

Matthew 15:1

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of confronting sin, following Christ, and staying close to God's standards in a world that's increasingly immoral.

Duration: 38:23

Scripture: Isaiah 49:4, Isaiah 55:10-11, Matthew 18:15, 2 Corinthians 2:12-16

Topics: "Pharisees"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by discussing various lures and promises that are often presented to people in the name of spirituality and fulfillment. He then refers to Isaiah 49:4, where the prophet expresses feelings of discouragement and a sense of laboring in vain. The preacher shares a personal experience of going through a difficult time and receiving a letter from a Christian sister that brought comfort and relief. The sermon also touches on the importance of following God's way, including resolving conflicts by directly addressing the person involved. The preacher concludes by referencing Luke 5:28 and highlighting the unexpected blessings that come with making the decision to trust Christ and commit one's life to Him.

Transcript

Insights today in which we take individual verses from the word and Just try to extract some honey from them The first verse I'd like to look at with you is Matthew chapter 18 and verse 15 the latter part of the verse Or in the middle part I should say moreover as I brother shall trespass against thee Go and tell him his fault Between thee and him alone If he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother Notice those words particularly Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone Someone has said something to you that has deeply offended you Not only offended you you're Hurt you're crushed and you cannot seem to rise up Above it and the Bible says go and tell him his fault between Thee and him alone But you don't want to It's too difficult So you start brooding over it You go over all the details in your mind at night when you should be sleeping You rehearse the entire unpleasant Incident and pretty soon the sulfuric acid builds up in your system When you should be sleeping The steam is building up in the boiler. I'm mixing my metaphors The Bible says go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone But it's just too difficult for you to do it. And so you don't Then you think I wish I could get the message across to him anonymously Is there any way I could get word to him without knowing that it came from me or? Maybe you hope something will happen to him to wake him up to the enormity of what he has done You wish that something would happen to him to shame him for the way he talked to you But it doesn't You know what you ought to do.

You ought to go and tell him his fault between you and him alone, but it's just too traumatic. By This time it's hurting you more than it's hurting him. He doesn't know all of the things that are going on in your gastrointestinal system. But others can tell they can tell by your glum appearance and when they talk to you. Your mind is off in another hemisphere and your work suffers and you're simply too Preoccupied and the Bible says go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. Well up until this time by a tremendous display of willpower You have refrained from mentioning it to us any other Christian. But the pressure on you is simply unbearable. And so now you You break down and you just tell one other person. Just for prayer fellowship you understand and the Bible all the time is saying to you Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. And when you tell it to this other person He says to you.

Why don't you go and talk to the one who has offended you? well, that does it so you decide that you would bite the bullet and After rehearsing your speech you go and you obey the word you tell this man his fault and He takes it surprisingly. Well He tells you he's sorry. He asks your forgiveness and the interview is terminated by prayer a Great load has been lifted off your shoulders your stomach quit churning your metabolism returns to normal I'll be dr.

Jones is having cardiac arrest at my use of medical terms here. But you kind of hate yourself. For not having had the sense to obey the scriptures sooner. God's way is the best way and when somebody offends you God says Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. Sometimes when you do that, you know instead of breaking of friendship It cements a friendship stronger than it ever was before. Isn't that amazing? really is God's wonderful way. Okay, while we're still in the Gospels, let's turn over to Luke chapter 5 and verse 28. Luke chapter 5 and verse 28 I'll begin at verse 27 after these things. He went forth and saw a publican named Levi. Sitting at the receipt of customs and he said to him follow me and he left all rose up and Followed him.

No, I don't know how you picture this scene in your mind. I Picture Levi or Matthew sitting out at a table by the highway. I don't really think he's in the IRS office he's out there where traffic is going by and he's collecting tolls from the people as They pass. He's a publican.

He's a tax collector and If Levi was a typical tax collector, not all the money worked its way to the Roman government. Some of it worked its way right straight into his pocket. All right, a lot of people have passed by and Then one day Jesus passes by and this is a most remarkable thing. All the Lord Jesus says to him is follow me and Levi Rises up from his table. He forsakes all and he follows Christ. Now that's a most remarkable thing, isn't it? What what went on in? Matthew's life at this moment.

Well, first of all I think there was a tremendous spiritual awakening in Levi's life. Ah, I said a lot of people had passed by there, but nobody had ever passed by like Jesus and I believe that in that moment Levi saw his sins exposed. I Think that's what the verse means when it says that which is that was a true light which lightens every man coming into the world. It shines on every man when we're in darkness. We don't see ourselves in all our sin. But when the light comes into the room everything is exposed and I think when the Lord Jesus met Levi that day He his whole life passed in front of him as it never had before not only that but he realized the emptiness of his life and He heard the promise of better Things the amazing thing is that his response was immediate. He left all rose up and followed him. Amy Carmichael wrote those lovely words.

I heard his call come follow. That was all My earthly gold grew dim my soul went after him I rose and followed that was all who would not follow if they heard his call. Well, that's what happened to Levi that day.

and you know in making that decision he Little realized the wonderful things that awaited him I often think of that on the day that a man trusts Christ to save her on the day that a man Commits his life to the Lord for service. He little realizes all that's packaged in that decision first of all, of course Levi Obtained the priceless blessing of salvation From then on he started to wear out his sandals on the toes instead of on the heels from then on he had more joy when he was sad than he used to have when he was glad and From then on he could say something lives in every few Christless eyes have never seen that wasn't all he became one of the twelve just think of what a priceless privilege that was Matthew became one of the twelve apostles Accompanied with the Lord Jesus slept under the same roof as the Lord Jesus heard his Incomparable words and saw miracles performed by him such as no other man had ever done Matthew was a witness of Christ in resurrection And he went forth with the message glorious and eventually he had the privilege of laying down his life for the Son of God So that wasn't all So Matthew was given the priceless privilege of writing the first gospel The Spirit of God came upon him and said in so many words I want you to write the gospel presenting the Lord Jesus as the King of the Jews.

I Said he left all but it does seem that the Lord allowed him to keep his pen Didn't he and the pen was converted as well as Levi and he used it to write that wonderful gospel. Yes he left all but he gained all and Found the real reason for his existence Christ's call comes to all If we respond he blesses us beyond our wildest expectations He really does Isaiah chapter 5 and verse 20 Isaiah chapter 5 verse 20 It says woe unto them that call evil good and good evil that put darkness for light and light for darkness that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter in this verse of Scripture God pronounces a woe on people who reverse moral standards and make sin respectable and You know, it's going on all around us in the United States today people making sin respectable and Suggesting that moral purity is something less than desirable In our daily bread Herbert Vanderlucht gives three illustrations that he got out of the paper first of all, he read an article about pornography that treated it lightly and Deplored the puritanical attitude of religionists Pornography is good, but those who oppose it, you know Second he came across a newspaper account that told about a parent teachers group that was trying to get an unmarried pregnant teacher removed from her class and The article went on to say that that woman was a beautiful person and the mothers and fathers who were trying to get her out Were a villain Well, that's what this article is. That's what this verse is talking about well unto them that call evil good and good evil that put darkness for light and light for darkness that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter and Third he read an article about a rock concert In which there was a lot of drinking and drugs and several young people were killed in this cut in this at this concert and the one who wrote the article blamed all our Social ills on those who don't like those kinds of gatherings imagine With all the faults of people who don't like rock concerts.

Well, that's what's going on today We today are witnessing an enormous wave of moral reversals People have abandoned the absolute standards that are found in the Word of God And I think what's happening is this as people go more and more into sin They want to justify themselves and they come up with these bizarre explanations and some of them resort to what what is known as Adhominem Arguments that means that when you can't argue the case on its own merit you start to speak against the people Involved and that's exactly what happened in these three cases that Herbert van de luck spoke about the first case they deplored the puritanical attitude of Religionists that was of trouble in the second place the mothers and fathers were the villains and in the third place those Who? Didn't like that kind of rock concert. They were responsible for all of our social standards Social problems. Well, it's not only those who are blurring moral distinctions but if you read your papers carefully, you'll find there an awful lot who are Who are blurring them and usually it's it's ministers.

It's men in the pulpit who are doing it Shocking that in this great tidal wave of sin and rottenness It's religious leaders and they say well, it really isn't that bad some years ago. There was a book came out in England called honest to God by Bishop John Robertson and He said in this book. You can't say that a thing is inherently wrong it depends on whether it's done in love or not and He really supported some terribly sinful things in that book and he's still a bishop as far as I know No action was taken against him.

And so that's what religious leaders are saying today they're saying that drunkenness is sickness and they're saying that sexual perversion is an alternate lifestyle and Cohabitation is okay If it's culturally accepted and they speak well of abortion and public nudity and prostitution and impersonal, right Well, it's all a lot of confused thinking it's the lies of the devil that drown men in perdition That's why I think verse 20 of Isaiah 5 is such an appropriate Verse for the day in which we live woe unto them that call evil good and good evil That put darkness for light and light for darkness that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter may the Lord help us not to be swept along by the confused thinking and Perverted thinking about us in the world today. We won't if we stay close to the Word of God and abide by its standards Okay back to the New Testament Colossians chapter 3 and verse 11 Colossians 3 verse 11 It Says whether it's neither Greek nor Jew circumcision or uncircumcision barbarian Scythian bond nor free but Christ is all and in all I'd like to just Just take those words out of the verse think with you about them for a little while this afternoon. Christ is all and in all There's a tendency today for Christians to spend an awful lot of time looking for a new spiritual experiences they float around from seminar to worship workshop to convention to conference and What they're really after is something that will give them permanent victory or freedom from the ups and downs of Christian living For instance here's dr.

So-and-so and he advertises a great new breakthrough That will make you radioactive with the Holy Spirit Here's a lecture coming up in your town some newly discovered shortcuts to the abundant life All kinds of lures held before the people the royal road to fulfillment The threefold secret of victory keys to the deeper life Five easy steps to holiness get it easy steps the holiness or maybe it's an altar call where the preacher says and beneath the promise Receives the filling or maybe it's the bodily healing kick or healing of the memories People are always looking for some new Spiritual high and I don't doubt that some of these people offering these lures are sincere And I don't doubt there's some value in what they offer, but I want to tell you this afternoon There are no shortcuts to holiness and the problems are still there. We have to live day by day independent upon the Lord Christ Is all in all it's better to be occupied with Christ than with experiences the one of the old worthy said and I like that he said a Sanctified self is a poor substitute for a glorified Christ Does that mean that if supposing you could? Through all of these conferences and workshops and all the rest supposing you should reach some state of Blissful sanctification you'd still be far short of a glorified Christ And so the lesson is don't be looking for these experiences, but look off to Christ There's no disappointment in him. We have all that we need in him.

He is the all-sufficient one A.b. Simpson was the founder of the Christian Missionary Alliance, and he spent the early years of his life looking for these experiences But toward the end of his life. He he wrote a hymn and the hymn is called himself Himself and the words of these once it was the blessing now. It is the Lord Once it was the feeling now.

It is his word Once his gift I wanted now the giver owns Once I thought for healing now himself alone All in all forever Jesus will I sing everything in Jesus and Jesus Everything well, it's wonderful that he came to that experience Toward the end of his life we can come to it now can't wait Christ is all and in all and a Sanctified self is a poor substitute for a glorified Christ first Corinthians chapter 15 verse 58 1st Corinthians 15:58 Therefore my beloved brethren Be steadfast Unmovable always abounding in the work

of the Lord for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord This is a tremendous verse of encouragement and It makes me think of some other passages in the Bible that have been a tremendous encouragement to me in serving the Lord passages that have kept me from quitting and I'd like to share them with you today. The first one is in Isaiah 49 and verse 4 I say maybe somebody here is discouraged today. Well, look at Isaiah 49 4 Says then I said I have labored in vain.

I have spent my strength for not and in vain Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord and my work or recompense with my God Was a time in my life when I was going through a very difficult patch and it really seemed as if the whole thing Had been in vain. I Was going through but the Lord knew and after she signed her letter down to the bottom she wrote Isaiah 49 4 and I read it and it was like the voice of God speaking to me Then I said I have labored in vain all in vain. All the service is just wasted.

I have spent my strength for nothing and In vain, but it says yet surely my judgment is with the Lord I guess that means yet surely my justice is with the Lord. God will see that justice will be done and my recompense Most of the modern versions my reward with my God Maybe that's a verse that the Spirit of God would have you to cling to today You might think it's all in vain It isn't all in vain God's a very good bookkeeper and he knows all about it and he will reward in a manner worthy of himself Another verse that's been a tremendous help to me is Isaiah 55 verses 10 and 11 another passage Isaiah 55 verses 10 and 11 For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven and returneth not thither But watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth in buds that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and It shall prosper in the thing where to I sense it If you are engaged in any way in propagating the Word of God you're engaged in a work that cannot fail and all the hosts of Demons and men cannot stop it. I think of the rain and the snow coming down from heaven and Not all the armies of the world can stop the snow from falling.

I mean the snow in itself isn't that much, you know? Just little tender snowflakes Once they start I say not all the armies of the world can stop them from falling and the Word of God is like that The snow comes down and the rain comes down and the fructifies the land and the crops come up The Word of God is just like that. The Word of God is Irresistible and wherever it goes it accomplishes for God and for the kingdom of God So again, I say that anybody engaged in the service of the Lord and propagating the Word of God is engaged in a work That's irresistible in a work that cannot fail.

God says it will not return to me void It will accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing where to I sense it Third one is in Matthew chapter 10 and verse 40 Matthew chapter 10 and verse 40 and there we read He that receiveth you Receiveth me and he that receiveth me Receiveth him that sent me That's amazing, isn't it? this is a tremendous encouragement to me because in this verse the Lord Jesus identifies himself with his service and What happens to the service?

Well, that's what's happening to the Lord In other words, you might go door-to-door in your neighborhood and get a sore nose from having so many doors slammed in your face And you you feel badly about it and you soak, you know, and you think how cruelly you've been treated Well, it isn't really you it's the Lord Jesus Isn't it in doing that to you? They're doing it to the Lord Jesus because you're there as his messenger on the other hand when people do receive you It's just the same as receiving the Lord Jesus Christ I think that's thrilling what a dignity the Word of God put on service for the Christ of God Absolutely thrilling the final verse I'd like to share with you as an encouragement in the work of the Lord in 2nd Corinthians chapter 2 verses 12 through 16 2nd Corinthians chapter 2 verses 12 through 16 I'll read the

whole passage Good furthermore when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel and the door was opened unto me in the Lord I had no rest in my spirit because I found not Titus my brother, but taking my leave of them I went from sense into Macedonia now Thanks be unto God which always Always causes us to triumph in Christ and make of manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ and them that are being saved and them that are perishing The one where the savor of death unto death to the other the savor of life unto life And who is deficient of these things?

Well just for the background of the verse the Apostle Paul came to Troas which was on the Western Shore of Asia Minor and a wonderful opportunity opened up for him there in the gospel We could say he was having a great revival campaign But he was having in his spirit he wanted to see Titus because Titus was going to bring him news from Corinth how the Corinthian believers had responded to Paul's words and Paul's letters and here he is in Troas and God is working in a wonderful way and He has no rest in his spirit.

He's got a leave He's got to leave a place where the blessing of God is upon the meeting and he crosses over the water to Greece To find Titus his brother in Macedonia. Now you think that would be a terrible defeat, wouldn't you? What an awful defeat leaving a place of blessing and triumph in the gospel and crossing over to meet one man And that one man a Christian There was no defeat. He says but thanks be unto God which always Leadeth us in triumph in Christ.

I'll tell you that's majestic Paul is crossing over the sea there and he sees Christ Marching ahead of that ship and always leading him in triumph and that's a tremendous encouragement to me Sometimes there are things that seem to be adverse in the work of the Lord but Christ is always leading in triumph and I remind myself that the The waves may seem to overwhelm us but the tide is sure to win There's something else very lovely in this passage that we read and that is this we're a favor of life unto life to some and death unto death to others Generally, we judge a person's effectiveness by how many people that person leads to the Lord, but God doesn't Life unto life to some but death unto death to others and I believe that God rewards Faithfulness every instance of faithfulness where a person has made a bona fide Presentation of the gospel even if the other person rejects it Kind of a different way of looking at things, isn't it? But that's the way God is God looks at things differently than we do and what he wants us to be is faithful in presenting the truth of God The the picture that Paul uses here, of course is the Roman Conqueror and he's coming back to Rome and all along the sides of the road. There are incense bearers there are men holding incense pots and the the air is fragrant with the incense from the Incense burners and here comes a Conqueror now and his soldiers are behind him and behind his soldiers are the captives that they've taken in war and you know it depends on Whose side you are what that incense means to you if you're one of the if you're one of the Conquerors Soldiers that incense spells victory, but if you're one of the captives it spells Defeat and that's what we have here the favor of life unto life to some and death unto death to others But a wonderful encouragement in the work of the Lord I think you know the service of Christ is the Prince of Calling and there are enough encouragement in the Word of God to keep us going on in spite of all the Discouragement that may come to us Praise his name Second Corinthians 5 while you have your Bibles there at 2nd Corinthians 2nd Corinthians 5 and verse 13 It says there Whether we be beside ourselves it is to God. I'm just going to read that Whether we be beside ourselves it is to God God has a lot of irregulars in his army and Oftentimes these are the people who win the greatest victories When I think of the Apostle Paul, I don't think of him as being odd But apparently he was He was one of God's Irregulars because he says here whether we be beside ourselves people must have been saying he was beside himself.

He was a fanatic He was a nut a religious nut Well, there are people who in their zeal for God seem to be eccentric They use original methods instead of sticking to traditional ones They're always saying and doing the Unexpected these people can murder the King's English and get away with it and they can violate Every rule of preaching and teaching because they're filled with the Spirit and they see great results. They're dramatic They're electrifying and people are shocked, but they never forget WP Nicholson was a man like that preached in Ireland years ago. He was odd.

He was eccentric He came one time to the red game on the train to the railroad station and all of the ministers were there with all their Pomp and regalia to greet him and he stepped off the train and he said let's get down on our knees and pray Right on a railroad platform of all places to pray Well, those bishops and those men had never prayed on a railroad platform today I guess they were before I guess they were horrified at the thought but they got down and prayed People like this God's irregulars are a constant source of embarrassment to staid and conventional Christians and These poor Christians shudder at the thought of violating Cultural norms and oftentimes they try to change God's irregulars, but fortunately they don't succeed Some folks. I don't know whether that yes here this week and last week from Guthrie, Oklahoma I have a friend in the assembly there in Guthrie Paul Renneth and What he was he was a Roman Catholic and God was working in his life he was at the universities there in Oklahoma City and one day he walked across the Campus and there was a religious fanatic out there preaching. His name was Holy Hubert.

Anybody ever hear of Holy Hubert? No, he's quite a character. He was um, he was active on the campus of the University of California Berkeley when all the militants were trying to destroy the University Holy Hubert has missing teeth where they've been knocked out by his Opponents, but it doesn't bother him at all. Well, anyway, he was preaching on a campus there Oklahoma City and Paul Renneth a seeking soul passed by Paul went back to his room and he fell on his knees and trusted Christ as his Savior.

He's never met Holy Hubert. I Don't suppose Holy Hubert even knows that somebody got saved that day, but God knows He's eccentric And I say other Christians are embarrassed by him. Don't be embarrassed by him Did you know the Lord Jesus seemed eccentric to his own family I Never picture him that way to me.

He was the most wonderful the most sane Person that you could ever envisage but look at Mark 3 21 Mark 3 21 Said When his friends heard it they went out to lay hold on them for they said he'd be beside himself beside himself means insane And if he checked with the other Gospels those friends were his own family His own family said he was beside himself he was so zealous in his work that often he had no time even to eat and His mothers and brothers wanted to take him away quietly because they thought he was going off his head They said he's beside himself Different it was Jesus who was the same man And they were the were at one who needed help. I didn't tell you the last part of WP Nicholson I could I heard so many stories about him when I was in Ireland but I mean he'd be preaching with a throng of people and He'd see a woman coming in with a yellow dress and he'd see a vacant seat down here and next to the vacant seat There'd be a woman in the back and a black dress and he'd say with that black bird Please move over so the canary could sit next to her see he did he said things like that and you know that that that man preached with such power and So many people were saved at one time in Belfast that some of the machine Corporations there had to build extra sheds to house the stolen tools that were returned We have needed He was queer he was odd, but boy he was powerful under God Imagine having to build sheds to house tools that had been stolen and now these people were saved and they were going to make retribution You've heard about one of God's irregulars who wore the sandwich board on him on this side It

says I'm a fool for Christ's sake and on this side. It says who's fooling you I Go along in San Francisco And maybe there's a black man there And he's walking along with a Bible in his hand at the corner of Powell and market and just walking along and saying Jesus is Coming.

Are you ready? And I want to tell you the people go by and they hold up their supercilious Noses and probably mocked him But that man could be just as important in the purposes of God as the prophets in the Old Testament Because that's a real prophetic ministry. He's carrying on most of us are too much like the ordinary aren't we We leave the average where it is, we're like Peter just warming himself We succumb to the chill of our environment Roland Hill was an eccentric Billy Bray was an eccentric CT stud was an eccentric and Nicholson was an eccentric Fred Mitchell said this and with this I close better a thousand times effective peculiarity than ineffective Ordinariness, isn't that a mouthful? Better a thousand times effective peculiarity than ineffective ordinariness first love may sometimes be peculiar, but thank God it's effective and Some of us have lost it. I Don't ask you to be odd.

I don't ask you. I'm not myself I'm not eccentric like that, but when you come across Christians like this don't write them off. Thank God for them Because they often accomplish more than we do in their zeal for God.

Shall we pray? Father once again, we thank you for your precious word so many facets of truth in it And we see how through verses like these you are trying to conform us to the image of your son where we're really appalled today when we think that That men thought the Lord Jesus to be peculiar and insane and the Apostle Paul to be beside himself and it's been going on down through the years Lord, we just thank you today for those who don't care who are dead the public opinion and Determined spread forth the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light We give thanks in Jesus worthy and precious name. Amen

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