

The Dispensation of the Gospel - Lesson 2

by Robert Wurtz II

The sermon emphasizes the importance of submitting to God and laying down secret sins and desires in order to experience true revival and live a life that is dead to sin and alive to God.

Duration: 30:04

Scripture: Matthew 6:24, Romans 6:6, Romans 8:13, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 5:24, James 4:4, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Holy Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker introduces the topic of being born again of the Spirit and discusses the three types of sinners: the careless sinner, the awakened sinner, and the convicted sinner. The speaker emphasizes that a born-again believer's nature is incompatible with the world and that they should have no use for it. The sermon also highlights the importance of avoiding worldly influences and continuously seeking God to maintain a holy lifestyle. Additionally, the speaker addresses the dangers of covetousness and the lust of the eye, emphasizing the need to resist illegal and illicit experiences.

Transcript

We started a new series last week that I've entitled The Dispensation of the Gospel, Rediscovering the Workings of the Holy Ghost. We talked about what it means to be genuinely born again of the Spirit. Sort of an introduction to being born again it was.

It wasn't exhaustive, but I wanted to at least look at the three types of sinners. Of course, being the careless sinner, the awakened sinner, and the convicted sinner. I wanted to also talk about some of the reasons why people never make the transition from being a convicted sinner to being a born again child of the living God.

A lot of people never make that step to serve the Lord and to give Him everything in their life. There's a controversy the Holy Spirit has with them, and they are not seeking after the Lord in a serious way. And they're hoping that maybe whatever it is that's between them and God will just go away, I suppose.

But when God has a controversy with us, we need to lay whatever it is down at the altar. Because we will never get any closer to God. We will never grow any closer to Him until we deal with that thing that He wants us to deal with.

We'll be perpetually locked in that place. But I want to add a little addendum to last week's lesson today. And I've entitled this lesson to, Crucified with Christ.

Our text is, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

You see, the natural state of man apart from being born again is purely selfishness. It is selfishness without mixture. Charles Finney defines selfishness as regarding one's own happiness supremely and seeking one's own good because it is his own.

I seem to recall years ago that I believe it was Sister Dorothy had listed a number of sins that were, if I could recall exactly how it was put, the greatest sins or something to that effect that we deal with. And the first one was selfishness. And the second one was selfishness.

And the third one was selfishness. And on down the list. Because at the very core, I believe of sin is pride and selfishness, where we want just for ourselves.

The selfish places his or her own happiness above all other interests, especially the glory of God. This selfishness is at the core of sin and must be crucified with Christ. Being crucified with Christ renders one free from sin and dead to sin.

How many of you understand that this morning? When we are crucified with Christ, when we genuinely come to the Lord and we are in Him, we are dead to sin and alive unto God. This truth is summed up in one verse. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? In this particular lesson, I just want to look at two basic things.

Number one, I want to examine those who are dead in sin. And secondly, to examine those who are dead to sin. You know, there are really only two types of people.

We are either dead to sin or we are dead in trespasses and sins. Those who are dead in sin are without Christ. They are strangers to the covenants of promise and are without God and hope in this world.

That's Ephesians 2 verse 12. They live their life self-willed, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and are by nature the children of wrath. They love the world and the things of this world.

Therefore, the love of the Father is not in them. Love for God manifests itself in selfless abandonment. That's a word that we really ought to look at.

Selfless abandonment. Just abandoning ourselves to our own desire and taking up the will of God for our life. But the love for the world manifests itself in three specific ways.

First, in the lust of the flesh. Second, in the lust of the eye. And thirdly, in the pride of life.

The lust of the flesh is simply covetousness. It is an inordinate desire for things. In our day, how many of you know that many times you turn on the television, you watch TV, and even when an altar call is given, there are oftentimes selfish motives that are being appealed to to draw that person to Christ.

If you'll come to the Lord, the Lord will make you happy. If you'll just come to the Lord, He'll get you out of your crisis. If you'll just come to the Lord, He will meet your needs.

If you'll just come to the Lord, and we're feeding jaded appetites. You see, we do not come to the Lord out of selfish motivation. Sometimes God may get our attention in that way.

But ultimately, when we come to the Lord, we are to set apart our selfish desires. Inordinate affection for things can range from desiring your neighbor's house to your neighbor's wife. Generally, it is a lust for material possession.

Paris Readhead described them as things that soon break, things that rust, things that get old, things that have to be hauled off to the garbage dump. This lust for things is the opposite of the personality of a giving God. You realize that when we become covetous, then we don't have a heart to give, to give to the needy.

We become very self-centered, and that is the opposite of Christlikeness. Jesus came to give Himself as a ransom for many. Secondly, the lust of the eye is the desire for illicit or illegal experience.

It is the desire to trespass against a boundary that God has set up. For example, fornication is illegal experience. Taking drugs, drinking alcohol, getting drunk is illegal experience.

Any type of desire to do something that is forbidden of God can fall into this category. The finality of these things is ultimately idolatry. Did you know that sin is progressive? The devil is not content that you would just start doing something little.

Pretty soon you've got to have something bigger to meet that need. And this progression gets greater and greater until you move out of the realm of doing fleshly things, or even worldly things, until you can actually move into the realm of idolatry, and that's very dangerous. We've seen this story with Solomon.

Solomon had everything. He literally maxed out all of the lust of the flesh. He had everything his eyes ever desired to have.

He had everything that any of us could have ever imagined. He had illicit experience. He had illegal experience.

He had all of these different types of things. But what we find out about Solomon is none of it was ever enough to satisfy him. When he got to the end of his life, read the book of Ecclesiastes, the scripture said, Vanity, vanity, all is vanity.

It's almost as if he was looking in the mirror and saying, Solomon, are you satisfied now that you've got everything, now that you're the most powerful man in this region of the world? Are you satisfied? He said, Vanity. He looked out and he saw all of his houses, his lands. He saw all of his gardens and places to walk in.

He looked up and saw his some 500 to 900 wives and concubines, and he said, Vanity, vanity, all is vanity, saith the preacher. See, the devil has never had any other new devices to work on man with. It's always been these three things.

Let's look at the third one. The pride of life is the desire for ascendancy. It's the desire to glorify yourself, to make a name for yourself or to move up the chain of command, to be popular or rule and reign over a people.

It's the desire to exalt yourself against your neighbor in any way that you can. See, a lot of times when we buy things or when we move here or we do that, it's a very selfish motivation. It's a desire to exalt yourself

and move up the ladder, and we need to be careful with that because that's a worldly mindset.

Any desire to promote oneself above others is rooted in the pride of life. Let's look at that in contrast to what Paul said in Galatians 6.14. But God forbid, he says, that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. You see, Paul was crucified to the world and the world to him.

He had no use for the world and the world had no use for him. Paul had no use for the world. He wasn't like Demas who forsook him, having loved this present evil world.

He had no desire for the world. The world had no use for him either. As we know, of course, he was martyred later in his life.

The nature of a born-again believer is totally incompatible with the world. How many of you remember Lot? The Bible talked about how him seeing all the things of Sodom and Gomorrah vexed his righteous soul from day to day. There's two Greek words there.

One of the words for vexed means it wore him down. The other one said it tormented him. And when you're a true born-again believer, when you have truly been crucified with Christ, born again to the Spirit, you're not at home nor comfortable in the world.

You're not comfortable. You can't make your bed in the world and feel comfortable. There's just something about it in your spirit that it doesn't sit right.

You're troubled, you're tormented, you're worn down. And the more you're worn down, you feel in your heart you need to get alone with God and be built back up in the Spirit so you can continue to walk and to serve Him. The world wears down a genuine believer.

Paul had no use for the world. It had no use for him. And the nature of a born-again believer is totally incompatible with the world.

The world represents everything that a born-again believer despises. You know, if you were to take several weeks off from just watching television and just get alone with God, get into the Word of God and begin to seek the Lord and allow your spiritual man to get strong again and then just walk into your house, flip on the TV, you'd be shocked at how you feel about it as compared to if you continually subject yourself to it. If you're not careful, we can sit around in the world and the things of this world and suddenly they're no longer shocking to us.

They no longer disturb us. I feel the Lord would have us do that. The greatest miracle is to watch God take an unholy person from an unholy world, give them a clean heart, put them back in that unholy world and keep them holy.

See, we can't live like the monastics that moved away and got farther and farther away from society thinking that they're being more holy. You notice there's something that happens. You get farther and farther out and you begin to pull out and think, well, I'm going to separate myself.

You can do that in your life from the world, but when you get alone, you also do something else. You open up the door for lots of other things to happen. See, Jesus didn't go out to the city to be tested of the devil.

He went out to a remote place. And when we get away from and we begin to separate ourselves, we become vulnerable to the devil as well. But I believe God can take a person that is unholy, give them a clean heart, put them in an unholy world and keep them holy.

I believe he can do that, but it takes the Holy Ghost to do it. Secondly, those who are dead to sin. Those who are dead to sin are those who have genuinely turned their life over to Jesus Christ.

They have been crucified with him and they are now walking in the newness of life. They have been buried with Christ in baptism unto death to sin and the world. Death in Christ to set them free from the slavery of sin.

Hence, dead servants are no use to their masters. Once we have truly been born again to the Spirit, we signify that by water baptism. We go down into the water.

What are we saying? We're saying, I am dead. I am dead to the old man. I'm dead to the old ways.

I have died. You're not doing this in order to achieve death. You're doing this because you are dead.

You see that? We do not believe in baptismal regeneration. We don't believe you go down in the water and you die. We believe that when you go down in the water, you're signifying the fact that you're already dead.

You're dead to the world and you come forth walking in the newness of life. How many of you realize, it's a very basic concept, but how many of you realize there can be no resurrection until there's death? There can be no resurrection until there's death. So oftentimes, we want to know the Lord and the power of His resurrection.

We want to know resurrection power. We want to see the moving of the Holy Ghost. But to see that, there has to be a perpetual death.

You have to die to yourself. Die to your own desire. Die to your own will and be willing to completely submit your life over to God.

And at that point, He can pour His Spirit out upon you and use you for His will. That's the key. Death in Christ has set us free from the slavery of sin.

Hence, dead servants are of no use to their masters. Therefore, no man can serve to masters. You are either dead to the former slave master of sin or you are dead to God.

You cannot be a servant of both. You know, when we try to live that life, it's the most miserable thing. Did you know that? Brother Birch talks so often about the joy of the Lord.

He talks about joy. You want to know what a real key to joy is? You know, the Bible says that the kingdom of God is not in meat and drink, but it is in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. In that order, in that progression, righteousness, then peace, then joy.

We can't have peace without righteousness. We can't have joy without peace. You see that? We can't skip from just over the top.

Well, I want the joy of the Lord, but I don't want these other things. We have to have peace with God or there will be no joy. We have to walk and live in righteousness or there will be no peace with God.

There are a lot of fake substitutes for joy, an awful lot of them, but the true joy of the Lord will come in that progression. Righteousness, peace, then joy in the Holy Ghost. You're either dead to the former slave master of sin or you're dead to God.

You cannot serve both. You cannot be a friend of the world and yet be in a right standing with God. Secondly, those who are dead to sin have crucified the flesh with its affections and its lusts.

Paul writes, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. You know, I believe, and I've told others this, and I believe it is as true this morning as it's ever been, that the condition that we see in our lives and in the body of Christ today is that God wants to draw us out of our besetting sins. Did you know that? You know, you can only sit so long in a pew, wrestling with God, knowing that you've got besetting sins in your life.

There's nothing that gets older than stumbling over the same old thing, church. And the Holy Ghost deals with us and deals with us and deals with us. And it makes us more and more miserable.

We have to crucify the flesh with its affections and its lusts. Paul said the old man is crucified, the body of sin is destroyed. We should not serve sin.

Those who are dead to sin and are alive to God have a completely different appetite than those who crave worldly things. Again, if you feed your flesh, if you feed your carnality with carnal things, you will grow an appetite for that. Did you know that? And the weird thing is, is that the more that grows, it's a bottomless pit that can never be fulfilled.

And the worst thing about it is it robs you of your appetite for God. In the streets of South America, in these big cities, there are kids that go around and they don't have food to eat, so they'll break into the store or they'll run in the store and they'll steal baggies and they'll steal little bottles of fingernail polish. And they will pour that into the baggie.

They will mix it up like this, hold it over their mouth, and they will begin to breathe in and out really quick. It gives them a high yes, but it also does something else. It takes away their appetite for food, and hunger is one of the most grueling things to suffer.

But they would put that over their mouth and it takes away their appetite. When you partake of sin, it's like putting that baggie over your mouth. And your spirit man loses his appetite for God.

It's a true thing. When you submit to things that you know God is saying, don't touch that, leave that alone, don't mess with that, what you're doing is you're quenching your appetite for God. You're quenching your desire to pray.

You're quenching your desire to read the Word. You're quenching your desire to get closer to God. You say, why are you saying that this morning? Because to be honest with you, I can teach till doomsday, but until we get past secret sin, we're not going anywhere with God.

We're not going anywhere, church. We're not going anyplace. We can make pretense.

We can pretend. We can keep coming. We can do a lot of things.

But until we submit that to God, we're not getting anywhere. I believe it's why we're seeing a holdup of revival in this nation because people just simply won't lay that thing down. God's saying, lay down, put that down, quit doing that.

I noticed that when God started moving in the early 90s by His Spirit, that it wasn't long and that thing just seemed to, the air just went right out of it. And two things, I believe, caused it. Number one, the advent of the Internet.

Yeah, the Internet. So much stuff on the Internet just literally destroying people of God. The second thing was a covetousness set into people.

And you see it even in the body of Christ when people are ministering. It's money, money. It's sow this seed.

It's give this and God will bless. It's covetousness. And those two things have robbed us of the move of God.

They've robbed us of the move of God. And until we come to that place where we say, God, I'm going to submit this thing to you, we're not going to have a desire for God. We're not going to have a desire to pray.

We're not going to have a desire to come to church and meet with God. What we'll do is we'll just keep holding out. We'll just keep holding out.

I hope I'm strong enough to make it to church next week, but, boy, I'm really getting weak. Let go of that thing. I did a lesson over at New Life.

I spoke for a few minutes on a subject that I entitled kryptonite. And I talked about how kryptonite would cause Superman to lose his strength. But as soon as he would let it go and get away from it, he would get his strength back automatically.

I promise you, I promise you, child of God, you lay that thing down and just give it some time, and you're going to start getting your strength back. You're going to start getting your desire for God back. Your talk is going to change.

Your feelings are going to change. Your appetites are going to change. And the next thing you know, you're going to be like, I can't wait to get to church.

I can't wait to get to the prayer meeting. But so long as you keep holding on to that thing, it's weakening you, weakening you. You know, kryptonite, that means hidden, secret, secret sins, things that maybe only you know about.

But it's killing you. It's weakening you. We have to die to these things.

Finally, in Section 3, in Colossians 1 through 3, rather, if you be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above and not on the things of this world, for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. The key word here is if.

If you be risen with Christ, it is because you have died. You died to the old man. You died to your own self-will.

You died to the child of disobedience that you once were. And because you are dead, your life is hid with Christ in God. Your affection is in heaven and not on this earth.

You are not your own. You are bought with the price. Therefore, you glorify God in your body and your life that now belongs to Him.

For the truly born again of the Spirit, the only reason for living, church, is to give glory to God. Nothing matters. Nothing satisfies.

Solomon said that it's all vanity. What if he would have taken all of his energies and done something for God and pursued the Lord? What if he would have done that? Finally, in Luke 9, 23, Jesus said, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me. Again, we are faced with the word if.

Do you desire to be a genuine disciple of Christ? That's the question. Deny yourself daily by taking up your cross and following Him. The cross is like an altar.

It is the place and the means of death. Dr. Tozer is frequently quoted as saying these words, You knew one thing about a man that was carrying a cross out of the city. You knew he wasn't coming back.

You knew he wasn't coming back. When you truly die to yourself, when you die, when you're crucified with Christ, you won't come toting that cross back into the city. You're going out once and for all.

You've burned the bridges behind you. You said, I'm serving God, and this is it. Those who have wrestled with God in their own personal garden of Gethsemane have declared, Not my will, but thine be done.

Listen, they're already dead. You know, Jesus determined in the garden that He was giving His life. Oh, He had determined it before the foundation of the world, but it was in the garden of Gethsemane, the garden of crushing, where He said, Not my will, but thine be done.

They are perpetual martyrs, the word is in the Greek, witnesses for the cause of Christ, which leads us to some questions. We have to ask ourselves, Are we dead to sin? Are we dead to the allurements of the world? Let me ask you, Are you dead to criticism and praise? If you're ever going to teach, if you're ever going to minister, if you're ever going to do anything for God, that's one thing you've got to die to. You've got to die to the praise of men, and you've got to die to the criticism of men.

You cannot serve the Lord because somebody pats you on the back or criticizes you. You have to speak what says the word of the Lord and let the chips fall where they will. Are you dead to competition with your friends, with your family? Are you dead to climbing the corporate ladder or the management chain at your job? Are you dead to competition in ministry? Paul said, Let a man examine himself, whether he be in the faith.

This is a good means of examination. Do we have an affection for God, or is our affection set on the things of this world? What governs our appetites? Finally, nothing is more miserable than trying to live both for God and for this world. And let me just say something to you because last year was the best year of my life.

I turned everything to God, and you know God did more in my life last year than He's ever done. He's done more in ministry than He's ever done before. He's changed more lives.

He's moved more people's lives by being able to be used as a vessel for Him. When you go into the cupboard and you pull out a glass and you see a stain on it, what do you do? Do you pour your glass a pop? Do you? Of course you don't. What do you do? You either put it in the sink or you wash it out, don't you? That's where I was, church.

That's where I was. God could use me to a degree, but He was like, you know, I've got to get this stain off the glass so I can use this vessel. I hope you take that seriously this morning because there's nothing more important than what I'm saying right now.

We are never going to get where we need to be with God until we lay down those things that He's been asking us for years to lay down, until we set them aside. Jesus said, no man can serve two masters. So then what is the attraction? Why even attempt it? Simply stated, listen, many do not want God at the level God requires them.

I talked about it last Sunday night. Many just simply don't want God at that level. They don't want to be that close to God.

But you know what? It's going to be one or the other in our life. Why? Because if we don't have the Lord in our life, sin is waiting at the door. Do you know that? It took me a long time to conclude that, and I won't finish today, but I'll finish with this.

It took me a long time to come to that conclusion. Many, many years, I would say, God, what is the solution to my problem? Why do I keep going back to this? Why do I keep tripping over this? Why, why, why? And the whole time, He was telling me, get closer to me. I need you to walk closer to me.

I need you to live full of the Holy Ghost. But I was saying, God, that's not on the table. I'm not going to be full of the Holy Ghost.

I'm not going to walk at that, I'm not going to surrender at that level. I'm not giving my life to you like that. I want a solution to the problem that I can still be me and be without that.

And take it from me. I looked in every place. The only hope is to get so close to God that the fire of God just consumes everything around you, that your whole desire is given over to God, and then you're protected from these things.

You can go out into an evil world, an unholy world, and God will keep you holy.

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