

# The Heart Is Deceitful and Desperately Wicked

by Peter Hammond

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*The sermon emphasizes the deceitfulness of the heart and the necessity of trusting in God for true transformation and understanding of love.*

**Duration:** 41:10

**Scripture:** Proverbs 28:26, Jeremiah 17:5-10, Mark 10:18, 1 John 1:8

**Topics:** "Heart"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing the existence of objective truth and reality. He argues that without the God of the Bible, rationality, logic, and intelligent design would not be possible. The preacher also discusses the concept of love, distinguishing between biblical love, which is characterized by selflessness, sacrifice, and integrity, and the world's sentimentality and emotionalism. He challenges the belief that only material and economic change can bring about social transformation, asserting that only regenerated lives and transformed hearts can truly change society for the better. Additionally, the preacher addresses the misconception that people are inherently good, highlighting the need for self-evaluation in light of God's commandments. He cautions against trusting one's own emotions and emphasizes the importance of following God's word, will, and worship as the measure of one's life.

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## Transcript

The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Let's hear the word of the living God as it's found in Jeremiah chapter 17 from verse 5 to 10. Jeremiah 17 starting in verse 5. Thus says the Lord, Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh a strength, whose heart departs from the Lord.

For he shall be like a shrub in the desert and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is in the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river and will not fear when the heat comes.

But its leaf will be green and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.

This is the word of God. The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, which is the opposite of what we hear so much in the world. The world throws its lies at us.

Man is good by nature, but is corrupted by society. How often don't we hear that lie? Actually, it's man's depravity which corrupts society. Every man possesses an innate moral goodness, they say.

Really? It would be more accurate to say that there's bad in the best of us, evil in the best of us, actually, because we have fallen to creation. There is good in the worst of us because we're God's creatures, but there's evil in the best of us because we've fallen to creation. Happiness is the measure and goal of our lives, we are told.

But is it? No, happiness is not the goal and measure of our lives. God's word is the measure of our lives. God's will is the measure of our lives.

God's worship is the measure of our lives. The chief end of man is to worship God and to enjoy him forever. God's work is the measure and goal of our lives.

We are told only fools restrain their desires. Actually, it's the fool who gives in to selfish desires fueled by pride, greed, and lust. Proverbs 28 verse 26 cuts across all the Disney premises where we're told to follow your heart.

Proverbs 28 verse 26 says, he who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered. It is foolish to trust in our own heart. In fact, James Dobson wrote a book on emotions.

Can we trust them? That's a great book and it's well worth reading every word, but the short answer is no, you cannot trust your emotions. Everything is relative, they tell us, but that is not true. There is objective truth.

There is objective reality. However, without the God of the Bible, the creator, who has a mind and is rational, logic and intelligent design would not even be possible without a creator God. All you need is love.

In fact, that mantra was a song by the Beatles, I think. But what do they mean by love? If they're meaning emotionalism and sentimentality, that's not enough. You need a lot more than emotion and sentimentality.

The biblical definition of love found in 1 Corinthians 13 is love is unselfish giving. Love is sacrifice. Love is duty.

Love is integrity. Love is doing the right thing. Loving God and loving a neighbor with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength.

And true love is measured by sacrifice. So the song All You Need Is Love, well, are you talking about biblical agape love or are you talking about the world's sentimentality or emotionalism, which is definitely not good enough. The Marxists keep telling us only material and economic change can produce a social change.

Not at all. Only regenerate lives, only transformed hearts, only renewed minds can change society for the good. Satan has a whole lot of lies he wants you to believe.

And one of the most successful that so many people believe is, I'm a good person. You just have to ask the average person on the street, are you a good person? And the answer is, I'm a very good person. And people are so full of themselves.

And I've been taught to say this by Hollywood. So much so that you can ask anybody, even a Christian, how are you? And the average answer will be good. And that gives us this wonderful evangelistic opportunity to say, but Jesus said no one is good except God alone.

When we evaluate ourselves in the light of God's 10 commands and we recognize that Jesus is the standard, he is the gold standard, no one should deceive themselves by claiming I'm a very good person. 1 John 1 verse 8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we say we have not sinned, we make him to be a liar and his word is not in us.

How categoric is that? Ecclesiastes 9 verse 3 says, truly the hearts of men are full of evil and madness is in their hearts. There's a book written on the terrorist war in Rhodesia where the title is A Time of Madness. That's exactly what it was, a time of madness.

There's madness in people's hearts. Our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 7 in Mark 7 verse 21 to 22 said, for from within, out of the heart of man proceeds evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, thefts, murders, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. Out of the heart.

So where's this business of follow your heart and I'll have a good heart as Bill Clinton famously said. Dr. Martin Luther was overwhelmed by a sense of his sin. When asked which Pope had caused him the greatest trouble, Martin Luther responded, Pope self.

People racked their minds because there'd been 10 Popes that Martin Luther had lived through and which Pope is that? The Pope that sits on the throne of my own heart. He said, that Pope, Pope self, which sits on the throne of a selfish nature, that had given him more trouble than all the Popes around. In other words, we are our own worst enemy.

Dr. David Livingston in his journals expressed his frustration that even when he was engaged in the best of actions, it was with mixed motives. He was not satisfied. Now it's an interesting thing that you ask the average unregenerate person about themselves and they'll say, I'm a very good person.

It seems the further away from God one is, the more one believes in the goodness of man, such as Kenneth Kohunda. Kenneth Kohunda who had reformed parents, who studied at Livingstonia. Kenneth Kohunda wrote in his book, Humanism and a Humanist in Africa.

He said, I could not agree with the Calvinist religion of my parents. They believed in the depravity of man. I believe in the goodness of man.

Well, how interesting he should say that considering he was a one party dictator who locked up people who criticized him, locked up people without trial, oppressed people. When the evil British colonials imprisoned Kenneth Kohunda for his revolutionary subversive activities, he had a cell to himself. He had running water, electricity.

He had a bed with sheets and pillows. He had a gramophone. He had access to the library.

He had a desk and table. He had three cooked meals a day brought into him by the demonic evil colonials. When he, the humanist who believes in the goodness of man, was running Lusaka Central Prison, there was one cooked meal a day, no plates, no bowls, no sauce.

They would dish up into people's hands. You had to lap it up like a dog. There was no eating utensils, no bowls.

The British built Lusaka Central Prison for 80 prisoners. He shoved 1,200 prisoners into Lusaka Central Prison. He had a cell to himself.

We had 65 people in a cell without beds, without sheets, without any utensils, without running water. No, the plumbing was blocked up. It didn't work.

There was no electricity whatsoever in the prison because he believed in the goodness of man. Isn't this funny? People who believe in the depravity of man do the most charity of the kindest, and the people who believe in the goodness of man are guilty of the worst atrocities. Kenneth Kohunda's Lusaka Central Prison, when I was his guest as a presidential detainee, they actually had a majority of the people, the vast majority, were remanded prisoners.

They hadn't had their day in court yet. You could tell the difference because a prisoner wore a prison uniform, and a remand prisoner who hadn't had his day in court yet, hadn't been sentenced, he was still in civilian clothes, all the tattered remains of it. The vast majority of the 1,200 in that prison, probably over 800, were remanded.

Some had been there eight years and hadn't had their day in court. But Kenneth Kohunda rejected the reformed teachings of his parents who believed in the depravity of man because he believed in the goodness of man, which is why he didn't allow his people a choice as to who to govern over them. I've seen in the museum the actual ballot paper.

It didn't even have a no box. There's only one candidate, Kenneth Kohunda. There was just the box for the yes.

Not even a no. But he believed in the goodness of man. When Charles Spurgeon was asked which of his 5,600 members had given him the most trouble, he responded, Charles Spurgeon.

And they said, you have a member called Charles Spurgeon? He said, I refer to myself. No member of Metropolitan Tabernacle has given me more trouble than I have given myself. And that is the truth.

We are our own worst enemy. Nobody can cause us more grief than we can cause ourselves. Now, one of the lies that you see in the world is people saying, I cannot change.

That's one extreme of the spectrum. I cannot change. However, the persecutor of the church, Saul of Tarsus, became the missionary of the church, the Apostle Paul.

Bernard Nathanson, once head of the Abortion Rights Action League, who ran a chain of abortion clinics responsible for tens of thousands of abortions. He became an avid pro-life activist, producer of the Silent Scream film. Abbie Johnson, once a director of a planned parented abortory, responsible by her own calculation for 22,000 abortions, has become a pro-life activist and the author of the book, Unplanned.

Before my conversion, I was a shy, introverted, quiet library bookworm. After my conversion, I became seriously evangelistic, but I was an Arminian, antinomian, dispensationalist, rapture fever, end times enthusiast, convinced the Lord was coming before the end of the year, 1977, 78, 79, 80, 81, gave up by 82. I was also a pessimist, and I taught you should not be involved in politics, and I was convinced we

were living in lost days.

I was extremely negative about the idea of getting married or having children, because there wasn't enough time. I mean, we're living in lost days. Snatch some salt from the fire.

So, I changed. I changed to the point that on this adventure of discipleship, you've got to continually be willing to change as your mind is renewed, and as you learn more about the scripture, and you come across wiser people, and experiences prove that your previous suppositions were wrong. And so, in time, God has turned me into where I'm now, a reformed post-millennial missionary father and grandfather.

I was a bit surprised at the shop yesterday to be given a pensioner's discount. I hadn't asked for it, and to be addressed as Madala by some of black staff, Madala meaning grandfather. And I'm still being challenged to change in response to the renewing of the mind, to the studying of the word of God.

Now, there's some who claim God can never forgive me. How many times do you hear that? God can never forgive me. However, church history is full of the details of enemies of the gospel, like Paul, and frightful criminals, even persecutors of the church, converted and becoming trophies of grace.

I've met many of them. I've had meals with many of them. I've met people who are persecutors of Christians, who are now brothers and sisters in Christ.

Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, yet they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as white as wool.

That's Isaiah 1 verse 18. Then you hear people saying, I'm unchangeable. God cannot change me.

I've heard that often. But Titus 2 verse 11 says, for the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for himself his own special people, zealous for good works. Now there's a new term that I've heard, showing the deceitfulness and wickedness of man's heart.

It's really like wildfire. First heard in America, now it's all over South Africa too. I'm done.

How many times do you hear this? I'm done. And actually it's only God, our Creator, who can tell us when it is finished, and when we are done, when our work is complete, and when we are dismissed, and when we're free to go. Nobody can just excuse themselves from the commanding officer or the monarch's presence.

They will tell you when you are dismissed, when your work is done, your presence is no longer required. We do not have the right to say I'm done. Try that in the army and from the commanding officer and see what happens.

How much more in the presence of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, a conqueror, the eternal judge, he is the only one who could say when your work is truly done, and when you are dismissed, and when you're free to go. And then you hear these people, and this is very common, especially in South Africa. People think things are only going to get worse and worse, but that's not true.

There have been many extremely bad times, even worse than ours, when dramatic turning points came. For example, take 1517 when Professor Martin Luther nailed his 95th thesis on the church door of the castle church, the Slosskirche in Wittenberg. That's the major turning point from a time of unbelievable darkness and superstition.

And the resultant Reformation unleashed forces of faith and freedom that the world had never before seen. And nations were transformed, and the scientific revolution, industrial revolution that flowed out of that Protestant Reformation created the most productive, prosperous, and free nations in the history of civilization. And the great revivals of 1859, 1860 transformed Western civilization even more.

You have people who say, we cannot win. The moment you suggest anything, you've got these people, the gift of discouragement, come up, we cannot win. Well, with that kind of attitude, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If you think you can or you can't, you're right. If you think you can, you can. If you think you can't, you cannot.

It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. And so this attitude is everything. Your attitude determines everything.

A defeatist and negative attitude will inevitably lead to defeat and disaster. It cannot but. But consider the facts of history.

Against all odds, just a few hundred knights of St. John held Malta against a phenomenal Ottoman Turkish army of over 40,000 dedicated jihadists, and they won. Four months of siege, and yet the knights of Malta stood firm. Every one of them wounded who was not killed, but they stood firm to the end until the jihadists set to flee.

Against all odds, the Christians of Europe defeated the vast numbers of Turkish invaders at the Siege of Vienna in 1683. In our own lifetime, we've seen how the Tutsi David defeated the Hutu Goliath in the Rwandan Holocaust in 1994. In our own lifetime, we've seen decisive victories won over communism.

Our defeating of the Cuban forces, the elite presidential guard of Castro himself at the Battle of the Lomba River in 1987-1988, all those battles around Crete-Cornwall, the high point of the Soviet Empire's expansion blunted by South African defense force in Angola, and the Russians have even written books on Angola, the beginning of the end. Angola, we never saw it, not even in Afghanistan. And Angola, the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union.

Those are books written by Russian officers who fought in Angola. We saw the conclusion of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the fall of communist regimes all over Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the coming down of the Soviet red flag with a Hammond signal rising up from the beautiful Russian flag. We've seen the Soviet Union abolished and 15 nations go free as a result of that.

The liberation of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine, so many countries. Praise God for all those countries in Eastern Europe released from the prison house of nations. In 1982, Christians launched a seven-year Jericho prayer march initiative focused on bringing down the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain and praying for the opening up of Eastern Europe and Russia to the gospel.

In 1989, those prayers were answered. In 2011, we witnessed the independence of South Sudan from Islamic Sudan. Just in recent years, we've seen the Brexit vote against the European Union globalist agenda in Britain and the President Trump victory against all odds and against all the predictions of the mass media and the establishment in the United States.

In history, just 464 fortresses against all odds defeated over 10,000 Zulus at the Battle of Blood River. The Zulus had never been defeated up to that point, but they were defeated on the 16th of December 1838 in response to prayer. Nobody expected the farmers of the Transvaal to defeat the redcoats of the British Empire, but in 1881 at the Battle of Majuba, they did.

We have seen communism defeated in Russia and Eastern Europe and we will go on to see Islam and the New World Order defeated as well and all the other communist regimes from China, North Korea, Zimbabwe, they will all be defeated in time. Psalm 2 verse 8 is a messianic psalm, ask of me and I will give you the nation's free inheritance, the ends of the earth for your possession. Psalm 22, all the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the nation shall worship before you.

For the kingdom is the Lord's and he rules over the nations. Psalm 72, which inspired that Jesus shall reign him, which was written 300 years ago by Isaac Watts, in his days the righteous shall flourish. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea.

All the ends of the earth, his enemies will lick the dust. All kings will fall down before him, all nations shall serve him. James 4 verse 7, therefore submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Romans 8 verse 37, yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus our Lord. Zechariah 4 verse 6, not by might nor by power but by my spirit says the Lord of hosts. Habakkuk 2 verse 14, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the seas are full of water.

The seas are pretty much 100% filled with water. This isn't as the waters cover the earth, it's as the waters cover the sea. The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

Submit to God, resist the devil, he will flee from you because greater is he who's in you than him who's in the world. And yet you find people saying some people never change so don't even try to share the gospel with them. But church history is full of the testimonies of individuals whom Christians could not even imagine being able to change, yet the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

Quasimodo mission was built by the conversion of witch doctors, chief of witch doctors, trainer of witch doctors, terrorists, murderers, gangsters, drug dealers transformed by the grace of God, and even my last visit to Quasimodo at the ministers conference this year I met individuals with those kind of testimonies who've been converted recently. I remember meeting Pastor Musa, a Zapu communist terrorist leader who'd been converted at an evangelistic rally in Rhodesia which he had been targeted to destroy. And he had his men waiting for his order, they had grenades to throw, they were going to open fire with their machine guns, and as he was in this tent outside Salisbury, hearing the gospel being preached, he was so convicted that he didn't give the order and his men came to ask what the problem is.

He says no, this isn't the right time to go home. He got converted. When I met him, which was in Frankfurt during Kirsten Tag, 1987, and we were having, he was working for the International Society for Human Rights at the time, and Pastor Musa had been imprisoned by Mugabe in chains and mistreated as you'd expect.

But on this occasion we were at a hotel, he had gone through the buffet and I said to him you missed the meat. He said I don't eat any meat anymore. He says it reminds me of when I used to eat people.

And I was thinking who am I having supper with? But I've had suppers with people who had taken part in cannibalistic rituals and so on. You should never place limits upon the gospel and upon the grace of God. My father was very resistant to the gospel.

He said after going through Second World War, couldn't believe there's a God to allow such terrible things to take place. But he got converted. Eight years of prayer and witnessing, my father finally was converted.

There's those people who say I cannot make any difference. In fact, I was one of those people who said that. When I was converted at age 17, I didn't know much about the Bible, but I felt quite helpless to make any kind of impact for the Lord at all.

Yet the challenge on the night that I was converted, 3rd of April 1977, was all this Christ did for you, what have you ever done for him? As I sat in that cinema, all my agnostic pretensions disappeared. I saw myself as sitting before a holy God, justly deserving of the wrath of God and held forever. And I recognized I'd never so much as given thanks to God for anything, not for the life of my parents being saved from bombings in Berlin or artillery barrages in North Africa.

And of course, if my parents had died, I wouldn't be around. I hadn't thanked God for how he'd saved my life at so many different points in my mother's testimony when I was young. I had not thanked God for so much as a meal.

I was an ungrateful soul. And I had to confess, I'd done nothing for Christ at that point, and I went forward and I surrendered my life to Christ. But what difference could I make? What impact could I make? What worth was it? My salvation was worth nothing because there was nothing I could do for the Lord.

I felt completely helpless. But within a few weeks, I was involved in a scripture and holiday mission in South West and even preaching in a Presbyterian church in South West. I'm so glad there's no recordings of that because I have no idea what I would have been saying.

I remember when it was hard for me to preach a one and a half minute message introducing the Jesus film because it's like running. If you've never done running before, you could start getting stitches within a few minutes and you haven't even done a few hundred meters and you've got to give up. But you keep at it and repetition brings revelation.

And so, as a Christian, you find that whereas before you struggled to give a one minute message, after a while you have more stamina for marathons. And so it goes on in the spiritual realm. Well, very soon I was involved in teaching Sunday school for teenagers at Pines Baptist and running a church book table and mass liturgy distribution, railway stations and helping to put Gospels of John in every one of the 4,400 homes in Pinelands as part of our EE program, putting up posters to invite people to the same evangelistic rally that I've been converted in.

And when Missionary Francis Grimm of Hospital Christian Fellowship came past our congregation at Pines Baptist, I went forward and I joined his mission, HEF. And soon I was called up to the South African Infantry for two years military service and I was led to challenge others in my unit who wanted to join me for Bible study and prayer fellowship. And out of that daily Bible study and prayer fellowship grew our mission.

And by 1982, I was crossing the border on a mission to Mozambique and then to Angola and Zimbabwe and Zambia and Malawi and Rwanda and Kenya and Uganda and Sudan followed and soon outreached into Eastern Europe and still when the Iron Curtain was up. In the last 40 years, I've ministered in 38 countries, traveled in 42 countries, ministered in 38 countries, and by my best calculations, taken 18,000 meetings in the last 42 years. Then marches to Parliament followed, mobilizing opposition to the ANC's plans to paganize South Africa.

In 1995, mobilized 30,000 people onto the streets of Cape Town and the next year over 10,096, compelling the government to backtrack on all kinds of plans that they declared the intention to prevent any churches meeting in school halls, classrooms, town halls, or any other facility owned, they claimed, owned by the government. Well, most people may not be aware that most churches in this country fall in that category. Most churches meet in school classrooms, school halls, in community halls, and so on.

And so that would have been a tremendous problem for the church. But we mobilized opposition to make them back down it. When the government announced the intention to close all Christian community radio stations, 1998, they said a community station must be represented to the whole community and therefore you can't have Christian community radio stations, you've got to have every religion represented in every station, especially Islamic and so on.

And we mobilized in very short order with barely a week's warning, 10,000 people to march to Parliament. And by the time we got to Parliament, the minister concerned ran of the white flag and said they'd abandoned the plan. When legislation was drafted to infringe on Christian schools and other independent private education, and homes education in particular, 1999, we mobilized marches to Parliament over that and forced them to back down as well.

Our Operation Clean Sweep from 1991 to 1994 persuaded over 9,000 stores to no longer stock pornography. Just one member on the Africa Christian Action Network managed to go to Raymond Ackerman, head of Pick and Pay at that time, and showed him from our Finding Freedom from the Pornography Plague booklet, a picture of the room of the rapist who murdered Ramonda Jacobs, just a few meters where her bloodstained body in a dustbin bag was found buried just outside his shack. The wall plastered with pictures of scope and all that sort of pornographic stuff.

And Monica Sandrys plonked it down in front of Raymond Ackerman and said, can you guarantee to me that none of these were sold from one of your stores? And the man hung his head in shame. And he stood up and he went to the phone, he ordered all of it out. Then he actually called a press conference, decided to make it a marketing thing, saying, just as we are for the environment, we cannot, and he used arguments straight from our booklet, that nobody would justify pumping raw sewage into a public swimming pool, neither can we allow moral sewage into our shops.

And I was saying how their shops have got signs saying no dogs allowed. I said, but they'll allow filthier things on their shelves. We've got cleaner dogs and what they're selling in their magazine racks.

And he used the same arguments in press conferences, and other shops followed. Okay, bazaars, checkers, and so on. And so Operation Clean Sweep was spectacularly successful.

Just a few of us. One person, going to one key person, cleaned up all the pick and pay shops. It just shows we should never use any excuse to justify disobedience and inactivity.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4 verse 13. There are those who claim they're too young to be used of the Lord.

I was one of those who said that, but I'm too young. I remember at age 28 saying I'm too young for what Bill Bathman was saying, and he rebuked me very soundly that you cannot say you're too young. That's how often has God not used people who are very young.

David, the shepherd boy, saw himself as the youngest member of the least tribe, and yet God raised him up. Jeremiah protested, ah Lord God, behold, I cannot speak for I am but a youth. But the Lord said to me, do not say I'm a youth.

You shall go to all that I send you to, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord. That's in Jeremiah 1 verse 68.

Timothy thought he was too young, but the Apostle Paul declared to him, 1 Timothy 4 verse 12, let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word and conduct and love and spirit and faith and purity. The Apostle John, the Evangelist John Mark, they were youths when they began, but God chose to use them. Esther, Ruth, Mary are other examples of young maidens whom God used in powerful ways.

At the beginning of our mission, there are many who declared that I was too young. Mozambique was closed. It was too dangerous.

It was illegal. It was the wrong time. This is the wrong way.

But looking back with hindsight, there's no doubt that God called, God led, he equipped and he opened doors. It was his project. And if God can change you, then he can use you to change some parts of this world.

Then you get others to say I'm too old. I'm too old for God to use me. But Moses was 80 years old when God called him from the burning bush to lead his people out of Egypt.

But Moses said to God, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh? That I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. Then Moses answered and said, but suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice. Suppose they say, the Lord has not appeared to you.

Then Moses said to God, oh, my Lord, I'm not eloquent, neither before nor since you've spoken to a servant, but I'm slow of speech and slow of tongue. Sounds like a very eloquent way of arguing that he's not eloquent. The Lord was angry and said, who has made man's mouth? Who has made the mute, the deaf, the seeing or the blind? Have not I the Lord now therefore go and I will be with your mouth and I'll teach you what to say.

What the Lord's basically saying is, if you're not going to use your mouth for me, I can take away your ability to speak. If you're not going to use your eyes for me, I can take away your sight. The Lord is the one who determines all things.

Why should you waste your legs if you're not going to go where I send you? I can make you crippled. You don't want to use your legs. This is a threat.

All this in Exodus chapter four. Caleb in his eighties could declare, give me that mountain. He wasn't satisfied with the flat lands or the valleys.

No, even his eighties, he wanted the tougher challenge of the Highlands. Frederick Bedecker was only converted to Christ in his forties. Yet he packed the second half of his life with so much strenuous journeys to evangelize Russia that would have depleted the energies of many younger men.

We've seen missionaries like Dr. Fritz House, over 68 years as a missionary. Reverend Earl O'Stegan, now, I think he's 84, he has been preaching gospel since he was 16. Brother Andrew and Bill Bethlen, both the same age.

Bill Bethlen put 67 years into missions. Working well into his eighties, proclaiming the gospel, teaching and serving the Lord fervently. Even his last year on earth, Bill Bethlen was able to be banned from a pulpit for giving an altar call.

When Bill Bethlen was in his seventies, I took him up to celebrate 50 years in ministry up to Sudan 2001. Flew in there. That was enough for him.

When he came back after preaching at the Battlefront Sudan, he bought a land cruiser in Cape Town, stocked it up with all of our materials and trailer and drove overland. Cape Town up to Mundry. We're talking about 8,000 kilometers by road.

A man in his seventies, he drove across Africa, which our young people complain about how hard that is. It is a rough, rough, rough road. And it only gets worse the further north you get.

And he delivered the vehicle supplies to beleaguered Christians, not enough to fly into the war zone, he had to drive up there too, over the continent in his seventies. Now we need to recognize that all of these lies of the age, I can't be changed. I'm too old.

I'm too young. I can't be forgiven. So these are actually just excuses for disobedience.

You're never too old. You're never too young. You're never too this or that to make a difference and to be used to God.

You can change. God can forgive you and God can change you and use you for his glory. Do not be deceived.

The Bible continually warns us less Satan should take advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices, but are fearless somehow as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness. So your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Whose minds the God of this age is blinded, who do not believe less the light of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God should shine on him.

That is why we are instructed to put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against all the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. Cursed is the man who trusts in man, who makes flesh a strength, whose heart departs from the Lord.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose hope is in the Lord. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be

delivered.

Let us pray. Lord God, we thank and praise you that you are our rock, you are our fortress, you are our shield, our strong deliverer. We pray, Lord God, that you'd make us more faithful to your word and more brave and bold in your service.

For we pray it in Jesus' precious and holy name. Amen. Hymn 52.

Hymn 52. I need thee every hour. You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind has stayed on you.

Hymn 52. I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord. No tender voice like thine can peace afford.

I need thee, oh I need thee, every hour I need thee. Oh bless me now, my Saviour, I come to thee. I need thee every hour, stay thou nearby.

Temptations lose their power when thou art mine. I need thee, oh I need thee, every hour I need thee. Oh bless me now, my Saviour, I come to thee.

I need thee every hour, in joy or pain. Come quickly and abide, all life is in vain. I need thee, oh I need thee, every hour I need thee.

Oh bless me now, my Saviour, I come to thee. I need thee every hour, teach me thy will. And thy rich promises in me fulfill.

I need thee, oh I need thee, every hour I need thee. Oh bless me now, my Saviour, I come to thee. I need thee every hour, most holy one.

Oh make me thine indeed, thou blessed son. I need thee, oh I need thee, every hour I need thee. Oh bless me now, my Saviour, I come to thee.

And now Tim is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To God our Saviour who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

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