

Conviction and Condemnation - Part 1

by Michael L. Brown

To overcome condemnation, we must understand God's posture towards us as his children, learn to take God at his word, and meditate on Scripture and passages of God's love.

Duration: 45:20

Scripture: Romans 8:29

Topics: "Condemnation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding God's posture towards believers. He explains that God desires to bless his children and wants them to live a righteous life. The preacher also mentions the process of transformation through the blood of Jesus, where believers are changed from death to life and from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God. The sermon highlights the intensity of emotions and the conviction experienced during a revival season.

Transcript

Father, I pray this morning for everyone hearing this, Lord, for those that will hear this message around the world via internet, Lord, you know those that are being spoken to right now, and I pray, God, that your Spirit would give illumination to your Word, that the eyes of our understanding would be open. Father, that truth would penetrate, and that your Word, your Word of truth, would set us free from wrong conceptions and wrong living, and help us, Father, to walk more closely to you, and help us to bear much more fruit for you. Thank you, Father, for speaking to us with clarity today, in Jesus' name, Amen.

You can be seated. When you are in a revival season, or a revival atmosphere, things will happen with great intensity. The emotions will often be more intense.

People are being radically converted. There may be tears of conviction. There may be roaring under conviction.

This is common in revival. There may be shouts of celebration and victory, because people are being set free. This is common in revival.

And the intensity of the message increases as God is waking up a sleeping church, as God is calling His people back. The message of repent, repent, repent is sounded over and over and over. And any revival that is ultimately not a revival of holiness cannot be called a revival.

Revival that does not produce holiness in the church is not true revival. And with holiness, there will be conviction of sin. There will be times when people are completely undone in the presence of God.

I remember when I wrote the conviction chapter in my holy fire book, that I literally stepped away from the computer as I was typing while on the road ministering, and started to jump up and down with joy because I was so overcome with the power of the subject, how deeply God brought people under conviction. How deeply the Spirit searched hearts. How radically people were undone and saw no hope except the mercy and grace of God.

The problem is that many people do not understand the difference between conviction and condemnation. And many people who hear the message of holiness, which is a message of grace, we are holy by the grace of God, but they hear the message of holiness, they hear the standards of God, they hear the preaching of repentance, they walk around condemned and hopeless all the time. Instead of being set free, instead of repentance leading to refreshing in their own lives, instead of overcoming sin by the message, they tend to get dragged down.

And I found, interestingly enough, that people who tend to get dragged down and walk around feeling self-condemned all the time, feel that way no matter what atmosphere there is. When you preach repentance, they say, I'm a wretch, God doesn't want anything to do with me. When you preach the love of God, they say, I'm not worthy of the love of God.

But in an atmosphere like this, with intense conviction, in a revival atmosphere where God is exposing sin among the people of God and in the world, it is all the more easy to fall prey to condemnation, and to run from conviction because of a misunderstanding. Not only that, in the contemporary American church today, we tend to be a bunch of softies. I mean, the way we are, if we don't like the preaching, and I'm telling you this for channels to another TV preacher, and if we don't like the preaching of one particular church, if it gets in our face a little bit, we just get up and go somewhere else.

I wrote a book called It's Time to Rock the Boat, and there's a chapter in there called Connoisseur Christians and a Gourmet Gospel. You know, we like it a certain way. And when someone starts to get under our skin, when someone starts to make us uncomfortable, when someone starts to hit home and nail us, we'd rather run.

When real conviction comes, we say, oh, I don't like that condemning kind of preaching. It makes me feel bad. I like the preaching that builds me up and makes me feel good.

Problem is, if there's sin and junk, God does not want to build you up and make you feel good. He wants you to see how ugly that sin is so that you can get rid of it, and then you can feel good. And you cut out the spiritual cancer so you can be healthy.

But I want to address this in a practical way today. How to overcome condemnation. How to live a life where you're open to the conviction of God, to the purifying of God, to the purging of God, to the pruning of God, but you don't walk around condemned all the time.

Let me say it again. Some people live defeated, discouraged lives that are by no means free from sin, because they feel condemned when they hear a message of holiness. Other people just cast it off immediately because the slightest thing that starts to convict them, they run from.

There is a biblical balance, and it's really not all that mysterious. There are simple truths from the Lord. If you can hold on to these, no matter how hot the preaching gets, no matter how piercing the sword of the Spirit is, no matter how deep the probing of the Lord goes, you welcome it, because you're not condemned, because this is the work of a loving father on children that he has predestined to glory through his son Jesus, that he has set aside through his son to be changed into his likeness.

He's working on us. It's a process of good. So we'll start in Romans, the eighth chapter, maybe the verses that you would immediately think of if you're dealing with the subject of overcoming condemnation.

I will give you about eight points. Romans 8, verse 1. Therefore, well, you know the first rule when you're reading the Bible in this, when you see the word therefore, you have to find out what it's there for. There's a context that's been going on for several chapters.

Really, there's a discussion talking about condemnation that goes back to the fifth chapter of Romans, and then our victory over sin in the sixth chapter, the struggle with sin in the seventh chapter, the life of the Spirit in the eighth chapter. There's a theme that Paul's been talking about, and you may find it interesting to know that the Greek noun for condemnation was used here in Romans 8 and in Romans 5, and there are related words that are used throughout the Greek New Testament, but this word for condemnation only occurs right here, Romans 5, verses 16 and 18, and Romans 8, verse 1. So Paul says, therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Some of your translations may read, you do not live according to the sinful nature, but according to the Spirit.

You might simply say that is understood from the concept of being in Christ Jesus. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because, through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. What the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did, by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering, and so he condemned sin and sinful man in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us who do not live according to the sinful nature, according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

He is not saying there is no condemnation because God has simply forgiven all your sins. He's saying there is now no condemnation because God has changed you and you live differently than you lived before. Yes, he has forgiven you, but you are not condemned because you now live in obedience to God, whereas before your life was characterized by disobedience.

Before you were a slave of the flesh, a slave of sin, now you're a slave of righteousness. Before Satan was our master, now Jesus is our master. There's a difference, not just God's forgiveness, but his changing of our lives.

Someone said years ago the only proof of the new birth is the new life. We're not talking just about praying a prayer or saying words, we're talking about being transformed by the blood of Jesus, being changed, going from death to life, from darkness to light, from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God. We'll come back to these verses, but I just wanted to say that so we don't miss what Paul's writing here.

Number one, remember this is one of eight, if you only have one page. Number one, to help you overcome condemnation, you must understand God's posture towards you. You must understand God's posture towards you.

How does God feel about you as his child? How does God look at you as his child? What lies at the foundation of everything God does for you as his child? You must understand that God wants to bless you. It's his desire. If he can do anything, he would see you living a right life so he can bless you.

You're not second-class, second-rate, reject. He will welcome you in even though he would rather not. One day, you know, you said the magic words, you prayed the prayer, so he has to accept you.

But when you get to heaven, he'll have a little slum area for you and the other rejects. Now that's not God's heart towards you. That's not God's heart.

God's desire is to bless you. God's desire is to fellowship with you. God's desire is to do good to you.

He is a righteous judge, and there is no compromise in him. And on the day we stand before him, if we have not been cleansed through the blood of Jesus, if he has not borne our sins and changed us, we will stand before God and there will be no way out. There will be no excuse.

There will be no appeal. There'll be no lawyer that we can hire. There'll be no returns.

It's over. He will bring a perfectly righteous verdict, and we will be lost forever. That same righteous judge is the most compassionate, kind, long-suffering, gracious being in the universe, that he is perfectly righteous.

His desire is not to cast off. His desire is not to condemn. His desire is not to just, we're all put up with you, but don't ever talk to me again.

When you pray, it's like, him again? He's got another request? You know, some of us almost cries at God, I don't know what you're talking about. I sent my son to die for you. God took the initiative.

When we were yet sinners, Messiah died for us. God commends his love towards us when we were ungodly wretches. The perfect son of God laid down his life for us.

See, I don't feel that. You don't have to feel it. You have to renew your mind to the truth.

Most people that walk around condemned do so because their understanding is messed up, because they're driven by their emotions and their feeling instead of by the Word. God wants to bless you. He wants to fellowship with you forever.

You need to meditate on that. It is God's desire to fellowship with you forever. Think back, you know, maybe when you were young and you first liked somebody, you found out they liked you.

Wow. Couldn't believe it. I mean, you knew you liked them, but for them to like you, you could hardly... Wow, they like you.

Think of the fact, you know, and you're thinking about that person. You want to, you know, you get serious, but you want to spend the rest of your life with me, with nobody else. I'm the one for you.

Uh-huh. Can hardly believe it. Except for some of you who are so egotistical that you would be nice enough to let someone like you.

But for most normal people, you know, you're, wow, you feel the same way about me. Think of the fact that Almighty God would like nothing more than to spend eternity together with you and to show you the

riches of His grace and His glory. He would like nothing more than to do that, to have you a whole, righteous, cleansed person and love within that He can shower His love on you.

You've got to accept that. It is the Word. It is Scripture.

Even the most sinful, wicked person, God's desire would be that they repent and live. And if they refuse, then His righteous desire is to judge them. Then He says plainly in Ezekiel 18, I don't have any pleasure in the death of the wicked.

I take no delight in it. I would rather that they turn and live. He says through the Prophet Isaiah in the 48th chapter, He said, if only you would listen to my commandments, then your peace would have been like a river.

It would have been wonderful. I could have blessed you. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem in Matthew 23.

How often I would have gathered your children together. The hen gathers the chicks under the wings, but you weren't willing. I wanted to.

I wanted to bless. I wanted to do good to you. So you must settle that in your heart.

You must understand God's posture towards you. I heard a story once about a pastor with a young girl. And she came to him.

She said, I just can't say the words. I love you, Jesus. I love you.

I just can't tell Jesus. I love you. I don't know why.

And the pastor said, don't worry about it. I just want you every day, every time you think about it to say, Jesus loves me. Jesus loves me.

Jesus loves me. It's the pastor talking to a little girl in his church. And a week later, she came back.

She said, I love Jesus. Get it settled in your heart. You know, when God corrects me, I get excited.

The flesh doesn't like it. And you know, birth, you know, there's always a little pride, flesh, and every one of us, God keeps dealing with it when we think we're, you know, we've completely overcome and he shows us another area. That's just growing in grace.

It's one thing to have habitual practice sin in your life and to call yourself a child of God. You deny it by your lifestyle. It's another thing to say, God continues to refine me and purify me into the image of Jesus.

I'm still growing. I'm not perfect yet. So the flesh doesn't always like to correct me.

But generally speaking, as soon as I recognize that God is bringing correction in my life, I get so excited because that's his man. I'm one of his favorites. He's going out of his way to spend time with me.

He's going out of his way to correct me. It says that in Proverbs 3, 11 and 12, that God recruits us, he treats us like the son in whom he delights. You know, that's a sign of divine favoritism.

I've told people God must love me more than just about anybody all the time he corrects me. But see, that's my father doing good to me. You know, I know when I go minister and pour my life out, I know he's

pleased.

I do it joyfully. I don't do it like, oh God, you're a hard taskmaster. This is tough.

I look at it, wow, how can I serve God more? How can I do more for him? So you could have preached that message at one time in that one country more effectively. Yeah, I'm a human being. I'm not hung up over that.

I know God's pleased. I know he sees my heart going after him and he sees your heart. He sees the frustration in you because you want to serve him more effectively.

He sees the longing because you want to be more like Jesus. He sees the hunger in you because you want to touch this world more. He sees the frustration because you want to have better times and longer.

That means something to him. He's not indifferent to that. We have a cavalier attitude, hey, it's no problem.

He's God to rule my life. He despises that. But when he sees the hunger and desire, he knows our pain.

He knows that we're not always going to witness imperfect love. He knows that we're not always going to pray through the night when we're determined to. He knows that we're not always going to bring the Bible every time we go to sleep somewhere.

He knows that. But see, he's on our side. He's for us.

He's with us because we're in his son Jesus. So understand God's posture towards you. Meditate on scripture.

Meditate on passages of his love. It'll bring purity and holiness. You better believe it.

It'll drive drunk out quicker than anything. The love of God or the fear of God or both will have a purifying, refining effect. Understand the love of the Father for you.

Number two, learn to take God at his word. Learn to take God at his word. If he says, I forgive and forget, accept it.

He's not a liar. If you know that Jesus really died for you, if you know that there's such a thing as sin, if you know there's such a person as God, you know it more than anything through the word. Then you're just going to have to accept the rest of what the word says.

Don't grow up. Get over being a baby and being run by feelings. Feelings are not the issue.

You know, I travel overseas and minister. You know, I get there. I don't feel like being there.

You know, I love to fly. I get on the plane. Everything's great.

But you know, about six, eight, ten hours into that flight, I don't feel like being on that flight. You know, I was coming back from India, this last trip, and it wasn't a, you know, a super heavy trip. It was about 40 hours of travel each way, and then a night sleeping on the floor of the airport.

But you know, that's India. Normally I would go for a month before revival. This was just five days of ministry, speaking 13 times.

It wasn't, trust me, it wasn't that rough a trip. But I started to get run down on the way back, and I'm on the flight, you know, and I'm tired, and I feel a little sick. I feel a little feverish, my stomach upset a little bit, and I start thinking of some of these trips I have.

You know, flying halfway around the world to speak for a day and a half, and then flying all the way back to minister in the revival for three days, and then turning around and flying somewhere else for, you know, two days of meetings and flying back, and I sort of think, you're crazy, man. You're crazy. What are you doing? You're not the call of God.

That's how you feel at that moment. It's your jet lag. Anybody ever been jet lagged? You know, some of you come straight off the plane right to revival, like, wow, I thought it would be more than this.

Well, get over your jet lag, man. You know, go home, get a good night's sleep. I'll get overseas sometimes to minister, and it's the last place in the world I want to be.

You know, I told our team, we had 59 people total with us, 51 students and others with us, and I said, listen, you know, there will be a time on this trip when you don't want to be in India, you know, and maybe one or two that didn't happen to, but most everybody, and there will be a time when you do not feel anointed. I tell you, you know, I would hope, this happened to me many times overseas, because I'm worn out, and I'm jet lagged, and I've been going day and night, you know, heavy schedules, like many of you have heavy schedules, and I'd get over there, and it'd be time to preach, and I would hope, oh, I hope the meeting gets canceled. I'm just fooling around the world to get there.

We've been praying for these meetings for weeks. They've been fasting and praying for months. I'm there.

I'm hoping that the meeting will be canceled. It happened on this last trip. It's standard with me.

You know, I remember one night when we may have gotten the best responses, you know, the team came up to him. Wow, what a powerful word. God is my witness.

I said, God, I have nothing. I didn't have a clue what I was supposed to preach. It's five minutes before service is supposed to start.

Oh, what am I doing in India? I don't have anything. I don't feel anointed. I don't have a message, but you ignore it.

You ignore it. What if mothers went by feelings right when it was time to deliver their babies, if they could change the whole thing? That's, you know, but no turning back. So you've got to simply say, I can't go by how I feel.

I can't go on my emotions at the model. You can't go by that. You must look at what God says.

And as Steve preached last night, I will, if you will. If you meet God's requirements and follow his directives, then you must take him at his word, period. I love to quote from the end of Micah, the seventh chapter.

The name Micah in Hebrew is probably short for who is like Yahweh. Probably a shortened form of that. And it says, who is a God like me? Forgiving iniquity and overlooking the transgression of the remnants of his people.

He doesn't hold on to his anger forever. Because he loves mercy. It's wonderful to think of.

He wants to find a way to forgive. He delights in showing mercy. What does it go on to say? We'll cast our sins into the depths of the sea.

We'll trample these things. You'll trample them on your foot. That's the heart of God.

To cast sin away. To blot it out. To remove our sin as far as the east is from the west.

I want you to chew on this for a moment. First John 1-9. Steve quoted it last night.

As we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. To bring out the Greek a little bit more clearly, let me translate it like this. As we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to cleanse us from our sins and forgive us from all our unrighteousness.

He is righteous to forgive our unrighteousness through Jesus. In other words, because of the cross, because of Jesus dying to take away our sins, and because of our faith in what he has done, and our confession of those sins to God. Confession is renunciation.

It's not just confessing to go on sinning. God, I murdered an hour ago. I'm about to murder again.

Let me confess that one in advance. No, confession is renunciation. He who confesses and forsakes his sins, the Proverbs says, will succeed.

He who covers them up will not succeed. He who confesses and forsakes will find mercy. But God is righteous to forgive our unrighteousness when we come through Jesus.

In other words, if he said, I won't forgive you, he would be unrighteous. He would not be just because Jesus already paid. It would be like exacting double payment and not accepting what Jesus did.

You must accept what it says. You say, yeah, but man, I feel like I disappointed God. I feel rotten over it.

That's fine. I can't believe I did what I did. I can't.

I cannot believe that I got so mad at that person I cut them off and they actually got in. I can't believe I did that. Yeah, God forgives you, but you may feel miserable about that for days.

That can be healthy. You don't feel miserable about it. You have no conscience.

But when you know God forgives you, then you can look at this inconstructively. You can work out why it is that you sinned like that. You can extend every type of helping hand to that person that you sinned against.

And they can scream and yell at you and curse you, but you know God's forgiven you. You're clean, but there are consequences to your actions, and now you've got to deal with those consequences. Learn to take God at his word.

Go through the scripture. Just take a Psalm like Psalm 103 and go through it and see how God deals with our sins and say, Lord, you said it. I embrace it.

It is so. I remember one time I blew it in some area that would be called a minor area. I blew it and I went to repent.

I went to say, Lord, I'm so sorry, and I heard the Spirit say to me, we don't have time for that. In other words, God knew as quickly as I did that. I immediately turned from it.

I was immediately grieved over. I immediately went in the right direction, and it was almost like the son is dealt with. You're walking with me.

Your heart turns from it immediately. Let's just go on. And you see, if your heart truly is in tune with God, you're not going to go out and commit adultery.

You're not going to go out and kill somebody. You're not going to lie on your tax returns. Some of you thought adultery, that's one thing.

Murder, that's one thing. If your heart's right with God, you're not going to lie on your tax returns. Maybe I should preach about truthfulness on April 14th in the revival.

See what Steve preaches on. God says I forgive and forget. Accept it on faith's side.

Number three, and this is really important, understand the difference between conviction and condemnation. By the way, just getting over this little cold here, my voice sounds a little hoarse, and by the end of this message, I may sound like I'm about 80 years old. Now, there's value to that.

I was once preaching in Italy, and I had a message that was really important, and I encouraged believers from all over the city to be there, leaders to be there, and I said, I've got a really important word for the church in this city. But I'd lost my voice to a great extent when I got up to preach that night. I was kind of talking like this.

But the good thing is, though, if you got the tape, you thought like this is some old apostle of the faith, you know, 90 years old, bringing his last message to, I'm telling you, you must hear what I'm saying, it's urgent. So my voice starts to go towards the end of this, you'll say wow, this is important. When you listen to it by tape later on, you'll say man, the message felt more and more important as it went on.

Hear what I'm saying as we go on. But I still have a voice, so we're okay. Understand the difference between conviction and condemnation.

I read to you Romans 8, 1, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. We've been set free from the law of sin and death through life in the spirit. We are no longer bound and enslaved to those things that held us down and to that system that held us down.

We now live a new life in God. But Paul elsewhere in this epistle uses that exact same word, condemnation. Romans 5, 16, and 18.

He says there, again, the gift of God is not like the result of one man's sin, the one man's sin. He's talking about when Adam sinned what happened versus when Jesus obeyed what happened. The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation.

Adam, Eve, the human race, guilty before God, condemned out of his presence, hell-bound, hell-bent. But the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. Verse 18, consequently just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men.

Condemnation is not feeling guilty, friends. Condemnation is not having a poor self-image. Condemnation is not struggling in a given area with forgiveness.

Condemnation is guilty, hell-bound, out of my sight, out of my presence. There is no condemnation for a child of God. The condemning sentence has been taken by Jesus hanging on the cross, and in him we are not condemned.

If you are a child of God, there is no condemnation. If there's condemnation, you're hell-bound. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

We've often explained it like this. Conviction is the risk of the prosecuting attorney to build a case against you. Hey, I'm fine.

I'm clean. Some lost sinner comes in here. I'm a good person.

I remember hearing someone get baptized one night. They said, I wasn't really a bad person. I was basically a good person.

I was just doing drugs and stealing cars. Remember, a German woman got baptized one night. She said, you know, I wasn't in any of the bad sins, you know, the real bad sins.

She said, but you know, gossips, anger. We thought, well, that's good. People need to hear that, you know.

It's not just like murder and drugs. That's good to hear gossip and anger and fornication and bisexuality. She actually said, but not any of the bad sins.

Somebody comes in here. I'm a pretty good person. I don't hurt anybody.

You know, I live a moral life. And they come in here in the Holy Spirit through the word of God. Sometimes it's the presence of God begins to convict that person.

You're selfless. You're self-righteous. You're full of anger.

You're full of lust. Goes down the whole list. You're Godless.

That person now is deeply convicted. Oh my God, I'm undone. If they repent, they're cleansed.

They're washed. They're freed from their sins through the blood of Jesus. If they refuse, condemn guilty.

See conviction comes and brings the awareness of what's wrong. Brings the awareness of how holy God is and how unholy we are without him. That's what conviction does.

Condemnation is the guilty sentence. Let me give you some New Testament examples. The word used to condemn or condemnation are related terms in the New Testament.

There's some good working dictionary definitions. The verb means to judge a person to be guilty and liable to punishment. John 7, 51 does our law permit a man to be condemned before a legal hearing to find out what he has done.

In other words, you pronounce that person guilty, pronounce a sentence on it, that's condemnation. Without hearing it out, 2 Peter 2, 3 talking about apostates, false teachers, their condemnation has long been hanging over them and their destruction has not been sleeping. This sentence hanging over their heads, judgment, destruction, guilt, hell, that's condemnation.

It's one of the related verbs and nouns, another related verb and noun. To judge someone is definitely guilty unless subject to punishment. To condemn, to render a verdict of guilt, condemnation.

For example, here's how the verb is used, Mark 14, 64 about Jesus. They all decided he was guilty and worthy of death. They pronounce a condemning sentence over him.

Acts 25, 15, they want a sentence brought. They ask that he be condemned. There is no condemnation if you're in him.

You've got to accept that as a fact for life. If you are in him, if you are serving God, you are not condemned to hell. Don't ever use the word condemnation in your own life unless you mean condemned to hell.

That will help you to sort it out. What about conviction? Here's some dictionary definitions, New Testament usage. To state that someone has done wrong with the implication that there is adequate proof of wrongdoing, to rebuke, to reproach.

You understand that? It's to indicate and prove that someone has done wrong. It is not to pronounce the guilty sentence. Welcome conviction.

Welcome it. Welcome God showing you when you're straying from the path. Welcome when he shows you that there are wrong attitudes.

Welcome when he shows you that there's still flesh. Welcome when he shows you wrong attitudes. Welcome when he shows you disobedience.

Welcome it. That's the loving work of God. Why? Because sin is always to your detriment.

Because the flesh is always to your destruction. Because the lusts and loves of this world are never for your good. Recognize it.

In his love he is turning you from those things so that he does not have to pronounce his guilty sentence over you. Those who heed conviction will never experience condemnation. You must understand the difference between them.

Number four. Understand the difference between being bathed and having your feet washed. Understand the difference between being bathed and having your feet washed.

Look with me in Romans, excuse me, in John chapter 13. And please don't be sitting there I feel condemned. I don't understand.

If you can say that then you really don't understand. And see when you can cast off this wrong notion of condemnation, it sets you so free to be corrected by God. It sets you so free to grow.

It sets you so free to be quick to repent. It sets you so free to not care about what other people think because you know you're accepted by God. You all know the incident where Jesus goes to wash his disciples' feet.

It's a Passover meal. There's four. Jesus got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, wrapped a towel around his waist.

After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around them. He came to Simon Peter. He said to him, Lord, are you going to wash my feet? Jesus replied, you do not realize now what I'm doing, but later you will understand.

No, said Peter, you shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered, unless I wash you, you have no part with me. Then Lord, Simon Peter replied, not just my feet, but my hands and my head as well.

Jesus answered, a person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet. His whole body is clean and you are clean, though not every one of you, because he knew who would betray him. What's he saying? Well, bear in mind in the ancient world and much of the world today, people do not have running water in their homes.

They don't have baths and showers in their homes. You go somewhere to bathe. You may go to the river.

You may go, ancient Jewish world, you can go to the river, you can go to the bathhouse. So you walk and bear in mind roads for the most part are not paid roads. You're walking on dusty roads.

Certainly at some point on your journey, you're walking on dusty roads. So you go to the bathhouse, you bathe, you get nice and clean like Steve caught on last night. 10 year olds that are here that are not bathers, you need to get last night's message.

40 year olds that are here that are not bathers, showers, you need to get last night's message. So you bathe, shower, now you walk home. By the time you get home, your feet are dirty.

Jesus goes to wash Peter's feet and Peter says, no, no, he's not going to wash my feet. He said, if I don't wash your feet, you have no part in it. Peter said, well then everything, shampoo me, everything, you know, just wash my head, my hair, everything.

And he says, no, no, Peter, those who've been bathed, those who've been cleansed, don't need to have a whole body wash again. They just need their feet washed. There's a difference.

And I want to apply it spiritually. Jesus is ultimately applying it spiritually here in John 13. I want to apply it to our lives.

There is a difference between being bathed, which is cleansed by the blood of Jesus in salvation, once and for all, washed, cleansed, set right with God, pronounced his child, taken out of the kingdom of darkness and captivity to Satan and brought into the kingdom of the son God loves. Wonderful. I'm saved.

I'm forgiven. I'm righteous through the blood of Jesus. I've been bathed.

I've taken a shower from head to toe. I was working out in the mud and the dirt and I've been completely washed clean. But now, as I walk through this world, there's pollution out there.

I may hear profanity on my job. It's like dirt on my feet. I may walk by somewhere and there's this lewd poster and I see it for a second, I look away, but that image, you know, just jumps at me, polluting.

Boy, you know, I'm waiting for some service and they're messing up, you know, on the phone. I'm holding 20 minutes. I start to get an attitude.

I get a little agitated. By the time they come on, I'm a little harsh with them. Dirt on my feet.

You know, someone's preaching a message and I'm sitting there thinking, I could preach better than that. Whatever it is. As you walk in this world, your feet get dirty.

It happens. No matter who you are, no matter how holy you are, no matter how close to Jesus you are, it's one thing to be bound by sin and enslaved by sin and walk in habitual sin. First John says, if you live like that, then don't say that you know the Lord because you're denying Him.

You're a liar. And if you did know Him, you've turned from Him. No one who is a slave to sin can lay claim to the Lordship of Jesus.

Who is your master after all? Jesus or sin? Jesus or Satan? But even if we are living clean lives by the grace of God, even if we are not habitual sinners in the sense of, you know, I was a slave to drugs before I was saved. Maybe you were a slave to lust before you were saved. You were a slave to greed before you were saved.

You were dominated by these things. These things were the characteristic of your life. You're not like that anymore.

If you're saved, your life is now characterized by Jesus and righteousness, not by those things. And if your life is still categorized by the fact that you are greedy, that is who you are, you are sexually immoral, that is who you are, then you need to repent and get right with God because you have no hope of eternal life. So those are strong words.

Read 1 Corinthians 5 and 6. Read Ephesians 5. Read Galatians 5. This is Bible. This is simple. This is clear.

Read 1 John 1 through 5. But as you walk in this world,

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