

Gospel Warnings

by Donny Coulter

This sermon emphasizes the importance of heeding warnings from Scripture to avoid a life of sin leading to separation from God. It discusses the crisis of faith, the need for genuine transformation, and the consequences of living a life contrary to God's will. The message highlights the discipline of God as a loving correction to steer believers back on the path of righteousness, using the story of the prodigal son to illustrate the consequences of straying from God's ways and the grace of repentance and restoration available to all.

Scripture: 1 John 1:5, 1 John 2:3, 1 John 2:15, Hebrews 12:5, Luke 15:11

Topics: "Heeding Warnings", "Grace and Restoration"

Description

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Transcript

Thank you for once again indulging my desire to follow the leading of the Spirit on occasion. Children, you are dismissed for Sunday school. I don't know if you know why I started using this, the one reason why, main reason why I started using a pad up here is because I can't see my Bible anymore without my glasses.

And this week I went to the eye doctor and got some contacts that allowed me to do that. Unfortunately, they weren't very comfortable and I went to put them in this morning and I started walking around going, man, something's really weird. What's wrong? And I realized that I had lost one of them trying to put them in and must have washed it down the sink.

So here I am today with my glasses. But that's one of the reasons why I use this because it has big enough writing in contrast that I can read. Today we're going to get as far as we can get in our sermon.

I'm not going to torture you and keep you forever because if I followed the notes we would be here for a couple hours probably. But I want to do something today. Last week we looked at this illustration and I had several conversations with many of you concerning this in terms of maybe even your own personal life or

even the lives of those around you, your kids.

And so with this I wanted to give, come back today, and give some warnings. I know we don't like the word warning when it comes to Scripture, but I believe that we must, when it is necessary, we must give the warnings of Scripture to those who will listen so that they might be able to turn and obey. And so this picture that we looked at the last time, it presents an opportunity to give some warnings.

Now if you remember we talked about the old life, that is the life of sin. The old life is a life that leads to an ultimate destination of separation from God forever in a place that the Scripture calls hell or the lake of fire. I know it makes us uneasy in a new world, in a new way of thinking, and a new thought that we don't talk about those kind of things, but it's truth, it's Scripture, and it must be told.

An old life, a life of sin separated from God ultimately ends in a place of punishment separation from God forever. But we have this crisis of faith in the old life. God calls our name.

We respond, this crisis of belief, this faith that we have, and we talked, you remember we talked about all of the things that take place at the very moment of salvation. All of the things, and it's so rich and too much to get into today. You remember, I hope that all of you did exactly what I challenged you to do, and that was to take all of those Scriptures that I put in your bulletin last week, take them home and study them.

If you didn't, you failed to do your homework, you failed. You got detention. No, here's what I would encourage you to do.

If you took that bulletin home, do it this week. Remember all the things that God has gifted you with at your salvation. The grace of God has gifted you with so much.

Study it, learn it, know it, and understand it. So that when the enemy does come, when those times of tripping do come, then we have the truth of God to fall back on. We have this place of faith, and then ultimately our place of faith will end in the permanent glorification.

That is, we will become like He is. But then we talked about last week how there is that yellow line in between the place of faith and glorification, and what happens in there. That's my life right now, and that the intention of God is to prepare me for eternity.

The intention of God is for me to be matured. The purpose of God is for me to be conformed to the image of His Son. So that's what we talked about last week.

In a nutshell, that's the picture. The problem came when we talked about, well, that's lovely, but how many of us actually have a life that looks like that solid yellow line smoothly moving towards glorification? And I don't believe that that is any of us. Because as Thayne, one of our elders, has said, we all struggle.

We all have difficulties. The difference is how you respond to the struggle. So we talked about how in my life, I've got to find, give me a second.

In my life, oftentimes looks like this, right? So my experience is that oftentimes I fall back under the power of sin. Oh, it's not coming up? Is it delayed? It's all right. You know what I'm talking about.

Squiggly yellow line from last week. Still not coming. Squiggly yellow line from last week.

So we go from the yellow line to the white line, right? The problem is, is that, and I was asked this by multiple people, what about my children who I know, that know Jesus, but who do not reflect the yellow line at all? And my immediate response is, is there are three warnings that are involved with that. The first one, the first warning is this, that if you find your life not the squiggly yellow line, but if you find you, I was led to Jesus. I made a commitment of faith.

And yet, the life that you live still reflects the white line in the picture. There is no change. There is no adjustment.

Then here's the warning to you or to those who you love. Here's the warning. The warning is, is that you most likely were never a believer in the first place.

Yes, there may have been a profession. Yes, there may have even been a baptism. And yes, there may even be attendance in church.

But if there is no change of the heart and the life, then there is a disconnect somewhere between the holy work and calling of God and your life. And therefore, I believe that there is this false profession of faith, that we are still an unbeliever. Let me give you scriptural references that will help you to understand why I can make such a charge.

First John chapter one, verse five and six. This is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and we walk in darkness, i.e. the white line, we lie and do not practice the truth.

First John chapter two, verse three through six. Now by this we know him, we know that we know him. Here's how we know if we know him is what he's saying.

If we keep his commandments. He who says, I know him and does not keep his commandments is a liar. That's pretty plain and simple, isn't it? That's a pretty stern warning.

That if I say I've had a crisis of faith and yet my life reflects the white line, the old life all the time, then he says he is a liar and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in him.

He who says he abides in him ought himself also to walk just as he is walked. Thus, remember the picture? Walking worthy. Walking.

Now listen, I know that there is a temptation for you to think that we're talking about a salvation of works. We're not talking about a salvation of works. We're talking about a salvation that reflects the work of God in your life.

So if God came to save us from sin and we say that we have faith and there is no life change at all, there is no heart change at all, there is no pursuit change at all, that all we have, everything still reflects the old life, then how in the world can we say that we have faith? That is not a works-based salvation. That is why Paul says that you are to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. You have a salvation, now let it work out in your life.

So there's the first warning. If we see that our life reflects the white line, nothing but the white line, then I would say, you need to check your soul. Secondly, look at 1 John chapter 2, verse 15, 16.

Do not love the world, the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world is passing away and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides forever. You see the reflection of the yellow line in that statement and the white line? Now, here's the second warning. If you are a believer, let me go back.

If you are a believer and you know you're a believer because your life has changed, but you have found yourself struggling with a battle over sin to the point that, I don't know, is this going to show up? Still not there, huh? That's okay. If you find your life struggling to reflect the maturity, the climb to maturity, to growing in the image of Christ, and remember we said last week that our desire ought to be that when we come to a place of permanent glorification, whether by death or rapture, that we would like for there to be as little change from this life to the next. How many of you want that to happen in your life? Men, I want that to happen in my life.

And that means that the Holy Spirit has got to be at work, and he is, in my life, and I've got to be responding and being obedient to the Holy Spirit. There are times in our lives when we give in to the selfish, lustful desires that we talked about here in 1 John, and we find ourselves away from God. When you do that, Thayne made reference to it today, I believe that there is a Father who disciplines his children, that if you are struggling with sin and are not moving, remember we talked about that illustration a few weeks ago about how our intentions, and if my intentions are not towards God, but my intentions are towards sin, then I lose the opportunity to access the power to godliness and life, and until I turn away from that, so think about your life in that state.

The Father does not want you there. The Father wants you to grow. The Father wants you to mature.

This is what this picture of the yellow line moving to your glorification, becoming more and more like Christ, is the intention and the purpose of the Father in your life. Do you believe that? Well, if it is, then you have to know that you have a Father that will discipline. And when your children, well back in the old days, we don't do this much anymore, but back in the old days, when I did something wrong and my mama said, you wait until your daddy gets home, that was bad news.

But I got to tell you that when my dad came home, he never took me into the bedroom. Boy, those were horrible, oh those were a horrible few seconds of your life. Son, go to the room.

Walking into the room, the door shuts. Dad walks over and he reaches down and pulls the drawer out and it was a belt that was only for spanking. It was just used for spanking.

My dad never wore it. It was a spanking belt and he would take that belt out and it was nice. I know y'all thinking, child abuse already, but he would take that belt out and he would say, he would talk about what I just did, what I'd done to mom or hadn't done, and then he would spank me.

And I got to tell you, when dad spanked, he didn't take it easy. He knew that the intention of discipline was pain because pain brought the thought of, I don't want this again. And he brought pain.

But never once did my father ever spank me out of anger. Not one time did he ever spank me out of anger. He spanked me because he loved me.

And he spanked me because he wanted me to be the best man that I could be. He wanted me to grow up and be this man that loved Jesus and loved doing the right thing. And when he'd get finished spanking, and I know you've heard stories about this, but this was true in my life.

My dad would sit down right after he got done wearing me out and he would sit down and I couldn't sit down. And he would say, son, I know this hurts, but I love you and I'm doing this for you. It hurts me to do this, but I'm doing this for you and I want you to know I love you.

Now go to your room. And there were many times I'd go to my room, slamming the door and angry and not being able to sit down on the bed. But you know what? I wouldn't trade.

I'm telling you folks, standing here, I profess to you that I would not trade one of those spankings today. Not one, because it made me the man that it's made me. My dad invested me in me in those formative years of my life when it was effective.

He invested in me. And I want you to know that if you find yourself struggling, that you have a father who desires to invest in you and he will spank you. Don't believe me? Look at Hebrews.

Hebrews chapter 12. For consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted unto bloodshed, striving against sin.

You already see the intention of the father in our discipline is to assist us and help us in our strive against sin. You have, in verse five, and you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons, as to what? As to the children of God. He's saying here that you are his children, right? You are his children.

And he says, my sons do not despise the chastening or the discipline of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by him. Are you hearing those? Did you see those two words? Do not despise the discipline of the Lord and do not be discouraged by the discipline of the Lord. Don't despise it.

Don't think it's a bad thing. And don't be discouraged by it. Don't be down and out because you are being chastened.

Look what he says. Verse six, for whom the Lord loves, he chastens. And he scourges every son in whom he receives.

If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons. For what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you, are you ready? Here's the warning. But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

That takes us back to what I just, the first warning that I gave you. If you can live a life of sin on the white line and get away with it for all of your life, for the rest of your life, then there is a disconnect between you and the father. You are an illegitimate child of God.

You are not a child of God at all. Verse nine, furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more really be in subjection to the father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but he to our prophet, that we may be partakers of what? His holiness.

Do you see the intention of the father then in discipline? Do you see it? It's exactly what we've been talking about for months, is this desire to be holy. Be holy for I am holy. Walk worthy of the gospel.

Walk worthy of the Lord. Walk worthy of your calling. Walk worthy.

There's our picture. The same weight as. Walk worthy.

Now, that's the desire of the father is that we would do that and he's chastening his sons and daughters for the purpose that we might move towards and be partakers of holiness, right? Now, no chastening seems to be joyful for the present. How many of you like the Spankings? I don't like them at all. I didn't like them when I was a kid and I don't like them right now from God.

But he says, they're not joyful for the present, but they are painful. Nevertheless, afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Do you see the love of the father in disciplining you? So the warning then is this discipline of the father, that his desire is to discipline his children so that they can be partakers of holiness and pursuers of righteousness.

So if you are not doing that and you are a child of the king, then you can expect a Spankin. And it will not be pleasant. I remember when I was called by God and knew that God was calling me.

I knew that God had called me to be a preacher at 17 and I had a pastor in my life who invested in me and loved me and mentored me and I got to preach. But then there's a difference in preaching on occasion and a calling of God in the ministry. And I knew, we knew, Dana and I knew that God had called us into ministry.

But I resisted. I didn't want to do what God wanted me to do. I was a computer technician.

I had a name in the city of Nashville among the studios, the country music studios, as one of their top technicians to come in and repair their computer systems. And I was enjoying that. I loved it.

And it was good money. We had a log house. I'd always dreamed of having my own log house.

And we had a log house. And I knew that if I agreed with God that I was going to give in to the calling, that I was probably going to lose all that. And I didn't like it.

And I resisted and resisted. And I could take you back step by step in the chastening of God. I've always said that God didn't use a belt that day.

He took me out behind the tool shed and used a two by four. And we listened. And here we are today, so many years later.

And I love ministry. You couldn't. I still love dabbling with computers, but you couldn't make me go back.

I tried some cowboying and it couldn't take me away from ministry. I love it. And I'm so glad that God chastened us in that time of our lives.

God will chasten you as his child. So if you are not in obedience to God, the warning is, you will and may be chastened by God. You will be chastened by God.

In that chastening, be careful that you do not become the prodigal. Remember the story of the prodigal son. Here's the third warning.

Prodigal son. Here's the main lesson I want to give you out of the prodigal son. Pig slop is not good.

Okay? Pig slop ain't good. You know the story. Man had two sons.

The younger son came to the dad and said, dad, I just, I just got to go find myself. I just, I just got to go do my own thing, daddy. And, and, and I just, I want to go have some fun.

And daddy to do that, I need some money. And so he says, okay, dad gave him the money. And the son went off into a far country.

Look what it says in verse 13 of Luke 15, verse 13. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, he journeyed to a far country and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. I believe some of the versions say with riotous living.

He wasted his life savings, everything on riotous living. Now, folks, I have to say that I, I see in this son, somebody who has fallen so far away from God that have moved them, removed themselves from, from the intention of God and their lives to, to mature them, to pulling back. Man, I looked at that clock.

I'm sorry. That clock is off. I thought I had a lot of time.

I don't even know what time it is. Good, huh? All right. I just realized it's the same time when I started.

Hope it feels like that to you. Sorry, squirrel. It just hit me.

The prodigal, get my mind back on track. He had, he had gone away from, from the father and gone to do whatever he wanted to do. Here's where I see this.

And we sang a song. This one song pointed to this. Oftentimes we find in our lives addictions, don't we? And I believe that I, I believe with all of my heart, this guy found himself in the midst of addictions of the day, whether it was women or drugs or whatever it was.

I don't know what it was, but he sure wasted his entire living in a very short time on his addictions. But there are two things about the story. There is the fault of the son.

He made choices that brought him down to that place, but there's also something else going on at the same time. Look at the story. And, but when he had spent all, there arose a famine in the land.

Do you see two different things happening? Bad choices in the hand of God, the famine comes, and now he has nothing and he's starving to death. And so what does he do? He went and he joined himself to a citizen of the country and he sent him into the fields to feed the swine. And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate and no one gave him anything.

Now, I, I was, I, I lived in a, in a place in, in the country when we were kids and our neighbors had pigs. They had hogs. They had three or four hogs.

They were big. I'm not talking about little bitty pig. I'm talking about, they were big hogs.

And, and they had a slop bucket. You guys know what a slop bucket is? Some of the old folks know what a slop bucket is. A slop bucket is just a, it's where you put all your scraps, your potato peels and, and coffee grinds and, and everything that you don't use is all dumped in the bucket, a little water put in, let it mellow a little bit and you take it out there and feed it to the pigs and they get up there.

They just love it. But we ain't made for slop, are we? And here's the prodigal son doing what he wanted to do, his decision to do what he wants to do and, and he goes out and comes to the end of himself and, and the famine comes at the same time and all of this, all of these things come all together and explode and now he's hungry enough that he's wallowing and desiring to eat pig slop. I don't know where you're at as a believer, but in your struggle with sin, if addictions have moved into your life, whether it be pornography, women, drugs, alcohol, power, money, I don't care what the addiction is, if the addiction has moved into your life, I want you to know that pig slop is pig slop.

Whether you eat it from a Dixie spoon or a golden spoon, it's still pig slop. And it's, you are not made for pig slop. When he had to eat pig slop, he came to himself.

You remember the story? He came to himself. Verse 17, but when he came to himself, he said, how many of my father's hired servants have bread enough to spare and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father and I will say to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

Make me like one of your servants. Oh, pig slop has a tendency to bring you to a place of humility. He was and came to his father.

Oh, I love that you love this story. I could tell the story all day long, but he wouldn't. He was a still a great way off.

Here's the picture I get. His father's been sitting on the front porch. This is a southern picture.

His father's been sitting on the front porch in the rocking chair, rocking back and forth every day, looking for his son to come back. You see the picture and his father, he'd looking over the horizon every day to see if his son's coming rocking in his chair daily, looking and hoping this could be the day. And then that one day happens over the horizon.

He sees a head coming over and he can see it from a distance. And I had one guy that told a story. One time he said he jumped up from that porch and he burned rubber on the way to his son.

Says that when he saw him, he was still a great way off. His father saw him and had compassion. Think the story.

The story isn't. The father runs to the son and says, you know what? You wasted everything that I gave you. I can't believe you did that.

I don't know what I don't even know what to say to you. I don't know what to think about you, son. Oh my goodness, you stink.

Oh, you need to get home and take a shower. Clean up, son. You know what the Bible says he did? Bible says that he had compassion on him and he ran and he fell on his neck.

I could hear the son, oh daddy, daddy, don't, don't touch me. Don't touch me. I stink.

I'm, I'm nasty. And daddy's just hugging him and kissing him on the neck and, and he's so glad that he's home. Look what he did for him.

Verse 21, the father and the son said to the father, said to him, father, I've sinned against heaven and in your sight, and I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. I smell like pig slop, daddy. But the father said to his servants, bring out the best robe, get the purple robe, bring out the best robe and put it on him.

The robe of righteousness that covers all of the slop. He says, and put it on him and, and put a ring on his hand. You put a ring that's a sign of his membership in my family.

He's my son. He says, and you put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet and you bring the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and be merry. We're going to celebrate coming home for this.

My son was dead as in a lie and is alive again. He was lost in his found and they began to be merry. The warning is this.

If you find yourself away from the yellow line and living on the white line as a child of God, the discipline of the father comes, maybe it comes in the form of a two by four or famine, but the discipline of the father will come and it is not fun when he disciplines and you don't have to be disciplined. You don't have to roll in pig slop. You can turn and obey, but if you don't, you will find yourself rolling in pig slop.

For those of us who have kids that are in this place, I know this is going to be difficult to receive. Sometimes the best prayer you can pray for your children is that they get a little taste of pig slop. If you truly believe that they are followers of Jesus.

That they have committed their life to Christ and their name has been called. And they truly are a believer, but they are not living in that way. But sometimes the worst and the best prayer that we can pray as parents is God give them a taste of pig slop.

I don't know where you are today. I hope that you are. Walking the line of maturity.

That you're struggling with your failures, but you're obedient when the Holy Spirit brings conviction. Obedience to the point that you do not have to be chastened, that as soon as you move away from the godly intentions, from holiness and worthiness, and giving in to being enticed by your own sinful desires, the desires of the flesh, that that tinge of conviction moves you to God. But if you find yourself not there, if you find yourself this morning rolling in pig slop.

So, let me compartmentalize this for a second. There are other parts of your life that are doing great. But there's this one part that doesn't reflect in any way Christ.

You find yourself smelling like pig slop there. It simply takes a place of humility. Remember, moving away, turning away, that's what repentance is.

And the rest of this message is going to be about repentance. But next week we will call, we'll finish it up with repentance. Because repentance is a turning away from the sin and turning to God.

And if we will do that consistently in our lives, then we can avoid the chastening and the discipline of the Father. But if we continue to intentionally move towards sin, the discipline comes, and eventually we find ourselves in pig slop when we do not listen. Have you listened? Do you smell like pig slop? Do you feel the burn of the belt of the Father? It simply takes a turning.

Turn away from that which has pulled you away and turn to God. And what a loving Father He is. To hug you, love you, and remind you that you were given at your place of salvation, you were given a robe of

righteousness of Jesus.

That your life, as stinky and smelly and pig sloppy as it is, is covered and hidden in Christ. Will you turn? Or will you continue to live that way? Let's pray. Father, I pray today, if there are any that hear this message today that have find themselves religious zealots, but are not living a life of Christ, or those who have come to this place today and have never entered into relationship with you, I pray, that you would set them free.

Set them free from the bondage and the power of sin and from themselves and let them see the power of God at work. In the cross, in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, I pray that they see the power of God. And the freedom that exists therein.

Set them free. God, I pray that you would put them on that line to their permanent glorification. That you would begin, even in the very first day of their faith, to shape them into, mold them into the image of Jesus.

I pray for those of us who are struggling with sin in our own lives, maybe it's we are completely rebellious to you. Not just in one area or two areas, but in a whole life. We have found ourselves cold to the move of the Spirit of God.

I pray, God, that you would do your holy work in them. Bring them to yourself. I pray that they would not fall into the trap of the devil, which is to bring condemnation.

And along with condemnation comes shame. Father, I pray that they would respond to the Spirit, the conviction of the Spirit. And in the conviction of the Spirit, Lord, may they find freedom, maturity.

God, I pray for those that may be struggling with addictions today. God, that you would take their life and turn it. Turn it towards yourself.

I pray that your Spirit would move and give them, may you help them to see light and power as they turn to you. Power to be free from that which has held them for so long. Father, we trust you to do these things.

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