

God's Pursuit of Man

by Denny Kenaston

Denny Kenaston's sermon explores God's relentless pursuit of man, emphasizing the need for restoration through Jesus Christ.

Duration: 1:08:25

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Topics: "Relationship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the initial state of humanity, emphasizing that without God's breath of life, humans are merely empty vessels. The speaker highlights the significance of God's love for the world, as demonstrated through the sacrifice of his only son, Jesus Christ. The sermon emphasizes the importance of believing in Jesus' sacrifice and its transformative power. The speaker also discusses the composition of the human being, distinguishing between the body, the senses, and the soul, which encompasses the mind and will.

Transcript

You know, that's a very humbling song. Fits my heart very well, though, this morning. We greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus.

It seems to me, I think I have a right evaluation, but it seems to me that we've been sanctified by that wedding yesterday. I sense it in the atmosphere here today. May all our weddings do that.

That it sets a fire in our hearts and strengthens us, the people of God, and inspires us to go on and love and worship and serve God. May all our weddings do that. And then I thought about all these young people up here again, and you know, I was thinking about you young people a few weeks ago, and it was dawning on me that little by little, the churches are being filled with young people who have been on missionary trips.

And all those young people will be the fathers and mothers someday in all of our churches. You young people, when you're there, you pass us up. Will you? You pass us up.

We want that for you. That thrills my heart to think about that and to see all these fathers lined up up here, bless God, sending their children away. What a joy.

You pray for Andrew and Elizabeth this morning. I always do pray for that couple that is married Sunday morning. Well, the Lord has laid on my heart to bring a message entitled God's Pursuit of Man.

I don't know if you ever read the book by A.W. Tozer. I know most of you young people have. We gave it away at a Bible school here one year, but A.W. Tozer wrote a very powerful book called The Pursuit of God.

How many of you read that book? Let me see your hands. Good. Many, many of you.

Well, I would like today to just give the other side of the coin on that book. And I don't know if you remember the book, but though the name of the book was The Pursuit of God and that was the burden that A.W. Tozer had, he wrote it to inspire God's people to seek after a close and a deep relationship with a living God. But though that was his motivation, you will also find in the pages of that book that there's a lot of God pursuing man in that book.

And those two are reciprocal, if you know what I'm saying. God draws man, man seeks God. God draws man and man seeks God.

And that's kind of how it is all through our lives. So I want to have a bit of a teaching this morning. My desire is to break down several aspects of the Christian life in such a way that we can get a glimpse of it, a clear glimpse of it, that we might better understand God's workings and God's ways.

You know, it's good to know what God is doing. Many times in our Christian life, we're not sure what God is doing. And I know that God reserves the right to be a mysterious God, and I'm glad that He is.

I agree with Brother Abner. Because He is a mystery to me, I thrill to worship Him. But even though God is a mysterious God, and He works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform in our lives, there are still some very clear revelations in the Word of God that help us to understand what God is after as He works in the hearts of men and women.

Samuel, the prophet, speaking of David in 1 Samuel 13 and verse 14, he said these words, The Lord has sought Him a man after His own heart, man pursuing God. And Samuel said, if David, the Lord, has sought Him a man after His own heart. Isn't that precious? He's still doing that today, by the way.

Even as we sit here today, God is seeking a man, seeking a woman, who is after His heart. That wants what God wants. He's still doing that.

This pursuit of God as He pursues man is a universal pursuit, which reaches back 6,000 years for us to even begin to understand the depth of that pursuit. We must go back to the Garden this morning, if we're going to understand God's pursuit of man. We must go back to the Garden, back to Genesis chapter 2 and verse 7, where the Bible says that in the beginning, the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.

Very interesting verse there. And I believe that God wanted us to see a picture of Him forming a man. That word form is the same word that is used when a potter takes some clay in his hands and makes himself a pot.

God, just like that potter, He took some dust in His hands, made some clay in His hands, and formed a man. He formed a man. And it helps us to get a right perspective, you know, when we look at it that way.

Because until God did what follows here in this Scripture, there wasn't a whole lot of value there. It was just a form, just a bunch of dust formed by the hands of Almighty God. And if you're ever tempted to get high-minded about who you are or what you have, just remember, if God takes His life out of you, you're just a bucket of dirt.

That's all. And I think now probably your value is about \$1.50 on the open market of buying minerals. \$1.50 without God breathing life into us.

That's all of our value. But oh, what our God can do with a piece of dust when He puts His life into it. Oh, how beautiful that can be.

But it helps us to see where we really are and what our perspective is as we walk upon this earth. The Bible says that after God formed man of the dust of the ground, He breathed into his nostrils. And you know, as I was meditating upon that fresh anew, I noticed what it said there.

God breathed into Adam's nostrils. He blew into him, the Bible says. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

And man became a living soul. I want to have a little teaching this morning and I want to draw a diagram on the board. I think someone took my string.

We have such efficient ushers around here. He took my string. I was going to make a nice circle here, but someone headed me off.

Who did that? That's all right. If you'll bear with my very imperfect circle, I'll make one anyway up here. Just want to put a little diagram on the board so that we can understand a little more deeply what happened in the Garden of Eden.

It's very important that we understand what happened in the Garden of Eden for us to understand why God is pursuing man with such intensity. It's a pretty bad circle, isn't it? Here on the board, we have a diagram. The Bible says that God made man a tripart being.

First Thessalonians chapter five and verse 23 speaks of man being a spirit and a soul and a body. But for the sake of this illustration this morning and the scriptures in Genesis, God made man first a body. So we'll put that up here and we'll just relate this outer circle that we have imperfectly put up here.

We will call that the body. And then this inner portion here, we will call that man's soul. Because that's what Paul said in first Thessalonians chapter five, spirit, soul and body, a tripart being.

And over here in the center is man's spirit, man's spirit. Now when God formed man of the dust of the earth, before he breathed in him, all he was was body. Everyone agree? It was just body, just a body laying there, no life in it, just a bucket of dirt.

But then God, in all of his awesome power, just breathed some air into that piece of dirt. And when God breathed into man, he breathed into him the breath of life. And we don't have time to talk about all what that is, but you just study what that word life means all the way through the Bible and you'll find out that was a pretty powerful substance that went into that dead piece of clay laying there in the Garden of Eden.

God breathed into man, into his nostrils, the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Now for the sake of illustration here today, we understand what our body is. Our body has five senses.

And those senses, you know, we feel, we smell, you know, we see, we taste. Those are the senses that God gave us. And as I relate to the soul, I'm going to relate to the soul in this way, that our soul is made up of our mind, that which we think and reason with.

It is also made up of our will, that is, that which we choose with our volition. God has made us a being with a free will. And number three, our emotions.

And with our emotions, with our emotions, we feel, we feel, we love with our emotions. This is the way that God made man. So now we have this being that God made, and man became a living soul.

But when God breathed into Adam, I want us to notice that Adam did not only have a body and a soul, but he also had a spirit. And the spirit is the place where we fellowship with God. We fellowship with God.

Our spirit is the place where God dwells. And that's how we can function as a spiritual being even today. It's because God is dwelling in our spirit that we can function as spiritual beings.

So when God breathed into Adam, the breath of life, not only did he receive a mind and a will and an emotion where he could think and function and interpret all the body senses of the physical world around him, but he also received in his spirit God's very life, God's very life. And I, as I understand the whole of the scriptures, Adam stood there in the Garden of Eden, a beautiful creation of what God had made. There was man in the beginning, a body perfectly, innocently and pure.

There he stood with his soul. His mind was clean and free. His will was submitted to God.

His emotions were functioning properly. And there he stood with his spirit, which was filled with God's life, God's light, and God's spirit, which is all the same thing. He was one awesome, powerful, beautifully functioning creation of God in the beginning.

He was. Don't doubt it. I don't believe we even can begin to imagine what he was like before the fall, because we're so far away from it, we can hardly begin to imagine it.

So there in the Garden of Eden, the glory of God was so filling the temple of God, which was Adam, that his body and his soul were so naturally doing God's will, that it was very simple to him to love God and to live for God. Just like in the Old Testament, when the Spirit of God filled the earthly temple which Solomon built, the Bible says that the glory of God so filled the temple of God that all the priests had to get out of there. They all found their place and let God have his place.

Oh, may it be so in our hearts and our lives that we know how to get in our place because God has come and taken his place in our own hearts. Well, then came the fall, and we're just quickly moving through all of this. In Genesis chapter 3, we learn that Adam and Eve, through disobedience, they chose to refuse God's authority.

Mark that. They chose to refuse God's authority. That's the bottom line of what they did.

Now, you may look at it many different ways, and you may say, well, there was a serpent there, and the serpent tricked them, and all those things, but the bottom line of the whole thing, brothers and sisters, is that they chose, through disobedience, to refuse God's authority, and this brought them under Satan's authority. That was the fall. Remember what God said to them.

God said, He warned them, in the day that you eat thereof, thou shalt surely die. God said, thou shalt surely die. You know, you meditate upon that account, and you think, well, Adam ate the fruit, and Eve ate the fruit, and they lived to be a thousand.

Oh, we must look a bit deeper to understand what God meant when He said, thou shalt surely die. I believe that they died spiritually that moment when they made that choice to go against God's authority and put themselves under Satan's authority. When they did that, something did die.

Something died inside of them. Their spirit died inside of them. That which fellowships with God died inside of them.

The glory of God that was glowing out from inside of them was gone. It was gone. Oh, no! Now look at Him standing there.

He has a body where He gets all His senses. He can smell, He can see, and all those things. He has a soul.

His mind is still thinking. It's interpreting things. He has a will in which He chooses things to do this way, that way.

His emotions are there, but there's nothing on the inside anymore. What a sad, sad state of affair. There's nothing inside anymore.

Now Adam, now Eve, now you go live your life without God inside of you, and your spirit is dead. How different life was after that, wasn't it? We can all let our imaginations go just a bit to know how different life must have been after that day when they chose to refuse God's authority. They had that choice, and they chose how different life was from then on.

Brothers and sisters, that and this is the state of each and every one of us as we are born into this world. We are born into this world a tri-part being with a body and a soul and a spirit, but the spirit of man is dead. It's dead to God.

It's dead to any awareness of God, and it cannot fellowship with God, and God cannot come and fellowship with it. And that's how man, all man, is born into this world. We are all born after Adam in this state right here.

And I think we all know it too, don't we? We know it. What is God's response to man's failure? Remember the title of the message? God's pursuit of man. Not the pursuit of God, but God's pursuit of man.

What is man's response or God's response to man's failure? God's response was love. It was love. And his pursuit of man begins.

He must make a way to restore. He must make a way to restore. He must make a way to have fellowship with man again.

He must make a way for man's being to be made whole again. And if you will, this morning, allow me to skip 4,000 years of failure in man's human history. And that's what you have in the Old Testament.

There are many other things in there, but it's just one big, long account of man's humankind's utter failure of trying to live on this earth which God made them and trying to live with a little awareness of God without

anything on the inside. 4,000 years of failure. And we can skip those 4,000 years of failure very quickly here this morning because we all do not need to look at the failures of man's past.

We can all look at the failure of our own human history to know exactly that is exactly the way it is. And it doesn't matter this morning, brothers and sisters, it doesn't matter whether you grow up like me, a heathen, with no understanding of God at all. I didn't have anything on the inside.

Or whether you grow up in a religious setting, never having been born again, you still don't have anything on the inside, my friend. You don't. No matter how much you dress it all up, no matter how much you try to act it all up, you still don't have anything on the inside.

It's just not there. Now, your life, if you're one of those religious ones, your life has probably been quite a burden. Because trying to be religious and not have anything on the inside, that's a great burden.

And if you are like me, just a heathen, living in a wicked world like me, my burden, my burden was another burden. But both of us were burdened, weren't we? Because we didn't have anything on the inside. What an awesome thing to turn a child loose in the world with a soul, a mind, will and emotion, and a body with all its five senses and nothing on the inside.

Turn them loose in that wicked world out there. What will happen? We all know what will happen. We all know what did happen, don't we? From our own human failures, we know what did happen.

Until that glorious day when whence we met the Lord Jesus, and all of a sudden everything changed. Hallelujah. So, we look at the failure of our own human history, and then we remember God will make a way.

He must, out of love, make a way. And He did. Nearly 2,000 years ago, God made a way.

The Bible says in John 3.16 that God so loved the world, that's the peoples of the world, that He gave His only begotten Son. He gave His only begotten Son, the only Son He had, dearest thing to His heart. He gave His only begotten Son.

Why? That whosoever believeth on Him, on His sacrifice, on that broken flesh and that shed blood we sang about this morning, and whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Right in here, brothers and sisters. Everlasting life.

And it starts right in here. That whosoever believeth on Him, that broken body, that shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ should not perish, but have everlasting life. Romans 5.8 says, but God, God, He commended, He expressed His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners without God, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Christ died for us. And oh, for most of us that are in this room this morning, this causes our hearts to redound with thanksgiving and glory to God as we realize what God has done inside of us, unworthy sinners. That's all we were.

But God, in His great love wherewith He loved us, sent His Son while we were yet sinners, rebels and going our own way. And He sought us and He bought us and He redeemed us to God by His blood. Praise God.

That's something to get excited about, isn't it? The Bible says that His name shall be called Jesus and He shall save His people from their sins. Oh, He's going to save them from their sins. And we're going to see how He does it in a minute.

This is the gospel, brothers and sisters, this is the good news. There is a way that we can be restored back to the place that it was before. There is now a way.

There's hope for man through the Lord Jesus Christ. Ezekiel, the prophet, speaking prophetically of this restoration of man through the gospel of Jesus Christ. He says these words, he says, of God.

God says, I will give you a new heart. God says, I will put a new spirit in you. I will then put my spirit in you.

That's what Ezekiel says. Oh, beautiful description of salvation today, that God is promising us that He will give us a new heart. And by the way, that's what salvation is all about.

Amen? It's not a ticket to heaven, my friend. It's a new heart. It's a new heart.

Not a ticket to heaven. A new heart. Oh, people who come because they're afraid of going to hell.

What a low motivation to come to the very God who made us. Oh, I don't want to go to hell. And I'd like to go to this nice place called heaven.

No, no, my friend. I want a new heart. I want a new heart.

I'm coming to God because I want a new heart. Oh, what a beautiful motivation that is. How does this whole process take place in a life? Well, it begins, first of all, with a self-revelation.

We have to see what a mess our life is. And for many of us in this room, we did have to see that, didn't we? And this is the bottom line. We have to come to grips with the reality that without God and the inside of us inside of our being, just being left with a body and five senses and a soul, we messed up.

We messed up. We have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And that revelation must dawn upon man's heart.

Then comes repentance. Then comes repentance. Repentance.

Yes. A deep cry from within that says, I want out. I want help.

I need help. No longer my way, but God's way. That's repentance.

Do you see how foolish it is to come and say, oh, God, I want to go to heaven. Save me. Oh, God, I'm afraid of hell.

Would you save me? Do you see how weak that is? When in fact, the reason why the Lord Jesus died on the cross was to give us a new heart so that He could totally change our lives. That's why He came and died on the cross. Yes, we're going to go to heaven when the whole thing is over.

But that's not why Jesus died. He died to give us a new heart, to bring us back to God through His blood. That's what He died for.

And oh, how beautiful when the heart begins to see. I am so mixed up and messed up and I've made so many mistakes and my life is so full of sin and I'm so weary of this whole thing. And to come to that place and say, I want help.

Oh, there's hope for you, my friend. There's hope for you. Then out of that utter condition, man is ready to yield to God.

He's ready to yield to God. Faith, that is, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and putting your faith in His precious blood is what can change your whole life, your whole life. Your sins can be forgiven and washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Your heart can be regenerated by the precious working of the finished work of Christ. It is finished, my friend. Jesus did the whole thing for you because it is finished.

He'll give you a new heart, but not until we come to that place where we say, I want help and I'm sick of going my own way. See, but when when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that's dead part of man, which is the center of man, is regenerated by the Spirit of the living God. The Bible says so, regenerated.

And that word regenerated, it means regeneration. That's nice. I'm glad it means regeneration.

Bring you back to the garden. That's what it means. Put you back in the condition that you should be in.

Regeneration. When that beautiful operation of God takes place in the heart of man, God puts a new spirit in us. That spirit that was in us, which was dead in trespasses and sins, is crucified with Christ through faith in His blood on the cross.

And a new spirit is resurrected inside of us, one by which can be clean and pure. And God can come and dwell in it again. God can come and dwell in it again.

And that is the new heart. Oh, you say that's wonderful. And it is just like second Corinthians 5:17 says, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature, a new creature, a new creation.

Regeneration, brothers and sisters, a new creation. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. All things are passed away.

Behold, all things are become new. Praise the Lord. What a beautiful expression of God's pursuit of man, isn't it? But wait a minute.

Is God done? Is God done now? He has come inside of man again. Is God done? No. Is that all there is? I have my ticket to heaven.

Is that it? No. God is still pursuing man. He's still pursuing man.

And now the message shifts a bit from just a few to all that are sitting in this room. And I'm so glad that God is that way and that the gospel is that way. And every one of us must come continually and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and come to grips with the reality of what God is after in all of us, in all of us.

God is not done. He is still pursuing man. This soul and body appear.

Now remember now, something new is here in the center of man, something new, something beautiful, a new life, a new heart. And oh, my mind goes flashing back to those days 27 years ago when something new was inside of Denny Keniston. Oh, you wouldn't have noticed if you looked at the outside for a while, still looked like the same old guy, still smoked cigarettes for a while, still had long hair, still didn't know how to dress right.

A lot of things wrong with him. But something new had happened inside of that man 27 years ago. But was God done? Was God done back there 27 years ago? Oh, I'm glad he wasn't done.

Praise God. It's been an adventure for 27 years as God has pursued this man. Well, what must be now? Well, gods, this soul and this body must be won and mastered and ruled by God.

Amen? Amen. Okay. Praise God for what has happened in here.

But this soul and this body, it must be won. It must be mastered. It must be ruled by the God who changed him on the inside through the gift of his Son.

That must be mastered and ruled. Amen? By God who has now come to dwell in you. God wants your entire being to be given up to him.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me, God says. God wants our entire being to be given up to him. And you know, when you think about it, surely he has every right to expect all of that, doesn't he? But thou shalt have no other gods before me.

God wants your life to be filled with personal fellowship with him. That is the reason why he pursued you through his Son. Because he wants your life to be filled with personal fellowship with him.

God wants your whole person to be yielded in service to him. Now, that takes in all this up here, doesn't it? If we're just going to be changed by God on the inside, oh, that's wonderful, my sins are forgiven, and everything is beautiful here. But no, God, he is looking for a vessel that he can use.

And if God is going to have a vessel that he can use, he's going to have to get control over this body and this soul. That is, our mind, our will, and our emotions. God must get control over all of that.

God is still pursuing man. And this is the whole purpose of redemption, that God will be glorified, the whole purpose. Verses begin to come to our mind, like Romans chapter 6 and verse 13, where it says, Paul says, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and yield your members, the parts of your body, unto God as instruments of righteousness.

Hear the verse, yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members, your body, as instruments of righteousness unto God. Verses like this come to our mind. Verses like Philippians chapter 2, 12 and 13, where Paul says to the Philippian church, as you have always obeyed, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Why, Paul? For it is God which worketh in you. God is now inside of you. Paul says to the Philippians, awesome thought, isn't it? Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, because God is now inside of you.

Both the will and to do of His good pleasure, His good pleasure, His pleasure, God, sovereign God, ruler over all things, creator of all, that God has come to dwell inside of you, as you have always obeyed, Paul

says. Work out your own salvation through body and soul, for there is a God living inside of you, who is willing and doing of His good pleasure. Let Him have His way.

Let Him have His way. He's inside of you. God's pursuit of man, brothers and sisters.

I want to turn, just turn the message a bit here and get a little more practical. Let's look at how God does this, because this God, this almighty, awesome God, beside whom there is no other God, this God, this God has come to live inside of us. And He wants to control all these other areas of our being by His Spirit.

That is His pursuit. That is His pursuit. Oh, somehow if we could understand that, if we could understand what God is doing.

So many of those dark questions that come to our lives from time to time, and we don't understand what's happening. I'll tell you what's happening. There's a God living inside of you that wants all of you.

He wants all of you. And He has every right for every part of us, doesn't He? Every right. First of all, let's look at man's spirit.

That is the center of man. It is the center of man's being. Man's spirit, according to the New Testament, must be filled and controlled and strengthened continually by God's Spirit.

That's the will of God. And we have a part in this, each and every one of us. I don't know if you understand it or not, but the very reason why the atmosphere of this meeting was the way that it was this morning, and the very reason why you will go home this afternoon, so just bubbling over with joy in your heart, is because God has been strengthening you with might by His Spirit in the center of your being.

And that's why when we came here today and started the first song, everybody just up to the Lord in worship and praise. It's because we had a whole day of God strengthening us with might by His Spirit in the center of our being. It affects the whole of your life.

And we all know it, don't we? It affects the whole of our life. Well, we have a part in this. We all know as we draw aside in the early morning hours and seek the face of God in fellowship and prayer, we are strengthened on the inside, aren't we? We all know that as we open up our Bibles and in earnestness we read the Word of God, it strengthens us on the inner man.

We all know that when we come at times like this to the assembling of the saints and we sing together and we fellowship and we hear the Word of God preached, all of those things strengthen us in the inner man. And that's part of our responsibility. And brothers and sisters, that's the key to the whole thing.

Oh God, open our eyes to the key to the whole thing. This whole Christian life, it all starts in the center. Every bit of it starts in the center.

But it doesn't end there. That center must come forth and captivate and subdue all the rest of man. And we want to talk about that also.

But I just wanted to tell you, if you're going to work with God and allow Him to subdue all things under Him, you must be strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man. You must be. That's very important.

I thought about you, dear young people who are going to Africa. You will understand this sermon very well by the time you get back. You will understand it very well.

Experientially, you will know in deeper ways what I'm talking about. So man's spirit must be filled and controlled and strengthened by God's Spirit. Ephesians 3 and Ephesians 5. Through all these, we receive God's strength.

Sometimes we feel God's strength. Sometimes we don't even feel it. But it doesn't matter whether you feel it, you still receive it.

You do. God is not a feeling. He's deeper than that.

What about the mind? Remember the soul now. The mind, the will and the emotions. What about the mind? Well, our mind has been left to itself for a long time without anything on the inside, hasn't it? Filled with all kinds of thoughts of the past.

Who knows what kind of garbage is in our minds because of the life we lived, because there was nothing on the inside. So we have this mind and our mind is filled with all kinds of ideas and reasonings. And God speaks to us specifically about our mind in this whole matter of the Christian life.

And he says, be transformed by the renewing of your mind, God says. We can be transformed by the renewing of our mind. Aren't you glad you can renew your mind, brothers and sisters? Aren't you glad you can take this book and so fill your mind with it that it pushes all those other thoughts way, way back in the back.

Amen. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, Paul says. Second Corinthians chapter 10 encourages us that we should be bringing every thought, every thought into captivity and into the obedience of Christ.

Every thought. You notice what God is after there? He's after our mind. God says, your mind is now mine.

Transform it and bring every thought under the obedience of Christ. Bring every thought into captivity. Don't let them just run around in there anymore.

That's what God says about our mind. What about the will? Well, the will has been left to itself for a long, long time because nothing was on the inside. And the will, maybe a lot of self-will even yet in us, even today, there may be a lot of self-will in us because the will has been left to itself for so long.

What does God say? God says words like this. Present. Yield.

Take my yoke. Obey. All these verses and many more as God speaks to them.

God speaks to the will of man where we make our choices. God says, my son, my daughter, I want your will. I want all of your will.

I want you to learn to yield to me. Take that will that is in you and let it work for me. Will to do God's will instead of your own selfish will, God says to us even today.

And it's very interesting, and I know that we all know this, but God will through people and circumstances go after man's will. He will. He'll go against the grain of our lives.

He'll bring people across our paths. He'll put circumstances into us until we finally come to that place where our hearts just say, I delight to do thy will, my God. And I know that we will all say that as we today.

But God is looking for more than a profession. He is looking for the possession of those very words. We're all through the days and all the days of our life.

The will is just continually being yielded up to God. He's after that. That's the will.

What about the emotions? Oh, the emotions were left to themselves also. And they're often out of control. Many times, emotions dominate and God never planned for emotions to dominate in a Christian's life, there to be under the subjection of the spirit of God in every one of our lives.

God wants to bring our emotions under the spirit's control to the place where we can be rejoicing, always rejoicing, always. Ah, those are emotions that have been brought under control to rejoice in the midst of all kinds of circumstances is to have emotions that are brought under God's control. God also says, give thanks in everything.

Oh, a thankful heart. There's our emotions again. And God says, I want to bring you to the place where you can just give thanks with gratitude for everything.

That's wonderful. God wants to bring our emotions to a place where we can obey his command, where he says that we should weep when others weep and we should rejoice when others rejoice. Oh, how beautiful, how out of control our emotions have been.

I'm amazed continually as I see not among God's people, but more among the peoples of the world. They laugh, they're happy at times when they should be weeping, but their emotions are totally out of control. God wants to bring those emotions in line.

God says, I will bring stability to your emotions. You see, God wants to have dominion over all these areas of your soul, the mind, the will and the emotion. If the soul is dominant in a Christian's life, things will not go well.

Can you see how that will work? If my soul is dominant, if I have my own mind, if I fill my mind with all kinds of carnal things, if my will is dominant and I want to do what I want to do, can you see how much frustration that brings into the Christian life and emotions on top of it all? If these things are dominant, the Christian life will not go well because we are we are going contrary to what God is pursuing with all of his heart. And as fast as we will let him, he's pursuing it. The soul many times can dominate in any or all of these areas.

There are those whose souls are dominant by the mind. And there we have the intellectual, whose everything's up here, everything just thinking, you know, it's hard to convince them of the Lord Jesus because they can't figure it out in their mind. And then there are those who are dominant in their will.

And I when I think of that, I think of all all the Olympic stars, all that's all in the news again, all the Olympic stars, you know what they are? They are will dominant with determination and their will without God in the center of it all. They will put themselves through such rigors just to get this little piece of gold. And then there are those who are dominant in their emotions and the singers and the movie stars would fall into those categories and people that are high, strong and extremely emotional.

God wants to bring all those things under the subjection of his spirit. And that's what he's after in our lives. What about the body? We know the answer.

We already know the answer. God wants to bring this body under subjection. A body that is dominant will have much trouble in the Christian life.

God never planned for this body to dominate. It is simply a house for the soul and the spirit to live in. Amen.

That's all it is. And as soon as the body dies, the soul and the spirit go back to God. It's just a house to live in.

God never planned for the house to dominate. It's just a place to live. That's all.

But because it has five senses and it has been left to itself for a long, long time, it still wants to dominate, doesn't it? Well, God has some things to say about that. God wants us to have a spirit-controlled body. And I know that we all know that and we all agree in this room, at least in the principle of that.

A spirit-controlled body. Eyes that have yielded to God and don't look where they're not supposed to look. Amen.

A spirit-controlled body. Ears that have yielded to God and are careful about what they hear. Appetites that have been crucified and no longer rule us as they did before salvation, but they've been brought into subjection, have our appetites been brought into subjection? Brothers and sisters, are we spirit-filled believers and live in gluttony? Those two don't go together.

Are we spirit-filled believers and lust dominates? Those don't go together. 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 4, listen to these words. Paul says that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor.

That vessel, that's talking about our body. That's all it is, just a vessel. That every one of us would know how to possess, possess, possess, possess this body from the inside to the soul over the body.

That's what it means, that we may know how to possess our body in sanctification and in honor. Paul said, I bring my body under subjection, lest I become a castaway. Paul knew, he knew, God is pursuing man.

He wants to possess all of you. He wants his fellowship and rulership to dominate your life. Brothers and sisters, this is the abundant life that Jesus came to give us.

I've been talking about it. It's an abundant life. It is a life that begins right in here, with God coming and taking possession of our inner man.

But it's not a life that stops there. It's a life that moves from here out to here, controlling mind, will, and emotion. And it moves from here through here, down to here, controlling the body.

And a life that has found itself in such a place as that is a life that prospers. It's a life that is blessed. It is a life that is filled with joy.

It is a life which is a light to a world around them. It's a beautiful life, this abundant life God is pursuing man for. A beautiful life it is.

God is pursuing man. And God will work in manifold ways. And God will work patiently for years to bring all of this that I've been talking about this morning to pass in our lives.

And it doesn't matter again who you are in this room, whether you've been born again by the Spirit of God or whether you sit here today and you don't even understand what I'm talking about. Still, it is true. God will persistently pursue and pursue and pursue until, first of all, he can take possession right here through the precious sacrifice of his Son and then from that possession move to here and to here and take control of you and make you the being that he planned for you to be.

He will pursue you relentlessly but patiently for years until that all takes place in your life. Paul said, oh, Paul said so many things. Paul said that Christ would be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death, Paul said.

And Paul said his goal was that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in my mortal flesh. That was Paul's goal. And it's God's goal also.

In closing, reading from First Thessalonians, First Thessalonians, verse 23 and 24. We have two verses which are the capstone, the old message. These two verses, Paul speaking out of a loving heart to the disciples at Thessalonica.

He finishes his epistle with these words in verse 23. And the very God of peace, and I believe what he was saying was, my prayer for you, may the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, completely. And I pray, God, your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless under the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then he finishes with this. Faithful is he that calleth you who will also do it. Even if it takes him 20 years, he will do it.

Oh, brothers and sisters this morning, let us open our hearts to this God who has possessed our inner man and let him take possession of mind, will, emotions and body and bring this being of ours into such a place that it can shine and glorify the Father who made it. The Father who made it. Our Father in heaven, we thank you this morning that you're here and we all know it, Lord.

You are here. We love you today, Lord. How beautiful is your plan, Lord.

How beautiful your ways. How my heart thrills this morning as I look back over the years and how my heart aches this morning as I look back over the years. I see all you've done, Lord, in my life and I praise you.

But I see how much more you wanted to do and I grieve, dear Father. Oh, Lord, this morning we all come before you. Oh, that we can all pray this prayer, dear Father.

Come take possession of all of me. Oh, my dear Father, do whatever you need to do to bring me to such a place that all my being is possessed by you. Lord, this is my prayer before you this morning.

How we rejoice that you've come and taken your place in my heart. Oh, God, I pray. Take everything, Lord.

Take everything. And we pray that, Lord, for everyone in this room. God, pray for these dear young people that are going off to Africa.

Lord, I know where their success will be. It will be from the center to all the outside things. Bless them there, Lord, and all of us as we go through all the bumps and troubles and trials of life.

May we always remember that God is pursuing man with all he has. I pray in Jesus Christ's name for all this. Amen.

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