

Ignorance, Prejudice

by Martyn-Lloyd Jones

The apostle Paul explains that people reject the Christian message because they are in a state of unbelief and ignorance, blinded by the devil, and that the root cause of prejudice is unbelief and ignorance.

Duration: 47:16

Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:12

Topics: "Ignorance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of recognizing our own failures and sins. He emphasizes the incredible love of God, who sent His Son to die for the sins of the world. The preacher also addresses the modern problem of immorality and the breakdown of morality in society. He challenges the idea that education and knowledge alone can solve these issues, highlighting the power of sin and the need for a transformation of the heart.

Transcript

The words to which I should like to call your attention this evening are to be found in the portion of scripture read to us, namely in the first epistle of Paul to Timothy, in the first chapter, and reading again verses twelve and thirteen. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief.

Now there in those words, this great and mighty apostle Paul says one of the most astonishing and remarkable things about himself, one of the most remarkable and astonishing things that we can ever hear. We all instinctively think of this great man as the mighty apostle, the great preacher of the gospel, the man who went round the then civilized world proclaiming this great good news, man under whose ministry many were converted, churches were established. We think of him as the incomparable teacher, the great writer of these mighty epistles which we have in the New Testament canon.

That's how we instinctively think of him. We think of him as one of the greatest, if not the greatest Christian who has ever lived. But here he reminds us, and we find it very difficult to believe this, but nevertheless it is the truth, he reminds us that he was not always thus.

There was a time when this man, this outstanding preacher of the gospel, was its most outstanding and bitter opponent. There had been a time when, as he tells us, he had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, an

injurious person. He not only was not a Christian, he regarded the Christian message as blasphemy.

He regarded the Lord Jesus Christ as a blasphemer, as one whose name should have been blotted out of history. And he thought that he was serving God and pleasing God when he went about to try to destroy the Christian church. This man, a soul of Tarsus, was undoubtedly the most agile, the most astute, and the most vigorous persecutor of the Christian church.

And here he reminds this young preacher, this disciple of his called Timothy, that that was once his state and case and condition. And then he tells him both why he ever was in such a state and how it ever came to pass that he was taken out of that state and condition and became this great and mighty apostle and preacher of the Christian faith. Now, it's an interesting thing always to consider the story of a great man.

Nothing is more beneficial than to read biography. It does us good to rub our little minds with the great minds of the ages and of the centuries. And no man is more worthy of our consideration than this mighty man, the apostle Paul.

He is indubitably one of the great masterminds of all the ages and all the centuries. I remember how during the last war, I think it was in 1944, I saw that a secular society in London, one of the learned societies, the British Academy, had decided to have a series of lectures on what they called the masterminds of the centuries. And I looked at the list, and there it was, the name of the apostle Paul.

Whatever your attitude, whatever your position, with respect to Christianity, you have to acknowledge and to agree that this is one of the masterminds of the centuries. Here is a man who has left his imprint upon the whole course of human history. Here is the man who first brought the gospel to the continent of Europe.

And it was from Europe that the gospel came to this newer continent. He is worthy of consideration in and of himself. But I am not here tonight simply to talk to you about the apostle Paul as such.

I am directing your attention to what he tells us here in this passing word of autobiography, because I want to show you that here he incidentally deals with a very modern problem, with a very modern situation. And the problem, the situation with which he deals can be put like this. He shows us here very clearly why it is that those who are not Christian are in that position.

Now I say this is the most urgent problem. We are living in a world that is on fire. We are living in a world that is in a desperate condition.

We have already had two world wars in this one century. We can see them piling up these horrible armaments. We can see the dreaded possibilities that lie ahead of us.

The world is in terrible trouble. But here we have the answer, we have the solution. And the great question is, why is it that men and women with the world, especially as it is tonight, why is it that they reject this message? Why is it that everybody in the world isn't a Christian at this moment? Well now the apostle here gives us the answer to the question.

And he puts it in terms of himself and his former experience. He said, I was formerly a persecutor and a blasphemer and an injurious person, but I did it ignorantly, in unbelief. What is it, I ask again, that accounts for the fact that men and women are not Christian? Now here is a very modern problem.

A problem that you find discussed in the papers, in the books, in the journals, often on the television and on the radio. What is the answer? Well, before I hold before you the apostle's answer, let me show you the complete and entire fallacy of many of the explanations that are being offered to us at the present time. I want to show you how this one man, in what he says here, gives the lie direct to what is so popularly thought and taught at the present moment with regard to this most vital question.

What are the reasons that are given today commonly by men and women for not being Christian? Well, I suppose the commonest of all is this. They tell us that they are not Christian because of their ability, because of their brain power, because of their reason, because of their understanding. They say, you know, you people, you are Christians just because, well, you lack intelligence.

They say backward peoples, uninstructed people, people who have much ability are generally religious. They very unkindly sometimes put it like this, that religion is all right for women and children, but not for a man, not for one who thinks, who's got a mind and who can reason. That, I think you'll agree, is a very common explanation that is given today.

And yet if we had no other argument to bring against this idea, we've got more than enough in this one statement. Here is, I say, one of the masterminds of all the centuries. Once upon a time he was not a Christian, but then he became a Christian.

Yes, and he still had the same brain, the same intellect, the same power of reason, the same understanding, the same logical ability. Look at his great epistles. Look at them as masterpieces of argumentation, of reasoning, and of deduction, and of exposition of the great and the mighty truth.

His mind comes out, his reason, his understanding, his epistles are full of it. But the point I'm establishing is this. Here he is at one time, he wasn't a Christian, then later he is a Christian, but he's got the same mind in the two positions.

So isn't it obvious that whatever else it is that decides whether a man is a Christian or not, it's not his brain power, it's not his intelligence, it is not his power of reason. This man alone is more than enough to prove it, and he's not the only one, of course. I could demonstrate in the same way, exactly the same point, in that mighty man of God, a few centuries later, the great and famous Saint Augustine.

There was this brilliant philosopher, another mastermind, yes, but living an immoral life, keeping his mistress. But then he becomes a Christian. Has he jettisoned his mind? Has he ceased to be intellectual? Read his books.

Read his mighty work on the city of God, and you'll see that the great, subtle, mighty brain is still in operation. The same ability, the same everything. He wasn't a Christian, he becomes a Christian, but the brain remains a constant.

So you see, isn't it obvious that that, whatever else may be the explanation, that that isn't the explanation. But indeed, I needn't take you back into history. It is simply the fact to say today that so often you find men that one period of their lives not Christian, then they become Christian.

And all the ability and all that they have and possess is as evident in the second state as it was in the first. Or look at it like this. Haven't you often seen two men? They were boys together in school.

They were always in competition. It was one or the other who was always first. The same in the college, the same everywhere.

They seem to be equal in ability, yet one of them becomes a Christian, the other doesn't. What makes the difference? Well, it obviously, it's the matter of intellect, because you can't choose between the two in this respect. And yet there are so many today who tell us that they're not Christian simply because they're thinkers, simply because of their great minds and their great intelligence.

This one man alone is more than sufficient as an answer to all such sophistry. But then another very common thing we are told is this, that it isn't so much a matter of brains and understanding as of knowledge and of information. They say, well, you know, if I'd been alive a hundred years ago, no doubt I'd have been a Christian, because then we hadn't the knowledge we've got now.

It was all right to be Christian then. We hadn't split the atom then. We didn't have all this marvelous scientific knowledge that we've now got.

They say it's entirely a matter of knowledge. And those of us who are Christian, they tell us we're in that position because we are either obscurantists who refuse to face the truth or else we are too ignorant to be able to assimilate the truth. We just don't know and we are holding on to these ancient shibboleths.

If only we had this new knowledge and information, we'd soon shed it and cease to be Christian. But here again the argument is exactly and precisely the same. Of course there have been tremendous advances in knowledge in this present century and particularly since the last war.

But my dear friend, what has all that knowledge got to do with the subject matter that we are considering? Does it tell us anything different about God? Does it tell us anything new even about men? What is the effect of all this modern scientific knowledge upon the problems considered here? No, no. It's irrelevant to this discussion. Not only that there are men, thank God, who have this scientific knowledge and still are Christian.

If you could prove to me that no man who has scientific knowledge has ever been a Christian, then I'd accept your argument, but you can't. There are men who have the same knowledge and yet one's a Christian, one isn't a Christian. It's obvious.

It isn't a matter of knowledge. It isn't a matter of information. It isn't a matter of being in this scientific age.

That's not the explanation. And the third and the only other explanation that I will hold before you which I want to show you is given the lie direct in our text tonight, is this. That after all this is just a matter of psychology.

You're familiar with the argument that one man has got the religious temperament or he develops a religious complex. The other man hasn't got it. They're kind enough to say that well, they don't blame us, but they just say you happen to have that and I don't happen to have it.

And it's all a question whether you do or whether you don't. Some people are musical, some are not, some are poetic, and others are not. Some are scientific and some are not scientific.

So they say some are religious and some are not religious. And so they try to evade the whole issue in terms of psychology or temperament or something along that line. Indeed they've sometimes gone further

and have suggested that the real trouble with those of us who are Christian is that we are mentally diseased.

We are psychopathic. We are not quite normal. We are ill persons.

You know towards the end of the last century it was a very popular thing for the theologians to say that the Apostle Paul and his conversion which we are looking at was nothing but a very clear and an obvious case of epilepsy. They say the thing is obvious. Look at him on the road to Damascus.

He has this traumatic, climactic experience. It's a typical attack of epilepsy. He falls to the ground.

He sees a great light before he does so. Typical attack of epilepsy. And so they try to explain the change in this great man's life in terms of an epileptic fit and an epileptic state and condition.

I don't want to wear you with all this. Let me tell you what I consider to be the finest and the best answer I've ever heard to that particular suggestion. It was in the book by an old German theologian.

He put it like this. He said if what happened to the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus was due to nothing but epilepsy well then he said all I can say is this. Oh blessed epilepsy.

Oh that it became an epidemic. And oh that we all became epileptics. How monstrous is the suggestion.

If ever there was a balanced, integrated, well-oriented man it was this mighty Apostle Paul. This man who hurls at us these mighty argumentations and disputations. This man I say who is outstanding as a benefactor to the entire human race and its long and checkered history.

No no my friends. You don't have the explanation of why people are not Christian there. Well what is the explanation? The Apostle tells us.

I did it ignorantly he says in unbelief. I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and an injurious person. But why was I like that? Well he says I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

Now here is the explanation. Why are people not Christian? Nothing to do with their intellects. Nothing to do with their knowledge and information.

Nothing to do with their psychological states. There are people of every conceivable psychological state and condition in the ranks of the Christian church. Some are phlegmatic, some are mercurial.

Some are optimistic, some are pessimistic. They are all Christians together. It's got nothing to do with these things.

But this is the explanation. It is a state or a condition. I was in unbelief he says.

So you see that he describes it as some curious kind of state or condition in which a man is enveloped and in which he is more or less helpless. Let me expound what he says because he himself helps us by what he says in his second epistle to the Corinthians. He says, If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest they believe the glorious gospel of Christ.

You see he says the whole thing is due to the fact that men are blinded. It's as if a man were in a mist. There's nothing wrong with his eyes.

There's nothing wrong in his power of seeing. But if he's enshrouded in a mist he won't be able to see anything. Let me give you an illustration.

I remember the first time I had the pleasure of visiting Northern Ireland and a friend said that he would take my wife and myself for a tour around the northern part of Ireland and he said we'll reach a point when you'll be able to catch a glimpse he said, of Scotland where Dr. Fitch comes from. And we looked forward. We went with bright sunshine and we were looking forward to this particular corner when suddenly we were to have a view of Scotland.

But when we got there we saw no sight of Scotland. Why not? A heavy mist had come down. Now the point I'm establishing is this there was nothing wrong with my eyesight and Scotland was there but I couldn't see it.

It doesn't matter how good how perfect your eyesight if there's a mist you can't see though the reality is there I was in a fog I was in a mist. That's the trouble with the unbeliever says Paul. I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

I was enshrouded I was covered by this darkness this mist, this opacity and I couldn't see. Here is the explanation still as to why men and women are not Christian. It is this terrible condition this condition produced by the devil the god of this world this blindness this mist, this confusion that he creates round and about us and though we have excellent faculties that are of no value to us we are blinded by the god of this world.

But then he says you see this condition is something that works itself out and it works itself out like this. It fills us with prejudices. That was the trouble with Saul of Tarsus.

He was a Pharisee and a very wonderful Pharisee. He began to hear about Jesus of Nazareth about his teaching, about his claims then about his death and about his perpetrated resurrection and he hated it all, he dismissed it all. Why? Well it didn't fit in with his theories it didn't fit in with his preconceived notions and ideas.

He was a man of prejudices. That was the trouble with all the Jews. There they were waiting for the coming of their Messiah and yet when he came they rejected him.

Why? He didn't fit in with their program. They were expecting an earthly king. They thought he'd set himself up in Jerusalem.

They thought he'd gather a wonderful army and conquer all their enemies and Israel would be the greatest nation on the face of the earth. But he died in utter weakness upon a cross. That the Messiah they said that's a blasphemer, away with him, crucify him.

Prejudice. This is why men and women are unbelievers. This is why they're not Christians.

It isn't because of their great brains and their great knowledge. It is that though they look at the facts they don't see them. They're blinded by the prejudice.

And the prejudice means this. It means that you prejudge. A prejudiced man is a man who brings in the verdict before he's heard the evidence.

He arrives at his decision before he's looked at the facts. And that is the position with every man who is not a Christian tonight. He's a man who is hopelessly blinded by his prejudices.

Here was this great man with his great brain hearing about this Jesus of Nazareth these tremendous things and yet he dismissed them. He hated them. It was nothing but sheer prejudice produced by this state and condition of unbelief.

Now I want to establish this point. It's such an important one. Prejudice is one of the greatest curses in the world tonight.

It doesn't only apply to religion, to Christianity. It applies to every realm and walk and department of life. Let me give you one very remarkable notable illustration of what I'm saying.

A few years ago you remember Dr. Arnold Toynbee produced his massive study of history in ten volumes. It's a history of the world. It's famous.

Everybody was reading this. A study of history by Dr. Arnold Toynbee. I remember very well when those volumes came out they were reviewed in a certain journal by another professor of history Professor A.J.P. Taylor of Oxford.

Dr. Toynbee incidentally was also an Oxford man. Here are two brilliant professors of history produced by the same University of Oxford. Listen to A.J.P. Taylor writing a review on the work of Professor Arnold Toynbee the study of history.

This is what he said. The events of the past can be made to prove anything if they are arranged in a suitable pattern and Professor Toynbee has succeeded in forcing them into a scheme that was in his head from the beginning. In other words, A.J.P. Taylor has a very drastic criticism to offer upon the theory of Professor Arnold Toynbee.

He says what he's done is this. He started out with a prejudice and he's looked at the facts of history and he's twisted them and made them fit into his theory that was in his head when he started out. But of course, Professor Arnold Toynbee says exactly the same about Professor A.J.P. Taylor.

You see the position is this. Here are two brilliant, able historians and philosophers of history. They are looking at exactly the same facts and yet they arrive at diametrically opposed conclusions.

It isn't a knowledge of facts. It isn't brain power and ability. These two men are equal in these respects.

What is it? Well, Taylor says that it's nothing but prejudice. It depends what you start out with, he says. You can twist the facts and make them fit into any theory you like.

That's the effect of being in a condition of unbelief. It leads to prejudice. And here was this great man with his great brain hearing these facts and he hated them and he blasphemed them.

That, my dear friends, is the explanation of why men and women are not Christian. It's nothing but prejudice. We've probably, most of us, known something about this from experience.

You know what it is to pass through that stage of adolescence. The boy wants to be a man. What's to be a man? Well, a man is to smoke cigarettes and to say that Christianity is played out, that there's nothing in it.

That makes you a man. You don't want to go to church any longer. You don't want to go to Sunday school. You don't want to read your Bible. You don't want to be bothered with religion. You become a man now.

And as a man you say there's nothing in it and you dismiss it. And they do dismiss it. But they've never read the Bible.

They really know nothing about Christianity at all. You just ask them next time when they dismiss Christianity with a wave of the hand, say, well now tell me, what is Christianity? What does it say? What does it teach? What does it offer? What's its history? What difference has it made to men and the life of this world? Ask them and you'll find they don't know. That's prejudice.

That's to be in a state and condition of unbelief which blinds you and makes you incapable of seeing the glories of the truth that are confronting you. I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And then, of course, when you've got a prejudice you must defend it.

So you put up your arguments. You talk about everything except yourself. You ask who was Cain's wife and what was that animal that swallowed Jonah.

It's all just to push it away somewhere there. You never face the real issues. That's prejudice.

That's to be in unbelief. That's why Saul of Tarsus was not a Christian. That is why men and women are still not Christian.

But you notice his second explanation. I must just refer to this. He says that this state and condition of unbelief produced a terrible ignorance.

This is, I say, the most remarkable thing this man ever said. Fancy this man saying that he was ignorant. He was such a knowledgeable man.

The favorite pupil of Gamaliel, the man who always came out top of the class, the man who exceeded everybody else in his knowledge, the man who could preach as an equal to the Stoics and Epicureans on Mars Hill in Athens. He could quote their poets. This most knowledgeable man, he said, I did it ignorantly.

In unbelief. He was appallingly ignorant, he discovered. What was he ignorant of? Well, he was ignorant of the very things that any man in this congregation, any woman in this congregation who is not a Christian is ignorant of.

Let me tell you just some of them. What was Saul of Tarsus ignorant of? Well, the most amazing thing was this. He was ignorant about the law of God.

What, says somebody, that's nonsense. He was a professor in the law of God. He was a leading Pharisee.

He can't have been ignorant about the law of God, yet he tells us in many places that that was his most appalling ignorance. He thought he knew all about it, but he discovered that he was ignorant about its most essential elements. He tells the Philippians in the third chapter that concerning the righteousness which is of the law, blameless.

He tells the Galatians that in his knowledge of the law he exceeded all his fellow countrymen, and yet he discovered his appalling ignorance of the law of God. How? Well, like this. Like all the Pharisees, and

really like all the Jews, he thought that the mere fact that the Jews possessed the law of God, some or another, put them right with God.

You see, they used to despise the Gentiles, these lesser breeds without the law. They say they haven't got the oracles of God. They don't know.

God didn't give them the law. He gave us the law through Moses, through the mediation of angels. We are the possessors of the law of God.

And because they had the law, they seemed to persuade themselves that they kept the law. But then he discovered that a mere possession of the law means nothing. A mere intellectual knowledge of the law is very little.

It is those who do the law that are justified before God. It isn't merely the possession, it's the doing. And he'd never thought of that.

As long as you've got it and were interested, you were all right, like so many today who think because they're religious they're Christian. And then another thing he discovered about his ignorance of the law was this, that if you break one point of the law, it doesn't help you at all that you've kept the rest. The law has to be kept as a whole.

It has to be kept entirely. The law is indivisible. And if you fail at any one point, you've broken it, and you're guilty and condemned before God.

He'd never realized that. None of these Pharisees had ever realized that. But he later discovered it.

He was ignorant on this point. And then, of course, another vital point he discovered about the law was that what matters about the law is not the letter but the spirit. Oh, and here was a tragic bit of ignorance.

Our Lord exposes this ignorance in his Sermon on the Mount. You remember how he puts it. The Pharisee stood up and he said, I've never committed murder.

I've never killed anybody. Wait a minute, says Christ. Have you ever looked at your brother and said, thou fool? If you have, you've already murdered him in your heart.

And then he said, you Pharisees, you say, I have never committed adultery. They thought that as long as they'd not committed the act of adultery, that all was well. But our Lord says to them, Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust with her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.

It isn't the letter. It is the spirit that matters. It isn't some mechanical obedience to the law.

It isn't some mechanical external morality and goodness and decency and niceness that matters. It's the spirit of the law. He'd never realized that.

That was his tragic failure. But above all, he'd never realized the ultimate object and purpose of the law. What was it? Was it just that men shouldn't do some things and should do other things? No, no.

The object of the law is that men might worship God and might live to his glory. Here's the law. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy mind and all thy strength.

That's it. And the second is thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. He'd never realized that.

Like every other proud, self-satisfied, conceited Pharisee, as long as he didn't do certain things, he thought he was perfect. And then he discovered that this was the question. Is he loving God with all his soul and being? And likewise, this whole matter of coveting, he hadn't realized the importance of that, but he began to realize it, that the tenth commandment is thou shalt not covet, thou shalt not desire thy neighbor's wife or his ox or his ass or his maidservant or his manservant.

Coveting? He'd never seen it. So, you see, he was appallingly ignorant concerning the law of God about which he thought he knew so much. But he was ignorant in a second respect, and that was this.

He was ignorant of the true nature and character of sin. You see, to the Pharisee, sin just means doing certain things. The Pharisee always thinks of sins, particular actions.

And he never stops to consider a man's whole state and condition. And that was the trouble with the Apostle Paul. He tells us in another bit of autobiography in the seventh chapter of the great epistle to the Romans.

And here he exposes the whole fallacy of his former position. He thought he was all right. He says, I was alive without the law once.

He thought that all was well with him as long as he hadn't done a particular number of things which he and the others had carefully listed. But the law suddenly became alive to him through the working of the Holy Spirit, and then he began to see himself and his own inward nature. And this is what he says, For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

He began to know the truth about himself and his own nature and the power of sin within himself. It isn't just a matter of a man's will. Sin is a power.

Sin is a great influence in the very warp and woof of man's nature, something that drags him down. Listen to him. For that which I do, I allow not.

For what I would, that I do not. But what I hate, that do I. I know that in me, that is to say, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing, for the will is present with me. But how to perform that which is good, I find not.

For the good that I would, I do not, and the evil which I would not, that I do. He says, What's the matter with me? I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward men.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. What does he mean? Oh, you see, he means this, that the trouble with us all is this evil power that is within us. In our better states and with our mind, we know these things are wrong and yet we do them.

Why? Oh, the power of sin, lust, desire, passion. And it's stronger than our minds, our understanding, our knowledge and everything. It gets us down.

Oh, wretched men that I am. It's because a man doesn't realize that about himself, that he's not a Christian. Men talk liberally about imitating Christ.

They talk about idealism and about doing good. Oh, my dear friend, it's an easy thing to talk, but do you find it easy to perform? You know a certain thing is wrong and it does you harm. Why do you still go on

with it? The answer is you can't help it, you're a slave.

It's the power of sin, the law in your members. The apostle knew nothing about that, the soul of Tarsus. He thought, therefore, that he could put himself right with God.

He trusted his willpower. He trusted his own power to act. But here he finds this fatal paralysis.

Indeed, he discovered something even worse. He discovered that sin is such a power in the life of men that it even twists and perverts the very law of God to serve its own desire. Listen to him in chapter 7 of Romans, verse 5. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

Listen to him again in verse 13. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid! But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. Now, that being interpreted means this, that the power of sin in our lives is so great that even when the law of God speaks to us and tells us not to do certain things and warns us of the consequences, instead of helping us it actually makes us worse.

The motions of sin which were produced, energized, inflamed by the law, he means this, that when the law tells me not to do a thing, it tells me what the thing is, and because I'm evil I want to do it. Now, my friends, this is very important at the present time. We are confronted in all the nations today by a most appalling moral problem, the breakdown of morality, all this business of sex, the problem of the teenager, the infidelity, the divorce.

What's the matter? Well, we are being told that what is needed is that our children should be educated and given a knowledge of sex. We are told that it's all due to ignorance. The Victorians, they used to hide it and they didn't talk about it, and now the way to cure the problem is to talk about it, to teach the children, to introduce them to all these questions about sex, and once they'll have the knowledge they'll never sin again.

Oh, what a tragic, what a dangerous fallacy. Listen to the apostle's answer to that. He says, you know, sin is such a power in men that if you tell children certain things and tell them not to do them, what you're really doing is to introduce them to them.

You're arousing a curiosity in them. They want to know more about it. To the pure all things are pure.

Yes, but if we are not pure, even that which is pure becomes defiled. There is nothing that I know of that is so dangerous today as this morality teaching. It is inflaming the passions.

We pretend we want knowledge that we may not sin. What really happens is that we are lusting, we are delighting in the knowledge, we want to do it all the more, and the more we are told not to, the more we desire to do it. The apostle was absolutely ignorant about all this, and the modern man is ignorant about it.

That is why he puts his faith in education. That is why he puts his faith in politics. That is why he says he doesn't need God.

He doesn't need religion. He doesn't need power. He can do it, he says.

He doesn't know he's paralyzed. A law in my members dragging me down. David, the king of Israel, he knew something about this.

You read his 51st sermon, he'll tell you. He committed adultery, and then to cover it he committed murder. And he was convicted by the Spirit of God, and his heart is breaking.

And this is what he says, Against thee, the only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight. And the thing that worries David is this, not even so much that he'd done these horrible things as the fact that he'd ever desired to do them. So he cries out in his anguish, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

It isn't my head, it isn't my knowledge, it's my heart. It's the lust, the passion, the evil. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Have you realized your problem, my dear friend? It's got nothing to do with your brains. It's got nothing to do with your scientific knowledge. It's your evil heart.

It's the lust, the passion, the power of the God of this world, the law that is in your members. You're a wretched man. The apostles knew nothing about that, as Saul of Tarsus.

I did it ignorantly, in unbelief. And that in turn, you see, led to a further ignorance, that he didn't realize his appalling and terrible danger. He thought he was all right, as a self-righteous, self-satisfied Pharisee.

He thought he was pleasing God. But the moment the law became alive to him, he says, I died. I was utterly condemned.

I saw that all my righteousness was as filthy rags. Do you remember those glowing words in which he puts that in writing to the Philippians? Let me read them to you. Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, the Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, Pharisee concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

But what things were gained to me, those I counted loss for Christ, ye are doubtless. And I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dying, refuse, manure, that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is after the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith in Jesus Christ. What happened? Well, what happened was this, that he suddenly awoke to the fact that he was guilty before God, that the whole world lieth guilty before God, that there is none righteous, no, not one, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and that he was amongst them.

Here he says in writing to Timothy, of whom I am the chief, the chief of sinners. He had never known it. He was self-satisfied.

He was good. He was moral, like so many today. I don't need to be a Christian, says the man.

I pay my twenty shillings in the pound. I am a good man. I am a moral man.

I am a good husband. I am faithful to my family. I am trying to do a little good in this world.

I am all right. All right. Do you know the test that is facing you? Here it is.

Not that you are moral and good and decent. Are you loving the Lord, your God, with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength? Are you loving your neighbor as yourself? Are you living to the glory of God and to his eternal praise? That is the test. And the moment you realize it, you realize

you are lost.

What about your heart? What about your imaginations? What about your lusts and desires? What about the things that play in your mind? All is known to God. It is because men and women are ignorant of their state and condition as sinners, that they are under the condemnation of the law of God and are facing an eternity of shame and of suffering and of punishment, that they reject the Son of God and blaspheme his name, even as Saul of Tarsus did. I was ignorant.

I didn't know I was a sinner. I didn't know that I was hell bound. I didn't know of the eternity that was awaiting me, of suffering and agony and useless remorse.

He was ignorant of it. And it is because men and women still don't think of that, that they are still not Christian. They don't face the end.

They don't face death. They don't face the judgment of God. They don't know about them.

But that is ignorance. And lastly, for me to close, he was appallingly ignorant about the mercy and the grace and the kindness and the love and the compassion of God. I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, he says, who hath enabled me for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was a blasphemer, etc., and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Oh, what an ignorance.

Here he was persecuting and blaspheming Jesus of Nazareth. Why? He didn't know that he was the Lord of glory. He didn't realize he was the Son of God.

In his self-satisfaction and self-righteousness as a Pharisee, he'd never seen any need of him and he didn't recognize him when he came. He was ignorant of the love and the mercy of God. Why? Well, he'd never seen any need of it.

He was like the Pharisee depicted by our Lord in his famous parable. You remember the parable of the publican and the Pharisee that went up into the temple to pray? The Pharisee came right to the front and he said, I thank thee God that I'm not as other men are and especially as this publican. I fast twice in the week.

I give a tenth of my goods to feed the poor. He never asked for any mercy. He didn't realize his need of it.

He didn't ask for pardon. Why? He was perfect. He didn't ask for compassion.

He doesn't say anything about love. Why? He knew nothing about them. He was completely ignorant.

And that is the trouble with the modern man. It is this appalling ignorance of the love of God and the grace of God and the kindness and the compassion of God. Saul of Tarsus blasphemed and was a persecutor because he knew nothing about it.

He didn't know that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. He regarded Jesus Christ, Son of God, as a carpenter, a

blasphemer. He didn't know that He was the Lord of glory who had forsaken the courts of heaven in order to save people like him, Saul of Tarsus.

He didn't know that the love of God was so great that though a man may spend a lifetime in blaspheming God's name and spurning the vice divine, God is still ready to be patient and to wait for him. In me first, he says, God has set forth an example of long suffering even while he was persecuting and blaspheming. God and the Lord Jesus still loved him, still were drawing him, still waiting, still patient.

He knew nothing about it. But later he came to discover it and his whole attitude changed and his entire life was revolutionized. That's why men and women are still not Christian.

It's got nothing to do with intellect. It's got nothing to do with scientific knowledge. It's got nothing to do with psychology and temperament.

Oh, but it has everything to do with this, that a man begins to realize his failure, begins to see the running sore of his soul, begins to see that he's a real cad, though he may appear to be the paragon of all the virtues. He begins to see himself as he is. And then he begins to know something of this wonderful love of God that though the world had rebelled against him and turned his perfect world into chaos, still didn't forsake it, still loved it, and loved it to the extent of sending out his only begotten Son from the glory everlasting into a world like this with its sin, its shame, its horror.

He sent Him even to the death of the cross, to a grave, and then raised Him again.

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