

Are You a Believer?

by Gerald Nolt

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a true believer, who is fully persuaded that God is everywhere present, all-knowing, and sees everything, including our thoughts.

Scripture: Psalm 139:16-17, Psalm 139:23-24, Isaiah 66:2, Matthew 11:12, Ephesians 1:4, Hebrews 11:1

Topics: "Spiritual Discipline", "Faith Development"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not living loosely in these times. He refers to Proverbs chapter eight, where a young man lacking understanding is led astray by going to the house of a prostitute. The preacher warns against being void of understanding and wasting time on worldly pursuits, like a computer game that can consume hours of one's time. He encourages the congregation to press in and believe in all that God has for them, referencing the message of taking the kingdom of God by violence. The sermon concludes with a prayer for guidance and a story about witnessing a dangerous driving incident.

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. Thanks for sharing that little account of walking on the beam there, Tim.

That's walking circumspectly. It's walking with caution. I remember a few years ago going on a hike here in Pennsylvania and we were heading back and some people had informed us that there was a rattlesnake on the trail up ahead and they tried to give us a description of where it is.

I walk very circumspectly. I hate snakes. If I could tread air when I see one, I would because I just have a fear of them.

I don't know how else to say it, especially rattlesnakes, because I can't hear their rattles. And so I can easily walk right up to them and never even know that they're there. I was glad to have some sons along that could hear because I depended on them to be able to see this snake.

We got all the way out to the car and we never did see it, which I was very grateful for. But once again, the Lord has permitted us to gather together, to worship, to exhort one another, to encourage. And I trust that we will always look at this opportunity of coming together corporately like this as a gift from God and never ever take it for granted.

We do not know how long we will have this opportunity. So let's make the best of it and the most use out of it that we positively can while we have the freedom in this country to gather together like this. Last Sunday, Denny had said that his message was going to be not necessarily that he feels that it's pertinent, but that it's for maintenance.

And then I was amazed at all the testimonies afterward that was anything but maintenance. It had to do with people were touched and they felt convicted. And I just praise God that He can take any kind of a message, regardless of where we think we're going to go with it, and He can take that message and minister it to the hearts of different people in the congregation.

And it's with that confidence that I can stand up here this morning, because if I felt I had to do it all on my own, I would have never agreed to be up here. Handling the Word of God is serious business. And so, I just beg of you to pray with me and for me while I'm up here.

I think it would be very appropriate this morning to bow our heads in prayer and just commit this time of the service to the Lord before we continue. Holy Father, we willingly bow our heads and our hearts before You this evening, acknowledging that You are the Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and that there is none like unto You. You are our refuge, our rock, the high tower.

And so, Father, it's because of who You are that we can come together like this and know that You will meet with us. Father, sometimes we get drained during the week, and it's just great to be able to come together like this and to be encouraged once again because of testimonies from other people and messages that we hear. And Lord, sometimes it's just a real blessing to be in a place that we don't even have to guard our eyes, that we can be at peace.

And as we rub shoulders with the world through the week, that here we can come together and just enjoy one another's company. Father, I marvel at how You have entrusted Your Word into the hands of men to stand before a group of people and to share out of Your holy Word. I don't understand, but Father, it's the way You have ordained.

And Father, we want to be faithful in that. So, Father, only You know how plugged up my head really is. And Father, I just beg of You to give me some air as I speak here and, Father, that You would guide these trembling lips and bring them to a place of peace and rest.

So, Father, we just commit this service into Your care that the words that I share, that Your Spirit would take them and minister them to the hearts of the people because, Father, there's no way that I can. So, Father, it's with this confidence that we move forward. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, I greet each one of you in the precious name of Jesus this morning. I'm glad I don't have to greet you in my name or in any other brother's name here in church, but we can greet you in Jesus' name

this morning.

I'm very thankful that He is alive and well this morning. We don't have to wonder as to whether He is. Our prophet has not died and gone to his reward like so many other religions that has happened to.

Our prophet is alive and well today. The title of the message this morning is actually in a question form and it's, Do You Believe? Or you could title it, Are You a Believer? I use that word believe very loosely because I'll walk out and look to the west and I'll say, I believe it's going to rain today. That's not the believe that I'm referring to this morning.

What we believe greatly influences our decisions. It greatly influences the way we walk. It greatly influences the way we order our lives.

So, it's very important as to what we believe. Believing is being fully persuaded. So, if I believe that it's going to be raining, I will make necessary preparation that I'm not going to, whatever is out in the rain that's going to get wet and shouldn't get wet, I'm going to make the necessary preparation.

But when I look to the west and I see that it's getting dark to the west and I say I believe it's going to rain, it's not necessarily meaning I'm going to make preparation. And as a child, we used to stand up on the beams of the barn and jump down into the hay pile and the hay was up very close to the beams at the end of the haying season. But as the winter went on, that pile kept getting lower and lower and lower and the distance between the beam and the pile kept getting greater and it became more exciting as you jumped.

But you knew and you were fully persuaded that you were not going to get hurt when you jumped because of the softness below you. We have had the opportunity of being at the Royal Gorge in Colorado three different times and they have a bridge that spans the gorge that you can drive across and you can walk across it. And as I stand on the bridge, 1100 feet above the Arkansas River below, I was never ever tempted to jump because I was fully persuaded that I would jump to my death.

That's the kind of belief that I want to refer to this morning. In Acts 8, verses 26-40, we read the account of where Philip met with Eunuch and how Philip shared with him out of Isaiah where the Eunuch was reading and shared with him Christ. And what's interesting is when they came to water, the Eunuch said, I'd like to be baptized.

And Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, thou mayest. And the Eunuch said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And that's exactly what Philip was looking for.

He wanted him to be fully persuaded that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And I've often wondered what all Philip shared with him because, you know, I go to the New Testament today to share Jesus. He shared it out of Isaiah.

And he also shared with the Eunuch the importance of being baptized. And I'm not sure where he went in Isaiah for that, but he shared it with him and the Eunuch was fully persuaded that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and he wanted to be baptized. Now, my question to you this morning is, are you fully persuaded that this is the Word of God? Because if we are, we're going to spend a lot of time right here.

Because what we believe this to say is the way we're going to conduct our lives if we believe. I'd like to turn to Psalm 139. I have three or four main points this morning.

And I'm just going to show a little bit as to where we go sometimes in our decision process. And as I've been preparing to share with the young people down in Oklahoma in May, God's been taking me all kinds of places. And I kind of feel like I'm going through gymnastics.

You know, I'm kind of all over the place, wondering what God would have for me to share with them. Because I look at it as an awesome opportunity, an awesome responsibility, because you see a lot of young people making unwise decisions. And so here we look in Psalm 139.

I'm going to read verses 1 through 16. O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising.

Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.

Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high.

I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee.

But the night shineth as the day, and the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee. For Thou hast not possessed my reins. For Thou hast possessed my reins.

Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Thy works, and that not my soul knoweth right well.

My substance was not hid from Thee. When I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect. And in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, even as yet there was none of them.

Verse 17 How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! Now, if we look at this portion of Scripture, and we say that we believe that God is everywhere present, He's all-knowing. How many of you have ever done something that you thought you were hiding from somebody? If we truly believe that God sees in the dark and the light and all this, how many times have any of, I'm sure all of us have done things in the past that we believed nobody's seeing? And one of the main points I want to make this morning is our pastors, our parents, and our brothers and sisters in Christ, they don't determine our destiny. But the Lord, the God of Heaven, does.

And so we can't hide anything from Him. Absolutely nothing. He even knows the thoughts that we think.

And especially we as men, sometimes I feel that we believe that we can kind of keep our thoughts and somehow we're going to be able to hide those things from other people, and we can hide those things from God. But if we truly believe God's Word, we will never, ever do anything in secret thinking that nobody's going to know. Because the very individual that determines our destiny already has seen it and knows.

So it seems rather foolish to hide something, doesn't it? It just goes to show sometimes where our belief system really is or how much unbelief we have in our hearts. Because the only way that I would do something in secret thinking that I'm going to get away with it is if I would believe that I could hide it from my Creator or my God, the One that I'm going to stand before and be judged. I can't hide it from Him.

I'm amazed as to how many times counseling with people, how they would say there's just something in my heart that I can't bring out. It's been there in secret for so many years. And I can't bring myself to share because nobody knows.

And if I share, people are going to think less of me. My parents are going to be disappointed or my pastor is going to be disappointed. And then you ask them the question, but what do they have to do with it? Because God of Heaven already knows what you're trying to hide from other people.

And when the reality of that starts to settle in their hearts, it's like, yeah, it is rather... One fellow said, I never realized how stupid I am. He said, I was believing that I could kind of hide that thing in there and if I could keep it right in here, that somehow even God is not going to know. But He knows the thoughts and the intents of the heart even before we have even really done it or thought it, He already knows.

So, if we are a true believer, we will walk our lives in a way and a path that we don't hide anything. We will walk as an open book before our fellow men because we have to walk that way before God. So, I titled that one, Secrets.

Do you have any secrets in your life that you think are secrets? We used to clean an office when we lived in Colorado for a number of years. And there was one desk that everything that they had on it, you could tell that the man was a Christian because he had all kinds of things laying on his desk about Jesus and His love for Him. And then he had one of these little calendars and most of them in the whole office complex there, I'm not sure how many desks there were, but most of them would have had the calendars called the far side.

And you know how ridiculous those things are. But he had a calendar that would give thoughts, spiritual thoughts each day. And it wasn't one that you had to pull off, you just simply pulled it out and stuck it to the back and that way you could use it again next year.

And we were in there cleaning one evening and I seen one that said, if you're alone at 3 a.m. behind your computer, what are you doing? That was the question. And then you could pull it out and flip it to the back and it shared as to how God sees everything. And in the technology world that we live in, whether it be computer, cell phone, whatever, we can get all kinds of data and what I'm going to call ungodly data right here in our hand at the push of a few buttons.

And I know the temptation is there for people to go there and think that I can do this in the quietness of my own room or I can do it in my vehicle or wherever I am where I'm alone and that somehow nobody is going to know. And the God of heaven sees every little thing that we see on there. So, if we try and hide, it's ridiculous if you really think about it.

I'd like for you to turn to Matthew chapter 10. Another one I'd like to look at is confessing or denying here in chapter 10, verses 32 and 33. How many times have you denied Christ that you were ashamed? I know I have.

I know there's times that I should have spoken out and did not. To confess is to acknowledge. I'm His.

He's mine. I speak about Him. I acknowledge that I am His and I'm not afraid to tell others.

To deny is to act like you don't recognize. I don't know Him. Or, I'm just going to share a... There were two families that used to attend here at the fellowship a number of years ago.

And one fellow worked in at Shady Maple in the bakery department there. And one of the other families, his little boy or young boy, I'm going to say about 12 or 13 years old, went in there. And this man that worked at Shady Maple, he was a big, jolly person.

He just didn't have any problems talking about the things of the Lord. And he's seeing this 12 or 13 year old boy come in there and he grabbed him and he hugged him and praised the Lord and all this. And the young man told me, he said, I was so humiliated.

He said, as soon as I got released, I headed right back out to the car. I said, why? Well, he said, there's a lot of other people in the store. I said, well, was it the hug that you didn't like? No, it's just that he was so loud about God.

And there's a lot of people that really don't like God. And I said, you know, it's easy to deny Him. Not too long ago, there's a young man shared with my wife and daughter as to how he and his sister had been at a restaurant late in the evening and that there's a lady came, or a woman came up.

I'm not going to call her a lady. A woman came up to them and said, I'm going to be dancing here. And I feel that you probably want to know about it because you might be offended.

And this young man told her, no, we're okay. You know, go ahead with whatever you need to do and we're okay with it. He had his sister along with him, with her veil on, sitting there in this restaurant late in the evening watching a dancer.

And as he shared it with my wife and all that, there was no shame. I thought, how can a young man come to the place of subjecting himself to ungodliness like that and then telling this woman that, oh no, we're okay with being here. That's another form of denying.

That woman knew they shouldn't be there. And that's the reason she came over to their table to tell them what I'm about to do is going to offend you or it should offend you. And it wasn't an offense to them.

I would have loved to ask that woman some questions afterward. What did that do in your heart? It's a form of denying. It would have been much better for the young man to say, no, we don't want to be here.

In fact, I don't even think that you should be here. What you're doing is ungodly and challenged her in what she's doing. But there they sat through her whole dance deal and then they were talking about how great it was to my wife and daughter.

Shameful. I don't know how else to say it. There's a man that used to come to the service station where I worked in Virginia that was always full of dirty jokes.

And for months, I could not bring myself to confront him about the jokes that he was sharing and I was amazed as to how many of those I could remember. Week after week, he'd come in two or three times a week and he always had this new joke he had to share. And I finally came to the place and said, Lord, I feel so helpless.

I feel so powerless in the presence of this man. Please help me to break through so that I can share with this man as to how wrong this is and how evil it is. And when I did break through and was able to share with him, I had also asked the Lord to wipe every single one of those jokes out of my memory and he honored my request.

I can't remember any of them. But that man, all of a sudden, he had no interest in stopping in at the shop or the station anymore. The only reason he was really stopping in there was to tell us the new joke.

And when I shared with him as to how repulsive it is and that many of the jokes that he's sharing are actually taking the Lord's name in vain. And I said, the name that you're taking in vain is the very name that saved me. You're taking Jesus' name in vain.

Now, I have a question for you. How many times has somebody taken the Lord's name in vain or told a joke in your presence that you didn't confront them or you kind of chuckled with it? Or you just kind of turned away with a smile on your face because you didn't want to embarrass the individual and you were embarrassed to just do what you needed to do? I'm sure all of us have been guilty of it. And while I was preparing for this, I had to think of if I was in a large auditorium, let's say with 20,000 people, and let's say the person speaking would ask, are there any Christians? Is there anybody? And this is a totally ungodly group of people.

Is there anybody in this auditorium that would be willing to stand up and acknowledge that they're a Christian? And if I was in that group of people, would I be able to have the courage to stand up knowing that I'm going to be ridiculed, I'm going to be mocked and made fun of if I acknowledge Jesus Christ? Many times we just simply keep our mouths shut, which is a form of denying. When we are called to confess Him, and God puts us in places all the time for us to confess Him in virtually every day of our lives, if we come to the place of not confessing Him, it's a form of denying. Now, let's read those two verses.

Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven. Now, do you believe that or do you not? That's where God had to take me.

Do I believe this? In other words, am I willing to go day by day denying Him and yet expecting my Lord Jesus to confess Me before the Father? And He's saying right here, He's not going to if I'm going to be denying Him. So brothers and sisters, I don't share these things for condemnation. I share these things to try and bring our hearts into a place of acknowledging that sometimes we don't believe as much as what we think we do.

That we are willing to go through our walk and believe that we have so many things right and then we can have all this unbelief in our heart by the way we conduct our lives. If we want God to confess us before His Father, we have got to confess Him here in this life. So let's begin.

Those that have not begun, and let's continue those that have already been doing it. Luke 16, beginning at verse 19. There's a city north of Loveland that we lived in in Colorado called Fort Collins.

And they have what they call Old Town Fort Collins which is basically a bunch of little shops and bars and all that type of thing. And Fort Collins is also a college town. And so there are a lot of college young men and women there that are just simply trying to find fulfillment on a Friday and Saturday night.

And so you can go through Old Town at 2 a.m. and it's milling with people like it would be in the middle of the day of people shopping because of all the bars and restaurants that are open at that time of the night and the theaters there. And so we decided as a church that we're going to go up there and pass out tracts. And there's a place called Tony's Bar.

We used to kind of position ourselves right outside the entrance of that bar. And I was amazed as to how many men, young men would come out of that place. You could tell that they were just living in the pit by the way they smelled, by the way they acted.

And you would tell them, you need Jesus. And they'd say, I already got Jesus. I go to Timberline Church, which is a mega church right there in Fort Collins.

That's where I go to church. I say, well, if you don't have any fear of God, do you have any fear that your pastor would find out about some of these things? And the one young man said, of course not, this is his son right next to me here. I said, don't you have any fear of the judgment? He said, no, because judgment is basically God.

He said, everybody's going to go to heaven. It's just what level of heaven are you going to be in when you die? And he said, you know, there's no punishment. And then we were invited to a high school program there in Fort Collins.

And we went to that high school program. And there at the very end of the program, the senior class had sang a song that was about pirates. And the theme of the song was, and judgment day will never come.

In other words, we can live a godless life and judgment day will never come. That was the whole song. And we asked one of these young men, do you have a fear of hell? He said, there is nothing like that.

So that's the reason they can live that kind of a life, is because they don't believe in a judgment and neither do they believe in hell. But here in Luke chapter 16, reading at verse 19 through verse 31, there was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus which was laid at his gate full of sores and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores and it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torment and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom.

And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things. And likewise, Lazarus, evil things.

But now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And beside all this between us and you there is a great gulf fixed so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot. Neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, Father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house for I have five brethren that he may testify unto them lest they also come to this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.

And he said, Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded till one rose from the dead. And I believe that to be very true.

We have God's Word. And I believe when we stand before the great judge, this is the book that we're going to be judged out of. If our name is not written in the book of life, we have no hope of eternal life in heaven.

And there's something that happened a number of years ago that caused me to take a look at what torment really is. And I never thought much about these things until I was preparing for the message here. And all of a sudden, the Lord opened up a whole new realm in my thought process.

And I came to realize that I'm not sure that I truly, totally believed in hell. We don't hear much about hell in our circles. And it's even less in mainstream Christianity.

They had a write-up in the Fort Collins paper a few years ago that said, they interviewed a few different pastors and they said, what do you do with some of the Scriptures in the Bible that have to do with blood, hell, and things like that? And every single one of the pastors said, we don't talk about those things because it just upsets the people. That's the reason these young men can go into Tony's bar and waste themselves and come out and claim Christ is because they aren't taught those things. We were on our way home from Denver, Colorado to Loveland, which is about an hour's drive.

It was raining. And there's an old silhouette minivan passed us on the left. Not fast, but slowly gained on us and passed us.

And they weren't more than 50 yards in front of us. And they went over and hit the guardrail back across, almost into the median strip, which was grass, and then back against the guardrail again, and then back into the median strip, and then drove in the median strip for a little bit, and then all of a sudden started heading north in the southbound traffic. And it's like, what is going on? You could just see all this happening, almost like slow motion.

And you knew, and this is at night, about 10 o'clock at night, and you just knew what was going to happen. And after a while, you could see the traffic just swerving all over the place trying to get away from this vehicle that's going the wrong direction. But there was a Walmart truck coming down the road that he had no place to go.

And this minivan and he just, they collided and spun the minivan down into the median strip and burst into flames immediately. There's no question as to what you're going to do. You park your vehicle and you go over to see if you can be of any assistance.

The mother, the driver, was totally pinned. There was no way in the world we could get to her. But there was a boy sitting in the seat behind her, a girl in the passenger seat.

And they heard this is burning on the passenger side down around the heater box area. And we didn't know how to break the glass out of the vehicle. There was really no rocks of any size right there.

And I didn't carry any of the little sharp things they used to hammer against the glass to shatter it out. And one of the truckers threw a fire extinguisher out and the Walmart driver grabbed that thing and he just started smashing window glass out of the vehicle, which even made the flames more intense because of

the extra oxygen. And he just grabbed that young man.

They didn't have seat belts on. He just grabbed that young man and just pulled him right through the window and laid him there on the ground. And of course, there were other people there by that time.

And they were meeting his knees and we went around to the passenger side and pulled the girl out. And it was then that we heard this faint little cry down in the flames of a baby. All caution goes to the wind.

You just reach down in the flames and pull out that child because I was persuaded that he's going to burn to death in that vehicle. The pain would only be for a short time. But what about all the people that we meet every day that are going to a lost eternity and are going to burn in hell forever? Do we throw all caution to the wind to go and minister and rescue them? This is where God met me as I was studying.

Do I even care? I could have said, I'm not going to stop. I don't want to be involved because now you've got to fill out all the police reports and they want to do all the interviewing and find out exactly what happened here. And it takes a lot of time.

I could have just driven off and said I don't even want to be involved. But there's something in here that says that is so wrong to do something like that when there's somebody in there that needs help. And then my heart cries, why don't I feel the same passion for people that are lost that I would be willing to reach into whatever and pull them out to safety or at least be there to share with them as to how they can get out.

I remember one man saying, we believe that the opposite of love is hate. He said that's really not it because he said hate is still an emotion that can actually be turned toward love. It's when we become, I'm hoping I'm using the word correctly, like lethargic or we have no feelings.

There's no feeling of love. There's no feeling of hatred. We just don't care.

Now I wonder how many of us sitting in this auditorium this morning would say yes, we believe in hell and we believe that anyone that does not accept Jesus Christ as their Savior is going to hell and we believe in a hell of torment. There were Jehovah's Witnesses at our house that said they don't believe in the eternal punishment. Our belief system determines how we conduct ourselves.

And if we believe that people that haven't accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior are going to hell and are going to burn and be tormented throughout eternity, and if we care, there's going to be action. I assure you. So if there is inaction in our part, it's because we don't believe.

How many times has God prompted you to share with somebody and you didn't have the courage? When I think of that accident, the girl died on the way to the hospital. The two boys made it. The little baby's face was all burned.

In fact, we babysat him for a while. Joan would go down to Denver virtually every day to be with the little baby because his mother perished in the fire. And I'd love to see him today.

But it gave us an opportunity to be interviewed by the TV station there in Denver. I couldn't go, but my family went and they shared as to how it was God that gave direction and how it was because of the love that we have in our hearts for people that we are, because of a God-given love, that we were willing to risk our lives in doing this. And you know, none of that was aired on Channel 9 or News 9, 9 News.

None of it. The other testimony were, but not that. So if you ever wonder if the media is godly or not, I can assure you they're not.

Do I even care if somebody goes to hell? That's the question I want to leave with you. Romans 8. This is going to be the final point. I'd like to share just a few thoughts about walking in the Spirit versus walking in the flesh.

I think all of us would acknowledge that these things are at war with one another within our hearts. The flesh wants to keep rising up, doing its thing. It wants to be pampered.

It wants to do all kinds of things. And then there's that Spirit that when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, and there's that Spirit that dwells within us that keeps telling us, no, you can't do those things. Or at least, it should be telling us that.

I'm going to read verses 1-14 in Romans 8. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit do the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh. For if we live after the flesh, ye shall die. But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

For as many are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Now, do we believe that portion of Scripture? I'm amazed as to how many times people don't know the difference between walking in the flesh or walking in the Spirit. These young men that we would have met there at Tony's Bar believed that the Spirit of God dwelt within them and that He was just going to overlook every little thing that they did.

We had also talked with a young man that said, I can't help myself. There is no way that I can keep from doing these things. He said, everything in me wants to do it.

He said, I am driven. And he said, if you were honest with yourself, you would have to acknowledge that you are also. I said, that's not true.

At one time, yes, but not anymore. He said, I don't believe that. He said, I've never met anybody that that could happen.

And he said, even the pastor of our church would admit that's not the case. People, do we believe that we can truly live a God-fearing life? That we walk in a way that we are not continually fulfilling the lust of the flesh? Do we believe that we can? Do we believe that it's even possible? And sometimes, I believe we think that it's less possible than what it really is. And therefore, we lose a lot of battles in life because we feel that somehow God is going to overlook my little petty sins and He's not going to be holding me accountable for the deeds that I do in this life.

One thing I like to ask young men is if your father was no longer with you, would you know how to go to God's Word and search it and find answers for your life? I had got an email just a few weeks ago and the title of it was how to stay saved when your pastor is on vacation. I didn't even open it up because I felt it would be such a waste. How to stay saved when your pastor is on vacation.

Do we know how to go into God's Word and through His Holy Spirit give us revelation because it says that the Spirit will guide us into all truth. And that's not just some of the truth. It's into all truth if we permit Him to.

And He has a desire. He wants to fulfill that in each one of us. He wants to guide us into all truth.

So now, if that's His desire and we open up God's Word and we permit Him to do that, He will give us revelation. He will give us, He will guide us, He will show us how we need to live because God didn't put us here on this earth and say, now I want you to figure it out. He gave us the very Word that we're going to be judged by we can hold here in our hand.

And when we think of how beautiful that really is, that God's not going to take us by surprise. I had a school teacher that gave us a test that made it very clear that she wanted each one of us to read all the directions before we begin the test. And you know how that is, how you can get bogged down and you look at the first question and say, oh, I know the answer to that one.

And you start filling in the blanks and we get down to the bottom of the page and it said, do not answer any of the questions in this test. That was the last deal. I failed the test because I answered every single one of them.

I got an F on that test. We are not judged by our conscience. We are judged by God's Word.

I meet a lot of people that say, as long as I don't feel in my conscience that I'm doing something wrong, then it must be okay. And when it's in direct violation of God's Word, it's not the Spirit of God speaking to them. Do we believe that there's going to be a great falling away? And this falling away doesn't mean the godless.

It means those that knew and turned their back on what they have believed. And do we believe that a loving God can and will send somebody or permit somebody to go to hell? Do we believe that? If we do, it's going to change our outlook on people. It's going to change the way we look at God's Word if we truly believe that we're going to be judged by His Word.

We love to go through the Bible and there are times in our lives when it's absolutely necessary. But we love to go through the Bible and claim all the promises that are there. And I love it when there's somebody

that you're leading to Christ and it just seems that the connection isn't quite there yet.

There's still unbelief in their heart that God can actually forgive them of all the sin and the filth that they've been involved in and they say, I just can't believe that God, for who He is, can actually come to the place of forgiving me my sins when I've been involved in all this garbage. And there's no way that you can actually show them that faith. There's really no way that you can lead or make it happen for them.

But I remember one young man specifically just crying out saying, I wish I could believe I just simply can't. I asked him if he's willing for God to put faith in his heart. He said, I just want whatever He has for me.

And we knelt there and we just pled with God to meet with this young man and to put that faith in his heart that he could believe that God can forgive him for all the godless things that he did. And when he came up, he hugged me so tight that I thought I was going to not be able to take my next breath. He said, I'm free.

He said, I know that God has forgiven me. He was persuaded that God forgave him. And when you see that happen and when you go to lead somebody to Christ and you know that there's nobody that has sinned that great that God can't forgive them, it's because of those kinds of promises and believing that that you can go into His Word and lead somebody to Christ knowing that He can meet them there if they are willing.

And there are times that you get overburdened with life and you go to God's Word. And that's what I tend to read in the Psalms and just read how David kind of cycles. He cries out to God, you know, how can you do this to me? And why do I have to go through all this? And then at the end of the Psalm, it's like this worship.

I know who You are and You're this great God and all that. And as he Psalm after Psalm, he cycles through that same sequence. And there are times that I'm down and I need something.

And so I'll go into the Psalm and read how David felt at that time and then how he turned around and rejoiced as to how he came through that trial and how he was to rejoice. And many times, I think we spend more of our time on that side of God's Word than we do on some of the not-so-pretty things. Like hell, for instance.

And I think it's good for us to think about some of these things like we shared this morning. That God would bring full revelation of His Word so that we would live our lives. And I guess the part I feel so pressed about is I do believe that we are going to see this great falling away in our life.

And I believe we are seeing the beginnings of it. And there are many, many, many families, there are many people that we have known from 15-20 years ago that were on fire for the Lord. And today, they have turned their back and have walked back to where they had been and even way beyond where they had been.

And I could name family after family after family that that has happened to. And you ask the question, why does that have to happen? And I asked one father, do you realize where you're leading your family? And he said, well, we still love God. Nothing has changed in that.

We still believe in many of the same things that we did before. It's just a different application that we have decided to take. And they are having more of what I'm going to refer to as the world in their home.

And then, I've lived long enough to be able to see the next generation be about 17, 18 years of age. And now you're starting to see the fruit of the decision that the parents made. And the parents are saying, where did we go wrong? Divorce, drugs, drunkenness.

It's all part of it. How many times do you see an alcohol advertisement with a drunk from New York City lying in the gutter in the midst of all his vomit and everything? You don't ever see that. All you see is these people sitting there with smiles on their faces.

And life is good and all that. And the world is throwing more of that at us all the time. In the next little while, you're going to start receiving all kinds of those kinds of advertisements on your cell phones.

You're not going to... We live in an information age and the only way they can fund some of this thing is through advertisement. You turn your cell phone on and you're going to see these godless advertisements. We live in times that we can't afford to live loosely.

I have to think of Proverbs 8 where somebody is watching through their window as this group of young men come into the city. And there is one of them in particular that is void of understanding. And he goes the way of the prostitute's house thinking nothing of it.

But the person that's watching him sees that he's going that way and knows the end and the trap that he's going to find himself in. How can a person be void of understanding? There are a lot of things that we can do with our time today. There are a lot of things that we can read.

There's a fellow I worked with in Loveland that there's a computer program that came out it was actually a game that he said he wanted to get. He couldn't wait until that thing was released because the advertisement just really made it look like the greatest thing since planet Earth. He said, I sat in front of that thing for 36 hours nonstop.

That man is 38 years of age. Most of the computer games we think are used by young people. The average age is like 29, 30 years of age.

So, for the average to be correct there would have to be men my age that are playing these computer games. Shoot-em-up games. People like that, that spend all that time doing those things are truly void of understanding.

They haven't spent any time in God's Word getting any kind of understanding because those games are not going to warn you about the prostitute's trap. God's Word will. God's Word has every answer to life that there is.

Young men, when you turn 25 years of age, are you going to be void of understanding? Or are you going to be full of God's Word? Study to show thyself to prove unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. It takes effort. Many books are easy reading.

The Bible is not the easiest reading. And so we have a tendency of becoming lazy and we are more apt to pick up another book. I personally don't believe I have, and this is for myself, I personally don't believe that I have a right to pick up a book and read it until I know that I have spent an adequate amount of time in God's Word.

Because if I have not had my time in God's Word, I have no right, or I have no reason to pick up another book and read it instead. Because I can have understanding today. And if I don't continue to feed here in God's Word, 20 years from now I can be void of understanding because I haven't continually been feeding myself in God's Word.

There are many traps that the world has to offer. And they're not only prostitutes. There's many others.

And if we believe God's Word to be true, and if we truly believe, if we're fully persuaded that the Word that He gives us is going to be judged by, is His written Word here, then let's by all means spend a lot of time in it and find out what it is. Because if it does that, if at the end of life, this book is going to either condemn me or set me free, then it's going to do that today. So if I go through God's Word, and there's something that the Holy Spirit gives revelation to my heart that's saying, that's not right in your heart, or you're not living correctly, you don't believe correctly, then it's time for me to stand up and take notice and make corrections.

I am thankful that I'm part of a body of believers, that I don't have to go through this in thinking I'm going to figure it all out on my own. But there are other men that are desiring to walk in God's paths and we can help one another. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we confess our sins. That's the if. And if we truly believe that, then we're going to be willing to confess very quickly because we want to be free and we want God's forgiveness.

But I don't know how many times I have harbored something in my heart that I didn't want to confess because somehow we have this belief system that if I confess, that somebody is going to think less of me. And it really doesn't matter. Even if they do think less of us, it really doesn't matter because we are doing what God has called us to and I know of a surety that God will think more of us.

And that's the only one that really matters because He determines our destiny. So through this next week, I would recommend that each one of us spend time on our knees and saying, Lord, what part of it is it in Your Word that I don't believe? Is there anything in the Bible that I do not believe? Or that it doesn't strike an urgency in my heart? Is there anything? And as we do that, I believe He will give us revelation and show us where we need to believe, truly believe. Not only believe that it's going to rain, but know of a surety that it's going to rain.

May the Lord's blessing be with you. Isaiah 66 Even to him that is... I'm sorry, but to this man why look. Even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word.

I'm just trembling at the Word of God this morning. God has been deeply working in my heart in this matter of believing, faith. You know, I think too often we're just passive about God's Word.

That's what He's speaking to me. And I've really been working in my heart the last few weeks in this matter of faith. To this man why look, even to him that trembleth at my word.

Are you trembling this morning at the Word of God when it's spoken? When you read it? Is it serious to your heart? Do you believe it? Do you appropriate the Word of God and say and acknowledge, Lord, I believe. I believe in Your commands. I believe in Your promise.

I think we'll take time to have an altar call this morning. I specifically like to make the altar call open to those of us that God has spoken to in regards to unbelief. Whether it's unbelief in your hearts as a sinner that you have not realized this morning, that you have not really realized this morning, until this morning, the seriousness of your soul before the Lord, of your standing with God, if you're unsaved.

Very clearly brought out this morning. The path that you're heading down, the road of destruction that you're on and where you'll end up at. Do you believe? Do you believe, my sinner friend? Do you believe the Word of God? What it speaks about.

What it speaks about to your heart in regards to your lost soul, but also to us who have been born again but have been convicted this morning that we have not believed. We have not been fully persuaded of God's Word in regards to His commands, promises, whatever God has spoken to your heart about in that area this morning. So I'd like to have a song of invitation.

I think one of the songs that Brother Tim picked this morning is How Firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord, is laid for our faith. So let's press in. Brother, sister, sinner friend, we know the message that was spoken recently.

Taking the Kingdom of God by violence and the violence shall take it by force. Let's press in to believing, apprehending by faith all that God has for us. Go ahead, Brother Tim, you have a song? Just make your way up to the altar here and pour out your heart before the Lord in the area of need that He's spoken to you about.

512 His thy heart brought washed in the His thy heart brought His thy heart washed in the crimson flood
Plants them made holy humble and lowly right in the Okay. If there's any of you who feel you need private counsel, please make your way downstairs. Brother Aaron or Emmanuel, one of you two maybe can lead out in that.

If there are any brothers or sisters, just make your way downstairs. Praise God. God met with me this morning.

I thank Him for His faithfulness and showing me my needs. I know that I've had unbelief and fear in my life, and the Lord has deeply spoken to my heart this morning in regards to that. Okay, we'll take time for a few testimonies yet.

Is there someone who would like to share, brothers or sisters here, maybe a confession, a comment, a testimony? Get your hands up. Here's one in the middle here. Thank God for speaking to me today.

Something the Lord's been impressing on me recently is the need to do, be a doer of the Word. How easy it is to deceive myself because I hear some good message or some good word. If I don't do it, then I'm deceiving myself.

I'm opening myself up to deception. My prayer this morning was, Lord, change me today. I believe He's given me something here this morning to change me, to make me more like Him.

And I thank God for that. This matter of being quiet when I should open my mouth and confess Him to other people, especially at work or places like that, something that I have compromised in, by God's grace, I want to change. And I'm asking Him to change me, to give me His boldness and take away that compromising spirit.

So, I just pray the Lord complete that work in me. Amen. Right here.

Go ahead. Last Sunday, we were up in Buffalo Valley Church and there something became very real to me. I saw it.

It was just like a light went on. They were speaking in John 4. And it talks where the woman of Samaria came to draw water. And Jesus said to her, Give me to drink.

For His disciples had gone into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink from Me, a Samaritan woman? For the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give me a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water.

He was saying, If you would ask Me, I would give you living water. The woman didn't really believe. She said to Him, Sir, you have nothing to draw with.

The well is deep. When then do you get the living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself as well as his sons and his livestock? Then Jesus tried again. He said, Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again.

But whoever drinks the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into the everlasting life. Now he had her attention.

She said, Sir, give me this water that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw. And what really spoke to me is Jesus' next word. Now she asked for it.

He said to her, Go call your husband and come here. What He wanted her to do is confess. How many of us don't want to confess? If we don't confess that living, that fountain of water will not spring up into our lives.

We need to confess. And I think if we could understand the power of confessing or the freedom of confessing, I don't think we'd hold anything back. Yeah, brother, I think of the It's one of the ways to overcome.

In Revelation 12-11 it says, And they overcame Him. One of the ways was by the word of their testimony. I mean, it's a word for us today, but it says of the saints.

There in Revelation. They overcame Him by the word of their testimony. Does Sister here? I want to praise God for the message this morning.

At first, when Brother Gerald asked whether we believe that this is the word of God, my hand went up. Of course, I believe it's the word of God. But almost immediately afterwards, I started thinking, Do I really believe it's the word of God? Do I really? If I would really believe that, I'd be desperate to search it out and see what it says.

Because I do believe that the word of God is what's going to judge us in the end. And so I just pray that God will work in my heart to make me aware of the areas that I don't fully believe and that I will become a true believer in every sense of the word. Somebody has a mic over here.

I'm very grateful this morning for God's faithfulness to us. And I confess that I have not always claimed His promises and really believed them to the extent that I should have. And just this past week, kind of the same theme that we heard today of really believing that a lost soul is going to hell.

And if I believe that, what will I do? I read one of the tracts that we have here on the back called Which Resurrection? which gives the description of a person going to hell. And then I read in Isaiah where it speaks of what Jesus did for us, what He suffered for us, our iniquities and our pain and all of that. And it just overwhelmed me to think that He did that for all mankind.

And how can I see my neighbors in a lost condition and not speak to them about it? And I confess my sin of not taking that seriously enough this past week. So this was just a reinforcement and I want to ask the Lord to keep that awake in my heart, that urgency that I should have. I want to praise the Lord.

Amen. Sister Jackie? I sort of feel like the Lord set me up this morning. Sometimes we get into a complacent state where we almost feel good.

We feel a little justified that we do this or we do that. Well, it's kind of good. I saw this morning, looking at the Word of God, how God looks at that.

I don't mind being a nice lady. I don't mind talking to somebody at Walmart and saying something and smiling and blessing them and the Salvation Army man, the man there, Team Challenge, and even say a little bit for the Lord. But I'm not sure I want to be a radical.

I'm not sure I want to identify myself the way that the Lord wants me to identify myself. Yesterday, I had an opportunity to jump a man's vehicle. Well, that's so out of place.

For me, we were in a well-lit daylight place, and the opportunity afforded itself, and I was able to say, in Jesus' name at the end. But I thought, I'm still just a nice lady to him, and I'm asking for accountability. I asked for accountability this summer on something, witnessing to a neighbor.

A brother kept me accountable. I appreciate it. If I had had a good track yesterday, it could have been more than just a nice lady.

And so I'm asking God to help me purpose in my heart to carry tracks. I haven't carried tracks since I was a Baptist. I used to carry tracks.

And so I was very convicted this morning that I'm not prepared to give more than just be a nice lady. So I would like accountability on that. I want to be faithful to that word, to pass out the word when I have the opportunity and make the opportunity.

God bless you, sister. May He give you the desires of your heart. Amen.

Father Denny, do you have the mic there? Yeah, I just also want to confess my unbelief this morning, listening to the word of God. The Lord spoke to my heart about the area of confessing Christ. And I know that I do confess Christ, but I have sensed a cooling in my heart lately in some of my travels.

It's real easy just to sit in the airplane and not say anything or just give a little gentle word and go about all the things that I want to study while I'm on the plane. And so God convicted me of that, that I've kind of let down my aggressiveness there. I can remember times when I sat down on the plane with a prayer on my heart saying, OK, Lord, how do you want me to talk to this person? And how are you going to open up the

door for me to talk to them? So I want to confess that and also confess my unbelief concerning the area of hell.

You know, I do believe that people who die without Christ go to hell. I believe that. But yet, it's very hard in personal witnessing to drop that truth on someone.

I agree with my wife. It's a lot easier just for them to think that I'm a nice Christian man who said a few kind things to them. So I want to confess my unbelief in those things.

And also just a word of exhortation to us as a congregation. I don't know if you recognize it, but it's the third weekend in a row that God has addressed us a bit concerning the word of God. And again, I just wonder how many of us have been being faithful in the word of God as we were challenged the weekend before the first of the year.

And just to encourage us that 30 days changes a habit in somebody's life. And it's January the 11th today. If we will just continue, not because we have to, but because we want to.

Get in the word. And get in it every day. And get something out of it.

If we'll do that, if we'll be faithful, soon it'll be a habit that we desire with all of our heart. And it will change our congregation if we will all do it. That I know.

May God help us to be faithful. Pray for me. Okay, we'll take one more if there is anyone that has the mic yet.

Brother. My heart's pretty full. Not sure where to start.

But I just want to bless God for strengthening Brother Gerald and giving him the courage to speak what he spoke to us this morning. And on that note, I'd also like to encourage us to remember him from now on because that likely is going to come at a price. He's likely to get attacked for being so bold and for shaking us this morning and probably turning many of us to consider our own state.

Maybe work some carefulness in us, drawing us back to the word again, which our enemy would love to keep us from doing. I know that before I was a Christian, one of the things that really impressed itself on my heart just before I got converted was that God is a righteous judge. And one day I'm going to stand before him, and I was not prepared.

His word witnesses of that. He is a righteous judge. As creator, he is a righteous judge.

Many of you would have gotten a hotline Thursday evening that my heart was acting up. I just thought maybe I'd say a word about that so you wouldn't all have to ask me. Though you're welcome to anyway.

Yes, after too much abrupt exercise on Thursday afternoon at work, it went out of rhythm, which I'd done before, although not for about 12 years. The first time I did it was nearly 20 years ago. Twelve years ago, I was working for Lawrence, and in a few minutes, it went back to normal rhythm.

It took four and a half hours. It gave me some time to think and to confirm some things in my heart that the Lord has been trying to speak to me, which, brother Denny, the last three Sundays have been doing very much to me. I just marvel at how the nudgings I've been getting from the Lord are confirmed by the preaching of the word.

And I'm so grateful for that. But the first time this happened to me, the first two times it happened to me, all the things that I had allowed the world and the devil to deceive me about fled, and I was terrified when my heart went out of rhythm because I knew I was not prepared to be judged by this righteous judge. And it had to happen the second time before I was ready to come before the Lord and say, I'm done.

You are right, and I'm a sinner. I was grateful that this last time, it didn't do that to me. It did give me some cause to think, to ponder my path in recent years and months, but I was not terrified.

And I am grateful for that. I'm still very tired. I'm not sure if I should pursue this further or not.

You can pray for me for wisdom in that, whether I should seek more medical input or not. I just praise God for the message this morning, that he continues to speak to us. May he grant his ears to hear as well.

God bless you, Tim. Amen. We thank God for bringing you through that.

Thank God for that testimony. There is no fear of death when we have Christ vibrantly living in our hearts and lives.

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