

Counterfeit Conversion (4 of 6)

by Winkie Pratney

Counterfeit conversion is a shallow experience that is based on good things, such as the opinion of the culture, rather than a genuine relationship with God.

Duration: 57:03

Scripture: Matthew 5:11, Matthew 6:33, Acts 14:22, Romans 5:3, Romans 8:35, 2 Corinthians 7:4, Revelation 7:14

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening", "True Conversion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker talks about a morning prayer meeting where many high school students gathered to pray. He mentions that there was a spiritual awakening in the area. The speaker then discusses the importance of addressing both rights and wrongs when counseling people and leading them to the Lord. He uses the analogy of plowing rocky ground to emphasize the need to dig deep and remove any obstacles. The sermon concludes with a prayer for wisdom and a desire to walk in God's ways.

Transcript

Let's look to the Lord again and I want to try and give you now some amplification of this parable and then we'll look at signs of this particular kind of counterfeit. Father, we bless you again for the privilege of studying your Word. We ask you for additional insight now and for the vision to see into what you've packed into this small and significant parable.

Give us wisdom that we may walk in your ways and be people of character and people who really do love you in spirit and in truth. In Jesus' name, amen. Okay, we are continuing on the study of the parable of the sower and the soils.

We have looked so far at hard ground and now at stony ground. We've been jumping up and down on these four things here, talking about how they can be things of strength in the Christian life. I want to give you first just a few scriptures for those.

First on tribulation, the bottom one. Sometimes affliction or persecution, it's called. Acts 14.22, we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God.

Acts 14.22. Romans 5.3, tribulation works patience. Have you prayed for patience? Oh God, give me patience. Do you know what you're praying for? Romans 5.3. Romans 8.35, shall tribulation separate us from the love of Christ? Obviously not.

I'm persuaded that nothing can separate us. This shouldn't stop us from loving God. Let's give another one.

2 Corinthians 7.4, being exceedingly joyful in tribulation. 2 Corinthians 7.4, Revelation 7.14, that great multitude. Who are these? One of the people says, who are these? They which come out of great tribulation.

And then let's give someone persecution. Matthew 5.11, blessed are ye when men shall persecute you. Now that is a beatitude we do not speak much on.

First, because we're not usually persecuted for righteousness sake, but for idiocy sake. But there is a blessing in persecution. And that can result from what happens, you see.

Some horrible things have happened to young Christians. I know a young lady, her name was Judy. She used to ride with the Hell's Angels in New Zealand.

She also was a nurse. A number of girls in the Angels were nurses. And they'd steal drugs from the hospital.

And when she got saved, because she was one of the chief procurers of drugs, she went back and told them, I'm finished, I'm quitting the Angels. Two of the girls, they grabbed her and held her down, and they cut her appendix out with a razor blade. Just, you know, to teach her a lesson.

They were nurses too, but brother, that's, you know, that's called being persecuted. Matthew 5.44. What do you do? Pray for them that persecute you. Pray for them.

Matthew 5.44. John 15.20. If they persecuted me, they shall also persecute you. John 15.20. Romans 12.14. Bless them which persecute you. Bless them and curse not.

2 Corinthians 4.12. We are persecuted, but not forsaken. And a couple on temptation here. 1 Corinthians 10.13. God is faithful.

He will not allow you to be tempted above that which you are able. Notice he doesn't say, God is faithful and will not allow you to be tempted. He will not allow you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it.

So we'll just say this. Temptation actually can stretch and increase your faith. That's why God allows it.

You can be allowed. He won't tempt you, but he will take off his protection to allow you to be in a situation that will demonstrate your roots. So temptation, you could say, is like this.

You can say, thank you God for a chance to prove that I really meant it when I said I love you with all my heart. And notice a way to escape. Way to escape.

Not a way to wrestle with it. The trouble with sin is that because it's self-centeredness, the more you wrestle with it, the bigger it grows. And then Hebrews 2.18 and 4.15. Just scribble those down.

2.18 and 4.15. And now let's read James 1.12. I'll just read it out and you scribble it down. James 1.12. So blessed is the man or woman that endures temptation. For when they are tried, they shall receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him.

Blessed is the man that endures temptation. 2 Peter 2.9. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. Means they were in it when he delivered them.

Revelation 3.10 would be another thing. Okay, now let me give you some guidelines of what this particular kind of counterfeit conversion is like. Now what do I do with my chalk? Do I eat it? Probably.

Here it is. Charles Finney called this particular kind of counterfeit conversion. Notice how these all deal with good things.

And he called them the religion of public opinion. The religion of public opinion. We could call this the social Christian.

Not the social gospel. The one whose Christianity is a thing of the crowd because it's a good thing to become a Christian. Do you understand what I'm saying? Here's a verse in John 12.43. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

For they loved the praise of men, John 12.43, more than the praise of God. And Finney said this verse describes men who refused to confess that Jesus was the Christ because he was extremely unpopular with the scribes and the Pharisees and the leaders of Jerusalem. Now when we're dealing with not bad things but good things that have not been repented of or surrendered, here is the word devotion.

What was the original meaning of that word, devotion? Today we have our devotions which means this. That's our devotion. Now what did devotion mean? Would he devote that sacred head? It meant to deliver to the dead.

That's what it meant. So your devotions are your deliverance to the dead. What we are dealing with here then is a counterfeit conversion that is not based on bad things so much but on good things.

And in particular we'll focus on the good opinion or the good opinion of the culture around you. In other words, it will never be popular to be a Christian, but as long as it is not too unpopular and you can still uphold some kind of reputation in the middle of that, this can operate. As long as those things there don't hurt you too much, you can still grow in this situation.

Let me give you now some of the characteristics of it. First, they do what Paul says, 2 Corinthians 10-12. They measure themselves among themselves.

Now the tragedy with this kind of shallow experience is that the comparison is not made with the Scriptures or with Christ or the conviction of God. It is made instead with the rest of the Christian church. In other words, you go, well, I'm better off than that person, or I don't at least do that thing.

And the measure is made of yourselves. Now what if the whole culture is so down in their Christian vision, so lacking a proper God-centered picture of the Christian life, that everybody around you is lukewarm? Do you see that? The tragedy is you never get over that. It's almost like a conspiracy of good things.

And because the consensus is like that, it never changes. It stays the way it is. You don't challenge that consensus because you're comparing with everybody else.

You all know the story about the frog. You take a little froggy, you throw him in a pot of boiling water, he blubbers right out of there quick because he knows that'll kill him. You put the same frog in a pan of cold water and you gradually bring the temperature up and that frog will boil to death and he won't know the

difference.

And our culture is being boiled to death by a compromise that is cut into the heart of the gospel. But because it's been slow, it hasn't been a radical thing. People haven't stood up and said, sell your life out to the devil and forsake God.

They've just said, hey, that's all right, this is all right, this is fine. And as Bill Garford points out, the things that one generation allows, the next enjoys. See that? When you make a compromise in one side, the next one will accept it as truth and then make further compromises.

And we have unfortunately inherited in our day a good 50 years of evangelical compromise and a subtle shift away from the center of Christ as the ruling center to man as the ruling center. And though the language has stayed the same, the content has shifted. Christ is no longer there.

So we are celebrity centered, we are reputation centered. Next, they never ask what would Jesus do or what does he say, they ask what do others think or do. I've asked many people, instead of making Jesus their standard and the Bible their rule of life, obviously I'm at no such thing.

Their great question they ask is, do I do as much in Christianity and be as good as others in the crowd of the church around me? Their aim is to keep up a respectable religious front for themselves. They do what is respectable, not primarily what is right. Secondly, they never bother to raise the standards of right around them.

The church isn't a rod of pieties and entertainment and this and that, they don't care. There's no power that don't care. They're not bothered that the general standard of piety is so low in a church that a visit from an early church Christian, an earlier church Christian visiting would have to backslide to be in fellowship.

And what happens, it's funny he mentions this, when Jesus denounced the church leaders of his day, they said he has a demon. That's what the church leaders told. This guy's a demon possessed.

He's God, see. He did say that unless a man's righteousness succeeded theirs, they would not make it. That was Matthew 5.20. Can you imagine going to eat at somebody's place? I mean, the guy invites you in for supper and you're sitting down and he tells you, you're a mess.

I mean, that's the things Jesus did. He would, you know, right over your waffles. And three, they oppose measures and efforts to wake the church.

Well, let's say there's opposition to revival. And I mean not just, not the revival that began Monday and ended Sunday. That's not what I'm talking about.

They oppose a genuine work to bring the church back to holy living. As long as they are unpopular. But what if this becomes popular? What if revival becomes the end thing? What do you think that will do? Remember what the God is, it's a reputation, acceptance, not being picked on by society.

So if revival then becomes the popular thing, a funny thing will happen to them. They will change their messages like this. Oh, we always believed that.

We were just trying to correct some imbalances. Do you see what I'm saying? When people stand up and go, this is wrong and it's got to change. They go, ah, legalism or any other dozen names, Judaism, you

know, they put isms on the thing, throw mud at it.

But what if it breaks through? What if the consensus in the country begins to shift and people won't put up with that standard anymore and they start crying out for a holy life? Then the same people say, that's what we believe too, brother. We've always believed that. We were just concerned lest there be excesses.

That is a characteristic of the people pleasing. This class of persons, Finney said, stand with the crowd when it condemns a man and turn the other way when he is honored. There is only one exception.

When they have become so far committed to the opposition, they cannot change without disgrace. Then they will be silent until another chance comes up for letting out the smoldering fires that burn within them. Now you cannot believe how heavy and how powerful opposition was in the old days.

How many of you have heard of John Wesley? Put your hands up, all right. Most of you have heard of John Wesley because I told you about him yesterday. If you hadn't, you're not listening.

I want to give you, these are taken from a pretty rare biography, Hettie Wesley, one of John Wesley's sisters. And there's a biography on Hettie Wesley and there's some stuff here that I've never found in any other biography on John Wesley's father, Samuel Wesley. Have you ever heard about Dad Wesley, Samuel Wesley? Here is, I won't read all of this because it will take me into the tape.

This guy, he was with the dissenters. He had left the Orthodox Church for a start and worked with the dissenters. And then he felt convinced that there was a real problem there with independent spirits and stuff.

So he went back to the ordinary church and tried to revive it from within. And that made him a really bad dude in the eyes of the dissenters. You know, like a traitor Judas, he betrayed us, he left.

So what they would do, here is John Wesley's dad. He's gone into this little parish in Epworth. He's been given a group of people and they all hate him.

He's their pastor and they hate him. And I mean they didn't just hate him. Here's what happens.

In 1702 they set fire to the parsonage and burnt two-thirds of it to the ground. These are his parishioners. In the winter of 1704 they destroyed a great part of his flax crop, which is the way that he paid his bills.

The dissenters looked on him in the worst of foes. He says, I went to Lincoln on Tuesday night in the election. Tory members lost to the Whig candidates which the dissenters supported.

Began Wednesday the 30th. A great part of the night our isle people, his parishioners, kept drumming and shouting and firing pistols and guns under the window. This is, I'll fix this guy, where my wife lay who had been brought to bed not three weeks.

His wife is expecting a child very shortly. I put the child, he's got another, Wesley had a lot of children, he had 19 children. And only a few of them lived.

About 80 of them lived, but they changed the world. I put the child, this is a fairly young baby, to nurse over against my own house. The noise kept the nurse waking till one or two in the morning.

So these guys are firing drums and pistols and making a racket outside the house till one or two in the morning. Finally they'll get tired, they go home. Then they left.

The nurse, heavy with sleep, overlaid the child. The nurse rolls over on the baby and suffocates him. She woke, found it dead, ran over with it to my house, almost out of her mind, and calling my servants, threw it into their arms.

They, as wise as she, ran up with it to my wife, and before she was well awake, here's his wife expecting in about three weeks time, threw it into her arms, cold and dead. Can you imagine, you wake up at about 2.30, 3.00 in the morning, and going, ahhh, throwing your dead baby at you. Alright.

She composed herself as well as she could, and that day got it buried. A clergyman met me in the yard and told me to withdraw, for the isle man intended me mischief. Another said he heard 20 men say, if they got me in the castle yard, they would squeeze my guts out.

I went by Gainsborough, and God preserved me. When they knew I was home, they sent the drum and mob with guns, etc. as usual, to compliment me till after midnight.

One of them passing by Friday evening and seeing my children in the yard, cried out, oh you devils, we will come and turn you all out of doors, begging shortly. God convert them and forgive them. All this, thank God, does not in the least sink my wife's spirits.

For my own, I feel disturbed and disordered. Now I want you to think of Sarah Wesley boy, what, talk about roots. And then he was betrayed by a servant and thrown into prison for a 30 pound debt he couldn't pay because they burned his flax crop.

So now he's sent to jail, his wife with all of these children, there's no money to pay anything, he's put in jail. And he says, I thank God my wife was pretty well recovered and churched some days before I was taken from her. And hope she'll be able to look to my family if they don't turn them out of doors as they've often threatened to do.

One of my biggest concerns was my being forced to leave my poor lambs in the middle of so many wolves. But the great shepherd is able to provide for them and preserve them. My wife bears it with the courage which becomes her and which I expected from her.

Then when he's in prison, they stabbed his cows to dry up their milk, hoping to starve the family. They tore the latch off the door of his house in order to shoot back the lock. And the dog, he had a dog in there, made so much racket that they ran away.

And he said, my house dog, who made huge noise within doors, was sufficiently punished for his want of politics and moderation, for the next day his leg was almost chopped off by an unknown hand. It is not everyone that could bear these things, but I bless God my wife is less concerned with suffering them than I am in writing. O my Lord, I once more repeat it that I shall at some time have a more equal judge than any in this world.

Most of my friends advise me to leave Epworth if I should ever get from hence. I confess I am not of that mind because I may yet do good here. And it is like a coward to desert my post because the enemy fire thick upon me.

They have only wounded me yet and I believe can't kill me. I hope to be home by Christmas. God help my poor family.

By the end of the year, and he's there in jail all year for 30 pound debt, \$90, finally an archbishop and some friends get enough money together to get him out. So he comes back. Three more years and people are still beating and drumming and doing all of this stuff.

And then John is born and Patty and Charles and the third was expected and shortly in the night of February the 9th, 1709 the passengers took fire again and burned to the ground in 15 minutes. The whole thing burned to the ground. And here is an account of how John Wesley was saved.

I ran down, I mean saved from fire. I ran down and went to my children in the garden to help them over the wall. When I was without I heard one of my poor lambs left still above stairs about six years old cry out dismally, help me.

He's upstairs. I ran in again to go upstairs but the staircase was on fire. I tried to force up through it a second time holding my breeches over my head but the stream of fire beat me down.

I thought I had done my duty. I went out of the house to that part of my family I had saved with a killing cry of my child in my ears. I made them all kneel down and we prayed to God to receive a soul.

I tried to break down the pails and get my children over to the street but I could not. They went under the flame and got them over the wall. And then he meets a couple of the policemen going away from his house, not to it.

And they said this, will you never get done with your tricks? You fired your house once before. Didn't you get enough by it that you've done it again? I heard my wife was saved. I fell on mother earth and blessed God.

I went to her. She was alive and could just speak. She thought I had perished and so did all the rest nor any share of the children for a quarter of an hour.

By this time all the chambers and everything were consumed to ashes for the fire was stronger than a furnace. She told me how she escaped. When I first opened the back door she endeavored to force through the fire at the fox door but was struck back twice to the ground.

She thought to have died there but she prayed to Christ to help her. She found new strength, got up alone and waded through two or three yards of fire, the flame on the ground being up to her knees. She had nothing on but her shoes and a wrapping gown and one coat on her arm.

Thus she wrapped about her breast and got through safe into the yard but not a soul yet to help her. She never looked up or spoke till I came. Only when they brought her last child to her bade them lay it on the bed.

This was the lad whom I heard cry in the house but God saved him almost by a miracle. He was forgot by the servants in a hurry. He ran to the window towards the yard, stood up, and said, I am saved.

I am saved. I am saved. I am saved.

I am saved. I am saved. I am saved.

I am saved. I am saved. I am saved.

I am saved. I am saved. I am saved.

I am saved. I am saved. I am saved.

I am saved. I am saved. I am saved.

He stood on a chair and cried for help. There were a few people gathered, one of who loves me, helped up another to the window. The child seeing a man come to the window was frightened and ran away to go to his mother's room.

He couldn't open the door, if he had he would have died. So he ran back again. The man was fallen down from the window and all the bed and hangings in the room where he was were on fire.

They helped up the man a second time and poor Jackie, that was John Wesley's pet name Jack, leaped into his arms and was saved. I could not believe it until I had kissed him two or three times. My wife then said to me, are your books safe? Because he had all these books.

I told her it was not much, now that she and all the rest were preserved. I hope my wife will recover and not miscarry, but God will give me my nineteenth child. I did not know her.

Some of the children were a little burnt, but neither hurt or disfigured. The neighbors sent us clothes, for it was cold without them. And the child, Casey, was born and lived.

And Wesley picked up a torn leaf of his polyglot Bible, which was still left. And it had in Latin there, in effect, I am crucified with Christ. The world is crucified unto me, that whole thing.

He wanted them to be great and eminent soldiers of Christ. And he divined already that it for one, above the others, this eminence was reserved for John. Now maybe you get an idea of why John Wesley had that character built into him from his death.

And can you imagine what it would be like to come back, after seeing all these awakenings in the rest of England, to your father's home church, where he is now buried, and another guy in the church will not let you preach inside the church. Won't let you preach there. So you stand outside the church, on your father's gravestone, and you preach in the open air.

And that was John Wesley's inheritance from his death. And what I want to say is this, when you read these guys, and you can go back to the Puritan writers, or you can go back to the Pietists, or you can go to the Reformation people, you can go to Wesley, you can go to Finney, you will see a level of consecration that we never even heard about today. You only know the results.

You don't know the cost of the thing. You don't see this stuff. It's not talked about today.

We don't like that. We want the blessing, but we don't want the cost of it. Let's finish these signs.

I just call this the people-pleasers. Do you know what I mean? A person whose Christianity is fitting in with others, not with God necessarily. They separate a law of God that is publicly accepted, and those equal statements by God that are not publicly accepted, and they will enforce these ones, but not the others.

Do you know what I mean? If society says drug addiction is bad, they will say drug addiction is bad. If society says prostitution is bad, they will say prostitution is bad. But if God says that covetousness is bad, and nobody in society thinks that, then they don't preach against covetousness.

They divide. A people-pleaser is very careful, Finney said, to stay away from sins forbidden by public opinion, but does other things not frowned on that are just as bad. He will never miss public worship, oh no, because he could never hold a reputation for religion if he did, but neglects other things plainly required in the word of God.

And then a statement, when someone habitually disobeys any known law of God, the obedience he seems to have to other laws is not from a true love of God, but from selfishness. A simple illustration, if we had two piles of money on this table here, one pile was just a loose pile of change, say we took up a collection, loose pile of change, and then a counted, numbered stack of bills of \$4,000 or something, all in numbered, counted bills there, and you came into this room and you took a single nickel off this pile, it would prove that given the right opportunity and circumstance, you'd steal that whole pile. Because what's stopping you from stealing is not love for God and a hatred of sin, but a fear of being caught.

You see, nobody misses that fine. Somebody would miss that counted pile of bill. So your love is not love for God, it's a love for public opinion.

Now how many people do you think we have in this country that are like that? A couple more. Oh, now I've got to give you one more thing. This is very key.

Write this down. Whatever we supremely regard is our God. Whatever is number one in our lives is our God.

I've used this so many times. If it is power or riches or comfort or pleasure, honor or power, that is the God of our hearts. If it is Jesus, that man is a true Christian.

If it is anything else, whatever his reason, that is his true God and his religion is selfishness. So sometimes in meetings I've said this, ask God the Holy Spirit to show you what means most to you. Reject the obvious answer, oh, obviously Christ.

And ask yourself this question, what would I sin or die than lose? What is the thing that means more to me? The thing your thoughts turn back to when you've got nothing better to do? The thing that you like most to spend your money on? The thing you enjoy more than anything else in the world? The thing you'd sin or die than lose? What is the thing that really means most to you? Now whatever that is, that is the God of your heart. And it's either Christ in the kingdom or it's something else. Now boy, if God put this test on our churches today, if he put it on our Christian organizations today, if he put it on us individually and specifically, and we rejected the obvious words and got to the heart of the thing, it would be no great surprise to us to see why God has not disseminated our gospel through the world.

And we want this thing going out. Okay, next one. I gave you this one before, they're apt to sin away from home when they would not if they were with those that knew them.

In other words, change of crowd, change of character. Apt to sin away from home. That was, remember the kid on the plane that was in the army? A true Christian does not lead a double life.

The things that make him happy in church are the same things that make him happy 400,000 miles away. Please turn your tape over for the remainder of this message. People pleasers also indulge in secret sin.

I remember Dave Wilkerson talking years ago about a pastor's daughter in a home. He had a girlfriend, I was staying with her for a week, and this girl couldn't sleep. You go to a strange house, it's kind of hard to get to sleep sometimes.

And right, it was about 1 or 2 in the morning, and she heard a window being slid up. She said, ah, there's a burglar coming. So she jumped out of bed, she sneaks into the room, and instead of somebody climbing in, it's the pastor's daughter climbing out.

This is an unusual way to leave a house, wouldn't you think, at 2 in the morning. And so she's going to say something, but she's going to watch, you see. So this girl drops out of the thing, she's all dressed up, and she looks out, and there on the street out there, she sees one of the rottenest kids in school, pulled up with a car, really quietly, just running outside.

So the girl jumps in this car with this guy, and they drive off. And about quarter to 5 in the morning, the girl comes back. And this girl's still awake, you know, kind of out from the window that she slid up, and the girl's waiting for him.

And the girl's about half way, and she goes, I saw you, ah! And the girl says, shh. She says, I saw you, going out with one of the rottenest guys in school. And this girl says to him, you snitch on me, you're dead.

And the girl says, dear, tell my father, see. And this girl wrote to Dave Wilkerson, and she said, what can I say? Her pastor thinks she's a wonderful, holy girl and that, and she's sleeping with one of the rottenest kids in the whole school. She said, shall I tell him or not? And Dave wrote back and said, you don't need to.

God will expose her. Scripture says, be sure your sin will find you out. And I think that's what's going on.

You know, God is going to expose rotten lives. He's doing it right through the nation, from top level down, boy. If you are messing around, God will expose you.

He will do it, and do it publicly. You don't have private repentance, God will publicly expose you. They don't like being thought fanatical.

You know, they don't like that idea, fanatically. What is the first principle of Scripture? The world is wrong. It means if you set your heart to follow Jesus, you set it against the world.

It's as simple as that. They intend on making friends on both sides of the line. I don't mean that in an evangelical way.

They have two distinct crowds. One crowd is the Christian crowd, and one crowd is the non-Christian crowd. And the non-Christian crowd never learns that they're Christian.

And the Christian crowd never learns that they've got people over here. Now that's easy to do, if you go to church in a different place than where you go to school. Like the church I went to, when I wasn't saved, was about 15 miles away from my school.

And I knew nobody from our school would even find where our church was. It's a little street mission type thing. So I had one crowd in church, five times a day.

And then when I said goodbye, I wouldn't see one of those guys until the following Sunday. And then my crowd at school never found out about that. So I could ping-pong backwards and forwards.

Can you imagine how embarrassing it would be if one of my crowd walked into church and saw me song-letting them in? Or me? And sometimes that happens. You know, God arranges things like that. Bring your pastor to your school.

Ah, no, no, don't come to my school. You'll find out who I really am. I think we'd get a shock if we realized.

I mean, some of you know what it's like. Remember Bill Gothard? He talked about this, how he had a youth group, you know. And he had a great, successful youth group.

And one day he drove over to the other side of town to deliver some stuff. And when he got there, he was in a drive-in. He stopped in to get some stuff.

And he saw a bunch of really rotten kids in there, swearing and cutting up and stuff. And he thought, I wish that our young people could go and minister to these young people. And then he looked closer and he realized it was his young people.

And suddenly he realized all this great youth group that he had. I'll tell you this from an evangelist's point of view. Some of the rottenest kids I've ever worked with in my life are church kids.

They really are rotten. Their parents, their parents, their parents might be dynamite. You know, they're really into the Lord and stuff.

And the kids have got all the words, but no reality. I was in a place once, one of the largest churches in California. I couldn't believe it.

The guy called me out. The pastor said, Brother Frightening, will you come over and share a little with our young people? We're just going to have a mellow, laid-back time. And why don't you come over and kick off your shoes? We'll have a little meal and share a little bit.

I said, you haven't heard me preach, have you? He said, no, but you know. I said, well, I'll come over, Pastor, but I don't think we'll have a mellow, laid-back time, you know. We got there, and I walked into this room.

I've been praying, asking God to give me something. I walked into this room, and there's a girl under a blanket, having some games first, right? And it's this game, you're in the desert, take off anything you don't need. You know that game? So all this stuff has come out from under this blanket.

No, take, it's moral, take it. The point, you know, the trick of the thing is you're supposed to take the blanket off, you don't need that. But this girl's getting undressed under this blanket.

This is a church, youth group, right? And I'm standing there, I'm getting madder and madder. Couldn't think that of me, I mean, I nearly melt. I am standing there, I'm getting so mad, and I said to the pastor, he's, he's, hey, this is funny, oh.

I said, listen, you don't stop this right now, I am not going to speak here, I'm, goodbye. Oh, brother, don't be offended, we're just having a little, so they stopped it. The girl came out before she lost everything, thank God.

And, uh, shall we have a meal now? I said, no, I don't think so, I don't want to talk to these kids. So they're sitting there, you know. Forty, gum chewing.

You know, this, give me a good old Hells Angel boy, any day. And this, religious, clutching their Bibles, and I'm talking, I may as well have been talking to, uh, Wall. Now, hello, Wall, how are you? You know, the last guy coming in a flying saucer, what are you going to do? And right in the front, there's this guy, and he's rubbing his leg, up and down, on this girl's leg.

I am so mad. You know, and I said to him, this is called getting attention. What do you think you're doing? Who do you think I'm talking to, this Wall? I said, I got so mad, I drew a line.

I drew a line on the board, I put all the signs of non-Christians on one side, signs of Christians on the other. And I said, how many of you, these are, you know, people who love God, and hot for God, and those who hated God. I said, how many of you think you're here? A couple of the hard dudes in the back, you know, I hate God, you know.

Well, how many of you think you're here? You're really on fire for God. But one person sort of puts his hand up like this. I said, where do the rest of you think you are? You're not hot, you're not cold, I'll tell you what you are.

You're vomit, that's what you are. God is going to spew you out of here, I get so mad. Anyway, that doesn't make you popular.

But I'll tell you what, if we don't get the junk cleaned up in our churches, we're not going to have leadership for any revival on the streets. And it's got to come, it's got to come through the preaching of a God-centered gospel, and not a man-centered thing that fits God into a slot in your time zone. And I don't care, I get... And now, we go on with the milder things.

I do more to gain the applause of men than the applause of heaven. There's some horrible things we do in churches today, we really do some horrible things. I'm all for developing Christian talent and stuff, but it's an ugly thing to see people competing for applause, you know, this kind of thing.

I remember one time I was with Keith, and we went to a meeting, and everybody was asked to give a clap for the Lord, and they all did. And then, straight after that, Keith was about to go on, and he said, he said, do you hear that? That was a clap for the Lord. And then he said, well, now they're going to introduce me.

And he said, I bet you they clap me more than they just clap Jesus. And sure enough, Keith went and clapped! Cheered for 20 minutes, you know. Can you imagine what God thinks of that exalting man and putting man in the center of things? I believe in giving honor where honor is due, but let's do it properly.

Let's give honor where honor is due. Let's do it right. Let's honor him first.

In Revivals, boy, nobody cares who's there. You don't care if people are there. You don't care if there's a special preacher there or music there or anything is there.

And a real, genuine spiritual awakening goes right out of the hands of man sometimes. Anybody can say anything, and people get saved. People don't even have to say things, and people get saved.

God loves doing that stuff. But our man-centered gospel, boy, we love exalting people and holding them up. Now, Finney said they're more anxious to know what men think about them than about what God thinks.

If such a one is a minister preaching a sermon or a singer giving a song, they fish for compliments. They're more interested to know what men thought of it than what God thought of it. If an elder or church member prays or speaks in a meeting, he is thinking, if he's a people pleaser, how he sounds to those who listen.

If he makes anything like a failure, the disgrace of man cuts him down ten times more than the thought he has let God down or hindered others. Females are this kind of vastly more concerned in church how they look in the eyes of men than how they look in God's eyes. You can see at a glance what this religion is the moment it is held up to view.

And that explains one time a woman was dressed up. It was Easter, so she had this really beautiful new dress, and she waited until everybody was in church before she came. She came in late, see.

And then she, Finney was preaching. Can you imagine? And seats in the front. She came down the front, you know, just looking pious and holding a Bible.

And Finney saw her, and he stopped. And he waited. It was awful silence, see.

And then she just thought, you know, he would go on, and she would sit down and be like, oh, what a lovely dress. And he stopped, and then he pointed to her, and he said, in effect, what do you think you're doing? Coming to the house of God to do this? And brother, I mean, you think, well, how could he say something like that? He was telling the truth. We need to say that more often.

We talk generally, you know. Many people in the world are awful. Right, right, you know.

Nobody's there. What do you think, Wall? Many people in the world, nobody here, of course. Just many people, other people, in horrible churches, not like you lovely people.

What Finney would do, he'd pray for by name. Father, deal with Don Jones there, who is still fighting you today, this morning. And you're Don Jones sitting there going, oh, baby.

You know, my friend, Tony Salona, when he was first a youth pastor in the church, and God began to deal with him about really honoring God, he had kids in his church. And you know what it's like. Don was telling me in high school, there's always, you know, there's some leader there, and they control the level.

And a church is that, too, often. There's a level of ungodliness, and it's controlled by one or two key people, the in crowd. You know what I mean? They're there, and they just sort of, hey, this is it.

It doesn't go any higher than this, and if you are, you're a jerk. Now that crowd, if that's broken, if that leadership's broken, and that in crowd becomes an up crowd up in the morning to see God, then it cuts the back of rebellion in the church. So what happened, Tony went to, first he preached to the youth group, because he had about 40 kids in his church.

He preached to the youth group, loved them, you know, laid out a commitment message to them, giving everything they had to the Lord, all right. After a couple of weeks of that, the ones that had not changed, he went down around to see personally. He went to talk to individuals.

Some of them got squared away with God. And then the hardest ones, a couple of guys in the back that were elder sons, that were some of the chief pushers in town, their fathers were elders in the church, they're right there, and the kids knew, you know. So he went around to see them.

He said, you're an elder son, you're a leader in this thing, but you're not really serving God. How are you going to get right with God? And the guy said, I don't know anything. So then he went and got one of his friends, one of those boys' friends, who'd got right with God, and came back and saw him again.

Saw him first on his own, got somebody else, came back and talked to him again. The guy said, the door's in the same place, and the next Sunday he'd do this. There are some of you that are still not giving your life to God.

We've got Jack here, who's pushing drugs. We've got John here, who's... Can you imagine what that did in the church? I mean, it was total shock, because kids think, hey, he can't be talking about me. He must be talking about something else.

It can't be me he's talking about. And when he did that, boy, it broke the back of rebellion in that church. Just snapped it.

You can imagine what the elders thought about that. But he told them, told them, said, your son's on drugs? The guy said, oh, my son can't be on drugs. He's a good Christian boy, you know, this stuff.

And when that happened, a snap took place, and that church jumped in a year from 40 to 400. And it was the kids that did it, because then the consensus was broken, see? If you're a junior high school kid, what do you go for? The crowd is very important to you. Do you see that? So what happens when the consensus is wrong? There's tremendous pressure on a kid who wants to be part of something that's going, see? You break that religious consensus, and you shift it to a genuine awakening, and it just, it becomes like a tornado, and it sucks in kids from all over the place who are getting saved.

They started prayer meetings every morning. At six in the morning, before school started, there were 30, 40, 50 kids at each day of the week praying from different high schools. And a real little awakening went out into that area.

We've got to bust this people-pleasing thing. It's got to be done. All right? Time is getting on.

I've got to give you one more thing. No, I won't give you any more. That'll do.

I'll give you these sheets out later. I'll just say this. How would you, we're looking at rocks now, aren't we? How can we, how can you, in an ordinary harvesting situation or gardening situation, how do you deal with rocky ground? You put a plow down, and you dig it up, all right? That means it's got to go in deep, deep enough to get those rocks that otherwise wouldn't be seen.

And when the ground is plowed up, the big rocks come, and you can take them out. So just say this. When you counsel people, when you are leading them to the Lord, you better make sure that you stress rights as well as wrongs.

That's a very simple thing. When you're talking about repentance, you can include in that the yielding of rights. Now, our tragedy is we don't put this in into the early Christian experience.

So what happens is there's all of these people who have made a profession of faith in the Lord who still have unyielded rights. So then, you know, Bill Goffert comes along, does a seminar on yielding rights. And great, a lot of people get free of anger and worry and fear and all these other things that connect up with rights.

What we could do is do it right at the start. Wouldn't it be easier than messing around for years on being worried and angry and greedy and self-centered and all that stuff? Do it right at the start. Assemble.

If a kid comes up, you just say to him, are you ready to give up anything at all that God asks you? Even the best, neatest things you're going to do now. Because the cross has got to finish off that one pattern. And I mentioned, Barry, right at the start of this thing, for a reason.

When those kids led him to the Lord, they said, are you ready to die? Lay his music down. That shocked him. But later that night, he said, yes, I'll do anything to get saved.

He gave his music up. He didn't, nobody said to him, come and be a Christian musician. And I know that because that first week, I saw him sit in the back.

He wept every session, just wept, wept, wept, wept. And about a month and a half later, he came to Tony and I were talking. He said, I'm not quite sure what I should be doing now.

He said, I used to be doing, I used to do a bit of plumbing once. And he said, maybe I could go back and be a plumber. We said, hey, whatever God tells you to do, it's fine.

See? And then God gave him his music back. Which is great. He started with a mouth organ and then he picked up his guitar again.

And Barry told me a year and a half ago, if I had not died to my music, I would not be in the Christian church today. Because the pressures that are put on by our rotten culture on the Christian celebrity, kills you. And that is a damaging, damaging thing.

I don't know how many, again, I have a personal stake in this. When I first became a Christian, remember I said, I copied all the best sermons and preached them? Nobody talked about that in that thing. So I just said, hey, except the Lord put him in and all this.

A young man in New Zealand, he's blind, he's like Jose Feliciano. Excellent guitarist, beautiful voice, blind. And in those days, he was just starting to go blind.

He could see very dimly. And he, God dealt with him in a street meeting. We have a street meeting, he came up and he said, you know, I'd really like to become a Christian.

So me and my great brilliant wisdom said to him, what do you do? A musician, praise God, we don't have very many singers out here, right? So I suggested to him that he get saved and dedicate his talents to the Lord. So for about six months, he was in the minister I was working with and he'd sing, very good musician, singer. His eyes kept getting worse.

And one day he came to me and he said this, you know, I've had a tremendous opportunity given to me. I had such spiritual language around it, even then I felt a check in it. A band, a quite well-known band in town, has asked me if I could front for them, do some singing and stuff.

And he said, I'll just sing a few songs and stuff at the end. And he said, last song, I can sing anything I want to. So it'd be a great opportunity for me to witness.

I'll just be able to, you know, sing a Christian song to all the mob that are there. So this tremendous opportunity for me to witness. And I felt a little check in my heart.

See the crummy theology, boy. He said, well, you rationalize. He's reaching unsaved people that would never get to reach.

There's all those dance band crowd that wouldn't listen to me. So he went. That was the last time I ever saw him in the Christian church.

I know him now. He's one of the number one vocalists in New Zealand that has absolutely no Christian thing at all. Finished.

Gone. He'd talk about it. He's mentioned it.

One day I'm going to see him. I'm going to talk to him. His name is Eddie.

He's a country western singer now, but an incredible musician and vocalist. Would you like to know how many people were counseled like this in our culture? And how many more we're going to go and do in that same garbage unless God gives us some wisdom? Okay. Time is about finished on us.

I want to read you just a poem that Jim Elliott quoted. He was that guy that laid his life down for the orcas. Have you no scar? No hidden scar on foot or side or hand? I hear thee sung as mighty in the land.

I hear them hail by bright ascendant star. Have you no scar? No wound? No scar? Yet as the master shall the servant be and pierce it are the feet that follow me. Yet thine are whole.

Can he have followed far who has no wound? No scar? From subtle love of softening things, from easy choices, weakenings, not thus are spirits fortified, not this way went the crucified. From all that dims like Calvary, O Lamb of God, deliver me. You know who wrote that? His name was Jim Elliott.

He was a missionary to the orca Indians. And he and four others went out one day after airdropping gifts to these orcas that had never had contact with any other civilization before. And they used to come around to the plane and they'd all laugh and they'd throw them down gifts and stuff.

So on one particular day these five men went out to make first personal contact with the orca Indians. And he sang a song, We rest on thee, our shield and our defender. And they left their wives and their children and the mission station and they're going with the radio and they walked into the jungles to meet him.

And hours later they had not radioed back in. And the whole day went past and finally they sent out a plane to a terrible scene. There was all of the stuff they'd brought in all scattered around the clearing and there were bodies all around the clearing and they'd killed every single one of them.

And they finally brought the bodies back and the wives were incredible. Betty Elliot is still alive. She's a woman with tremendous depth in her spirit.

And a neat thing happened. Some, I'll just tell you the good part first. The wives went back in and also ministered to these orcas.

Loved them even though they'd killed their husbands. And the same two that killed Betty Elliot's husband became the leaders of the church and the orcas. The orcas could not understand, they didn't have the word love in their language, but they could understand people who had guns that could have shot them that never fired a shot.

They laid their guns down and took the spears and died to get a message that was more important than their lives. But shortly after Jim died, back in the United States when Betty was brought back for a short time, she was at a friend's place. And they just heard over the radio the tragedy of the great loss.

And people were talking about how dangerous it was to send missionaries out, just like El Salvador and places like that today. And how there should be a government ban on allowing Americans to go into that area because it's too dangerous. And this person who was a friend of Betty's turned to Betty and said, uh, how did you handle it, Betty, when you first heard that Jim had died there in the jungle? And she said to him, Jim did not die in the jungle.

And the guy said, he thought, oh, he's turned her head, you know, and he said, hey, you're going to have to face it, Betty. He really died. And she said, yes.

They found him with a spear and his back floating down the river. But Jim, my husband, did not die in the jungle. He died in high school.

He died beside his bed when he knelt and he said, oh God, spend me. Blood is of no value unless it flows before the altar. Gold is of no value unless it's spent.

Am I ignitable? And he said, I lay my life down. You take my life and spend it any way you want to. That is where my husband died.

That's close. Our Father, we live in a world filled with Christian covetousness and Christian greed and Christian materialism and Christian immorality and all of these things that make you sick. We ask in Jesus' name that you give us a gospel to preach that is pure, that exalts you, that puts you in the center of all things, that calls a man not only to die to bad things, things that he doesn't even like, but the things that he has exalted in your place.

Give us a gospel with teeth in it, with guts in it, we pray. Something that will genuinely touch the heart of a man who knows the difference between religious shallowness and genuine reality. We ask it for your namesake.

Amen.

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