

Changed Into Christ's Image #7

by Robert B. Thompson

To live a life of true Christianity, one must cultivate the life in the Spirit, which requires radical obedience, discipline, and a willingness to face fiery trials.

Duration: 1:03:06

Scripture: Ezekiel 1:19-21, Romans 8:1-13, Ephesians 6:10-18, Revelation 2:7

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Faith Renewal"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of returning to the old ways of faith and righteousness. He highlights that living according to the sinful nature leads to death, while only Jesus can bring true happiness, joy, and peace. The preacher encourages believers to have faith in God's goodness and patience, knowing that He will bring them to joy. He also mentions the significance of the number four in the Bible, representing communication and Pentecost.

Transcript

Lord, as we come unto you this morning, Lord, as with praise and thanksgiving for all the wonderful things that you do, we're especially thankful for your work among the young people, Lord, and their leaders. Bless them mightily, Lord. I pray for each family represented here, Lord.

We know that many are in turmoil, and we pray, Lord, for your peace and your strength, your wisdom and your righteousness to prevail there in each home represented here, Lord. Let's work out your workings and then help us, Lord, to recover and go on. We pray, Lord, you'll bless the little children as they're being instructed and their teachers.

And as we continue, Lord, you know what needs to be said. You know where the needs are here this morning, and I pray the Holy Spirit will add Jesus to that need. In his name I pray.

Amen. You may be seated. We'll turn in our Bibles.

I will turn toward the screen, toward Romans 8. We're going to read verses 1 through 9. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do, in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us

who do not live according to the sinful nature, but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires. But those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.

The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature, but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. Now, we've been studying about the image of Christ as found in the book of Ezekiel.

And we're studying about the outward image and the inward image. Now, looking right here at these verses, we're talking about living in the Spirit. You could regard that as being the inward image or the outward image.

I regard this as being the outward image because this is how Christ lives and not so much as what he is. So, I categorize this living in the Spirit as part of the outward nature. The Bible says that we've been predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.

And that is both outwardly and inwardly. And so, that's what we're talking about. Now, I guess most evangelical Christians know and maybe have memorized Romans 8.1. What is that? Yeah.

And so, that's preached far and wide and up and down. But not too many preach Romans 8.4. And Romans 8.4 is the key to Romans 8.1. Because we preach Romans 8.1 in isolation. And it is Paul's way of explaining that we're not supposed to live under the law of Moses anymore, but under a new law.

And yet, the righteousness of Moses' law is ascribed to us if we do. And so, in Romans 8.4, it says, and this is necessary if you're going to be without condemnation. And it ought to be preached more than it is, I think.

You can't just say I'm without condemnation if you don't meet the terms. Well, that's logical. And verse 4 says, in order that the righteous requirements of the law, that is the law of Moses, might be fully met in us, that means we're without condemnation because the righteousness of the law has been ascribed to us.

But then it gives the condition. And the condition is not that we take the four steps of salvation. The condition is not that we attend church.

It is not that we're baptized in water. This is not what brings us or maintains us without condemnation. It's this, who do not live according to the sinful nature, but according to the Spirit.

So, we all have a sinful nature, and hopefully we have the Spirit of God in us, which we do if we've received Christ and are obeying Him. Now the trick is to live by that Spirit. And there's only two ways that any human being can live.

Only two ways. There aren't three. There's only two.

You can either live according to your own thinking and plans and ambitions and enthusiasms, or you can be following the Spirit each day. And that means that you pray and read your Bible and give yourself to

God every day and ask that His will be done in every decision that you make. That's what it means to live in the Spirit.

Well, we are without condemnation, Romans 8.1, only if we are living according to the Spirit. So that means a great part of the Church of Jesus Christ is under condemnation, and they don't know it. They don't realize that because they've only eaten half of the loaf.

They're not taking the whole counsel of God. We are under condemnation unless we are living in the Spirit of God. You know that the standard of Christianity and discipleship in the United States in the year 2000 is dreadfully below the Scripture, even though everybody agrees to it.

It doesn't make any difference what the Scripture says. And we sang this morning, Soldiers of Christ Arise. How many noticed that? Did you notice the words? And that was written a long time ago.

And you see, if you follow that, the words of Soldiers of Christ Arise, maybe we could flash that up on the board for a minute. I'd like to see that. Because, can you get that up there, Anthony? Soldiers of Christ Arise.

It must be around there somewhere. But these words are awesome. You know, if we were living according to this song, hymn, I wouldn't need to preach.

I mean, this is it. So you can see from this, as we come down into the contemporary teaching of grace, we have backslidden. We have wrested the Scriptures to our own destruction.

Strong in God's strength, more than a conqueror, stand in His might, arm you for the fight. That's not the fight of grace. What fight is there in grace? If you believe and you're forgiven, there's no fight there.

The Bible never talks about a fight of grace. What does it talk about? A fight of faith. Faith.

It's a fight. Well, if we were saved by grace, meaning we're saved by forgiveness and that's all we do, what fight? There's no fight. You just hold fast your doctrine.

So we are dreadfully backslidden in America at this time, standing and having all things done and all your conflicts passed. How many this morning have conflicts? I mean, you have conflicts, you have problems, you have things you're trying to overcome. If you don't, my suggestion is ask God for a report card.

It may be that you're in deception. It may be that you have believed a lie. Because the normal Christian life is one of conflict.

Because we are fighting the fight of faith. We are fighting to overcome the things that are sinful. We can't just say, oh, God's forgiven me.

That's not the Scripture. The Scripture talks about fighting the good fight of faith, putting on the whole armor of God. You may overcome through Christ alone and stand entire.

You don't stand entire in grace. You stand entire as you overcome. Amen.

Now look at this. It's marvelous. Marvelous.

Leave no unguarded place. Anybody have an unguarded place this morning? God will show you. He will show you.

He showed me something two weeks ago. I didn't realize I had such a chink in my armor. I got so mad I could have bit the head off a spike, so to speak.

And I let someone know about it. I apologized. I said, I'm sorry.

Do you forgive me? Well, after a lot of talk, they finally said yes. But when I hung up the phone, I said, thank you for that person, Lord. They showed me something that I did not know was true, and I appreciate it.

I didn't know I had that chink in my armor. It was an unguarded place, and I didn't realize it. And so God is constantly showing us unguarded places.

And when he does, he wants to post a guard there. And so instead of becoming angry at the you just settle it in prayer, let the Lord take the fiery dart out. Don't you try to take fiery darts out.

You'll burn your hands. Let the Lord take the fiery dart out. Just get down and say, Lord, take this out on my person that's poisoning me, that's making me angry, that's caused me to lose faith in your watch care over me.

Take it out of me, Lord. He will. I forgive.

I have nothing against the soul. They're only doing me good. So why should I be resentful? And so we have unguarded places, but the person walking in the Spirit finds out about that.

Take every virtue, every grace, that's in 2 Peter, the first chapter. Add to your faith this, and add to that that, and add to that that, and add to that that. And it says if you do that in 2 Peter, the first chapter, then you won't come short of God.

The Bible just does not push grace as it's preached today. It just does not do it. From strength to strength go on.

Well, I went on to, I'm stronger now, they can't pull that same thing on me again, thank God. Wrestle. Fight.

Pray. This was written quite a while ago. Well, I couldn't tell, Stan could probably tell how long ago, but I don't know.

Tread all the powers of darkness down and win the well-fought day. That's it. They had it.

The old-time Methodists had it. The old-time Baptists had it. And early Pentecost somewhat, but Pentecost got so emotionally oriented that they began to regard the Holy Spirit as a blessing, a feeling.

And then, of course, they couldn't distinguish between the Holy Spirit and their enthusiasm. Just good feeling in church. They couldn't distinguish.

They said, that's the Holy Spirit. The talking tongues and prophesy and all this. Those are only gifts of the Spirit, the purpose of which is to transform us morally, to accomplish this.

This is why we're blessed. This is a blessing. So in Pentecost, the blessing became an end of itself.

And we lost the strength of the Baptist word and the Methodist word. In fact, the old Episcopal word. Well, that's the strength of it.

You go back to the old Episcopal confession and read it. Man, strong. Strong.

And in Pentecost, we lost all that. Pentecost has become kind of a jazzy thing, and we've lost our moorings. And our theology is threadbare.

Was there any more to that song, or is that it? That's the whole thing. Isn't that impressive? Whoa. And that's exactly what we preach in this church.

So we've really gone back to the old ways. We're not in anything new. We're going back to the old ways.

This is the ways of the saints. The old paths of righteousness and holiness and fighting the good fight of faith. Now, he says in Romans 4, verse 5, those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires.

Now, what that nature desires is the things of the flesh. Eating, drinking, reproducing, anger, violence, entertainment, drunkenness, self-will, amuse my flesh. Well, that's what the flesh desires.

And if you live that way, you will die. You will die spiritually. And of course, this is a tremendous danger in America because we have so many creature comforts.

We don't realize how most of the world has lived for most of history. It's been rugged. Rugged.

Up until recently, women were having 10 children. Five, six of them would die before they got to the age of five. It was common.

Common. But immunization has changed that. Diphtheria and smallpox and the other things that used to wipe off people, because now we have a new assortment of diseases like AIDS that you can't get inoculated.

So it's always going that way. But by and large, as American people, we have not suffered as most of the people have throughout history. Now, we may in the future.

I don't know. I'm not looking for it. But I do know it's the norm.

It's the norm of life on the earth is a commotion. It's not like we are in America. In America, we're getting our spirit destroyed by material ease.

So you can tell if you're living in the spirit, not by whether you talk in tongues, but where your affections are. That's how you can tell whether you're in the spirit, is if you have your mind set on the things of the spirit. Now, the things of the spirit include the gifts and ministries of the spirit.

But those are not the prime things of the spirit. The prime things of the spirit are the image of Christ. It has to do with the moral image of Christ.

That's the main charge that the Father has given to the Holy Spirit, is to bring forth to Jesus a bride without spot or wrinkle. And that means in moral character. It doesn't mean by grace or imputed righteousness.

It means a bride without spot or wrinkle who has been morally transformed. And that's what the spirit, that's his charge from the Father. And he gives gifts and ministries for that purpose.

And you'll notice in the same chapter in verse 13, says if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die. We die spiritually, Christian or not. Because it's written to Christians.

But if by the spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, as I had to do a couple of weeks ago with anger, you will live because those who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God. So the spirit of God is continually bringing forth in your personality those things which are not in the image of Christ. Because your role is to be the wife of the Lamb and the body of the Messiah.

And so the Holy Spirit's job is to lead you step by step to these things that are unguarded, to moral actions that are not in the image of Christ. That's what Christianity is. That's what it is.

It's a fight of faith because you have to believe that God is good and that God is worthy of your faith and your patience and that God is bringing you to joy. You know in our, what is it, in the Declaration of Independence I believe, or the Preamble to the Constitution, one or the other, it speaks of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Well see that's incorrect.

That's an incorrect goal. Jesus said seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, not happiness. Not happiness.

That's not our goal. Now if we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, eventually we will have happiness. That's the only path there is to happiness.

But if we make happiness our goal, then what we have is what we have in America today. Where so many people are on tranquilizers, Prozac, acid indigestion relief, and so on. Plus domestic uproars and wars and homicides and everything else.

The reason for that is because we're in the pursuit of happiness. And that's not what God said to pursue. He said to pursue righteousness.

When we pursue righteousness we may have to discipline ourselves for a season and deny ourselves happiness. But in the end we will be happy. Because that's what the Bible promises, in thy presence is fullness of joy.

But if we pursue happiness we will end up unhappy. So God makes no mistakes. And this is the way.

The way is to cultivate the life in the spirit. Which is difficult in America because we have so many material alternatives. We have so many things that we can do to pamper our flesh, our fleshly desires, that it would be much easier for us to live in the spirit if we were in an impoverished country.

Much easier. Much easier. That doesn't mean poverty alone will bring about spirituality.

It will not. But it would subtract from the temptation. And that's why people go into nunneries and convents and what do you call think for the monasteries and live in the holes and cliffs in Greece and down in Jericho in that terribly hot caves that they live in cut out of the granite.

It's because they're trying to reduce the temptation. The alternatives. So they can focus on God.

So to focus on God in our culture is almost impossible. That's why the Bible says it's almost impossible for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. It's because the rich have alternatives.

One thing you lack, sell everything that you have. You want eternal life. So we can make it in America but you have to be outrageous.

I mean you have to be really radical. Not an outward exhibition of being different but in the way you approach life. Determined to deny yourself and take up your cross.

Determined to follow the spirit. Determined to turn away from the world. Determined to present your body a living sacrifice.

Now the Lord is preparing this army today and we heard quite a bit about that. There are evidently two armies and people talk about an army of witnesses that God may raise up. That being as it may.

I don't know about that. I suppose that's another name for the latter rain revival. But the army that I'm concerned about and the army that we're singing about from Joel and other things is an army that will ride behind Christ when he returns to establish righteousness on the earth.

And let me tell you something. To ride in that army you're going to have to go through fiery trials. There's no way out of it.

Because God has got to prove within you absolute discipline. Absolute obedience. And he doesn't need us.

He doesn't need you and me. He's got thousands of saints. Millions of saints throughout history who have suffered for the gospel.

You can read about them in the 11th chapter of the book of Hebrews. Tradition says Isaiah was sawn in half with a saw. And some of you have read Fox's book of martyrs.

That's only the church age. But you've got all that going back to the days of Adam. So Christianity has always led bloody footprints in the snow.

Now why is that? It's because if you're going to ride with Christ in that day, you have to be called chosen and faithful. You have to be proven faithful beyond doubt. And so thus requires fiery trials because fiery trials work steel and fire in our personality that will obey God no matter what.

I think God's people are tender today. Whoa. You get the slightest advice, not even a reproof, from an elder and you lose the spirit of God.

I got to toughen up. We're talking about an army. So if the elders or your leaders like Kathy or or Stan or anybody else who's leading a particular part of the parade, however it may be, if they rebuke you about your dress or say you should dress differently or you should do this or you should do that or whatever, don't lose the spirit of God.

That's good for you. If you lose the spirit of God over those things, you'll have a hard time riding behind Christ because you're talking about people that have been hardened through being broken on the rack and seeing their loved ones burned at the stake and everything. This kind of thing, seeing your loved ones burned at the stake or your home broken up at two o'clock in the morning and never seen your family, it

does something to you inside.

It does something to you inside. It puts steel and iron and fire there. That is part of the image of Christ.

Because you see, his life was not exactly the pursuit of happiness and we're called to be in his image. I don't mean to scare you. If you're young, don't be afraid.

I'm challenging you to stand up for Jesus. And he'll always make a way. I don't care how rough it gets.

There'll be extra grace, enough so that you'll be just as content as if you were in your four-bedroom split-level ranch house with four and a half baths. Probably happier because how many hundreds of thousands of people today in America living in four-bedroom split-level four and a half bath ranch houses today are screaming at each other in preparation for divorce. You see, riches don't bring happiness.

They don't bring joy. They don't bring peace. Only Jesus.

You can have it in the jungle. You can have it in a communist prison. You can have it in the great rooms outside the arenas at Rome where the iron gate come down you knew in the morning was going to be lifted and the lions are going to be let out.

See, Christians have gone through these things. But you don't have the grace for that now, so don't worry about it. When the time comes, you'll have one foot in heaven and say, wow, I never knew it'd be like this.

This is wonderful. But you won't have that now because you don't need it. It will be there.

I will never leave you nor forsake you. Talking this morning about being conformed to his image and living in the spirit and that this is very difficult to do in America because all the media all around us is calling to our flesh. So you really have to be a very worthy disciple to evade all this and to stand before Christ perfect and complete.

You're really going to have to give it your best shot. Or I don't say you'll be lost. That isn't what we're talking about.

We're talking about being conformed to the image of Christ, especially in preparation for his coming. Verse six, the mind of sinful man is death. And all that you're going to ever see in the television and the radio and the newspaper and the internet is death.

That's what you're going to see. Death. We don't realize it, but it is.

The mind of sinful man is death. But the mind controlled by the spirit is life and peace. And you can have that where you have no material blessings.

And many people have experienced that where God just gives them life and peace. How could I feel so good, Lord, when my whole world is crashed around my head? That's what it works. The mind controlled by the spirit is life and peace.

The sinful mind is hostile to God. Now, what does that mean? It means that the more you strengthen your mind, and education will do this. Education will strengthen your mind and at the same time make you hostile to God.

And we see that in German higher criticism. We see that in the great universities of our country. They are not centers of godliness.

What do they learn as their mind gets blown up far beyond their intelligence? What do they learn? There is no God. There is no God. How do we know? Well, our brilliant men have figured it out.

They learn. We worship education in this country. Education is not what it's cracked up to be.

It's only a tool to use to do God's will. It's not good in and of itself. In fact, in and of itself, it tends to puff you up.

It's no good in and of itself. God has used some remarkably ignorant people to do his will. Smith Wigglesworth, the great apostle of faith, couldn't even read.

He was a plumber. He couldn't even read. He could read the Bible, but that was by a miracle.

He couldn't read anything else. Education is a very dangerous thing because it strengthens the sinful mind and it begins to promote doubt. The sinful mind is hostile to God.

There's no way you're going to make your natural mind love God because by nature it is an enemy of God. Education is a good and useful tool if you're going to use it for a vocation. Otherwise, it's just a source of pride.

In America, we're all puffed up about how smart we are, and that's why we don't have any more miracles than we do. It's because we're so puffed up. Education does that.

It doesn't produce morality, as we see many of our major cities are in a state of anarchy where the police cannot handle the gangs, so education doesn't produce an orderly society. The sinful mind is hostile to God. Verse 7, it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

In other words, it's not able to serve God. That's why religion is of such little use. It's because religion tends to work with the mind.

You learn all these things about religion. It's not salvation, it's religion. Christianity is a religion just like the rest of the world religions, and that's fine, and good, clean, decent people, and they're smart, and they've learned this, and they've learned that.

That's not Christianity. Christianity is a one-on-one with Jesus, and Jesus is infinitely more than a teacher. He's the bread of life.

You have to eat Jesus. You have to get him inside of you. It's not enough to know about religion, theology.

Theology has caused more problems in the world, caused people to be burned, drowned. Theology, a pox on it. C.S. Lewis would say, the devil take it, and that's about all you can say for religion.

What matters is not what you know or think you know about God. What matters is your relationship with Jesus. Do you know him? He's a person, not a philosophy, not a religion, not a theology.

He's a person. Did you spend time this last week talking to Jesus, getting to know him? Religion will never save you. Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

He himself is eternal life. Jesus himself is eternal life. Does that make sense to you? Eternal life is a person.

It's not living forever. It's a person. The sinful mind does not submit itself to God's love.

It's impossible. That's why in Romans 12, 1 and 2, it says, be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Well now, how do you do that? By prayer and reading your Bible and following the Spirit, and he will cause you to, he will lead you in a way that your sinful mind would not go.

And that's why it says in Proverbs 3 verses 5 and 8, Proverbs 3 verses 4 and 5 I should say, trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean to your own understanding. When you have a decision to make, you don't figure it out. In all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your paths.

Now when I was in college, I learned what's called the scientific method of problem solving. Now this is supposed to be closely related to democracy. You could call it the democratic hyphen scientific method of problem solving.

And what you do is you array your alternatives and then you test them with a hypothesis. In other words, you hypothesize that such and such will happen. If it doesn't happen, then you have proven that that hypothesis is incorrect.

If on the other hand you test it and you try it and it, quote, works, and I say it might not work in God's sight but it works as far as you can see, then you verify your hypothesis. And this is the way you're supposed to think. You're supposed to think in terms of alternatives which you test for their validity, for their effectiveness.

Does that make sense to you? Can you see how that's totally mental? Can you see that that is totally a mental exercise? It has nothing to do with God. Listen again, Proverbs 3 verses 4 and 5. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean to your own understanding. In all your ways, now it doesn't say in the major ways like buying a house or a car or getting married or taking a different job.

Most of our life is made up of very small ways, very small little daily decisions that we make. And so God doesn't say in the major decisions of life. He says in all your ways.

Acknowledge. Hold it before the Lord. Don't try to force Him to go your way.

Sometimes the way we want to go is not going to bring joy and righteousness or peace. And so you acknowledge Him. You don't try to force your way on God even by praying and fasting unless the Lord leads you.

You don't have to twist God's arm. Anyway, most of prayer should be listening. And anybody can acknowledge.

You start off to swim across the pool. Acknowledge it. Acknowledge it.

Otherwise you might get swimmer's ear. Oh, what pain we often forfeit because we do not bring everything to God in prayer. It's an old song, Stan.

An old song. I tell you, everything to God in prayer. Well, I think I'll do this.

Acknowledge the Lord. Can't hurt. In all thy ways, acknowledge Him.

Lord, I'm going to do this. But if it's not right, show me. Acknowledge the Lord.

Lord, I'm doing this as part of my service to you. And this includes every aspect of life. You're going to drink coffee in the morning.

Acknowledge the Lord. Acknowledge the Lord. Maybe it's good for you, maybe it isn't.

You'll never know if you don't acknowledge it in all your ways. Acknowledge Him. And He shall direct your paths.

Doesn't say He'll speak to you. It says He shall direct your paths. So, some of it, sometimes there are some personalities that communicate verbally with the Lord.

There are many who do not. And so, they just have to trust that if they will acknowledge the Lord, He'll do what He said. That is as true as John 3.16. So, it says, lean not to your own understanding.

Now, you have to practice this because it does not come naturally. And your natural mind will fight this. Fight it.

That's the problem with education. We get so used to thinking instead of praying. Scheming instead of praying.

Planning instead of praying. A place for scheming and planning. But the first item on the agenda is praying.

And of course, if you've got a head full of knowledge that you've been pumped into union, you have five years of college or seven years of college, you're going to have a hard time. Because you're so smart. You have to humble yourself and say, Lord, I don't know anything.

Let's all say that. I don't know anything. Oh, that's good for you.

Because you really don't. None of us know anything at all. We just think we do.

We're educated far beyond our intelligence. What we need to do is humble ourselves and say, Lord, I'm a little child. Take my hand.

I don't know. Up, from, down. Just like the people in Nineveh.

I don't know my right hand from my left. The Lord loves that. He loves little children.

It's hard for PhDs to enter the kingdom. All right. Now, that's how you, that's how, Romans 1 and 2 says, be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

And that's how you renew your mind is by learning to acknowledge everything to the Lord. See, you're not leaning so, hey, you should got a mind. The reason you've got a mind, the reason God gave you a mind is so you can learn about God.

Is that it? That's it. And the reason that God gave you an imagination is so that you can think about the things that are not seen. So you can set your affection on things above.

And if you don't go window shopping every once in a while about who you'd like to meet when you die, what work you're going to do and everything, and you don't go telling the Lord about, Lord, I'd like this and I'd like that and I'd like some of that and some of that, you're missing a treat. That's a lawful use of your imagination. Otherwise, how are you going to set your affection on things above when you can't see it? So that you can set your treasures in heaven and rejoice and keep your mind up there, which is hard in America because we're being called down all the time, called down, called down, called down.

And you keep your mind up there, that's why he gave you an imagination. And he gave you a mind so that you can understand his laws and his ways. Not so you can learn how to get around them.

So we, in all our ways, we acknowledge him. And there's a place for education. I'm not decrying education, understand me.

I have at least an average education and it's helpful at times, but don't think it's a substitute for committing your way to the Lord, because it certainly is not. In fact, it's a hindrance more than anything else. Because the sinful mind is hostile to God and it does not submit to God's law, nor is it even able to do that.

It can read about it and boast about its knowledge of theology, but it is unable to submit to God. Your natural mind is unable. I'll tell you why, because your natural mind loves to reason.

And so do the demons. The demons could reason the leg off a mule. They love to reason.

Reason. Demons will reason with you all day long. That's why Jesus didn't allow them to speak.

When I'm praying a prayer of exorcism, I don't even allow them to act out, puke or anything else, because they'll do whatever you let them do. I've been in churches where they call forth demons. I mean, all over the church, people were puking in their clinics.

So unnecessary. But the demons love this kind of thing. So Jesus just said, come on, don't give me this stuff.

Anyway, that was all free there. But because your sinful mind loves to reason, and the demons love to reason, so you get into a reasoning thing, which of course the demons rejoice over, because they enjoy their attention. And by the way, when you do that, you're detracting from the glory of Christ.

Because you're a servant of the King, and he doesn't want you consorting with the enemy or talking to them, giving the impression that somehow they have power. They don't. It was destroyed on the cross.

So you're just foolish if you do that, and it displeases the Lord. Alright, those controlled, verse 8, those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. They cannot please God.

So that tells us that the only way you're ever going to please God is by doing what? Living in the Spirit. Because otherwise you can be as religious as all get out, but you're not going to please God, because you're in the flesh. Religion operates in the flesh.

So no, religion is fine in this place, and it's all that. But what you want is a one-on-one relationship with Jesus, so that you can live in the Spirit, and that's life and peace. That's life and peace.

Anybody that doesn't want life and peace had better see the doctor. Because if in your right mind, what you want is life and peace. Dear Lord, grant us life and peace.

The waters of Shiloah that go quietly, but sometimes we refuse these because we're full of vinegar, and we have a hard time getting the message. Alright, verse 9, you however are controlled not by the sinful nature, but by the Spirit of God. If the Spirit of God lives in you, and if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Now a person could take that wrong, and say, well I accepted Christ, and so therefore I'm in the Spirit, so therefore everything's okay. But you can't take one verse out, you've got to balance it against everything that God has said. So what Paul is saying in here is like wrecking yourself dead, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ and God.

In other words, he's telling you how to orient yourself. Like you might do to a child, say, come on, you're not a naughty child, don't act like that, that isn't true of you, that's not what you are. Come on now, let's put our best foot forward.

It's that kind of thing. He's not saying, well you've accepted Christ, therefore you're in the Spirit, therefore none of this applies to you. Do you see what I'm saying? You can't take a verse out and say, you have to balance it against everything that's being said.

And he's talking to the Roman Christians, by the first chapter, it tells us he's writing to the saints in Rome. So at verse 9, we're automatically all this by accepting Christ, then we have absolute confusion, nothing makes any sense at all. So you have to balance this against Romans 6, it tells us that we have to choose to be the slave of righteousness or the slave of sin.

You have to do Romans 8.13, if you live in the flesh you will die. All of this is written to Christians. So he's not saying if you have accepted Christ, you're automatically in the Spirit.

He's encouraging us, just like he's reminding us of who we are and what we are, and to act like it. Does that make sense to you? Have you ever done that to a child or to anyone? Come on, that isn't you, that isn't right, and you know that, you know better than that. Did you ever do that? Sure you have.

That's the way we do it with people, we try to encourage them to put their best foot forward. Now, I'll turn back briefly to show you where all this is going, is Ezekiel chapter 1, verses 19-21. And this first chapter of Ezekiel is talking about the outward image of Christ, whereas the temple of Ezekiel, starting in verse 40, talks about the inward nature of Christ.

And then what chapter did I tell you starts, once we're in the image of Christ, where it's all going? 47, exactly. Chapter 1, the outward image. Chapters 40-46, the inward image.

Chapter 47 tells us that this purpose, and God bringing us through all this, is that we might bring life to the world, become trees of life. Alright, now, chapter 1, verses 19-21, tells us about living in the Spirit. Now, this is talking about, now here we're going to get, maybe strange to you a little bit, but that's alright, if it's in the Bible then it's food.

These cherubim here, there's four of them in this chapter, there's four, and they have four wings. Now, the cherubim that are in Revelation, the fourth chapter, around the throne of God, have six wings. And I believe this is the interpretation of the difference in the number of wings they have.

In the Bible, six stands for man, because man was created on the sixth day. And four stands for communication. Four is the number of Pentecost, and of the lampstand.

So, and of course, the stars and moon and all that were created on the fourth day. So, I think what this is telling us is that the cherubim around the Emerald Throne in Revelation 4 has six wings because they represent man. And in the first chapter of Ezekiel, they represent the traveling, the communication of God.

Now, as I pondered this, why then, if this is the image of the glory of the Lord, where did the cherubim fit in? And I'll give you my opinion, though I couldn't give you a verse to support it, so this is my opinion. I think the cherubim were a forerunner of man. And now man is going to take their place.

Yeah, because God is giving everything to man. Man's on the highest throne. We're there in Christ, Revelation 3.21. It's appointed to us to judge men and angels, to judge the world.

It's appointed to man to rule over all the works of God's hands. It's appointed to man not only to be in the image of God, but to become the dwelling place of God. None of this is true of the cherubim.

So, I think what's happening is God, because of... See, in the beginning, before there was any sin, when there was only the angels of God and whatever other heavenly orders were there, the seraphim, the cherubim, and whatever else there were, before there was any transgression, there was a cherub. There were two cherubim that guarded the throne of God. Sin came into existence through one of those cherubim.

It came into existence through a cherubim. Think of it. So, they were evidently the highest order of God's angels.

And God, when he created man from the dust of the ground, don't you worry, the cherubim were watching that because they had been up there in God's counsels. Imagine, guarding around the throne. And Satan is only one cherub.

Well, look at the power he has exerted. Look at the damage he has done. That's just one cherub.

So, it gives you some idea of the importance and the grandeur of these creatures. But God reached down into the dust of the ground. The cherubim were watching this, of course.

And he said, let us make man in our image. See, that was never said of a cherub. Never.

Let them have dominion over all things. And then later as we go through the Bible, he's making man his throne, his dwelling place. That is awesome.

And I think he did that because of his reaction to the fact that a cherub had defied him. If you care to look at... I'm sorry, Brian, I'm out of order here. But if you care to look at Ezekiel 28, verse 14.

And Ezekiel, the 28th chapter, might be worthy of your attention because it talks about the prince of Tyre. But then we find hidden in the words, Tyre is a city, of course, no more because God demolished it. But it clearly branches over from flesh and blood and begins to talk about Satan.

And in verse 11 of Ezekiel 28. The word of the Lord came to me, son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him, this is what the sovereign Lord says. So obviously here he's gone way past the king of Tyre.

There's no question about it. Because as you read it, you'll see. You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

You were in Eden, the garden of God. And he was, didn't he? The serpent came down there. Every precious stone adorned you.

Now this is the way he was made. No human being was made like this. Ruby, topaz, and emerald, chrysalite, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and beryl.

Your settings and mountings were made of gold. Imagine, this was a creature. You were anointed as a guardian cherub.

This is Lucifer, the sun of the morning. For so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God.

You walked among the fiery stones. And there are people, and I'm one of them, who believe that the fiery stones are people. Who was it that wrote Greenleaf and Drought Time? Does anyone remember? Isabel Kuhn.

And she also viewed that these stones of fire is talking about people here. Because we do have fire. We have gods.

We were born from God's fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created. See, so originally, he was without blame.

Till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade, you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub.

See, none of this Satan understood until it came through the prophet Ezekiel. See, God is speaking through the earth to the heavens, both the righteous and the unrighteous. He did not answer them at the time.

He did it in a parabolic way, by creating a man, and then getting men to where they could prophesy through his spirit. And the Ten Commandments, for example, in Exodus, the 20th chapter, are God speaking directly to Satan, and telling him what was wrong with what he did. Because before that, there apparently was no code of righteousness in the heavens, because there was no sin.

And see, there was no code until it came forth through man, and then God declared, this is what I am, Satan, and Michael, and the rest of you. You will have no gods before me. Isn't that interesting? That God would choose the dust of the ground.

See how exalted Satan was? And so God goes to the most useless commodity on the earth, dust. And he said, okay, if you want to play hardball, we'll play hardball. I'll show you what I can do with dust.

And here's the dust here, you and I are down here, dust. Here's the angels that fell when they were in the supreme exaltation. And here we are down here as dust.

Oh God, help me through another day. Oh God, help me through another day. And God says, angels, look at that.

That's what comes from having the spirit of my son in the dust. Serving me, they can't even see me. They're full of pain, they're tired, they're bewildered, they're frustrated, they're frightened, and still they come on.

Still they come on. Isn't that marvelous? God's wisdom. It's no wonder everyone said, wow, Paul would break out in a hymn and talk about the greatness of God and his wisdom.

Then he says, I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth.

I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade, you have desecrated your sanctuary. So I made a fire come out from you and it consumed you.

You see, Satan is consumed with two things at least, many other things such as lying. But two that consume him, three, are self-will, lust, and violence. Satan is the incarnation of lust.

He's the incarnation of violence. He's the incarnation of self-will. But he can't help himself.

See, the fire comes out from him and there's nothing he can do about it. His whole nature is a fiery torment. Now let me tell you something, that can happen to us.

And we're warned about that in Galatians 6, verses 7 and 8, where the Lord says, but if you sow to the flesh, and I like the NIV says on that, from your flesh, you will reap corruption. In other words, God won't have to bring it from the outside. It will come from within you.

See, the corruption that you have sown by giving way to your flesh, in the day of resurrection, it will come out from you and destroy you. That's the perfect justice of God. What you sow, you're going to reap.

And there's nothing more just than that. Because God said, come on, come on, you can do better than that. I'll help you sow.

Let's get busy now and start sowing some good seed around here. And if you do that, that's what you're going to reap. But if you say, no, I've got to have my fling in America.

Everything's fine. It'll always be this way and everything. Just give me a little time to do what I feel like doing.

All that's inside of you. And you say, but then when I'm older, when I'm 30, I'm going to serve the Lord. But it doesn't work that way.

Because every day you're building habit patterns. That's the problem with waiting until you're 30 to serve the Lord. Because every day you're building habit patterns.

And if you say, well, I'll wait. You'll find when you get there that it's tremendously difficult because you've already formed your character and your habits. So the idea is, as early on as you possibly can, get in the habit of giving everything to the Lord.

And then when you're 30, you will serve God by nature. But if you have your fling first, if you should live to 30, and these days that's questionable, you will find it extremely difficult because you're already pretty well set. In fact, people are pretty well set by the time they're 10 years old.

So you have to be careful about human beings. That's the way they are. So that's what it says.

The fire comes out from Satan and there's nothing he can do about you. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you. You have come to a horrible end.

It will be no more. Now, whether he went back there to the physical King of Tyre or whether he is predicting what's going to happen to a future of Satan, probably both. It's the law of multiple application of the prophets because we find in Revelation that he is cast down.

It says, beware inhabitants of the earth for Satan has come down. So it's probably both. So we see then that the first chapter of Ezekiel is talking about cherubim, four of them having four wings.

But around the throne of God, the cherubim have six wings. And I explained to you the reason, but to find out how that applies to us, you'll have to tune in tomorrow. All right.

That's all the time. We're out of time. Praise the Lord.

Shall we stand then? Oh, hallelujah. Hallelujah. Oh, yes, Lord.

Oh, yes, Lord. The Lord is dealing with something. If anybody has a prophecy or a word, don't be afraid to give it.

That will not allow the need to be destroyed. And if necessary, you will be destroyed.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11170.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/robert-b-thompson/changed-into-christs-image-7/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net