

(Christ--the Way God Makes Man Righteous) 6. How God Helps Man See His Need

by Denny Kenaston

God's goal is to make man a totally different man in Christ Jesus, and He uses several ways and means to bring man to see his need.

Duration: 1:06:04

Topics: "Man's Need"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses how God helps man see his need for salvation. He emphasizes the importance of conviction and how it leads people to realize their need for Christ. The preacher mentions that testimonies of godly lives can be a powerful tool in convicting others. He also highlights the role of God's moral law in showing man his sinfulness and need for a Savior. The sermon emphasizes the ultimate goal of pointing people towards Christ and the importance of recognizing and repenting of one's transgressions.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Good morning, brethren.

You have a good weekend? How many of you got a little bit of rest yesterday? Let me see your hands. Oh, good. Amen.

Amen. Okay, here's your assignment. You can write that first.

The next word I'd like you to memorize, the definition, is for the word conviction, which we'll be speaking about that quite a bit today. But I want you to memorize that definition, conviction. And then also read the

last two chapters in the book.

The last two chapters that I want you to read in the commentary on Romans, that's 18 and 19. And we'll be finished with that book. Just encouragement to you all.

Someone was mentioning the other morning or the other afternoon how difficult it was to get up and lead a song. And I was just encouraging him a bit that the reason why those things are difficult is because we're very self-conscious. Self.

S-E-L-F. Conscious. And because of our self-consciousness, we don't feel free.

You just don't feel free. I've heard some men pray powerful prayers when their eyes were shut and their face was on the ground and they were in a dark room with other people. But you take the same person and put them up behind a pulpit and they see all the people and self-consciousness takes over and they don't do well.

So, it's important for us to learn, and this, maybe it takes some time, but it's important for us to learn to release ourselves to God's Spirit. Show that God can use us. It's very important.

You know, I've seen people lead singing, you know, the first time they lead singing, you know, it's kind of like this. But you know, when you get free in the Lord, then it doesn't matter so much every little thing you do or like this, you know. When you get free in the Lord, you can worship.

When you get free in the Lord, you can preach. When you get free in the Lord, you can edify other people. When you get free in the Lord, you can open up your mouth and you're not self-conscious.

That's just a little lesson before our message here this morning. Let's stand for prayer. Father, we do rejoice this morning.

It's Monday morning. And Lord, we smell the sweet savor of yesterday in our spirits this morning. And we thank You, Father.

Thank You for the Lord's day. Thank You for the blessings that You put into our hearts and our minds. And in our spirit, Lord, we feel strengthened because of yesterday.

And here we are this morning, God. And we ask You to, again, open the eyes of our understanding, Lord. And we ask You to fill us with the Holy Ghost.

And we ask You, Lord, to, yes, God, grant us the grace to release ourselves unto Thee. That we might do the will of God. That You might work Your will out in our lives.

In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. You may be seated.

Alright, the title this morning, we are moving away from a bit of the foundations of theology and getting into some of the more practical aspects of how Christ makes a man righteous. The title of the message this morning is, How God Helps Man See His Need. And we are looking at the subject of conviction.

Which is a very important subject in this day and age that we live in. Conviction. In our last session we gazed upon the sacred scene of the atoning, sacrificial Lamb.

Christ Jesus the Lord. This event, without doubt, is the most powerful and the most far-reaching event in all of human history. I mean, it seems to me that all history before Christ was moving toward that beautiful, glorious event.

And all history since Christ looks back to that. Now, some historians may disagree with that, but if you'll step for a moment back out of time and into eternity and sit on God's throne and take a good long look at the world and the history of the world, you'll see Christ right in the center of it all. And man working his way up to that event and looking back to that event over the course of 6,000 years.

Yes, by far the most powerful event that ever happened in human history. I think that we can understand more clearly why Paul could say, It is the power of God unto salvation. However, it is only the power of God unto salvation to who? To everyone that believeth.

To the Jew first and also to the Gentile or the Greek. I don't know which way he says it in that verse. So, how can they believe if they do not see their need of a Savior? And how will they need a Savior if they don't see that they are lost and dead in trespasses and sins? So I want to address these issues of how God brings a man or a woman to that place where they sense their need.

Where their heart begins to say within themselves, Something is wrong. Something is wrong. We want to address this this morning.

How God moves, draws, and motivates man to come to the Savior. Because see, that's what God is after. It's not that God wants to make you miserable.

It's not that God wants to make a man miserable. Although God has to make a man miserable in order to save his soul. He has to come under the grip of the reality of where he's really at.

But God's goal is not to make that man miserable. His goal is to make him a totally different man in Christ Jesus. Man must see, he must sense, he must feel his need.

Paul describes fallen man in pretty bleak terms in the New Testament. Listen to some of his words. It was quoted here this morning, but he says, he speaks of man and he says, He is alienated from the life of God.

Now that word alienate, that's a strong word. You know, it's like, get way over there and I'm staying way over here. I'm alienating myself from you.

And man is alienated from the life of God. Paul speaks of the heart of man, the mind of man is being blinded by the God of this world. Blinded.

On purpose. He uses terms, speaking about salvation, of being translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. But this morning we're just looking at the fact and the reality that man is in the kingdom of darkness.

And again, we won't quote the verses, but there in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 1 through 3 is the most powerful definition of the condition, the state of man. But how do you bring this man to the place where he realizes, I'm dead in trespasses and sins. Alienated from God.

I'm in the kingdom of Satan. I'm being controlled like a pawn on a chessboard by the devil and his angels. How do you bring a man to see this? In our consideration of man's need, last week we saw man's spirit was dead and that he lost the ability to have fellowship with God.

I want to put the diagram again on the board this morning. We're going to use it a little bit as we consider the whole issue of bringing man to the place where he sees his need. How will he see his need? This is a supernatural work.

Now God does use us, we'll see as we look at the many different points. But it is a supernatural work which we will finish with that point. Turn with me in your Bibles to John chapter 16.

God uses several ways and means to bring man to this end of seeing his need. This is so beautifully defined and clarified by Christ as He's speaking to His disciples and telling them that He's going away. And I guess it came to me in a fresh and a new way the last couple of days as I was meditating upon this portion of Scripture that again, I see that God had a lost and dying world in mind.

You know, many times we think, oh well, God sent the Holy Spirit so that I can enjoy life. God sent the Holy Spirit so that I could be comforted. And that's true.

He is our comforter. He is our paraclete who comes alongside of us. But brethren, God sent the Holy Spirit that man might come to a knowledge of His Son.

Read it in Acts chapter 1 verse 8. We heard it yesterday here, yesterday morning in church. Why God sent the Holy Spirit. So Jesus is speaking about the Holy Spirit here in John 16 and verse 17.

He says, Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away. Now, He's going to have to, you know, they're going to have to taste something because they're not going to be convinced of that.

He's been with them for three and a half years. Every question they had, He answered it. Every need they had, He met it.

Every situation that they found themselves in, He saved them out of the midst of it. And now He's telling them, It's expedient for you that I go away. For I go not away.

For if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you. It will not come. You see, Jesus had to go away in order for the comforter to come.

And imagine how limited the spread of the gospel would be if the disciples were always going to be dependent upon Christ in His person, in His body, here upon this earth. Oh, blessed be God! Christ went to the cross, rose from the grave, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and came back to them in the person of the Holy Spirit. And not only on them, but the 3,000 that were converted that day.

And not only on them, but the 5,000 that were converted after that. And not only on them, but on each and every one of us. Yes, now Christ's kingdom can expand.

It is expedient for you that He go away. And if He go not away, the comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

That's a promise. And what's He going to do? Well, we know He's going to be a comforter because He used that word, comforter. But He's also going to do something else.

When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. And I want you to note the word reprove there. And just circle that.

That's the word convict. But it's interesting to me that we use the word convict. But it's not in the Bible one time.

I guess it's a nicer word than reprove. But Jesus said the Holy Ghost is going to come and reprove or convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Now those are powerful things that He's going to do.

He's going to reprove or convict or convince the world of sin, the world of righteousness and the world of judgment. And I want you to note what He's going to do. He's going to do that to the world.

Again, Jesus has evangelism in mind in this context right here. He's going to do that to the world. Of sin, because they believe not on Me.

I mean, that puts it right down in a nutshell, doesn't it? Of sin, because they've committed adultery. Of sin, no. Of sin, because they're covetous.

No. Of sin, because they believe not on Me. And if you understood what that word believe meant, you'd understand what He just said there.

And we'll look at that word in a couple of days. But of sin, because they believe not on Me. Of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more.

The example of righteousness which is before you is going away. And I'm going to send the Comforter and He's going to reprove the world of righteousness. He's going to lift up a beautiful, righteous standard in their hearts.

And lastly, of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged. And if the Prince of this world is judged, you can be sure that everyone else who goes against God, like the Prince of this world did, will also be judged. And why all this? Why all these uncomfortable words? Why all these strong words? Why this word, reprove? To make man miserable? No, to save that soul and bring him into union with God again.

Glory! That's what God is after. To save that soul and bring him into union with God again. One of the main purposes for the advent of the Holy Spirit is to convict men.

In the book of Acts, we find words that describe this process of conviction. Can you think of some? They were cut to the heart. That's a good one.

They were pricked in the heart. They were... Jesus said to Paul, It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. I looked up that word, prick, and it means, literally it means to stab.

To stab. And that's exactly what happens. God sends the conviction and He makes us miserable, especially if we resist Him.

We all know what it's like to be under conviction. You know, sometimes parents will say to other parents, you know, when you're talking Sunday afternoon or whatever, So, how's John doing these days? One parent will say to another one, Pray for him. He's not doing too well.

He's under conviction. You see, when God begins to convict a man, a soul, of his need, sometimes we resist that conviction. And what do we act like when we are resisting conviction? You know, we're just kind

of miserable.

We're just kind of ouchy. We're just kind of, you know, nothing seems to be right and nothing seems to be said right. And that's just the way it is.

That's the conviction of the Spirit of God. I think of the conversion of Saul in Acts chapter 9. It's a good example of this whole process of conviction. There's Paul on the road to Damascus.

And Jesus appears to him. And he falls on his face on the ground there before this glorious light. And Jesus speaks a few words to him.

And his eyes are blinded from the light, I believe, that he saw there. And they led him like a blind man into Damascus. And there he sat for three days.

What do you think he was doing for three days? He was praying. But he was under conviction. God was dealing with him about his own need.

Imagine what he was thinking about. Oh, no. I've been totally wrong.

I've been fighting against the very thing that I need. He was under conviction. Three days he sat there in Damascus in a little house.

In total darkness. Probably in mostly silence. No food.

No drink. Just him and God the Holy Ghost. Reproving him of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come.

And I mean when Ananias walked in there three days later. And spoke to him and said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus who appeared unto thee has sent me to lay hands on you that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. That's called conviction.

God's Spirit has been sent into the world to convict men. To bring men under conviction. I think of a negative example of that there.

The Pharisees in Acts chapter 7. You know, when Stephen was preaching his famous sermon to them. The Holy Spirit was also there that day in that group of people. As Stephen was preaching.

But they didn't respond quite the same way to the conviction of the Holy Ghost. They responded in anger. They responded in outrage.

The Bible says they gnashed on him with their teeth. And shut the voice up, they thought. The voice of conviction.

And threw stones at Stephen and killed him that day. But did they shut up the voice of conviction? No, they only shut up the voice, the human voice. Who was bringing it.

So, God must bring man to the place where He sees his need. That's the point here this morning. There are several ways in which He does this.

And all, all of them by the Holy Ghost. Which we will look at more clearly toward the end. But I want us to just consider these.

I have eight of them. Number one, how does God do this? Number one, there is that never ceasing void in man's heart. That empty place.

Look up here. That empty place. That says, something is missing.

Something is missing. Now, you may not know what it is yet. But there is that continual gnawing witness of an empty heart that is void of God.

That just keeps saying, something isn't right. We know what it is. That something that is missing in the center of man's being is God.

Ecclesiastes chapter 3 says it, that He has put eternity in God's heart. I mean, in man's heart. And I believe that.

In all my years of witnessing and talking to lost people and all of that, there is that emptiness in soul. As the one preacher says, God has made an empty space in man's being that can only be filled by God Himself. Man will try all kinds of other ways to try to satisfy that, to try to bring a fulfillment there, but it will only be satisfied by God Himself.

And if you think about it, it makes sense. Here is man. God made man in His own image.

In the image of God created in Him. Spirit, soul and body. But all of a sudden, man's spirit dies.

God is not there anymore. Now He's just soul and body. It only makes sense that there would be that inner witness, that inner knowing witness that says, something isn't right.

It's important for you to know that. When you work with people, it's there. They can put on a facade.

They can put on a big show. They can be bold. They can growl at you.

But deep down inside, something is missing. Number two, God uses the testimonies of godly lives to witness to that lost man and help him to come to grips with the sense of his need. Remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount.

Ye are the salt of the earth. Ye are the light of the world. That's one of the reasons why we're here.

That we can so let our light shine before men that they will see our lives and glorify our Father which is in heaven. This convinces man of righteousness. And they begin to search.

It convinces man of righteousness. I mean, how many times have you heard it? I've heard it. But there's something about you that's different.

What is it? Or, maybe it comes this way. I don't know what you have, but whatever you have, I want. That's God using the testimony of godly men and women to bring a lost man to face the reality and sense his own need.

I don't have what these people have. Amen? Oh, how well I remember some years ago, one of our dear church members, faithful church members, in the church probably five years, came walking down the aisle one day, weeping her heart out. You know what she said? She said, I do not have what you people have.

I need to be born again. Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, that the God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the gospel should shine unto them. Okay.

So the God of this world has blinded the minds. The eyes. Which eyes is He blinding? It's the eyes in the heart.

It's not the eyes in the head. The eyes in the head of all the people in the world are not blind. So God wants us, as His people, to give them something to see.

Amen? Give them something to see. Let them see how you live. Let them see what you do in a hard circumstance.

Let them see what you do when your baby dies. Let them see what you do with your family. Let them see.

And it will convict them of righteousness. Number three, God uses what theologians call the law of nature. Romans chapter 2, and I'd like to turn there and read these verses.

You've read them, but let's just read them in light of this. In Romans chapter 2, It's just a powerful revelation of how God works in man. In Romans 2, 14 and 15.

I'm watching that clock and it's forcing me to go faster. Verse 14, chapter 2, And He explains, Now, He's talking there about man's conscience. And He's relating to us the truth of the matter, that there's law written upon the conscience of every man's heart.

It's there. You don't have to grow up in a Christian home. You can be a heathen on the other side of Africa.

And still there is that law of nature written in the heart. I think of my own testimony. I didn't grow up in a Christian home.

No one taught me all those things. You shouldn't be doing this. This you should be doing.

I didn't have any of those things. My first sermon was gazing at the stars in heaven. But those stars in heaven told me that there's a God.

The law of nature. Witnessing, bearing witness in my own heart that God is. And that He has power.

And that He has order. And that I'm going to have to answer to Him. Now, I think of the illustration that Paris Readhead so beautifully describes in one of his sermons.

I think the title of the sermon is The Right Use of the Law. But he was addressing this whole subject of the law of nature in the conscience of the human heart. And how that over in Africa, the missionaries would come up to, you know, would face total, wicked, heathen chiefs.

And start asking them questions about morality. Like, is it wrong to go and sleep with your neighbor's wife? Oh, the chief knew that. He knew that.

He never read a Bible. He never read a commandment. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

But you ask that chief, is it wrong for you to go sleep with your neighbor's wife? Oh, he said, it's wrong. Ask the chief, is it wrong to go and take your neighbor's things? Oh, he said, it is wrong. It is wrong.

And they just went right down through there. And oh, not in the full measure that we would have having the Ten Commandments in our heart. Or the revelation of the whole Bible.

But, there was enough written in that chief's heart for him to know the difference between right and wrong. So God even uses the law of nature to bring a man to the place where he senses his need. Point number four.

God uses preaching. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 says, It pleased God that by the foolishness of preaching, He would save souls. God uses preaching to bring men under the conviction of the Spirit of God.

And under the conviction of their own need for God. He uses preaching. This can be one-on-one.

This can be in service. This can be out on the street corner. You're walking down the street and some guy standing over there opening his mouth and preaching his heart out.

You stop for five seconds or ten seconds. You listen to what he has to say. You keep on going.

But something gets inside of your heart. You heard something that he said. And the Spirit of God used it.

And changed your whole life. God uses preaching. All kinds of different ways.

I mean, it could be some guy half drunk driving home at two o'clock in the morning. And flips on the radio and some guy is preaching there on the radio at two o'clock in the morning. And his heart is gripped with the reality that he has a need in his life.

God uses preaching to bring man to the place where he sees his need. Number five. This is a separate point, but it still has to do with preaching.

But we're talking about preaching judgment here. Judgment. Talk about preaching heaven and hell.

And you may think that I'm against preaching heaven and hell because of a few of the things that I said last week. I'm not against preaching heaven and I'm not against preaching about hell. It brings the fear of God into the heart of a man.

I am for this. But, I'm for it in the right way. How is it done? If all we do is preach about heaven and warn about hell.

And then invite people to come and ask Jesus into their heart. That's not going to change a life. Oh, there might be one here and there that will get through.

Out of the sincerity of their heart. But that's not going to bring men to Christ. Heaven is a wonderful place.

Don't you want to go there? Hell is a terrible place. You don't want to go there. Here, come forward.

Pray this prayer. Ask Jesus to come into your heart. And you can go to heaven when you die.

I'm sorry. I don't believe in preaching that kind of heaven and hell. But rather, you have sinned against the Holy God and He is angry with you and you need to repent.

And if you don't repent, you will go to hell. That's good and right. You see, then a man is recognizing, Okay, I've sinned against God.

And God is angry with me because I'm living in my sin. I don't want to be judged in hell for all the evil of my life that I have lived. I'm going to flee from the wrath to come and give my life to Christ.

Now, if you do it that way, that'll work. In fact, that's much needed. A man that I was reading, L.A. Maxwell, to give you the facts, who's gone now, but he was preaching a sermon in 1950 and he gave these statistics.

That for all the years in the Bible college where he was a principal, they always took a survey in the beginning of the school year and they asked the students, How many of you were saved because you were gripped with the reality of your sin and the judgment of God? And how many of you were saved when you heard a message on the love of God? Very interesting statistics, by the way. It averaged about 10% that were saved because they heard a message on the love of God. And all the rest of them, I'm talking year after year after year after year, they came to Christ because they were gripped with the conviction that there is a just judgment coming upon them for the way that they've been living.

And they fled to Christ and fled from the wrath to come. This is good. God uses that to bring men to a place where they realize, I'm undone.

Number six, God uses his moral law to show man that he has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Reading again in Romans chapter 3, we find these words, how God uses the law. Verse 19 of chapter 3, Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Whoa, that's pretty strong stuff. Oh, but don't forget, the end goal is Christ! Glorious Christ! Not just a miserable man whose mouth has been stopped, but the end is Christ. Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

God uses his righteous moral law to bring the knowledge of sin to bear on the heart of mankind. He does that. Again, Romans 4 and verse 15.

Listen to what Paul says here about the law. Because the law worketh wrath. For where no law is, there's no transgression.

For man does not come to full reality and understanding that he is transgressing God's law. Chapter 5 and verse 20. Moreover, the law entered.

God brought the law in. That the offense might abound. Abound.

What do all of these verses say? That the offense might abound? That every mouth would be stopped? And that every soul would become guilty before God? What is God after? A little later he says again, Sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. What is God after here? You know, he's trying to bring man to come to grips with the fact that he is far away from God. That no matter what good things he may do out here, you know, in his body, you know, in his soul, his good thoughts, he might have those good feelings toward that poor neighbor who doesn't have any food.

No matter whatever those things are out here, there's something missing in here. That sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. And you say, oh, what a despairing thought.

But Paul goes on in verse 20 there and says, But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. So, don't worry about it. If you find a soul in such a despair, and souls have been in such despair at times that the people that were dealing with them thought they were going to go crazy.

What was going on there? Sin was becoming exceedingly sinful. I've seen men rise on the floor under conviction of their sin. But when sin is exceedingly sinful, oh, then grace does much more abound.

I mean, God is just waiting. God is just waiting to come in there and deal with all of that. Number seven.

God uses the call to come to Him and to believingly surrender. He uses that call to convict men of their need and of their rebellion. You say, brother, that's a new thought.

Well, think about it. Christ found Himself as His ministry began. Christ found Himself in the midst of humanity.

Multitudes of humanity. Very religious people. But nothing on the inside.

Oh, Christ lifted up a standard. Yes, He did do that. But do you notice how many times He just simply said, leave everything and follow Me.

Just leave everything and follow Me. God uses the call to come to Him and to believingly surrender to convict men of their need and of their rebellion. Look at the rich young ruler.

He went away sorrowful. But by the way, he went away very rebellious. He loved his riches more than he loved God.

And he went away sorrowful and rebellious. How did Christ preach the gospel to the people? He laid commitment out to them. He said, accept.

You are willing to forsake everything. You cannot be My disciple. Now, some modern day teachers today are saying, well, that doesn't mean that.

It means that you come to Christ and He becomes your Savior and then sometime later you can decide whether you want to be His disciple. That's hogwash. I mean, see if the angels can get by with that one in heaven.

Huh? Oh, you can come to Jesus and He can be your Savior, but you can decide later whether you want Him to be your Lord. You can decide later whether you want to surrender to Him. You can decide later whether you want to be His disciple.

The Bible doesn't teach that. Christ just preached to a whole bunch of them. And He called them to Himself and convicted them of their unwillingness to forsake everything and follow Him.

Which, by the way, Christ is God. Amen? It's not wrong for God to say, if you're going to love Me with all of your heart, which is the first commandment, you're going to have to forsake everything else to love Me. There's nothing wrong with God saying that.

But not only that, but Christ raised the bar on the commandments when He showed up on the scene, didn't He? I mean, look at the Sermon on the Mount. He raised the bar on the commandments. I mean, they already had love your neighbor.

But He told them, your neighbor is your enemy. He told them, your neighbor is the guy that sued you at the law. He told them that your neighbor is the rest of the world.

Be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. I mean, He raised the bar on what love your neighbor is, didn't He? He talked to them about anger. You know, they thought, hey, we're fine.

I've never killed anybody. And He just raised the bar on the commandments. He said, you never killed anybody, but you're angry in your heart.

If you're angry in your heart, you're a murderer. Well, I've never committed adultery. If you've looked at a woman's lust after you've committed adultery already, already, in your heart, He raised the bar on the commandments.

How about covetousness? He raised the bar on covetousness, didn't He, there in the Sermon on the Mount? Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Oh, He raised the bar, didn't He? Why is He doing that? To make men more miserable? To make you more miserable? No. To drive men to Himself.

See, we can't do that. The lost man can't do that, but we can't either. I'm getting into next week's messages.

The whole of the Sermon on the Mount is an example of how Christ was bringing men to see their need. All those beautiful attitudes of humility there in the first part of the Sermon on the Mount. They have to do with God.

They have to do with loving God. Then I thought of the early Anabaptists as a good example of this point. You know, the Anabaptists didn't go around preaching the Ten Commandments all over Europe.

They didn't do that. You know what they did? They preached Christ and a commitment to Christ that will cost you your very life. And you know what? The Holy Ghost came down and brought conviction upon men's heart.

And their conviction was, I'm not following Christ. And oh, some of the beautiful stories of when the Holy Ghost fell on one of their little meetings in the woods. Or behind the mill.

Or wherever else it was that they were secretly meeting. And how that men would just fall on their knees, weeping over their needs and surrender to Christ. And number eight, He uses the power of the Holy Ghost to bring all these influences to bear on man's needy heart.

Now this is not a little point. This is the big one. And by the way, it's a bit of a dangerous thing to just look at these points and say, Okay, now I've got some methods, I'm going to go out there and let them have it.

And let them see how needy they are. And show them how wicked they are and all that. No, you missed the point.

These are not methods. This is the way that God brings conviction upon men's heart through the power of the Holy Ghost. History is full of examples of this happening.

And of examples where it doesn't happen. And that's why churches can go on and on and on for years and years and years and have no converts. Why no converts? No conviction.

Why no conviction? No Holy Ghost. Or very little. Very little.

Many examples where the Holy Ghost is not dynamically present. I think about revival times. Oh my, some of the accounts of revival.

Do you know what happens when the Spirit of God descends upon a community? All these points begin to happen. Because He, the Spirit of Truth, has come. And He begins to convict men of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come.

And the stories would fill pages where the Spirit of God came upon a community. And I mean, people out in the ditches and over by the police station. People going to the police station and turning themselves in.

People showing up at the church at the middle of the night because they're under conviction and they don't know what to do! They're undone because the Spirit of God has come upon them. And so convicted them that they're afraid they're going to die before they find peace with God. That's what the Spirit of God is supposed to do.

I think of some of the people movements on the mission field. Oh, I mean, and thousands and thousands coming to Christ. It's because the Spirit of God was there.

It's not because the missionary worked harder than another missionary. To go around and make sure the people see that they've got a void in their heart. And how godly the missionary's life is.

And preach to them and show them about heaven and hell. No, that's not it. It's not that the missionary was extra full of energy to go out and do those things.

It was because the Spirit of God came. And then all these things come clear to light by the revelation of the Spirit of God. And man falls on his face and says, like the Philippian jailer, falling down, trembling, he cries out, What must I do to be saved? Or there in Acts chapter 2, Men and brethren, what shall we do? I mean, I love that.

Peter didn't even give an invitation. You know, we do the invitation thing, you know. I mean, before he even said, Now what are you guys going to do? They were so gripped with conviction that they started speaking back to the preacher.

Brethren, what do we do? Oh, God, do that again. But that's where they were at. I think about John Wesley and some of the testimonies I've read about John Wesley and some of his meetings.

And how that man would stand up there under the anointing of the Holy Ghost and preach the holy, righteous judgment of God. And those people, some of them would literally fall over. When the meeting was over and all the people cleared away and went home, you looked out over the field where the people were standing to hear the sermon and it looked like a battlefield.

Two, three hundred people laying out flat, trembling. Because the Spirit of God had come. And a fearless man preached the righteous judgment of God.

And the Spirit of God took the Word of God and gripped the heart of that needy man. And he was overcome with his conviction. And fell down.

I think about Bible school. Bible school and leadership seminar even around here. All these points come to bear in a Bible school or a leadership seminar.

And people come together who are not born again. But in the midst of a whole week, these things just begin to bear upon their heart. And you know, when you've done Bible school for 15 years, you know what's coming.

Amen? And about Thursday night, it just starts rolling. And it's because the Spirit of God has used all these means right here to bring to bear on the conscience of man that he's lost. God uses all of these means to bring a person to a place of accountability.

To a place of self-revelation. Ah, God's gracious gift. A revelation of my evil heart.

God's gracious gift. Amen? I mean, it's judgment day early. How much more mercy do you want than that? Judgment day early.

What a merciful God. To bring a man to a place where he is undone and he sees his need and he doesn't know what to do. Bring that man to that place where in his heart he can begin to say, I personally, I am undone.

I am a sinner and I have sinned against God. Two points there. To bring a man to the place or a woman to the place where they can say, I'm broken.

Something is wrong with me. I'm blind. I am not whole.

I remember so well when my dear aunt told me that I was a sinner. That was a whole new thought to me. This drunken, rebellious drug addict.

When my aunt said to me, You are a sinner, Denny. Now, some people might say, Now, that might make you angry. But to me, that didn't make me angry at all.

It made sense. It made sense. No wonder my life's a mess.

I'm a sinner. I'm without God. Those words were comforting words to me.

I was able to say, I am not whole. Something is missing in me. I am without hope and without God in this world.

Now, let us reason together concerning all of this this morning, brethren. No one can say, Lord, save me! Until he sees, I am lost. Right? Now, he might be able to pray a little prayer.

You might be able to get him to do that. But that's not what I mean. I mean out of the depths of his heart.

God, save me! You're not going to say that unless you know, in the depths of your heart, I'm lost. He is not going to call for a lifeboat until he sees that he's out in the middle of the water and he's drowning. Does that make sense? Huh? That make sense? Like the jailer falling down, trembling and crying out, what must I do to be saved? Or the publican there, in the Gospels, who would not lift up his head, but smote his breast and said, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

You see, God has to bring you, God has to bring a soul to that place. It's not enough to just say to him, do you know that you're a sinner? Yeah, I know I'm a sinner. Alright, pray this prayer.

What shall I pray? I'll tell you. Okay. God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

God, be merciful to me, I'm a sinner. Those are just words. Don't get him to pray that! If his heart is not saying it, it's not going to do anything for him.

But, oh, that publican, he wouldn't even lift up his face, but smote his breast and said those words. And Jesus said, that man went down to his house justified. And we'll come back to that verse again.

Let's move on. We're not finished looking at this process. Often, man's first response to these influences is, I'm going to do better.

I'm going to do better. That's what I'm going to do. I'm going to do better.

I'll quit drinking. That's enough. I'll quit smoking.

I'll quit rebelling. All that is, is reform. God uses it.

It's not all bad. God uses it. Remember? He's after the inner man.

Often, that's man's first response. But look at the diagram again of man's being. Is that going to help? He's out here in his body and his soul, trying to do better.

Taking his 10-step program to get rid of his alcohol, or whatever else it is, you know. I mean, I remember. Oh, how well I remember.

Waking up the next morning, so many times and saying, that is it. I am not going to drink again. Right, Denny.

You are empty inside, boy. You have no power to do that. But I kept getting up and saying, that's it.

No more drinking for me. And it was that despairing situation, though I knew none of the law, like many of you have grown up learning, the fact that I couldn't stop drinking, drove me to look for an answer, and I found the answer in Christ. So reform works good.

But that guy who's trying to make things better and trying to do better, he's just trying to deal with the fruit. And God wants to deal with the root of the matter in the center of his being. So, you know, he can reform in this area, and he can reform in this area, and he can try to do better, and he can dress the way Dad wants him to, or whatever it is, but God wants to get to the root of the matter.

And that's not the way that God makes man righteous. You see, God's not just wanting somebody who doesn't drink, or who doesn't smoke, or who's somebody who goes to church on Sunday morning. That's not what God is after.

God wants to bring man back into union with Himself in a unity of life and purpose where God and man walk together again. That's what God is after! He's just not looking for somebody who doesn't drink. He wants an Enoch who walks with God.

That's what he's after. Christ is the way that God makes man righteous no other way. And this whole issue of reform, it brings man to the end that he might yield himself to Christ and find out that Christ is all he needs.

Please note this. Reform without regeneration brings failure and frustration. Amen? Brings failure and frustration.

And God meant it to be that. This brings man to his sense of need. This is one of the purposes of the law.

To bring man to the end of his self-righteousness. To bring him to the end of his own self-attempt to bring himself into line. God wants to bring man to the end of that.

Alright. Alright. I think we're going to stop there.

I'm not done but we'll figure out how to fit it in tomorrow. I want to be on time here. Shall we stand for prayer? Oh Lord, how lovely are your ways, Father.

Thank you Lord for every misery that you brought upon us. For it only brought us closer to Thee. Thank you Father for the wisdom and the insight here this morning as we can begin to understand what you're doing in the lives of men and women.

Oh Father, you're doing these things in people's lives all the time, all over the world. Oh, let us be in tune with your Spirit and of God that we can co-labor with you and help someone along the way that he might find himself lost in Christ. The all in all.

God, we trust you to continue to lead and direct, Father. Guide me the way that I should go. Bless these men the rest of the day.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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