. It is sinful. But we dealt with this for the past several weeks.

Adultery is sin. Fornication is sin. Pornography is sin.

It's sin. Call it what it is. There was an evil influence in the midst of the church.

And Paul said, instead of mourning, the word mourn there means to experience deep, piercing grief. Deep, piercing grief. That the kind of pain that one would feel if one experienced a plunging of a sword into the depths of their spirit.

Where is the mourning? Where is the grief that we should be experiencing as we look around and look into the tendencies of our own heart and see evil? Where's the mourning? It's not present, is it? Paul said, instead of mourning, you're puffed up. In other words, you have a casual attitude. About sin.

A casual attitude. Oh, well, hey, everyone's doing it. Hey, hey, the Lord understands.

You find out about corruption. You find out about an evil thing that is seducing the church or might even be seducing your home. And rather than mourn and rather than cry and rather than call a fast and say, oh my God, have mercy upon us.

Deliver us from the corruption. Deliver us from the evil. We're puffed up.

We have a casual attitude. We're no longer moved by the things that move God. When we don't we no longer we no longer feel the pain.

And it's because we're intoxicated with the things of this life. Let me tell you, you drink the wine of this life and you're not going to feel the pain of God. You're going to feel the pleasures of sin.

You drink the wine of this life and you're going to become numb to the cry of God's heart. And you're going to become angry at the word of the Lord. You're not going to want to hear it.

And you're going to slow. Listen, this is what will happen. You will slowly surround yourself with influences and people.

Who don't make you feel uncomfortable. People who coddle you in your sin rather than rebuke you in your sin. Hey, do you have a friend? They're not a friend if they haven't come to you in tears.

And in meekness, warned you about something in your life, they're not a friend. Friends love at all times. Friends speak the truth.

True friends speak truth. So what does Paul do regarding this dreadful situation that's present in the Corinth church? Brothers and sisters, this is the situation that is present in almost every Christian home. Almost every.

There is an attitude about evil and evil influence that is worthy of a stern rebuke from the Lord. We cannot have this, this, this lazy kind of attitude about sin. Listen to what Paul says, for I verily as absent in body, but present in spirit have judged all ready.

You see, when we live by God's word, we do not blow off situations that need to be dealt with. Paul said, though I'm absent, yet because the Spirit of God is with me and because I'm filled with the Spirit of God and filled with the Word of God, I have already made my judgment about what's going on in your midst. He said, you haven't made it.

It hasn't bothered you. But Paul said, I have. And here's my judgment.

Verse four, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together and my spirit with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh. That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, do you see what we're seeing here? We are seeing the true effects upon someone who is truly filled with the Spirit of God and filled with the Word of God. Do you see what we're seeing here? What did Paul do? What did Paul do here? Paul said, listen, I will not tolerate this evil, corrupting influence that has the potential to destroy the whole work of God.

Brothers and sisters, we must pray that God will birth in us the same zeal that we see Paul has here regarding every evil influence that is trying to corrupt our life and trying to corrupt the life of our children and trying to corrupt the life of our brothers and sisters in Christ. And in love and in meekness, pray and mourn that God will heal our hearts. Listen, from self-deception, we are self-deceived.

Your glorying is not good. Listen here, listen, everyone, listen. Your glorying is not good.

Listen, whenever we have an attitude about evil communication, evil association, whenever we have an attitude about anything that's influencing our life or the life of our children or the life of those close to us that comes across like, well, I know that's wrong, but there's nothing we can do. Or I'm not going to, I'm not going to wrestle with this and open up a can of worms. I'm just going to let it go and live at peace.

Whenever we have that kind of an attitude, we are self-deceived. But. You know.

As most everyone here knows, I have seven children. And in my home. We don't have a democracy.

You know what a democracy is, everyone has a vote and the popular vote wins. We don't have a democracy in our home. We have a theocracy.

We live and die by what is written in God's word. And it's my responsibility as the father of my home. To hear from God.

And to tell my family what God is saying about any particular matter. And unless you are prepared, mother, father. To come to God.

And let him put his word in your heart so that you are able to articulate what God's word says about the events of life and about the many things that come and go in the life of a family, unless you're prepared to do that and stand for what is right and holy and just and. Reject what is corrupting unless you're prepared to do that, your family will be corrupted. It's not a question of your family might be corrupted.

It's not a question of, well, maybe it'll affect us or maybe it won't. Brothers and sisters, it is a settled fact. The Holy Spirit is saying to us, whose authority are we living under? Beware.

Listen, beware. Of resisting the authority of God's word, taking your life, your decisions, your plans into your own understanding, rather than falling down upon God's word and praying and seeking out God's word that God's word might interpret life for you. See, because the spirit that is seducing modern Christianity today is saying this, a little evil won't matter.

A little corruption won't matter, but God's word says. Verse six, chapter five, first Corinthians five, know ye not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump, just a little bit of evil, a little bit of sin, a little bit of corruption has the potential to ruin the whole lump. Now, are you persuaded of that? Do you really believe that? Are you prepared to die by that revelation? Are you prepared to die rather than allow yourself to be corrupted by evil? That's what the Lord is looking for in this hour that we live in.

Forget about Christianity and the modern apostate message. Forget about it. It will lead you right into active membership in the Laodicean church.

You will be active members in the Laodicean. You might even be made a board member. And if you really know how to talk around in circles and be a politician and say a bunch of nothing, you could be made an elder or a pastor.

That's right. The Laodicean church is made up of the modern Christian message that has departed from the word of God and is full of the traditions and teachings of men. We need to come back to God's word.

Every single family needs to come back to God's word and bow down to it and pray over it. So, well, brother, that's the job of the preacher. Oh, God, help us.

God, help us. Well, as long as I know the preachers praying and the preachers studying and the preachers reading the word, everything will be all right. Brothers and sisters, that's not true.

Everyone is called to follow Jesus. Everyone is called to deny self. Purge out, therefore, the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you are unleavened.

For even Christ, our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness. But with the unleavened bread of sincerity, that word sincerity means purity, that which is pure, that which is true, that which is just.

I wrote to you in an epistle not to company with fornicators. Now listen to what he says. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world or with the covetous or extortioners or with idolaters.

For then we must needs go out of the world. In other words, Paul saying this. Listen, guys, I told you not to company with fornicators.

He's saying, but don't misunderstand me. I'm not talking about. People in the world, that is, if you have to live in the world, you might work for someone who's a covetous person.

You might work with someone who's living in adultery, you have to. That doesn't mean that you're an intimate association with them. You can't just separate yourself from the world and live in a monastery somewhere.

That's not the call of the spirit of God for the Christian family. We're not called to just go isolate ourself and stay away from the world. Listen, we're called to walk in the midst of the world as a bright, shining light.

But listen to what it says. But now I write on to you not to keep company. If any man is called a brother and he is a fornicator, a brother or he is covetous, a brother or he is an idolater or a railer or a drunkard or an extortioner with such a one, don't even eat.

So the truth of God's word is this. You can go out and eat with fornicators and idolaters if they're in the world. If they're not believers, you can go out and eat with them and love them and tell them about Jesus and let them see your lifestyle.

Let them see that you don't need to get the newest thing. Let them see that you're not driven by the love of money. Let them see that you love your wife and you love your husbands and you love your children.

Let them see that your mind is on heavenly things. Let them see when the subject of death is talked about that you can say, oh, hallelujah, I don't fear death. My God, I look forward to death.

Are you nuts? Well, some people think I am. But the reason I live, I look forward to death is because I have a savior. I have an eternal inheritance in heaven because I've trusted Jesus as my let them see that.

But if someone calls himself a brother, if someone says, I'm a Christian and they're a fornicator, if someone says, I'm a Christian family and they're covetousness and full of greed and they're serving money and they allow the evil, corrupting influence of the world to come and seduce them. Oh, what do you do? Don't mess with them. So that's divisive, isn't it? All right, here, give me a pair of scissors.

I'll cut this part out then. We don't like that. Anything else we want to cut out? Anyone have a pen knife? I'll cut it out.

You see what the bottom line is? Well, Phil, I feel uncomfortable. Ha ha. That's it.

That's it. Remember what we were talking about earlier? We're addicted to what? Everyone's got to feel comfortable. We all everyone's got to feel nice and happy.

We can't offend anyone. Brothers and sisters, that lying spirit will lead you right away from Christ. Doesn't mean you're obnoxious or you're self righteous.

But what it does mean is that if we're going to follow Jesus. We must bow to his word. Do you see how serious this is and how self deception is running wild over this issue of evil communication, corrupting good manners? Can't you see it everywhere? Do you see it in your own home? Do you see it in your own life? Ephesians, chapter five.

Be not deceived, evil communication corrupts good manners. Be not deceived, evil communication corrupts good manners. You say, well, what kind of a lifestyle can I have? I mean, brother, you're basically what you're saying is now you got to take a you got to you got to take a plane and go to the moon.

You know, I hope this stirs up everything. I hope this makes people uncomfortable because you know what? I'm not going to give you the answer. You need to find it on your knees in God's word.

I'm not going to write a 50 page manual next week and give it to you and say, all right, now here's the rules. If you follow these, you'll be OK. No, it's not going to work that way.

It's not going to work that way. And anyone who does that is robbing you from the responsibility that you have to get down on your knees off your high horses and weep and pray until God reveals his word to your heart and then start living your life by the power of the Holy Spirit in obedience to God's word. Oh, yes, there's a time when we need to be spoon fed.

There's a time when. For everyone here, for the most part, that you ought to be teachers of God's word. You ought to be instructing the babes, instructing the weak.

Most of us have been on this path for several years now and have been taught many, many years. Most everybody in here, the adults should be instructors and teachers of the word of God. Is that what's going on? Well, brother, I don't have time for that.

Always remember, brothers and sisters. You have time to do exactly what you want to do and don't ever forget that. Don't ever let somebody and don't ever let yourself fool yourself into thinking you don't have time for something.

If you wanted to do it bad enough, you'd stop the whole world and say nothing's happening because I want to make time for this. We don't have time to seek the Lord. It's because you don't want to.

I want to. Well, that's not true. Yes, it is.

Let's not play games. Let's not play games. Let's not play mind games.

Well, I'm doing what I don't want to do, then stop doing it. Stop doing it, then. We make time for what is important to us.

You see, and when we begin to make a decision for the Lord, we might feel the cost of it. You might have to downsize. That's right.

Well, brother, we can't make it. Can't make it. That's right.

God's a liar, right? God's word isn't true. Your heavenly father knows all these things that you have need of. Oh, but brother, you don't understand.

No, you don't understand. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things, all these things, these things refers to whatever we have need of, not what we want.

Not what we want. You might want a lot of things, but when you decide to follow Jesus, you might not get anything you want, but you'll get everything you need. Hallelujah.

Boy, I'm glad I don't need an amen section, I'd get discouraged, you see, but I don't need one. So I can keep preaching even though everybody just sits there. I guess maybe that's one of the reasons I miss David.

Old David in the back, help me, Jesus. Oh, Lord, you just showed me my whole religion is hypocrisy. Bless his heart.

Is this the truth? Is this what we want? We want a candy coated gospel penis enterprise. That's what you get. Or what about what about the Burger King gospel? Hold the pickles, hold the lettuce.

Special orders don't upset us. All we ask is that you have it your way. Well, well, we just want to please you.

We just want to make you happy. Brothers and sisters run from that. So you make time for what's important to you.

So see what we have to do is we have to decide before God what's important to us. You know what? I take it a step further than that, because I couldn't trust myself if I decided what was important to me. And that's a pretty poor standard.

If you if you ask me, if you decide that you're going to make time for what's important to you, I, I would basically take your whole self out of the equation. And I would this is my advice to you. I would get on my knees and not get up until I heard from God and his word so that I can know what's important to God.

And then I would devote myself, irrespective of whether or not I thought it was important, irrespective of whether or not I wanted to do it. I would devote myself to what is important to God the rest of my life. And I'll tell you what's not important to God, killing yourself over stuff that doesn't matter.

What's not important to God is spending all your time doing everything other than the thing that's necessary, and that is communion with God and getting into his word and fulfilling your responsibility before God to know his word and to order your life and your family's life. We haven't even got into this stuff yet, which, God willing, I hope to begin to preach about. And that is, am I my brother's keeper? You certainly are.

You are your brother's keeper. And there's a gross negligence in our midst. Gross negligence over the responsibility that we have to care for our brothers and sisters to watch over their soul, and it's because we don't have time.

It's not important to us. This is costly stuff, I know it now, it's OK, you could be a Christian and you can do what you want, but you become a follower of Jesus and your whole life is shaken up to pieces. Your entire life is shaken up.

When you follow Jesus, you lose your hold, you lose your grip, you lose your way. You lose this, well, I want this, I want that, bless God, I would like to do this, followers of Jesus don't say those things, followers of Jesus say, Father, what is your heart's passion for my life? Period. Isn't it easy to just go with the flow and coast? The tide of life, you know where the tide of life will lead you? Into a shipwreck faith that heaven doesn't even recognize.

That's where that's where going with the tide of this age will lead you. I tell you, there's a call of the spirit of God today with his word. It's a call to everyone's heart.

Don't you sense it? I sense it. I sense a challenge from God. It's time, brothers and sisters.

To seek the Lord, it's time to fall before him, it's time. To come aside. See, Norman, it was prophetic, brother, that you got this.

Listen to this. Listen to this. It's time.

It's time. Listen, this is prophetic. This is the word of the Lord to every one of us.

Listen to this short little story. Entitled Gentle Whisper. God, listen, God wants to speak to us about these things that are in his word.

Listen, he wants to speak to us about following him. He wants to speak to us about the risk of following him, even at the loss of many things. But we're going to reap so much more if we'll follow him.

Listen to the gentle whisper. The young man had lost his job and didn't know which way to turn. So we want to see the old preacher.

Pacing about the preacher study, the young man ranted about his problem. Finally, he clenched his fist and shouted, I've begged God to say something to help me. Tell me, preacher, why doesn't God answer me? The old preacher who sat across the room spoke something in reply.

Something so hushed, it was indistinguishable. The young man stepped across the room. What did you say? He asked.

The preacher repeated himself, but again, in a tone as soft as a whisper. So the young man moved closer until he was leaning on the preacher's chair.

Sorry, he said. I still didn't hear you. With their heads bent together, the old preacher spoke once more.

God. Sometimes. Whispers, he said.

So we will move closer to hear him. This time, the young man heard. And he understood.

We all want God's voice to thunder through the air. With the answer to our problem. But God's is the still small voice, the gentle whisper.

Perhaps there's a reason. Nothing draws human focus quite like a whisper. God's whisper means I must stop my ranting and move close to him until my head is in the air.

Bent together with his. And then as I listen, I will find my answer better still. I find myself closer.

To God, is it possible that some of us haven't heard from God regarding these very things that are being preached this morning? They're far into your mind. They're far into your heart. They're far into your ears.

They even make you uncomfortable. Is it possible because God has been whispering them to you all along, but you haven't heard a word so busy, so running. So involved in life that you can't understand why.

Well, today. God is saying. I'm whispering, I will not raise my voice, you are going to have to come closer.

If you want to listen. But Lord. You don't understand, Lord, I can't.

Got too many things going, you want to listen, you want to hear come closer, it's listen, it's going to mean saying no to this. And that and this and that it's going to mean looking at your kids in the eyes and saying no. And watching the tears stream down their eyes.

And listening to them say it's not fair. Or whatever else they might say. And embrace them and say, sorry.

The answer is still no. That's what it's going to require. I hear him speaking.

Be not deceived. Evil communication corrupts good manners. I'm going to stop now, I'm not done.

But I'm going to stop now. Because I sense the Lord. Has captured our hearts and has communicated what he wants to say to us this morning.

And I want to open up the invitation to every heart here to bow before God. And to say these words, Father, speak to me. And I suggest that if you don't hear him talk, it's because he's whispering.

And you're simply too far from him. You're too far from him. See, because he is speaking.

My sheep know my voice. They follow him. God is calling us aside to hear his voice.

There's many issues that we've dealt with this morning. You need to hear from God. Father, I thank you for your word.

I thank you for the Holy Spirit this morning. I pray, Father, for every single person here. That you would capture their heart, enable them to draw close to you.

So they can hear your voice and fall under the authority of your word. Even if it means the loss of everything. What was it that Jim Elliott said? He is no fool.

Who gives up what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose, give up what you cannot keep that you might gain what you cannot lose. Beloved, let's just give the Lord a few moments. It's.

It's only 20 after 22 after 12, you might you might have seen self-deception in your heart today over this issue of evil communication that's seducing you, seducing your heart, seducing your life, seducing your family. If this is true, then I invite you today to make an altar right where you are sitting. And let Jesus free you from this self-deception by his truth.

Side with God, that's how you are free from self-deception, side with God, align yourself with what God says, renounce. The deception in the name of Jesus Christ. Others, God has let you go for a while, listen, God has let you go for a while.

You've been coasting, you haven't heard from him, your heart hasn't really heard from him. And you listen, you have been grieved by the movement. Of the tide that has taken you.

God is saying, I've let this happen in order to awaken your heart to see that this brings no satisfaction, this brings no lasting joy in your life. And today God is calling you back to himself. He's calling you back to himself today.

He had to let you go for a season. And now he wants to draw you back to his heart, that you might hear his voice. And now you know more.

That you cannot live, you cannot survive without his word. And that it's not worth, it's not worth it to lose out with his word and his heart for the things of this world. It's better to have a little with him than much.

And have your heart cold and calloused and insensitive to him. Oh, yes, he's speaking. Now's the hour, let's let up, let's let the group sing and let's just let God speak to our hearts now in Jesus name.

Jesus, draw me close, closer Lord to you, let the world around me fade away. Yes, Lord, yes. Jesus, draw me close, closer Lord to you.

Yes, Lord. For I desire to worship and obey. Listen for him, he'll speak to you.

Jesus, draw me close, closer Lord to you. Let the world around me fade away. Jesus, break the power of deception in the name of Jesus.

Jesus, draw me close, closer Lord to you. For I desire to worship and obey. Hallelujah, Lord.

Jesus, draw me close, closer Lord to you. Thank you, Father. Let the world around me fade away.

Yes, Lord, we say yes to your call. Jesus, draw me close, closer Lord to you. For I desire to worship and obey.

For I desire to worship and obey. Don't take things into your own understanding, brothers and sisters. Now, listen, that is not a subjective thing I'm saying.

Your understanding is simply this. Anything that leads you away from obeying what God says in his word. This is not just some subjective thing where, Well, brother, what's right for me is not right for you.

And, you know, we all just walk according to the light that we have. No, brothers and sisters. We have one standard.

It's God's word. And human understanding will lead you away from it. But a faith born by God and fanned into flame by the Holy Ghost will empower you to obey it.

At any loss, at any cost. Listen, you might lose everything, but you'll gain eternal life. Listen, your friends might think evil of you, but you'll receive a great reward in heaven, because so did they, the prophets of old.

They thought evil of them. Thank you, Lord. Let's sing one more song.

Gentle Holy Spirit, confirm your word. Yes, Lord. That's it.

That's it. Young people, young people, listen. Devote your life to Christ.

Say, Jesus, take me. Take me. Soft and still inside my heart.

Speak to me. Speak to me. Word of God, comfort, heal, restore with love.

Teach my heart and heal my soul. Speak the mind that in Christ we know. Take me to your sanctuary.

Breathe on me. Speak to me. Voice of God.

Soft and still inside my heart. Speak to me. Word of God.

Comfort, heal, restore with love. Teach my heart and heal my soul. Speak the mind that in Christ we know.

Take me to your sanctuary. Teach my heart and heal my soul. Speak the mind that in Christ we know.

Take me to your sanctuary. If there's any young person here who wants to come forward and devote your life to Christ, come now. We're going to do it long.

Any young person, any of the teenagers, you want to come. Come now. Don't be timid.

Anyone now, we'll just give a few moments. Thank you, Lord. Oh, thank you, Holy Spirit.

Spirit of truth, wash us and cleanse us. Wash us and cleanse us, Lord, we pray. Thank you, Lord.

Hallelujah. Thank you, Lord. Oh, Father, we thank you for your presence.

We thank you for the work that you're doing in our hearts. We thank you, Lord, for the power of truth that sets us free. Make us lovers of truth as we depart here.

Lord God, write these words upon the very depths of our heart, Lord. Lead us to you, Lord. Help us to be radical followers of Jesus Christ, filled with love, not critical, not judgmental of others, not with a holier-than-thou attitude, but rather an attitude that is in love with you and just wants to do those things that are pleasing in your eyes.

That's all we want, Lord. Please, Lord, we offer ourself to you. We offer ourself to you today, Lord.

In Jesus' name. We really only have another minute or so. We have to clean up.

I encourage you to just keep listening for his voice and get into his word and obey his word by the power of the Holy Spirit. Don't worry about what people think. God will take care of everything.

You just obey him. And remember, God's restoring today. He's restoring today in the hearts.

He's calling many back to himself. For a season you've been on the fast lane, in the fast lane, but now he's calling you back and he's taught you some things during this season. Just obey him and he'll bless you.

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