

Spiritual Labotomy

by Ralph Sexton

The devil is using a spiritual lobotomy-like procedure to numb people's consciences and lead them away from God.

Duration: 42:16

Scripture: Isaiah 64:7, Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:20, 1 Timothy 4:1-2, 2 Timothy 4:3, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Spiritual Revival", "Media Influence"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses how our society has become desensitized to violence, fear, and immorality through the influence of media. He highlights the prevalence of graphic and disturbing content in movies, television shows, and video games, and how it has numbed our souls to the point where we no longer react with shock or disgust. The preacher warns that this desensitization is dangerous for Bible-believing churches, as it can lead to a loss of spiritual power and a disconnect from God. He emphasizes the need to open our hearts to joy and leave behind fear, and encourages believers to seek a revival of their relationship with God.

Transcript

1 Timothy, chapter number 4. If you have your old Schofield study Bible, it's page 1,276. 1 Timothy, chapter 4. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron. I wonder how many people in the house of God have been defeated by a spiritual lobotomy.

The Bible talks about in verse 2 of chapter 4, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron. I know that there are people that have never been saved, that have put a wall up or a barrier up to the call of God. Many of us can remember being in service before our salvation, and you can remember the convicting presence of God and physically holding on or gripping on to a pew for that sick sensation in the pit of your stomach.

I'm not right. There really is a God. There really is a heaven and hell.

I'm not ready to go and look down and your palms be sweaty and wipe those hands one against the other, hesitant to look up, feeling that every eye in the house was on you. Somehow everyone in the building knew you weren't right with God. When the truth of the matter was, it wasn't everyone in the building.

It was only the glaring truth of the gospel. It was the searchlight of the Holy Ghost that was bearing in. All of us that have been saved by the power and the grace of God, we understand that feeling and experience of conviction.

But we also know that after salvation, that it is very easy to get a hard place on your heart. If you've ever worked in a garden, if you've ever worked in your flowers, if you've ever raked the leaves in the fall of the year, if you've ever had an opportunity to do manual labor, you have had the experience of a hand tool sliding through your hand. A shovel, a rake, a hammer, a saw.

And when that springtime experience comes, many times your hands are tender from the winter and you receive a blister. And the heat of that will cause that skin to produce a blister and it will separate from the skin underneath and a protective fluid will fill that pouch. If you continue to work and continue to do manual labor, you will notice that over a period of time that that may break and that it may heal.

And another smaller blister may even come up in the same place. But by the end of the summer, you've noticed something has happened. You can use your rake or your hoe or your mattock all day long.

It won't bother you because you've built up a callus. That skin has been injured and it has healed. The skin has been injured and it has healed.

The skin has been injured and it has healed. And to protect itself from further injury, it has built up a callus. I can remember seeing men when I was a little boy standing around the store or at the feed and seed or many times talking on a Sunday and flip out their old timer and trim the top of their calluses because they worked hard with their hands every day.

And they would feel no pain and there would be no bleeding because that skin had been injured until it was hard. I wonder if we've ever considered after salvation how many times that the sweet Holy Spirit of God has walked by the same heart that was convicted to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and pricked our heart that we needed to move up with God. We needed to submit ourselves to the hand of God, the will of God, the way of God.

We needed that time of growth. We needed that time of spiritual maturity. He wanted you to crawl out of the playpen and get on the battlefield.

He wanted you to get up off the couch of apathy. He wanted you to pull up out of the bed of unconcern and throw off the covers of it doesn't matter to me who lives or dies and walk out and serve Him in this day and generation. And we just say, well, maybe tomorrow, maybe next day.

How many times has God talked to us about reading our Bible, about our prayer life or our lack of prayer life? And without realizing it, a little at a time, a little at a time, we've been in church so much that we have a callous on our heart. One way that the Bible describes that experience is that the devil has performed a procedure on the human mind that he took your conscience and he cauterized it. He seared it with a hot iron.

That cauterization would be the same process that friction would do slowly. The cauterization of the hot iron would do instantly. It would injure and seal immediately.

That's the purpose of cauterization. It is to stop bleeding. And in microsurgery in our hospitals today, medicine has the technology now that they can actually cut with heat lasers and go in.

And they're cauterizing as they perform the surgery. The searing of the vessel and sealing of the vessel and the tissue to prevent massive blood loss. Way ahead of lasers.

Way ahead of cauterization. Way ahead of the process and technology of our day. God recorded in this book, the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith.

If I understand this Scripture correctly, God's warning church people, the Word of God that is being given here is that some will depart from the faith. Giving heed to seducing spirits. Giving heed to doctrines of devil.

Speaking lies in hypocrisy. Do you know the Bible teaches that you can be backslidden and out of fellowship so long and you can be in such a state of broken fellowship that it is even possible to forget that you've been saved? You can so grieve the Holy Spirit. You can so injure the tender dove of the Holy Ghost.

The biggest danger that I see for a Bible-believing church in the year 2005 is that we are desensitized to everything. We've seen so much on television. Our movies are out of this world with what they can do with video graphics.

Even the children's games at home far exceed what television used to be capable of doing, projecting into the home. Five years ago, now kids have it in handheld game boxes and have the toys and have the images and the graphics and the technology that only used to be reserved for military and science. We're so accelerating.

We have heard 24-hour news. We've seen unbelievable computer-created images on the screen. We've produced a generation of teenagers that have grown up on slice-and-dice movies.

We are actually numbing the soul to blood, pain, and suffering. The most popular movies seem to be among the young set are those that contain cruelty, fear, shock, nudity, brutality, and dismemberment of human bodies. The gorier, the scarier, the more horror, and the more unbelievable the image is, it seems to have more audience because it seems to be what our society would like to feed on.

If that's going on in the secular world, how do God's people, how do people at Trinity Baptist Church, how do we come in here Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and not be affected by what we're seeing and hearing in the world? Do you understand that just a few years ago that men would not use profanity in front of women? Do you know that just a few years ago men would not use a profane word and they would kick each other, punch each other, hush up, here comes a lady? Do you understand that? They wouldn't say a profane word. They wouldn't say an obscenity. There comes a lady.

And now we have in the public places women, not ladies, women using more vile, filthy language than many of the men that are working there. How has that happened? Because we've become desensitized to what we're hearing and seeing. As we gather here tonight, the Scripture says that just because we are born-again believers, we are not isolated, nor are we insulated from what's going on in the world.

I cannot put down my guard. I cannot lay down my Bible. I cannot put away my prayer life.

I'm saved now. I'm going to heaven. I don't have to pray today.

I don't have to have God's Word today. I don't have to have Christian friends today. I'm saved.

I'll be okay. The Bible is warning us that we have to be careful, especially in the hours and the days before the Lord returns, that there are seducing spirits. Now, think with me for just a moment.

If you were the devil, if you were a strategist and you were working in a military manner, you were declaring war against God Almighty, and that's what Lucifer has done. He's declared war. He wants his throne higher than God's throne.

He and one-third of the angelic beings kicked out of heaven. Their penitentiary was planet Earth. They have been here for eons.

The devil knows human beings. He is powerful, but he's not all powerful. He's mighty, but he's not all mighty.

He's knowing, but he's not all knowing. So you need to know you have a smart adversary that's watched a lot of good people fall. A lot of good people make mistakes.

A lot of good people get cold. A lot of good people get calloused. But God said, Hey church, right before my Son comes, the battle is going to ratchet up.

Right before Jesus comes, there's going to be an intensification. Said right before the Lord comes back, that there's going to be a period of time that the devil will so target the church that some will depart from the faith. Let me submit to you tonight that I personally believe many that are leading the departure of the faith are in the pulpits of America.

They're leading the church away from God. They're no longer over having worship with fundamental able in the house of God. But a little at a time, they've gone out the back door and they're now worshipping with Cain over in the church of Cain.

They're helping God with salvation. They're saying we can't take old time religion. It won't work in 05.

We've got to change it so sinners can be comfortable in the house of God. The very reason that sinners get right and get in God's house is they get uncomfortable in their sin. How can you be a friend to a man when you're going to assist him in his slide to hell? How can you be a friend to a man's soul when you're going to console him and pet him and conjole him as he rejects the Lamb of God and the Word of God and the calling and the wooing of the Holy Spirit? Ladies and gentlemen, what we need to desperately understand is that there is such an intensification of the warfare against the church that never before have we needed men of God and women of God and men of faith and women of faith and men of prayer and women of prayer that we would intercede in front of a holy God and call your children's names out and say, Oh God, this is my wife.

I love her. God put a hedge around her today. This is my husband.

I love him. Put a hedge around him today. This is my son.

This is my daughter. This is my brother, my sister. I'm begging you God, put a hedge around them.

Put a hedge around my church. God, there are so many churches that are sliding down the slippery slope. They've traded off the power for popularity.

They're trading off the anointing for another program. My God, the world is perishing. And the power is leaving the church.

We desperately need a revival of brokenness in the heart of the church. He said before Jesus comes, the doctrines of devils. The devil would seduce men's minds and spirits.

There would be the lies of hypocrisy. And then he followed all those statements with having their conscience seared with a hot iron. What is that lobotomy? What is that searing force of that hot iron? I believe it is saved and satisfied.

I believe it is found out to be saved and sound asleep. How could you be asleep? How could you be satisfied in today's world? How could a born-again Bible believer find comfort in this wicked world? We seem to be comfortable with the sin that is permeating our nation. The cultures change.

Morals have changed. Values have changed. And the church ought to be leading the charge.

For restoration, revival. And saying, we need to get back to what got us here. But instead, we have pastors.

One was interviewed nationally even this past month. And he was asked by a secular reporter his position in the Word of God over homosexuality and lesbianism and on the issue of abortion. And he said, that's a question I'm not going to answer.

It's too controversial. And God didn't call me to be controversial. He called me to make people feel loved and accepted.

Ladies and gentlemen, that man just took his call of God to preach and put it over on the world's platter of popularity. And then he said, I want the world to know that I love them. If you love anyone and you see them headed across a bridge and there's a great ravine and the bridge is out, what kind of friend are you if you don't get in the middle of the bridge and say, stop! This wave's going to kill you.

This wave will take your life. Because we now have men in the pulpit who have taken the position that's right here in this book, departing from the faith. Whoever said that the man of God would not be controversial.

Whoever said that the prophet would not present a situation of controversy. If you're going to declare, thus saith the Lord, somebody's not going to like that. Jesus Christ had never sinned.

Jesus Christ had never committed one act of sin. And yet the world, when they heard him preach and teach, they nailed him to a tree. They whipped him.

They put a crown of thorns on his head. They pulled his beard out. I'm telling you, our society and our culture has left the Word of God, the way of God, and now we're walking out of the will of God.

What we're experiencing at church is that it doesn't bother us. And what concerns me is what happened to the conscience of the church. Are we now just believing backsliders? Are we now just prodigal sons? And proud of it? Are we now nothing more than righteous referees? He went to Bob Jones.

He went to Tennessee Temple. He went to Pensacola. He went to Liberty.

I don't like him. He's not in my group. I don't like him.

He's not in my group. He doesn't do it my way. They didn't do it this way.

They're not over on this side. They've got two buses. You shouldn't have any buses.

They have church on Thursday night. You can't be right. You've got to have it on Wednesday night.

They don't have seven o'clock Sunday night. You can't have it at five o'clock on Sunday. She doesn't wear her hair in a bun.

She doesn't have three quarter length sleeves. Righteous referees and the blood of a lost and dying world running down the streets in front of the house of God. Homes breaking up.

Kids growing up in church. Can't wait till they're 16, 18 years old. Get out of the church.

Get out from under mom and dad. Hate the God they love and serve because of the hate, the spite, and the game playing and the hypocrisy at the house of God. I really believe some are deceived unto death.

The dictionary defines lobotomy as a surgical incision into a lobe of the brain, especially to cut nerve fibers in the treatment of certain mental disorders. This horrible operation on the brain was reported to be used as a weapon in the hands of certain dictators in the past. Some said that Hitler used it against millions of people as he experimented on some in concentration camps.

What would a lobotomy do? How would it take away the will to resist? I'm convinced that many of you that are in the house of God, in the balcony, the main floor, those of you watching on closed circuit TV and the internet, how easy it would be to be dizzy going to school and to college and to work and then just easily deceived, tricked, lured away, and you wander over into the devil's laboratory. And there, Lucifer himself, the very epitome of evil, had been taken aside. And there, when you're isolated from family and friends, there, when you're taken out of the house of God, you're strapped to this old world.

And there, the devil begins to work on your mind, and he jolts you with electric shock, strapped down to the table, stuffing a rubber ball in your mouth so you feel like you can't scream for spiritual health. And there, he shocks you with jolts of circumstances to take your breath. Your life is going to end.

Your job will take away. Your finances will collapse. Your marriage is in jeopardy.

The crowd is against you. Pleasures you seek, pain in your physical body, wealth or the lack of wealth. Over and over again, he zaps you, jolted long enough with the circumstances of this world until the devil, with a gory glee, can then see that you're almost not in this world.

And he can then take a hot iron and sear your conscience. And you, as a child of God, are now walking around, going to work, going to church. But you're nothing more than a spiritual zombie.

No prayer life, no God, no anointing, just going through the religious world. I've got my King James Bible. I have my hymn book.

I'm singing my songs. I'm going to work. But oh, in the privacy of your heart, it's a barren desert.

It's been so long since you've had the latter rain. It's been so long since you've spent time with God. It's been so long since you felt the dew from another world and you knew that your God was alive and well.

And without realizing it, the devil had you strapped in and was shocking you and shocking you until he could numb you spiritually. You wouldn't even know the Holy Spirit had pulled away. And you're left with a form of godliness.

But you've left the power that you once knew. The famed writer, Bertrand Russell, one of the leaders of the modern philosophic movement, he wrote in his papers the principles of logic. Mr. Russell, and I quote, Man now needs for his salvation only one thing.

To open his heart to joy and to leave fear. To give her through the glimmering darkness of a forgotten past. He must lift up his eyes and say, No, I'm not a sinner.

I'm not a miserable sinner. I am a being by a long and arduous road. Has discovered how to master natural obstacles.

To live in freedom and joy. At peace with myself and therefore with all mankind. You know what Mr. Russell wrote down in his principles of logic? He wrote down, I am a victim of the hot iron.

And it has seared my conscience. And now I believe I can be my own savior. That's what he just wrote.

He didn't realize that. But he's saying, I can save myself. Mankind can save the self.

His conscience has been seared. All he's testifying to is that there's a world out there, Jackie, that doesn't know anything about God. And they're going to try to redeem themselves.

That's people in the world. And they go further and further every day away from God. The danger I'm concerned about is we that go to church every week.

I understand a lost philosopher writing that. But what about God's people? Well, I'd never write that. But yet we live like we're our own gods.

We conduct church like we're our own gods. How many of us, if Jesus Christ walked in this building and stood up here on this platform in my place. I went and sat down at his lovely feet.

And he said, I want every person that has prayed for this revival and prayed for the preacher, I want you to stand up. Would we stand up? Or would we sit down? I wonder how many people Jesus looks around and says, I wonder how many people have prayed this month for Trinity Baptist Church. How many people have prayed for Asheville? How many people have prayed for revival to break out that we could have the life changing power? See, that's not me asking the question.

That's Jesus. How many people would say when he looked around, he said, I want everyone that's read my word today, I want you to come and stand here with me. How many would come and stand with him? How many of you know you're going to spend eternity with him? And then he would say, how many of you are so excited and happy you're going to spend eternity with me that already this week you've told someone about me? How many shared their faith this week? Well, I only saw with strangers.

God may have sent an angel by unaware to see if you'd witness and share your faith. You see, we're so caught up with us that the devil's cooked our brain, seared our conscience. We don't even think like Christian people anymore.

We're thinking about us. I'm going to tell you, you want to find out something very quick. If we watched other Christian people, there wouldn't be one person back here Sunday.

Do you understand that? Because Christian people, those that profess His name, will let you down. That's why He warns us not to watch people, but to watch Him. The oldest trick in the book is to get you to look at other people.

Because you can hide behind that. But remember, if you can hide behind a hypocrite, all you're saying is, I'm smaller than the hypocrite. You can't hide behind something unless it's bigger than you are.

And what God's trying to do is to shake us. Romans, Revelation 3, verse 20, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. That's that Laodicean church.

Is your conscience seared? Isaiah 64, 7. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee. The Bible says that I don't have to wait for you to stir me up. You don't have to wait for me.

I don't have to wait for my wife or my children, my grandchildren. He said, son, stir yourself up. Read my Word.

You say, well, people have disappointed me. God said, get your eyes off people. Stir yourself up.

These are the last days. You've got to be more mature. You've got to be smarter.

You've got to read your Bible. You can't let the devil's mind game get to you. He'll sear your conscience.

Is that conscience seared? My belief tonight, as a student of the Word of God, is that America cannot fall. I really believe that because I believe America has already fallen. I believe I'm living in a post-Christian society.

I believe we're already awaiting the judgment of a holy God. If God doesn't judge America, He'll have to apologize to Sodom because we're sinning in far greater style with more sophistication and technology than Sodom ever had. America cannot go into slavery because our people are already in slavery.

We're slaves to sin. I believe that we're wearing chains of self-forged, self-chosen moral rebellion. And we've clipped them on and say, God, I'm going to do what I want to do.

I don't care what the consequences are. There are millions of us in America diseased morally and there's no longing for spiritual healing. We're paying for pleasures with the price of our children and our grandchildren.

I ask you tonight, what price will you pay for your personal sin? Sin just doesn't bother us anymore. Sin doesn't shake us up anymore. Go watch I Love Lucy.

Go watch Rin Tin Tin. Go to TV Land and watch Leave It to Beaver. Go watch what television used to be Father Knows Best.

That wouldn't even get on today. It's not politically correct, right? Don't look at me like a calf at a new gate. I'll back up and start over.

You know I'm telling the truth. Here's where we are. Go watch an hour or two of that and then flip over.

Flip over. Feel vulgarity, sexual innuendos, nudity, violence. And how did we get there? If that would have happened in just a week, it would have gone from Dennis the Menace and Leave It to Beaver and Roy Rogers and Gene Arthur.

If we'd have gone just in a week from that to where we are now, you would have reached up and taken that old shotgun off the wall and you would have shot the front out of your television. And you would have said, you're not talking like that in my house. And now we've heard it so long and we've heard it so much that now another Christian friend will ask us about the movie and you'll just say, well it's only got this word in it three times now.

That's pretty good. It's only got that many bad words in it now. You know, it just doesn't bother us anymore because we say, Brother Ralph, I'd known you was going to preach on that.

I stayed home. Yeah, but you didn't. You see, church, we've allowed it to happen a little at a time.

And see, if we don't take this passage apart, we don't realize that God warned us that would happen. We don't think about that. We don't think about that.

Dr. George Truitt was conducting a funeral and the father of a 17-year-old girl, a teenage girl in his church was killed. And the dad of that 17-year-old girl was riding back from the cemetery with Dr. Truitt. And that dad, here's what he told Dr. Truitt.

He said, Dr. Truitt, when you preach, I used to have to hold on to the back of the seat while you were preaching. And he said, when the great choir sang Just As I Am without one plea, he said, I couldn't hardly stand it. I'd grab my hands.

And he said, as soon as church was out, I'd have to go outside and go to my house. And he said, on Sunday afternoon, I'd have to walk around the block because I could still hear that choir singing Just As I Am without one plea. He said, I couldn't hardly shake it off.

And he said, now I can take it. You can preach anything you want to preach. You can tell any illustration.

You can have a choir sing any song you want to. And it doesn't bother me anymore. He said, Dr. Truitt, what's wrong with me? And Dr. Truitt responded.

This is what's in Dr. Truitt's diary. He said, Sir, there is a line unseen by men. When you cross it, you have built such a thick barrier, you will never, ever let Jesus back in.

You quench the Holy Spirit. That's why the Bible says today is the day of salvation. And I'm afraid, moms and dads, because it's been so long since our children and grandchildren have seen us tender-hearted and in the altar praying that we're teaching our children to be resistors of the Holy Spirit and hard-hearted.

Until now, we've grown a generation of young people. He said, Brother Ralph, I don't believe it's that bad. Could I just give you two or three stories from the news? Here's one that's not from a news reporter, but it's from my brother-in-law in Houston, Texas.

He stopped at a 7-Eleven on a business trip to get a cup of coffee and to use the phone. There were several teens outside the store. Two young girls, 13, maybe 14 years old, were talking.

He said they looked very young to him. He said, this one girl said to the other girl, The doctor said my baby died because my mother kicked me so much in the stomach. The other teenage girl sitting on the curb of the store responded, Tell your old lady she can kick me in the stomach anytime she wants to.

I don't want this blankety-blank-blank thing that's living inside of me. You know what that is? That's a seared conscience. Teens have had their minds burned and numb by music that is nihilistic, no hope.

Rock music, punk rock music, rap music that feeds on the sensual, sexual side of life. That the human body is nothing more than a party toy. Use it any way you can.

Get it drunk. Get it high. Consume it.

Burn it up. And then the devil laughs while you drop off on the way to hell. Burn out.

Consume with venereal disease. And your body has been destroyed by the ravages of sin. He got what he wanted.

Another soul on the way to eternity without God. Orlando, Florida, Associated Press. Child crime figures soaring.

Ten years ago it was a shock to see seven, eight and nine-year-old children coming to the system. Now it is not unusual. It seems to be a trend.

Last year, 1,311 children under age 18 were charged with murder in the state of Florida. In Florida, children ages five to nine have been charged with killing younger playmates. Is that unbelievable? 1,311 children charged with murder? Oh, I forgot.

Those figures, they are almost 20 years old. I just read to you the report from 1986. 1986.

That was 1,311 in 1986. We were starting to reap of having children with no Bible, no God. It was just starting.

The epidemic is now on the land. Now it is even in Little Asheville and Buncombe County. Right here in our own community, it is happening.

Now even at church, inside the church, people that profess the name of Jesus Christ, one out of every two marriages are failing, even in the house of God. It was not many years ago that right down here on I-26 that the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against those that own the water tower. And I remember the cross that used to be up on the tower, that when you would come up the mountain, you could see that cross.

And they said that that was a fence. And they sued and the people had to take the cross down on the tower. Well, that has happened all across America.

We have tried to sanitize the nation, get away from God. And now we have had a spiritual lobotomy performed on the nation and on the church. Leonard Ravenhill wrote in his book on revival, could a mariner sit idle if he heard the drowning cry? Could a doctor sit in comfort and just let his patients die? Could a fireman sit idle and let men burn and give no hand? Or can you sit at ease and zine with the world around you damned? Isaiah 64, 7 said that we needed to stir ourselves.

We need men and women out of this church that say our comfort zone is not what we are seeking. We are seeking God's will, burning hearts, lips that will witness, eyes brimming with tears. And to say, God, I want you to keep me from having a spiritual lobotomy.

I want you to see my heart this moment in sackcloth and ashes. It's not this deacon's fault. It's not this teacher's fault.

It's not this choir member's fault. God, it's not my wife. It's not my husband.

It's not my children. It's me, God. I need a revival.

I need a renewal. I need the callous cut off my heart. God, touch me again one more time.

Let's bow our heads.

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