

Regeneration ■ Are You Aware Of Your Newness In Christ ■

by James Jennings

This sermon emphasizes the transformation that occurs in a believer's heart through regeneration, leading to new desires and obedience from the heart. It contrasts the nature of an unregenerate person enslaved to sin with a regenerate person who desires to obey God. The speaker uses the analogy of two dogs, each with different inherent desires, to illustrate the change in desires brought about by regeneration. The importance of understanding and living in light of the truths of justification and regeneration is highlighted, along with the high expectations God has for believers to walk in obedience and love for Christ.

Scripture: Romans 6:6, Romans 6:17, 1 John 5:3, Romans 13:10, Romans 15:14, Romans 8:13, Ezekiel 36:27, Titus 3:5, John 14:15

Topics: "Regeneration", "Transformation of the Heart"

Description

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Transcript

Well, let's pray. Father, thank You so much for these precious believers, Lord. I missed seeing their faces and fellowshiping with them while we were gone in Missouri.

And yet, Lord, I'm grateful for the church up there and, Lord, all that You have helped sustain Clint through in the last four years or five years in that church. And Lord, just thankful for the solid witness they continue to be for Your blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And I pray You'd be with them today.

Be with the saints at Faith Fellowship. Encourage their hearts. Father, we just pray You'd be with our missionaries and different people on the field and people facing tough situations and needing great amounts of wisdom.

And Lord, I pray You'd be with us here. Father, we look to You for Your hand to come and help us right now, even in this hour, that we might be more conformed to the image of Christ and that we might have a

mind that thinks more clearly about what You say in Your Word. And so, Lord, we commit ourselves to You and ask for Your help.

In Christ's name, Amen. Well, before I have you turn to my passage, because it kind of gave away the answer to the question I wanted to start with, at least it could, but why do people write books with titles like, I wish I knew this when I started woodworking. Why do people write books like that? And obviously, it's to share insights, knowledge that the writer wishes they had known when they initially began their journey in woodworking.

Even just looking at Zell right there talking beforehand. Think about barbecue, right? You're going to start doing barbecue, and someone has a book called What I Wish I Knew Before I Started Smoking Briskets. You'd probably buy that book because you wouldn't want to fall into making the same mistakes that someone else did.

You'd want to learn from them in order to not suffer at the lack of your wisdom. So these lessons, they could potentially save time, effort. They could help you avoid common pitfalls.

Or mistakes that beginners often make in woodworking or in smoking a brisket or something like that. That makes sense to us. So, I'd ask you this, what's something you wish you knew when you started in the spiritual realm? Not barbecue.

Not woodworking. But when you were first converted. Right? However long ago that was.

You go back in time back then. What's something you wish? You wish you would have known. You wish it would have been taught to you at an earlier age as a spiritual infant.

What comes to your mind? Just shout it out. What's something that you think? Yeah, understanding the sovereignty of God. That can be hard, right? Some new Christians, they might reject the sovereignty, which isn't right.

Or some embrace it too much to the point where they become what's called hyper-Calvinistic. So getting a right, balanced view of God's sovereign control over all things. What else? Knowing the truth.

What specific truth though? Any specific truths that you wish you would have known as a new Christian? The Gospel. Yeah, the Gospel. What else? Yeah, how much God loves you.

You come out of easy-believism where the love of God is abused, and you naturally might get into sound doctrine, and you minimize God's affection and love for you as a Christian. You do an overreaction. What else? What else is something? Yeah, the security, the assurance, the perseverance of the saints.

That's helpful. It's also helpful to know the warning passages that they are not irrelevant for us as Christians. Now, let me ask it in this way.

What would the Apostle Paul say if he wrote a book entitled I Wish I Knew This When I Was First Saved? Or he wrote that to us. What would be some of Paul's items or chapters that would be in that book? What I wish I knew. What I wish new believers knew.

What would Paul say are his chapters? Tell me from the Scriptures. Romans 7? I didn't hear that. Depends on how you interpret Romans 7. But for the sake of time, not lack of understanding, but for the sake of time, I must avoid talking about Romans 7 at this moment.

What else? Say again? Yeah, 1 Corinthians 13. Yeah, you've got a church there who is overemphasizing knowledge and lacking in love, and Paul really emphasizes that. So he's saying that to a church.

But what are some other examples where Paul even clearly states something that he wishes they would have known? They didn't know. They lacked the knowledge. His power? Yeah, knowing the power that is at work in the Christian.

What's another way to say that? Yeah, that's a good verse, right? It's right there in the verse. 1 Corinthians 6. He says to a church, do you not know? Are you not aware about something about yourselves? That you are the temple of the Holy Spirit? So there's knowledge that they should have that they might have that they've forgotten. And Paul is saying, don't you know this? Aren't you aware of this? Right? And so maybe 20 times, that language is used in your Bible.

Sometimes it's repetitive and referring to the same thing. But it's that question, don't you know? Are you not aware about this reality about yourselves? So, if Paul had a book, you could have chapter 1. It could be Harmony and Liberty Unveiling the Essence of Romans 14 to Foster Compassion Towards Those with Unique Dietary Choices, right? I mean, that's something new Christians tend to... You wish you understood Romans 14 at an earlier date so you don't create division based on food and drink. But what I want to think about right now is don't you know, not just your God's temple, but what is bound up with the Christian and the church corporately being a temple of the Holy Spirit? What's that also speak to? What truth? We're going to look at that truth in Romans 6. So turn to Romans 6. In the Berean Bible that Jeff directed me towards months back, it's a public domain Bible, so you can use it in books without breaking copyrights.

But it says, instead of, or do you not know, in 1 Corinthians 3 and 6, it says, are you not aware? And I think that's a really good way to think about it. Are you not aware? And what I want to think about is are you not aware of who you are in Christ? You are a new man, a new woman, with a new heart, with new desires. Right? Do you know that truly? And that truth is bound up in what doctrine? What doctrine is it bound up in? That you're a new man with a new heart with new desires.

Yeah, the doctrine of regeneration. You will not find the word regeneration in your Bibles that much. Where's the one place that it is rendered regeneration? Yeah, Titus 3, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

But, you find the truth of our new creation, of being recreated, of being given new desires, you find that all over the Scriptures. And you find that in Romans 6. Now what truth that we kind of hit on and what I wish I knew as a new Christian. What truth is in Romans 3, 4, and 5 primarily? Well, all of sin is in Romans 3, the total depravity of man, but what do you really get into in chapters 4 and 5? Justification.

And what I find, and I could be wrong, this might not be everyone's experience, but I find that a lot of new Christians, they really get to understand justification early on. That they're legally righteous before God through what Christ has done. But, they tend to have ignorance when it comes to the doctrine of regeneration.

I don't know if you guys have seen that. I think part of that is in American churches at large, what doctrine is more commonly emphasized and taught? Is it regeneration or justification? It's justification, right? So that tends to be common. But if it's not common for you, the verbiage that I've used to teach my kids what justification is, in case someone here doesn't know what that is, and you could find fault with how I define

this, but this is just where I'm at in expressing it to the kids, but I mentioned three things.

To be justified is to be declared before God just as if you've never sinned, just as if you've lived perfectly, which means just as if you legally are Jesus Christ. And to be justified is to be viewed with the righteousness of Christ before God in His courtroom. That's the only way the holy God of the universe can let you into heaven.

You have to be as righteous as His Son. And the only way to be that righteous is to have the Son's grade on your paper, to have His righteousness given to you. So, we find that in Romans 5.19 even.

It's a glorious verse. For as by one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience, the many will be made righteous. And so thank God for the Lord Jesus Christ that we can be legally righteous in God's courtroom.

Praise the Lord for that reality. And that is something you better know as a Christian, that even when you've sinned, it has not changed your legal standing before God. You are not now condemned after you've sinned.

Because your righteousness isn't based on your works. It's based on the work of Christ. And so when you live in that reality, you don't want to sin.

You don't want to abuse His grace. And that's because the second truth that we find in Romans 6. Regeneration. So, let's look.

Romans 6.17 is the main verse that I want to think about with us right now. And we'll start in v. 15. What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law, but under grace? And again, Paul, by no means! You can't do that.

And then he has one of those do-you-not-know statements in v. 16. Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey? Either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience. So he actually puts a master that you can be a slave of as obedience.

And where does obedience lead to? Which leads to righteousness. Verse 17, But thanks be to God that you Romans who were once slaves of sin, you have become obedient from the heart. You see that language? This is astonishing language that we just read right here.

You have become something obedient from the heart. What's the opposite of obedient from the heart? I would say it's not just being disobedient. It's something more than just being disobedient.

Yeah, because you can have outward obedience where you're actually doing what you should do. But where does it come from? It doesn't come from the heart. It comes from where? Some external motivation? It's robotic? Who is convict number one in not having obedience from the heart in the Bible? What group of individuals? The Pharisees.

I mean, they were outwardly righteous. They did all these things externally, but it wasn't coming from the heart. Paul's saying to these Romans, your obedience, it is coming from the heart.

And he's thanking God for that reality because God has done something. And something I hadn't noticed, in Romans 1, look at what Paul even says here. Hold your place in Romans 6. But Romans 1.8, he's also thanking God right here for all of the Romans.

And he says, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. Now, you tend to think, what is their faith? What we see as we read the letter, it's not just saying, he doesn't just mean your faith as in the doctrine that they embraced as a church. But it's actually their conduct.

What's being lived out by their faith, that is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. He thanks God in Romans 6.17 that they are obedient to the standard of teaching that was given to them. And look what Paul says in the very next verse, in chapter 1, verse 9, for God is my witness, whom I serve with what? With my spirit in the Gospel of the Son.

Notice, where is Paul serving the Lord? Is it some external obedience? No. No, no, no, it's not. Paul is serving within his spirit.

That's what Ezekiel 36.27 says. I will take out your heart of stone. I will give you a heart of flesh.

And I will cause you to walk and to obey My statutes. Isn't that what the Bible teaches? He says I'm going to put a new spirit within you. And I don't have time in this message to hash through different definitions of heart and spirit and mind.

That absolutely is a topic worth studying in depth to rightly understand certain verses. So, let's look at Romans 6.17. And if you notice right here, he says he thanks God, and he mentions what they were. That you were once slaves of sin.

And that is referring to a person not in the regenerate state, but in what state? Unregenerate. They were not born again. Now, they might have been going to church.

They might have been as religious as a Pharisee. But they were slaves of sin. They didn't have the ability to truly obey the Lord.

And what also did they not have? They didn't truly have the desire. Right? You can have an external... as one brother mentioned, it's like the dog. You can train your dog to not eat the treat.

I remember when we had our golden retriever, she was a lot smarter than our border collie. Or maybe it was bad parenting. I don't know.

But you could put a treat on the ground and teach Anne to sit there, and you could walk away, and she would not get the treat. But she's sitting there all the while. What is she desiring? She wants the treat.

Right? I'm just keeping her from getting it. Is that obedience from the heart? No, it's not. The heart really wants that treat.

So we were dead in our sin. But what happened? He thanks God that we were. This is a past tense reality.

And you know, I really appreciate how much Paul is just overflowing with thanks. And he's doing this even towards a church. We saw it in chapter 1, I thank God.

And here he's thanking God again for what God has done in their lives. Paul is just overflowing with joy for these Christians and everything that God has done in their life. And we should do the same thing.

When you hear about what's going on in other churches and other parts of the world, there's a place to just give thanks to God for what you hear about obedience and them obeying the Word of God. That is such

an encouragement. It's something supernatural.

Right? We cannot obey the Lord in our own power. And then thirdly, so he thanks God. He sedates what we were.

We were slaves of sin. And then he mentions what we have become. You have become obedient from the heart.

And then he mentions to the standard of teaching to which you were committed. Now, maybe I'll just mention a brief thought about that last section just to make it clear. The standard of teaching to which you were committed.

You know what's interesting when you look at the language right there? The word betrayed is there. The same word in the Greek for when Judas handed over Christ. Right? And Paul is saying we've been handed over to a standard of teaching.

That's the word committed. We've been handed over to this standard of teaching. What is this standard of teaching? It's interesting because Paul's just been saying you're not under law.

Right? And so what is Paul even referring to here? I believe he's referring to the doctrine of the apostles. Right? What Paul himself is teaching to these other churches. You find this in Timothy.

He refers to... what is that verse? He refers to... I don't have it memorized. Where was it? It's somewhere right here in the notes. But that's what I really think that means.

We'll look at that in a minute. But that's what was committed. There's this teaching that Paul is bringing out.

And the Romans' response is they want to obey the truths that are being taught. It's their natural inclination to obey this teaching from the apostles. Do you hear what Paul's saying? It's natural to them.

Right? Because of this truth of regeneration. He's not saying there isn't a struggle. He's not saying there isn't a flesh.

But there's something that has changed in the heart of the Christian. This is remarkable. This isn't robotic obedience.

It is obedience from the heart. Does it mean that could a true Christian who's obeying the Lord from the heart fall into some season where it is a robotic obedience? Yes, but their father won't let them remain in that state. Right? He's going to discipline us.

He's not going to let us continue on in that state. So we have become you. Remember? Part of why I'm bringing this message is all of Paul's statements.

Do you not know? Are you not aware? So one thing you need to think about right here as you're sitting here and hearing this, are you aware that this has happened in you, Christian? Not do you feel like this is a reality in your life, but are you aware that this has happened? That God has so changed you to give you new desires. Right? Not to leave you where you were, but to make you want to obey from the heart. Right? What else does he say in Romans 6? Do you not know that you're dead to sin? Right? Consider yourselves dead to sin.

These are incredible truths in Romans 6 that we need to believe, regardless of what we subjectively feel when we wake up in the morning after a bad night's sleep. Alright, Romans 6.16, I mention this, but he says you can have a master of obedience. That is, the true Christian is bound by a desire to obey.

Disobedience does not satisfy the true Christian. When he disobeys, he doesn't leave satisfied. But when he obeys, he leaves satisfied.

But it's the opposite. When you're not a Christian, you're truly satisfied when you disobey, and when you obey, you're left empty because it's robotic. It's not from the heart.

Now, like I said, Christians, we're going to have painful falls, but that's not the burning desire. My burning desire here is not to sin. The burning desire in my regenerated heart that God has given me is to please and honor the Lord because I was bought with a price.

Therefore, I want to glorify God in my body. And that's just been my desire for 15 years now. It wasn't something I stirred up.

It wasn't something I created. It was something the Spirit of God did in my heart and in my soul. And you need to know that as a new Christian.

If you've been saved for two weeks, if you've been saved for one month, if you got saved in the 9 a.m. Spanish service, that's true of you right now. And you don't need a weight to believe that as being a reality. You're dead to sin.

Sin has no dominion over you. As Romans 6 says, we know our old self is crucified with Him. You need to believe that.

My old name was crucified with Him. My old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. You see, the old self dying and being crucified is what leads you to no longer be enslaved to sin because God has recreated you and made you a new person.

And Paul thanks God for their obedience that's giving this evidence. You know, when we were lost, we might have had the desire to be delivered from our sinful desires. I know I did.

Oh, I felt so miserable and ashamed when I would sin. I felt horrible. But it wasn't about Christ.

It was all about my reputation. That's what greatly grieves me. Well, now the Lord has delivered us.

And I'm going to refer to this and give some quotes in a minute, but part of why I'm even bringing this up is the book, and I've sent it to you men already in the Exemplary Husbands chat, but the book *Delivered by Desire*. Who else even read that book in the years past? Has anyone read that? A few? Yeah. You know, the cover, I remember when I first got it, it came out in 2011.

And the cover, it has delivered from desire. And the word from is crossed out and what word is put there? By. And right there, the cover really speaks to what's in the book.

And it really articulates something very well that the Bible is mentioning right here in chapter 17. You see, the Christian, as Mike Morrow and many others have said, I actually go do what I want as a Christian. I mean, you've got to realize that.

When I wake up, I go do what I want to do. Because my heart is not deceitfully wicked above all things. Luke 8.15 says my heart is a good and an honest heart.

Doesn't mean I don't have the flesh. But the Christian does what they desire because they have new desires that have been given to them in the regenerative work of the Spirit of God, where their desires have totally changed. And so they're delivered by desire.

It's not a matter of I better not do that. You don't want to do it. And even if you're really tempted and you're really being deceived in the moment to sin, if you're really regenerated, that's not true of you.

Don't believe that it's true of you that you should go and do those things. The Lord has changed you, Christian. You need to know your old self is crucified with Christ.

You have a new Master. Obedience. It is now natural to obey.

What does 1 John 5.3 say? Anyone have that memorized? 1 John 5.3 I think it's, this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not what? Huh, interesting. It doesn't mean there might not be times you feel like it's a burden to obey, it's tough to obey.

There's people going through things this week where they've got to obey and it's going to be tough. The way is hard that leads to life and few there be that find it. But generally speaking, the burden for the Christian is when they sin.

It is not obeying. Obedience is this natural desire. Yes, our fallen flesh, it doesn't want us to obey.

It doesn't. What did Jesus say right there in the garden? The Spirit is willing and the flesh is weak. So, do you realize that, Christian? You're not just forgiven legally of your sin and declared legally righteous in God's court.

That is true, thank God for that. But you've also been transformed in your heart and in your nature and in your desires. And you need to know that your old self was crucified with Him.

You've been recreated by God. Your now supreme desire is to do your Master's will. I mean, are you aware of this? That's Paul's question.

Do you not know? Are you not aware of this? You want to be aware of it and live by faith in light of it being true. As I said, regardless of how you feel, the devil does not want you embracing a truth about who you are in Christ and going out the door and living in light of that. He will give you a million reasons to excuse it away and say that it is not true.

And to make you look at feelings and not by faith. And then you're not going to live in reality of what's true of you and it's not going to affect your life. Tom Schreiner in his commentary on Romans, he gives a helpful explanation of 6:17.

He says, "...you have become obedient from the heart. People do not submit to sin against their will. Rather, they freely and spontaneously choose to sin.

In other words, unbelievers are slaves to sin in that they always desire to carry out the dictates of their Master. This does not mean that those with addictions never wish to be free. It means that the desire for these things is ultimately greater than the desire to be freed from them.

Sinning is what they want to do. Only God, therefore, can release them from such subjection. For new desires are necessary to escape the bondage of sin.

Of course, this is precisely what God has done. He has liberated them from the tyranny of sin so that they have become obedient from the heart to the Gospel. He has planted new desires in them.

As Paul said, I serve with my spirit. There's something internally happening. This all goes back to Craig's series on Galatians about walking by the Spirit and walking by faith.

And the Spirit is supplied by hearing and faith. And you're reading the Word of God. You're believing the promises of God.

And all of a sudden, there's power of the Spirit in your life and you go put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit, Romans 8.13. And in the midst of all of that, this isn't a burden. Your ultimate burden is I want to obey the Lord because He's given me new desires in the heart. Many serve God with their bodies.

But Paul's saying, I serve Him with my spirit. I serve Him with what's going on inside of my heart. Okay, what time do we got? Well, I mentioned this a minute ago.

What he says at the end of 617, let me just reiterate it. He says that you become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed. So we've been transferred.

We're not under law as a covenant system. And we're transferred to this standard of teaching. Listen to the NIV.

Many have commented on how helpful the NIV is in this translation. You have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You hear that? There's a pattern of teaching.

There's a truth that has claimed your allegiance as a Christian. Your allegiance has changed. In the verse earlier I was referring to, 2 Timothy 1.13, follow the pattern of sound words that you have heard from Me in the faith.

So Paul is giving a pattern of sound words, of sound doctrine, of sound teaching. That's what I'm saying is the standard of teaching which has been committed unto you. And listen to what he says here.

In the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. So you think, what's this standard? How could it be summarized that I'm now obedient from the heart to one obey that is before me? Well, look at Romans 13.10 is a place we go in the same letter where Paul mentions something right there that's again right along the lines of what Craig taught through in Galatians. Romans 13.10, love does no wrong to a neighbor.

Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And have you ever found that? You get converted. And there is a desire to now love other Christians.

To love your neighbor who wasn't there before. You realize that's an evidence of the regenerate heart. That's why John can come along and in 1 John say if anyone does, if you do not love your brother, or how's it go? We know we've passed from death to life because we love the brethren.

So if you don't love the brethren, John is saying you don't even know you've really passed from death to life. Well, that makes sense why he would put is one clear assurance you're a Christian is your love for the brethren because Paul says that's fulfilling the law, right? And so when you think of the Apostle Paul's teaching and his doctrine, he keeps emphasizing again and again, loving as Christ is loved. Loving the Savior supremely.

And so not only have we been transferred and committed a new teaching, a teaching has been committed to us that has this great emphasis on love. We've now been given the new heart and the ability to go out and do that. Praise God for that reality.

You know, does Paul have low expectations for us? Does he? Hello? Does he have low expectations for us? No, he doesn't. He's got really high expectations. Why does he have the right to have high expectations for you and me? Yeah, it's because who's doing the work? God.

And so when people come along and they lower a view of what conversion really is, they're ultimately lowering a view of who is, who God is, right? When the non-lordship salvation guys in Dallas, when the free grace evangelical society says the things they say, when they teach this idea that Christians can continue to live in slavery to sin and they're a true Christian, they are minimizing and abusing and distorting and blaspheming who God truly is. God says He will give you a new heart. God says He will cause you to walk and obey His statute.

That doesn't remove the reality of this remaining flesh. It doesn't remove the reality that we wage war against the passions of our flesh, that wage war against our body. It doesn't remove those realities.

But we can't minimize who God is and what He has done. Brethren, one of the greatest things you can know as a Christian, it's not just justification, it's regeneration. It's what God has done in your heart and given you new desires.

And you go live in light of that? Oh, there is such freedom. And you know, Paul, Romans 15, 14, you gotta love what Paul says here. This is an incredible verse.

Romans 15, 14, I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness. That's how Paul speaks to Christians. Chris, you're full of goodness.

Ryan, you're full of goodness. And that's what he says. Filled with all knowledge.

I don't know if I'd use all right there. Do they really have all knowledge, Paul? And you're able to sit around and mourn how wicked you are. Is that what he says? My Bible's kind of blurry right there.

What's it say? Oh, you're able to instruct one another. You see, that's what the Lord does. It doesn't matter what you feel.

It doesn't matter what failures you've had this week. You need to believe, thus saith the Lord. And you need to go live in light of that truth.

So this is something to thank God for, brethren. And I was reminded of the power of desires in our recent trip to Missouri. So just another way to illustrate this change.

So while we were in Missouri on my mother-in-law's farm, there were two dogs there. Red, who is my dog, he's a border collie. And Missy, who is my brother-in-law's dog, and she is a golden retriever.

Now, if you guys know anything about border collies and golden retrievers, do they have the same, are they both dogs? Yes, they got four legs and a tail and they look like a dog. They are dogs. Do they have the same desires? I mean, do they have similar desires? Will they both eat bacon the moment you put bacon? Absolutely.

Okay, what's the last word for a golden? A golden what? So what do golden retrievers do? They love to retrieve. What do border collies love to do? Herd, right? So there's two dogs, just like there's two humans, but they've got, naturally, they have different desires given by God. Red is a herder and Missy is a retriever.

And so one of the main things we did, Terry recently bought a new gator, four-wheeler type of thing. The old one was always broken. She got a new one.

So that was one of the big things the kids look forward to, speeding around on this gator on the farm. Well, what do you think Red does? I mean, right when you get on that gator, Red is up there yapping away. As you're backing up, he gets to your back tire.

He's yapping at the back tire. Then when you try to go forward, he's hopping in front of the four-wheeler, yapping at the front tire. He's herding us, saying not to go that way.

Where's Missy in all of this? She's not doing the same thing. She's got a different desire. They're both dogs, yes.

But they have different natures or different desires given to them by the Lord. Now, one day, the whole game was you got to fake Red out and then put the pedal to the metal and leave him in the dust. And it could be difficult.

And we kept getting him day after day and he'd just get worn out and he could never catch up to us. Well, one day, the last day we were there, I thought we faked him out and he slept. And I don't know what went under the wheel, but then he's laying there.

He wasn't dead, thankfully. He started wiggling around. His collar was like three feet down the road.

I'm thinking, did his head go under the wheel? He started limping. But you know what he did within 30 minutes after getting ran over by a four-wheeler? What was he doing? He was herding again. He was yapping again.

Why? It's in his nature. Look, you know what happened when you were lost? You went and sinned and you got ran over by sin on the head. And you laid down for a little while and you kind of limped a little while and where were you the next week? You were going all out after your sin.

Right? I mean, that's the unregenerate heart. It's a slave to sin. And to add to the illustration, you know what Missy would do sometimes when Red's trying to catch up? She was like the good Christian friend.

She'd kind of cut him off. Like, don't do this, Red! And she'd literally be biting at his neck, getting him to stop. And did that work for a little while? It worked for a little while, but Red would always, he'd just get past her.

Like, get out of my way. Brethren, I mean, I was just reminded of that with those two dogs. They've got totally, they're both dogs, but they've got different natures, different desires.

And the truth is, you turn the four-wheeler off, we're not in the four-wheeler. They both acted like the same dogs. They both sat down and drank the same water.

They both walk around. But the moment of test was when the four-wheeler was running. That yanked out Red's nature.

And the same thing for you and I. You can be here today and there's no four-wheeler going. There's nothing that's drawing your desires. The real test is when we're out there in the world, when we're living in the midst of the world, are we a righteous lot in the midst of a Sodom and Gomorrah? You can be because God has changed your desires.

He's made us new. This is a miracle to take a person who is a slave of sin and make him obedient, not robotically, but from the heart. Thanks be to God.

Darrell Winger, he writes this, the Christian's God-given ability to see and appreciate Christ sets him free from his former love for the world and its pleasures. Seeing Christ with the eyes of faith, he loves Him above all things. And his new affection motivates him to obey Christ consistently.

Yes, in one sense, it is what defines them as Christians. They follow Jesus rather than obeying their fleshly lusts because they find the satisfaction of knowing Him to be better than the satisfaction they formerly gained from sinning. Even though they might not articulate it clearly, right, you might not understand it, they know it by experience.

Love for Jesus is the natural product of regeneration. And it always displaces the desire for sin as a man's strongest affection. But your love for Christ is the desire that will affect your behavior the most.

As Jesus said, if you love Me, you will keep My commandments. So do you know this, Christian? You know Romans 6.6? Can you say to yourself this morning, I know that my old self is crucified with Him. Can you say that? Can you say 6.17? Thank You, Lord, that I who was once a slave of sin have become obedient from the heart.

Thank You, Lord. You did that. I didn't work it up.

Isn't that the beauty? The true Christian, you look back and it's like this is a miracle. It is a miracle. It should feel like a miracle.

You might fall in the mud, but you can't live there anymore. It is a miracle. You're not a pig anymore.

You're a sheep. It's opposed to your nature. I mean, I've still yet to do this.

I want to get a video. If anyone has a pig and a sheep, we can go video it sometime. But you throw the pig in the mud, he's going to stay there.

You throw the sheep in there, the sheep isn't going to stay there. Their nature's opposed to that. They're going to get out.

And you and I, maybe you fell in the mud this week, but Christian, look, you got out of the mud. That's an evidence of the Spirit of God's work in your life. And you might fall in the mud next week.

Don't fall into condemnation. You're no longer under law. You're under grace.

You're free. And no, you're not free to continue in sin, but if you really look, you don't want to continue in sin. You're delivered by desire.

God's given you a new want in your heart. I mean, this is incredible, these realities. Well, that's all I have.

Now, I do have a gift for all of you. I'm not that Christmassy of a person. Now, there is a caveat with the gift.

It's not a physical gift. But while I was in Missouri, I finished making an audio book of this book, *Delivered by Desire*, that Daryl Wingard wrote. And I was reminded of how biblically sound and impactful this book is.

And so I would encourage you, you can get the PDF online for free. But if you go to the new audio book site we started months ago called scrollreader.com, the first thing up there is going to be *Delivered by Desire*. And you can go listen.

It's about two and a half hours to that book, *Delivered by Desire*. Brethren, it is so full of truth. It's said in such a balanced way.

There's about three chapters where it's two guys in a park talking to each other. And he's giving counsel. I remember when that book first came out in 2011 and I got a copy of it, I remember reading chapter 1 and it dawned on me, huh, I don't counsel like this guy does.

I lay too much condemnation upon Christians who are struggling with lust. And so I really appreciate the book. It's not just to know these truths as a Christian, but to actually help you be a better counselor.

I mean, what do you do when someone comes to you and they're struggling with lust and they say they've looked at stuff on the internet? Do you have the wisdom and knowledge in how to approach that situation in a right biblical way where you won't look back and say, you know what, wow, I really drug them through the mud. I could have mentioned these truths to them and more greatly helped them and been a benefit to them. And so brethren, I'd encourage you, whether you read the PDF or get the book, I think they give the book away for free on their site where you hear the audio book, *Delivered by Desire*.

It is a thorough look at these truths that I've been trying to bring forth from Romans 6 this morning. So do you thank God for what He's done? It's a miracle. Let's pray.

Father, Lord, we do thank You. We thank You so much for what You've done. Lord, it's just a miracle to be here today, 15 years into the race.

Lord, there's a lot of people out there running a marathon this morning. And Lord, theirs is for rock and roll, but Lord, ours is for holiness and obedience and love for Christ. And Lord, we're thankful that You work in us both to will, that is the word desire.

You work in us to desire the right things and to work for Your good pleasure. Lord, we thank You for that. And yet, Lord, we realize, Paul says, I labored harder than the rest.

And we've got to work, Lord. Lord, we've got to work believing what is true about us. So, Lord, I pray You'd help these dear, precious Christians and myself to just have a renewed conviction to believe these truths.

That our old man was crucified. Lord, help us to put off the old man. Lord, help us to be who we are.

Lord, You said we're obedient from the heart. Father, I know all the temptations in this world Lord, that I've faced in 15 years. Lord, it's just miserable, the temptations, but we thank You there is always a way of escape.

And Father, I don't know what people have had different failures this week in their Christian life, but Lord, I pray that these truths would not be condemning for them, but they would be truths they would embrace and finally have a greater victory in their life because they believe what Your Word says. And Lord, if there are those here who don't know You, if this is not true of them, if they look and they can humbly say they're a slave of sin, Lord, I pray, would You do this work in their heart? Would You cause them to look to Your Son and live? And Lord, You promised life. Lord, life, we can go live for You, glorify You.

And so we're so thankful. Lord, we love You and we just thank You for Your goodness to us. In Christ's name, Amen.

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