

Adultery In The Heart

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the need for believers to take drastic measures to deal with sin, particularly focusing on the battle against lust and sexual immorality. It highlights the importance of making a covenant with one's eyes, fighting the good fight of faith, and seeking the empowering of the Holy Spirit through prayer and dependence on God. The speaker urges humility, desperate prayer, and a violent approach to sin, emphasizing the grace of God that enables believers to overcome and persevere in the Christian walk.

Scripture: Matthew 5:27, Romans 6:11, Colossians 3:5, James 5:16, Romans 13:14, 1 Peter 5:5, Romans 8:13, Colossians 3:2, 1 Corinthians 10:13

Topics: "Overcoming Sin", "Dependence on the Holy Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

I'd like to call your attention this afternoon to Matthew chapter 5 verse 27. It's the portion of scripture we'll give ourselves to considering verses 27 through 30. You've heard that it was said you shall not commit adultery, but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.

For it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body go into hell. Father, we ask you now just for the grace and help to deal with this passage in a faithful manner. I pray Lord, give me the words to speak as they're needed.

Give us all ears to hear. I pray this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

So, you have heard that it was said you shall not commit adultery, but I say to you. I mean, we need to just stop. I mean, sometimes we get used to things, but what is this? I mean, who talks like this? I mean, think about it.

Dad says to his children, I know you heard mom say a certain thing and she gave you some orders, but I say. I mean, what's going on when somebody talks like that? Who talks like that? I mean, it's a statement that says I supersede what was already said. It's a statement of override.

That's how you talk when you want to communicate that though someone else has already set the standard, I'm now replacing the standard. That's how he is talking. You've heard what they say, and you know this is very interesting.

I find this interesting because we have to sort through it. What he is going to say right here is exactly what Moses says, but you know what's very interesting? He doesn't say, you've heard Moses say, but I say. And even though he's quoting Moses verbatim, he doesn't say, you heard Moses in the Old Testament say.

He rather says, you've heard it said. Or, you know, he says, you've heard it said by those of old times. Isn't that the way the KJV says it? But here's the question.

What is what's happening here? Who is Jesus contradicting when he speaks this way? Do you use the word Trump? And I don't mean Donald, but if you say, you know, somebody's word trumps somebody else. You talk like that? Use that terminology? I mean, who's he trumping here? Who is it? Who's he overruling? Now listen, a lot of people want to come along and say, well, you know the Sermon on the Mount? The Sermon on the Mount is basically, and we have good reason for thinking this, because our righteousness has to exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees. But a lot of people want to come along right away and want to say, well, what Jesus is doing is correcting the misrepresentations of the scribes and the Pharisees.

They misrepresented the law. But you know what's happening right here? The only thing he quotes, the only thing he says that you have heard is, you shall not commit adultery. And you know what? If you look at the Old Testament Septuagint, the Old Testament Greek, and you compare it to the Greek that he's saying right here, identical.

It's absolutely identical. He's quoting the seventh commandment. He's quoting Exodus chapter 20, verse 14.

So, Jesus is saying, you've heard it said. I mean, somebody's been saying this. This is what Jesus is saying.

You people out there, you've heard that taught. Now, he doesn't say that it comes from the seventh commandment, though we all know it does. But he's saying, you all have heard that taught.

But, somebody's saying that, somebody's teaching that. Jesus knows we've been taught this. No adultery.

But I say. And you know, one of the things, one of the things, we get people down there. There was a guy yesterday, really insistent.

I was wanting to go through scripture with him. But the Indian guy, Walid, or whoever, he just came around and he broke this thing up. But this guy was insisting that, I told him, Jesus said he lays down his life and he takes it up again.

Because he was insisting, well the father raised him. The father is God. Jesus is not God.

And I can prove it by the resurrection. I said, no, Jesus himself said, even though scripture does say the father raised him, the reality is that Jesus says, I lay down my life and I take it up again. And he said, show me.

And so I went and got Sonny's Bible. And the reality is that when you start listening to what Jesus says in the New Testament, you really start paying attention. Listen, you know, we need to recognize, who does he make himself out to be? You've heard it said, but I say? Wow.

Do you know before we get to the end of the Sermon on the Mount, what he says? He says this, he says, you want to measure all wisdom and all foolishness in this world? You can measure it based on my words. You see a man, he hears what I say and he does it. That's a wise man.

It's like a wise man who built his house on a rock. Same thing. You can measure wisdom and foolishness by this.

You know what? This Christ is the one specifically who God said to Moses back in Deuteronomy chapter 18. He said this, I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

This is the one that the author of Hebrews says that Jesus has been counted of more honor than Moses. Do you know who this is? God specifically tells us by this author of Hebrews that in times past, God spoke to us in all sundry and diverse ways. But now in these last days, how has he spoken to us? No longer by the prophets, by his Son who is heir of all things, by whom he created all things.

He's the one who upholds all things. He's the one who is the radiance of the glory of God and he is the one who after he made purification for sins, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. And before you get out of Hebrews chapter 1, do you know what God says of the Son? Your throne O God! I took that guy, I took that guy yesterday.

See what he was really wanting to say is Christ is not God. And he had this agenda to take me to John chapter 17 and verse 3 and say, see it speaks about God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. See he's not God.

I went right to Hebrews 1 and I said the Father calls the Son God. Well he didn't want to hear that. He tried to explain that.

Do you realize who we're dealing with here? We are dealing with the one that Peter said, remember? Are you guys going to go too? Lord we're not going. You are the one that has the words of eternal life. This is the one.

And this is what Jesus said. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge. The word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

Do you know what Jesus said? One that is greater than Jonah is here. One who is greater than Solomon is here. One who is greater than the temple is here.

You know what? One that is greater than John the Baptist. John the lachet of his sandal. This is the one we're dealing with.

But we never want to think that as much as Jesus says, you've heard this said, and even though he's quoting the seventh commandment, you never want to think that Jesus came to contradict Moses. And the reason we know that is because what we already read in chapter 5 verse 17. Don't think I've come to abolish the law.

And he's talking about the law of Moses. I've not come to abolish but to fulfill. Brethren, a father says to his children, you heard your mother tell you to go to bed.

But I say, don't go to bed, it's play time. Okay, now that father used his authority to contradict mom, right? But if mom says, children go to bed, and dad says, you heard mom tell you to go to bed? I'm telling you, I don't want any playing. I want you to go right to sleep, no horsing around in there.

We've got to get up early tomorrow, we're going on holiday. Now see, that father fulfilled what mom said. That's what Christ is doing here.

He's doing the latter. He's fulfilling. Jesus is not saying, well you heard it said, don't commit adultery, but I'm telling you it's okay to commit adultery.

That's not what he's doing. He's saying, no. He recognizes this.

It's been said. He recognizes these scribes, these Pharisees and their rabbis have been walking around for hundreds of years, and you know what, when it comes to adultery, this is basically all they put on the table. He recognizes that.

That they basically whittled this thing down to, well if you don't actually commit the action, then we're all good. He recognizes that they heard that, and he knows full well this is a matter of the heart. Because remember the Beatitudes, blessed are the pure in heart.

This is where this all comes from. They externalized this thing. Do you realize who this is? Have you ever realized that Jesus is called the Word of God? Do you know what a word is? What is a word? You put letters together and they make up, and really all it is is symbolism, right? It's not the thing.

Letters are symbols. That when we see it, it tells us it means something. And so you put them all together and they express something.

There's a meaning there. You see, Christ is the Word of God. He came to declare God.

He came to declare the mind of God. He came to, I mean basically what John 1.18 says, He declares Him. This is what we have here.

His words are life. He speaks this way in John 3. He whom God has sent speaks the words of God. Now here's the thing.

The scribes and the Pharisees, their rabbis throughout the ages, they could quote the seventh commandment to you. They knew it. No adultery.

Well enough. They had that down. They had externalized it nicely.

No problem. But you know what? Do you know what the problem was? There was also a tenth commandment. And you see that tenth commandment was not one they liked to spend a whole lot of time on.

That tenth commandment created incredible amounts of problems for them. Because that said, you can't covet your neighbor's wife. And do you realize? Paul, he speaks to us this way.

Well when it came to righteousness, what? Blameless. Blameless. When it came to the law of God, he said blameless.

And yet, in Romans chapter 7, when he says, oh, I was doing good. I was keeping that law. I was alive.

And what happened? What came in that slew him? It was the tenth commandment. And I'll tell you what the problem with the tenth commandment is. It can't be externalized.

And do you know what happened to him? It finally registered with him, oh, there's a commandment. Like he was blind to it. And suddenly, bang, there it was.

And he began to recognize, that is a heart issue. And do you know what he says? The more he tried not to covet, what happened? The more he coveted! He said that law, which is good, and it's just, and it's holy. But he said, sin took an advantage by that commandment.

And it produced in him all manner of covetousness. And you see, this was the issue. And these guys had nicely externalized everything.

But even Paul, he recognized that got him. Suddenly it was a heart issue. Again, blessed are the pure in heart.

So, pure in heart, that's the objective here. And what he's saying is, if precious things, what's the deal with the right eye? Now look, you understand what's being said. He's talking about sexual sin.

He said, if your right eye offends, you want to gouge that thing out. Your right hand? Why would he say right eye? Why would he say right hand? Because the problem is, that if I have a real lust issue, and it's based on what I see, and I'm looking at women with lust, why only the right eye? I mean, because if I pluck that right eye out, don't I still kind of have a problem? Why does he leave left out? Well, because obviously, for one, he doesn't mean physically, you should go do this. He's using this very metaphorically.

And he's basically saying, the right eye, the right hand, they were considered, you know, for most of us, we're right handed. The right hand would be the last hand you would want to lose. The whole idea is exactly that.

We have things in our life, and they trip us up. They're responsible. And he's saying, take those dear, precious things, and you've got to get rid of them.

Even as graphic, I mean, you think about this. This is graphic imagery. Can you imagine somebody gouging their eye out? Maybe you, I think I mentioned this once before, but when Lloyd-Jones was down in South Wales, and he was pastoring down there, he said he had an eerie thing happen.

A woman showed up that actually had an empty eye socket, and she'd done this very thing. Now, you know what? I don't think we would all think, oh, they are a really godly person. They did the Sermon on the Mount.

I think we'd all think they are strange, and that's what he thought. He said something was peculiar and was not just right. But I'll tell you this.

I remember not too many years ago, somewhere in the Middle East, you know, Sharia law, and somebody had stolen, and they were chopping a guy's hand off with a machete. And it wasn't a pretty thing. They said it took a whole lot more blows than what they expected.

In fact, I've been doing some research on just English history here, and you guys had, maybe you all know about him, you guys had an executioner that really botched it like more than once. Do you know who I'm talking about? He actually tried to take, you had a king that was beheaded, and he botched that like it didn't happen really cleanly. And the next guy he executed actually paid him more money to make sure that he did it right, and he botched it even worse.

Just hacking on the guy. Now, you know, this is graphic imagery. There's no question about this.

And this is exactly the kind of imagery that he's using here. Brethren, I just want to ask you this. Have you counted the cost? I mean, is this the kind of Christianity that you signed up for? Because Jesus does not think that this imagery is too graphic.

Because you know, you obviously recognize the urgency of this. He is saying that when it comes to such sins like this, the kind that really go deep into a man or a woman, now he's dealing with men here, but we know that this thing can be reversed. But this is, the urgency here is just this.

Our souls are at stake, and he's talking about being thrown into hell here. And what I find is this. Have we really counted the cost as to what it is to follow the Lord Jesus Christ? I mean, have you ever noticed, Jesus never seemed to be really interested in getting the big crowds.

I mean, when people were walking away from him, you know, we've talked about this before, that he looked at the twelve and he said, you guys want to go too? You know, it's very interesting. Here comes a guy, oh, I'll follow you wherever you go. Foxes have holes, birds of the air.

Why would he even talk like that? Sometimes you think, Jesus, were you really trying to save people? I mean, it sounds to me like part of the time he's trying to run people off. Well, why? Not that he was really trying to run people off, but see, he wanted people to count the cost and know what they were really getting into. And if people weren't really serious about this, better to let them know and know all the conditions and know his requirements of salvation right in the beginning than let them go on deluded and deceived.

And it's like if I'm going to put it all on the table and all these guys want to walk away, he doesn't beg them. In fact, he turns to his twelve and he says, look, you guys saw all my credentials out there on the table too and you saw what I'm saying this is all about. Do you guys want to go too? No, no.

You have the words of eternal life. And see, that's where we all need to be. No matter what hills of difficulty are before us, no matter how difficult following Christ may be, even if it costs us our own life, if we've got to gouge out eyes and we've got to chop off right hands, the reality is he's got the words of eternal life.

So you don't want to let go of this. Listen, no matter how difficult this gets, and he never promises it's going to be easy. He does not do that.

I mean, far from pressing people just to decide for Jesus, he put obstacles in people's way. I mean, he looked at people and in effect said, do you realize what you're getting into? Do you realize what I'm calling you to? Do you realize the battle? Do you realize the difficulty here? It's graphic. Do you really know what it means to deny yourself, take up the cross? Jesus said it this way, whoever does not bear his own cross, that's a death instrument, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he is enough to complete it. Otherwise, when he's laid a foundation, not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish. So therefore, he says this at the end of the chapter, so therefore, anyone of you who does not renounce all that he has, cannot be my disciple.

Did you get that? That is one of the most difficult verses that he ever says. But because gouging out eyes sounds more graphic, but do you realize what he's saying? I only lay claim to your right eye and to your right hand. If you don't forsake all that you have, your left eye, your left hand, your right foot, your left foot, it's all mine.

You see, this is the thing. Jesus will wonderfully save us. Do you recognize why it is that people go to Christ and they ask him to save them and he doesn't, after he promised that he will give rest to everybody that comes to him, and why people go to him and they don't get rest? Do you recognize why? Because they go to him wanting to be saved on their own terms.

Jesus' terms are this, I am going to save you the way you need to be saved. That means, I am going to save you to be surrendered to my will. And that means all you have and all you are, are mine.

You see, when a person is at the end and they come and they are not bargaining anymore, Lord save me on your terms. Oh, he'll save them like that. You see, he wants us to count the cost.

He wants us to see what this is really all about. Brethren, does Jesus not know how graphic it is? Could you imagine watching somebody gouge out their eyeball? You see, that's disgusting brother. That is Jesus' imagery here.

I mean, doesn't he realize? You take, you know what, several years back, I don't know if the story made it all the way over here, but in Utah, I think it was Utah or Idaho, they have very interesting rock formations in both those states in the U.S. And Ellen, maybe you remember what state this was in. But there was a guy out there rock climbing and he, you know, mountain climbers, they jam their toes and their hands in the cracks and stuff. And he put one of his hands in the crack and I mean, a massive boulder shifted and crushed it.

It landed on his hand and no matter how hard he pulled, he could not get his hand out. You remember that story? And what happened is he kept hoping somebody's going to come. Somebody's going to find him.

But I'll tell you what happened. His hand, for one, I think he had a certain amount of food, a certain amount of water. Then he starts running out of food and water.

And obviously he's not sleeping and his hand begins to rot. Circulation's cut off, it's smashed under this thing. I mean, he could hear like gases escaping from it.

And so basically he recognized. He had a knife. He recognized what he had to do to save himself.

And he talks about just how difficult it was cutting his own hand off. Brethren, do you realize the urgency? And Jesus, his graphic language doesn't stop there. He doesn't give you this picture that if this doesn't happen, you're going to be gently laid into the lake of fire.

He says, you'll be thrown into hell. Again, you know, as I said last week, don't attack the messenger. Jesus speaks this way because this is the kind of Christianity that Jesus is selling.

Not that it can be purchased. But this is what he's got. This is what he's advertising.

This is how it is. This is violent. We've got to deal... And he's talking about sin.

He's not talking about an actual right eye and an actual hand. He's talking drastically. We've got to deal drastically with sin.

That's the issue. Violence. Violence to gain the objective.

Have you ever read that the violent take the kingdom of heaven by storm or by force? Have you ever read that? I mean, sometimes you could read it. Strive to enter in. Why? Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way.

See, you can't go in there with all your idols. You can't take all your stuff. You can't take all your sin.

And the reason it's so narrow is because you've got to go through that style on Christ's terms. And that's bankrupt and that's empty and that's forsaking everything that you might be as a disciple. Because Jesus is intent to save us to the uttermost.

And you know what we have to be saved from? Every single idol in our life. And we are... Our hearts are idol manufacturers. We idolize anything and everything in this world.

You see, we have to come... We have to come surrendered. He may let me keep my shirt, but you know what he may tell me? Well, if you've got two of them, you need to share that with that guy over there that doesn't have one. He may let me keep my bank account just where it is when I get saved, but you know what? Probably not.

Typically what I've found is... And you know what? He lays dibs to all of it. He may tell you to give a tenth away. He may say this, that, or the other thing.

But the reality is he may say what he said to some men, I want it all. You go sell everything. Nope, not coming on those terms.

You see, his terms are absolute. You say, who is this guy? I'll tell you who he is. He is the one and only Savior.

And he knows how we need to be saved. And he wants nothing held back. Because anything held back is going to... It's only to your destruction.

He knows it's no good for you. He knows it's poison. See, he really cares about us.

He wants to save us the way we need to be saved. And then, no reserve. Scripture says this.

We've got to fight the good fight of faith. You need to recognize this. Our violence is by faith.

See, we don't get violent over these things in our own strength. We fight the good fight of faith. That means we constantly are looking to the Lord.

We're constantly dependent. We're constantly crying out to Him. 1 Peter.

Beloved, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against their soul. Or Colossians 3. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you. Sexual... Just get this.

Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire. Wow! What sort of category of sins is that? Well, just the kinds he's talking about. The kind of adultery.

The kind that are lust. And he says this. He says that you've got to put those to death.

And I'll tell you, if you've ever really tried to put any kind of sin in your life to death. Or you've tried to uproot any idol in your life. For one, you know, this is, it takes violence.

You know, the Christian life is not, this thing is not casual. Paul says I don't run aimlessly. I don't box as one beating the air.

I discipline. The word is subdue or beat. I beat my body and keep it under control.

I beat my body into submission lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. See, drastic. If there's no fight, there's no faith.

It's a good fight of faith. No fight, no faith. No faith, no heaven.

You'll be thrown into hell. And he uses that terminology. Why? Because it's very real.

It's, he's not messing around. I mean, do you realize this is a simply devastating statement about sexual sin. If you're right, that causes you to sin.

Tear it out. Throw it away. It's better you lose one member than that your whole body be thrown into hell.

Listen, our society can't even boast of what the scribes and the Pharisees had. I mean, you know the scribes and the Pharisees, they at least had the outward thing. They would outwardly commit it.

Our society, we can't even boast of that morality. We're way beyond that. Adultery and fornication in your country here, it's like, I noticed talking to my neighbors, the fact they're not married and they're living with each other, that doesn't even register on their consciences that I could tell that it was even wrong.

You recognize, adultery and fornication are absolutely applauded. In this, down in the city center when we're talking to people, I mean, basically you see this everywhere. The feel is, if I love him or her, then it's all good.

I mean, that's what matters. And I think God wants me to be happy. Didn't we just hear that yesterday? I think God wants me to be happy and I'm happy with this guy or this girl, whether you're homosexual or heterosexual, but you're not married and you're having sex.

As long as we love each other, that's all that matters. And as our society moves further and further and further and further away from the seventh commandment, Jesus is taking us all together in the opposite direction. I mean, these guys had the external and this society is going that way.

Jesus comes in and he says, oh no, all the way this way. I mean, he absolutely takes us in the other direction. People can hardly fathom this.

Sexual sin leads to being thrown into hell? What? What? Lustful thoughts lead me to be thrown into hell? I mean, it's like the society, you know, we could tell people down there in the city center and we do tell them and this is what draws their ire out. This is what gets their wrath really stirred. Do you realize how many people really come unglued when you begin to call into question their relationships and that their relationships are sin and will lead to hell? That gets their wrath more than anything else that I've seen when we go down there.

I mean, they can't even fathom this. The world cannot fathom that their sexual sin is headed in this direction. Paul says the same thing.

Listen to this. Colossians 3.5, put to death therefore what is earthly in you. What's earthly in us? Earthly? Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry.

On account of these the wrath of God is coming. You see, it's the same note. When you think about the way Jesus talks, this is violent language.

Tear it out, throw it away, or be thrown into hell. Amputate that right hand or your body is going to be cast into this place. This is a devastating statement about sin.

I mean, this is a pornography addicted age and it needs to wake up and tremble. I mean, the reality is, people walk by and when somebody is preaching, they will just shout out. I mean, yesterday, I don't even want to put the images in your mind, but the people are flaunting this.

They're ready to tell you what they do and what they've done that day and what they're going to do later. No problem. And I'll tell you, if they really knew what was coming, if they knew, I look at the people, I'm sure you all do too.

You look at the people and you just, you know, they don't know what they're saying. They don't know what they do. They're blind.

Do you see what the issue is? Unless you forsake all that you have, you cannot be my disciple. And one of the things that Jesus is clearly saying is, I lay claim, even to every impulse of your heart and every glance of your eye. That's clearly what he's saying.

I want it all. And God created male and female and we recognize he created sexual passions, attractions, and God delights that Carlos and Natasha are going to be married. He designed this.

He loves this. He designed intimacy to be within that realm. And the fact is that it's the very picture of the gospel and we know that.

But sin came in and it wrecked it. It wrecked it all. Jesus sees the wreckage at a deeper level, certainly at a deeper level than those scribes and Pharisees saw it, way beyond committing the actual act.

He sees the eye and he sees the lust. That's what he's hitting on. John Piper said this, the male eye, he's male, he can speak to this.

Ladies, you fill in the blank. The male eye is like a magnet in its attraction to excessive female skin or tantalizing gaps in clothing or featured bodily shapes through tight clothing. God cares about these magnet impulses of the male eye and what we do with them.

For Jesus to suggest that we've got to tear out our eye because the issue at stake is heaven and hell, I hope you feel the urgency of that. Do you know one of the verses that I find unsettling? And I can imagine you all do too if you really think about it. God is no respecter of persons.

That shakes us because you know what? We are. We often think, well that can't happen to me. Why? Because you're you.

And you put a value on you that God comes along and says, no my words true and I'm not going to bend these realities for any man. He's no respecter of persons and you do know that it says that with regards to judgment day as well. No respecter of persons.

I mean, it's basically, we respect our children. We look at our children, we love our children, our grandchildren. We have respect for that.

God has no respect. I would not cast one of my children into hell but God would because he's no respecter of persons. And if that they have not sought shelter under the wings of Christ, they're in dire trouble.

And I'll tell you what a command like this does to us. It ought to shake us all to the depths of our being that we need help. And I would just take you on eagle's wings to fly right back there to that first beatitude.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Because I tell you that's what something like this ought to do. It ought to cause us to recognize there's not a man in this room that if you were, if God's no respecter of persons and we were all brought before his judgment seat.

And it was all put up there on the screen as we've heard and imagined. You full well know. Brethren, we're fighting something that becomes like gouging out an eye.

Violence is needed. We need help. We need help.

And I mean this is a teaching that I hope will cause everybody, not just men, but men, women and children. We need to run to Christ. We need to rely on him.

Such a doctrine as this concerning looking and lusting ought to drop us to our knees realizing that without him we can do nothing. And listen, origin, you know that, I don't want to necessarily, he was one of the early church fathers. Origin, I don't know how good his doctrine was.

I think maybe there was something wrong with it. But he castrated himself to try to avoid this. If you've heard, Ruby and I listened to the Piper bio sketch on Augustine recently.

He vowed chastity trying to get away from this. You know what the Catholic church has done? They've created their monasteries. They create celibacy.

They create their convents. And look what happens. Look what it produces.

You know what it produces. This is, listen, if you live according to the flesh you will die. What I'm saying is this, if you try to do this, if you try to handle this, what does it mean to live according to the flesh? Well it basically means you try to live as a mere man.

It means you try to live in human strength. You will die, but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body. By the spirit.

Now see that's radical. How do I get the help of God himself to combat this and put it to death? And I've got to put it to death. And Peter says, they war against your soul.

It's a battle. It's an all out battle. And listen, it is so violent sometimes that we say can I possibly be saved? But see it is the violence that says you are.

Because before we were saved we coasted. The only kind of sin we tried to escape was the one that humiliated us. We were embarrassed.

We didn't want to get caught. We didn't like the consequences. No, no, no, no, no.

When there's a battle, when it's all out battle, you know that that's the reality. And that's how scripture describes it. Gouging out eyes.

Chopping off hands. Even if you've got to hit it with a machete like your failed executioner here. And keep hitting it and hitting it and hitting it.

Even if it takes ten or twenty blows before the thing is severed. I mean this is the kind of thing and it's radical. It's violent.

We've got to strive. We've got to kill. You killing sin is not easy.

It's all out. And listen, what scripture says is this. You need to think right.

If you're wondering, okay, how do I, again, see remember we're walking by faith, not by sight. I can't see the spirit. I know by faith the spirit is here.

I know by sight. Now, how do I tap his power? I don't have like a cord coming out that I can stick into the receptacle and draw the amperage out. How do I get this power? See, that's the question for living the Christian life.

How do I get it? Well, the spirit is supplied not by works of the law, but by hearing of faith. Faith and the spirit. You need to live by faith.

So, here's one thing. Here's what you need to think about. We are dead to sin.

You see, that's what Romans 6 teaches. Paul teaches us there. Romans 6.11. You need to consider yourself dead to sin, alive to God.

Now see, that's by faith. Alive to God means I'm alive to the spirit. I can communicate with the spirit.

I can draw on the spirit. And so, I am going to live as though I believe that that spirit is there and by the blood of Christ as a believer, I've got that power to draw on. And so, I am going to step in faith.

In faith. You think about this. Peter could not see that that water was going to hold him, yet he jumped out of that boat.

Why? His eyes were on Christ. You know the spirit loves it when our eyes are on Christ. It says we are transformed into that image of Christ, the image of the Lord, as we behold the glory of the Lord and it's the spirit of God that does it.

He loves it when our eyes are on Christ. Brethren, the spirit supplies his power. When we walk by faith, jump out of that boat.

Ruby was talking about it while we were driving here today. You know the priest. You know back in Joshua.

God specifically said, you have the priest walk down to the edge of the Jordan. Jordan was at flood stage. You put your feet in the water.

They had to put their feet in the water. Once they put their feet in the water, it withdrew and they went across on dry ground. But see, they had to put their feet in there first.

I'll tell you this, when David went out to the battlefield against Goliath, he didn't see God there. But he said this, he said God's going to give me your head. You know what? We have to act.

This is not passivity here. This isn't well I'm saved and God's just going to make this happen. Nope.

This takes work. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Why? Why? Because God is at work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Isn't it interesting? What comes first? God acting or us acting? Which is first? God's always first. Is he not? Do we ever get one up on him? No. He's working.

Why does it say first we should work and then second he's working in us? Why does it put it in that order? Because that's the order by which we're going to work this out. Because when I'm confronted by things, I'm going to say this. I'm going to go to the end of that and I recognize that God is there working.

But I come back to the first responsibility on my part and that's to work out my salvation with fear and trembling. We've got to go after this. You know, I heard a pastor give counsel.

I heard this online. He gave counsel to a man who was having struggles. This man came to this pastor and he said, Pastor, I've had tremendous victories in this area.

Sexual sin and looking at things. He said, but I've fallen into this. I'll tell you where I'm struggling right now is my wife gets magazines in the mail.

And you know, all you have to do sometimes is have ladies living in the house and the advertisers find them. So you end up with these victorious secret things coming in the mail. And this guy was admitting, my wife gets like two or three of these magazines in the mail each month.

And he goes and gets the mail and he said, you know, that walk from the mailbox to wherever he dropped these things off, he was admitting he was falling. And now he said his wife's going out of town for three weeks. Do you know what this pastor told him? I thought this was, this is really helpful because I found this, in battling sin in my own life, whether it's that sin or any other.

You know what he told him? He said, Job made a covenant with his eyes. He said, if you make a general covenant, like for the rest of your life, he said, you won't, you won't do it because it's too general. The moment you make a covenant that covers your entire life, you already know you're not going to live perfect.

And so then you don't, you don't do it. He said, short term, make short term commitments. That's, there's reality to that.

Now, I don't know how you are before the Lord, but I see David. He made a covenant with God to keep his commandments. And I think doing this, Job did it.

I don't think there's anything wrong with it. I don't think you want to talk, go to the oaths here and say, well, you know, that rules out. We can't do that anymore.

No, I don't, I don't believe that at all. I think you want to live that way before God. I think there's a place to talk to God and say, I covenant, I promise I'm not going to do this.

Lord, help me. I'm going to strive. I'm going to fight.

I think there's something to that. I think that, brethren, I think there's a lot to that. But this pastor told this guy, here's what you do.

Your wife is going out of town for three weeks. He said, covenant that during those three weeks, you will not look at one of those magazines. I think that was brilliant.

You see, take this a day at a time, whatever your sins are. And listen, I don't, you know, they're finding out more and more that ladies are having pornography problems. We live in a society where this stuff is available to us at a click of a mouse.

And you know what? Sometimes it finds us when you're not looking for it. I've heard that, you know, you get some places like over in China and it just, that stuff is all of a sudden on your screen and you weren't looking for it. Brethren, this is a battle.

Math. You want some math? Basic math of this thing is this. What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world? And you can gain all that eye candy, all the stuff the world throws.

You can seek to indulge in that. You can go at what's going to profit you if you lose your soul. And Jesus says, you will.

You will lose your soul. I'll tell you this. I'll tell you what we're going to find.

We're going to find that every single person in heaven has gouged out eyes and cut off hands. And you know full well that over in Matthew 18, this kind of visual, graphic reality about the Christian life, it's not just with regards to sexual sin. It's regarding anything in your life that's got to come out.

Any idol. Any kind of sin. Brethren, we need to fight.

And I'll tell you the fruits of it all. Just think about the fruits. The effectual, fervent prayers of a righteous man avail much.

If my, I mean Jesus basically says, if you abide in me and my words abide in you, my words abide in you, which you're doing this, you can ask what you will and it shall be done unto you. Do you know what happens to the prayer life of a church when we're fighting for this kind of purity? It makes us prayer warriors that the devil sits up and takes notice of. It makes us dangerous in our prayer meetings.

Why? Because I'll tell you, you look through Scripture, you will find over and over and over again that what makes for dangerous prayer is that you do pray, but that you pray in righteousness. The Spirit of God, how do we tap Him? How do we do it? The fight. But you want to believe that you can do it.

Brethren, Scripture says this. Brothers, we're debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. You know what happens? We're lost.

Sin cracks the whip. Snap! And our flesh jumps. Here we are.

What do you want us to do? That's how we are when we're lost. But you know what this is saying? This is saying, sin, by the way, still cracks the whip. And you know what happens to the flesh? It pulls.

I mean a guy, listen, a red-blooded guy becomes aware when there is something that can draw the eyes in the way of lust. And the pull is there. And I remember a missionary saying, stuff just pops up on your computer screen when you're not looking for it, and he said, it can just pull you.

Here's the thing, you know what Paul is saying? You can say to the flesh, I don't owe you anything. Do you recognize Christian? You don't have to look. Do you recognize Christian? You don't have to think.

See, what are you talking about? Do you realize Scripture says this? Set your mind on things above. Do you recognize? You know it doesn't work for the Christian to say, well I can't control what I think about. That's not true at all.

That is not the way Scripture speaks. Scripture speaks altogether different than that. Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

You can chase it out. You can chase thoughts out of your head. You can think about other things.

And listen, the reason you want to make a covenant with your eyes, do you know what Paul says? Paul specifically says, concerning the flesh, you want to walk properly as in the daytime. Not in orgies, drunkenness, sexual immorality, sensuality, quarreling jealousy. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

Don't feed the monster. You know what the picture is in Scripture? It's like you've got a fire in you and you can throw petrol on it. You've got the ability to do that.

And I'll tell you men, there's a reason why Job made a covenant with his eyes. Because a lot of times that fire, the gasoline comes right through here. And I'll tell you, you've got the ability to say, you know what? My neck muscles don't have to turn there.

My eyeballs don't have to go there. And my mind doesn't have to think on that. And I can get rid of computers and phones and whatever if I can't handle it.

I mean men, you ought to be able to tell somebody in this church if they ask, no, no, I am not viewing pornography. I don't go there. I am fighting this battle.

Listen, if you've got to gouge out right eyes, that's something. That looks like something. Practically that has to do with the warfare.

And I know this, you know what heaven is going to look like? Heaven is going to be a bunch of soldiers who fought the good fight. And they are going to have empty eye sockets spiritually. And they are going to have cut off limbs, spiritually speaking.

That's what heaven is going to look like here. Because Jesus says that people that don't do that, they end up being thrown into hell. You see, this is grace.

And you know what? I heard of one person that said, you know, well, I don't want to go to church in a certain place because it just sounds too hard. And it sounds too graceless. And so I am going to find a church where the pastor has his own problems with pornography.

Is that how you are going to win this? Is that the way to do that? Is that the path to victory? That's not the path to victory. The path to victory is we want to be in this together. We want to be praying for each other.

We need to do battle. We need to learn what it is that prompts the Spirit to act on our behalf. I'll tell you this.

God gives grace to who? The humble. Brethren, right from the beginning we need to recognize this. Lord, I can't do this.

I can't win this. Sin is too much. We are made of such feeble stuff.

We get worn out easy. We get weary of the battle. And then we are called to live in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation.

And it's like, do you know where we are going when we go to preach the Gospels in the city center? You are basically going into this realm where women are dressing specifically to find guys. And so we are going down in the midst of that. And you just go down there and there are things you don't look at.

And you have to see people for having souls. You see these girls come and it's like they have a soul. They are going to perish.

And I'll tell you this. Give God no rest. Because He says, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask? The Spirit loves it when our eyes are on Christ.

He loves it when we believe the truth. That we actually don't owe the flesh anything. That sin no longer has dominion.

That we really can by the Spirit have victory here. He loves it when we trust Him. He loves it when we are humble.

He loves it when our eyes are on Christ. But you know what? We can pray to the Father. And the Father is very willing to give the Spirit to His children when they ask Him.

We should be asking for the Spirit of God to empower us all the time. Not just in this area, but in all manner of areas. So brethren, you think about David.

This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand and I will strike you down and cut off your head. The Lord is going to do this. See, this is the way we live the life.

You've got your Goliaths. You better believe, David and Goliath is a picture, a bigger picture. Yes, you can see Christ and the devil there, but you can see us and fighting our Goliaths.

And He didn't say, well, you know, let me tell you this. I'm a crack shot. I've been practicing with this sling ever since I was a kid.

You know, my skills, I'll tell you, you better be afraid. Even though you're big Goliath, I've got, I've got precision. He didn't say that.

He said the Lord's going to give you. And that's the way we want to approach this. The Lord's going to give us the victory here.

Brethren, I'll tell you this. If we try to mortify the flesh alone, in our own strength and power, we're going to end up just like the scribes and Pharisees. Brethren, if, if we're dependent on the Lord, can I, can I tell you this? I've just wrapped this up.

You can measure your dependence on the Lord. You can measure your humility. You can measure how much you yourself really feel desperate that you need the help of the Lord in this, by your prayer life.

That's all you have to look at. Because people that don't pray aren't desperate, they're not needy and they're not really seeking the Lord. And you may not feel this exactly, but that's the reality.

If you're not living this Christian life on your knees, if you're not living it crying out to the Lord in desperation, then it's because you're too independent, too self-satisfied, too self-sufficient, and he resists the proud. And you know what? Do you know what I've seen? If you are proud, he will often attack your pride by allowing you to fall flat on your face in some of these other areas. He will not allow you to get victory because you're not trusting him.

And just keep that in mind. Brethren, I'll tell you this, the Spirit makes violent Christians. We don't want any people to say, well this isn't what I signed up for.

This is what grace does. Paul said it, by the grace of God, I am what I am. And that grace given to me, it was not in vain.

And brethren, that's what's going to be said of every child of God at the end. The grace of God was not vain. We will have in our wake our idols thrown down, gouged out, cast away.

God help us. God help us. Brethren, I really believe this, that as God uses this church more and more, the battle will intensify.

So we've got to live on our knees. Because the fact is that there are a lot of people who do get to the place where they say, this isn't what I signed up for. The reason I know that is because of the parable.

The sun comes out and things get hard. And there's a lot of people that when it gets too hard, they say, I'm out of here. And we don't want to do that.

We want to persevere to the end. Brethren, I know this. There's been a lot of hills of difficulty.

We're not there yet. We're closer than when we first believed, but we're not there yet. And it's kind of like God said to Jeremiah, if you can't run with the footmen, what are you going to do when the horses come? We have not yet resisted.

To the shedding of our blood. So brethren, onward. Your eyes on Christ.

Clinging to the Lord. We move on. Father, I pray that you would indeed help us to fight this battle.

Give us a church of exemplary purity. Lord, help us. We know the eyes of the world are on us.

You can tell even going down there to the city center. People make every sort of accusation. They call us this and they call us that.

They're looking for something. We know that that's exactly what Peter said. Evil speaking.

They speak evil of our good. And we want to cling to that. That they will glorify you in the day of visitation.

Oh, please bring a day of visitation. Visit us in mercy. Visit the people of this country with new showers of blessing, mercy.

I pray this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. You are dismissed.

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