

Human Potential, the Spirit of Anti-Christ

by Phil Beach Jr.

The flesh has a 'good' side and an 'evil' side, and both are sinful, but the 'good' side is subtle and can be just as sinful as the 'evil' side, and the spirit of human potential seeks to imitate the Holy Spirit and offer up the 'good' works of the flesh as counterfeits of the life of Christ.

Scripture: Genesis 2:18, John 3:6, 1 Corinthians 15:49, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 1:17, Ephesians 1:21, 1 John 3:2, Revelation 13:1

Topics: "Spiritual Deception", "Flesh Vs Spirit"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. preaches about the dangers of offering the religious side of our flesh to the Lord, emphasizing the need to discern and reject the seemingly good, religious nature of the flesh which is equally corrupt and rejected by God. He highlights the importance of understanding the root of pride and self-righteousness in our offerings to God, drawing parallels to Cain's rejected offering. The sermon delves into the significance of fully surrendering to Christ, renouncing all works of the flesh, and allowing the preeminence of Christ to be established in our lives.

Transcript

Perhaps one of the greatest pitfalls we will face as we walk with the Savior, growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus, is the temptation to offer to the Lord the religious side of our flesh. Early on in our walk with Jesus, the Lord is able to show us quite clearly the evils of our old nature, the sins of Galatians 5, namely, sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, discord, jealousy, fits of rage and anger, selfishness, selfish ambitions of all kinds, drunkenness, and the like.

For the most part we are quickly taught by the Lord to make a complete break with these sins of the flesh, and to have nothing to do with them, making no provision for the expression of these sins in any way at all. We are taught early on, or at least should be, to declare war on these deeds, and by the power of the life of Jesus and by walking in the Spirit, to put these treacherous works of the flesh to death by starvation, thus escaping their power. However wonderful this may be, there is another aspect of the life of the flesh which is equally corrupt and rejected by the Lord.

Tragically, we often learn only to resist the flesh's overtly evil side, totally missing the other side, which is its seemingly good, religious nature. Flesh is flesh, and even though we may offer the best of ourselves to God, all dressed up in piety, devotion, faithfulness to the Scriptures, earnest desire in prayer; all having a form of godliness, a form of Christ-life, a form of righteousness and true holiness, we are still offering flesh,

void of the power of God and the life-giving presence of Christ.

There is an entire realm of the flesh that is eager and ready to arise in this kind of expression, very well hidden to the undiscerning. The Fruit Of Our Ground The underlying root, the very strength of this side of the flesh life is nothing other than the old sin of pride and self-righteousness first seen in the Scripture in Cain's offering of the fruit of the cursed ground (rather than trusting in the merits of another as did righteous Abel). It is the same rotten sin in us that makes us offer something of our own hand, our own doing, our own creation to God, as something we think He should accept, bless and honor.

Never, beloved! You see, the "evil" side of the flesh is filled with works which are obviously wrong, and clearly considered to be sin (at least by those who still believe in the basic laws of the Bible). Yet the "good" side is just as evil and just as sinful because the root, the source, is yet the flesh. It does not matter that the "good" of the flesh can consist of things we are engaging in within the realm of Christian service whereas the "evil" works are outside the realm of Christian service, because both are springing out of the same source, the flesh.

The common feature of both sides is that of their origin. That is the whole issue and cause of concern. Jesus said, "that which is of flesh is flesh; and that which is of Spirit is spirit" (Jn. 3:6). Whenever anything is the product of the flesh, out of the corrupt workings of our fallenness, it is flesh, no matter how it looks, no matter how nice it appears, no matter how people may admire it and praise it. If it is of flesh, it is flesh, and all flesh is rejected by the Lord Jesus.

Only what is out from His Spirit, born out of His heart, imputed to and formed in us by His hand is of God and is spirit, acceptable to Him. Therefore, only that which we do which is springing out of what He has already done in us is truly of Him and for Him and by Him and unto Him. Oftentimes when the Lord strips one of the "evil" side of the flesh and delivers one from the deeds mentioned earlier, the very same energies that were engaged in the pursuit and fulfillment of those deeds are simply transferred to the religious side of the flesh.

Ironically, it is those who were most involved in the evil deeds of the flesh who, upon becoming saved, become so against them, and go into a Christian life full of religious, zealous deeds of devotion, denial of the flesh, and great forms of commitment--yet all springing out of the energies of the flesh. As a result, these individuals offer up a host of works being fueled by the power of will, or soul or body, but void of the heavenly fragrance of Christ, and His merits and Life.

It's the same corrupt spring, with different ways of expressing itself. It's the creature's efforts, the creature's own "sweat," the creature's own energies, the creature's own works, though dressed up so nicely, which are nevertheless all stench to the Lord. How deeply this religious nature is ingrained in us, being the source of much of our service, much of our devotion, much of our zeal for God and the things of God! May the Lord help us to truly see this religious nature in our flesh, and see how, along with the "evil" side, it too must be reckoned by us as cursed.

How we need to be taught of the Lord to discern its subtle workings and to resist them by the enabling of His power. A Vision Of Christ It seems to me that in order to truly comprehend the magnitude and extent of the things of which we are speaking, our uttermost need at this present time is for an unprecedented unveiling to our hearts of the glory, majesty and person of Christ. Surely we need the Lord to have mercy on us and answer the prayer of the precious Holy Spirit being offered by Paul, "[That] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory... may grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation... in the... knowledge of

Him, by having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you can know and understand the hope to which He has called you and how rich is His glorious inheritance in the saints..." (Eph. 1:17-19 Amp.).

It is only by an influx of light from the face of Jesus shining into the very seat of our seeing eyes that we can be made to comprehend the significance of Christ and His finished work, as well as His being set down on the right hand of the Father, there in the presence of God, as us as well as for us. To see the Lord Jesus in glory is to see the complete death of the old creation, the totality of God's rejection of all that pertains to what we are in the first Adam, and an absolute, final establishing of the new Man upon the throne, with glory and honor!

When Jesus went down into the waters of baptism, He was demonstrating in type the fact that through Calvary He would bring the whole of the Adam race down into the waters of death, thus bringing it to a complete end. Coming up He was signifying to all that only what He is shall be the substance of the new creation. It was after He rose up from the water that the Holy Spirit descended upon and anointed Him. Here we see a most vivid picture of how the Father in heaven entrusted Himself by His Spirit to His Son only after He, in representation as well as in substitution, buried in death the whole of man as he is in Adam, and arose as the Man of heaven--the one in whom the Father is "well pleased"--the one from whom all would have to derive a brand new life, if they were to please God!

It is here, beloved, at this very critical issue, at this all-important transition from one kind of a man to another--from one who is earthly and at enmity to God to a brand new kind of a man, one who is of heaven, one with God in nature and character--that war is being waged in the heavenlies! In the new Man, Christ and those of His nature, Satan loses all of his rights, all of his power, all of his dominion. Satan has nothing in Him. The very presence of the new Man in glory is an ever present witness to all the defeated powers of darkness of the complete victory we have in Christ, over "all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named..." (Eph. 1:21).

Yet this victory can only be maintained as long as we live in the good of what Christ is and come to a complete renunciation of all that we were after the flesh, being not that any longer, but a new creation. This then is our warfare, for it is at this very point that the spirit of human potential seeks to exert all of its wicked powers against us, hoping somehow to veil to us the sufficiency of Christ and our completeness in Him. The enemy knows that if we live on the basis of what we are after the flesh, no matter how holy or sacred it may appear to be, such a life is a complete mockery of the Man in glory and what He stands for to God as well as to us!

Beloved, some of the most wicked, subtle, deceitful devices of the enemy are being exerted against the church along these very lines. Though the common "works of the flesh," the obvious sins of lying, stealing, cursing, immorality, hatred, contention, witchcraft, drunkenness, etc., are quite awful and indeed under the curse, yet this is not where the church is being deceived today, at least not the section of the body which is pursuing after the Lord's ends and is utter before Him.

Rather, the warfare which is being waged at the forefront of the battle is with this devilish spirit called human potential, which is ever seeking to infect us with the poison of adding something of human origin to the work of Christ, though cloaking it with all kinds of religious garments and the perfume of pomp. Master Imitator Beloved, the manner in which this spirit of human potential operates is by imitating the workings of the Holy Spirit. The particular workings which this spirit of human potential most detests are the Holy Spirit's blessed work of offering up to God all the good of what Christ is, and has done, for the believer,

and His ever making good, in the shrine of our spirit, our continued transformation into the very likeness of Christ Himself, in all things excepting His deity.

Many think that the devil's chief work today is to imitate the Holy Spirit by inspiring false visions, false prophecies, false signs and wonders, etc., Though the devil does do this, this is not his chief work. And many who are not falling prey along these lines of falsehood are being deceived along the line of this other, more subtle imitation. For it is here in the most sacred ministry of the Holy Spirit and His offering up to God what is of Christ that the greatest spiritual deception and battle lie.

Looking more closely at this battle we will see something of the nature of the great mockery, the great counterfeiting work of the spirit of human potential. Just as the Holy Spirit offers what is of Christ to the Father, and is ever busy forming Christ in us as the only life that can ever be well pleasing, a sweet smelling fragrance to our God, likewise, the spirit of human potential masquerading as the Holy Spirit is ever seeking to offer up the "good" works of the flesh as counterfeits of the life of Christ, as a mockery to His finished work.

Sent by the devil to all who are utter before God, the spirit of human potential hopes to deceive us into believing that it is the Christ-life ascending up to God when in reality it is the offering of Cain, the fruit of our "earth," which is cursed and rejected by God. Just as one of the chief purposes of the Holy Spirit is to work in us by spiritual reproduction the very character of Christ, the Man in glory, and then to offer this life to God as the life by which we are living moment by moment, so likewise the spirit of human potential seeks to imitate this process, by fanning into flame all the latent "good" works of our flesh.

He seeks both to offer these cursed works to God and to cause us to trust in their merit, even thinking that they are the fruits of Christ, when in truth they are out of the flesh, mocking Christ and what He stands for! Though we may not see this to be as awful as it really is, it is in fact a mocking, blasphemous substitute for Christ, who alone is the life of the new creation. The beast in Revelation 13:1-7 is described as one who has blasphemous names, who speaks out blasphemous things against God, His temple, and those who dwell in the heavens.

How telling! Could it be that the seat of this beast lies at the very heart of this foothold that human potential has in the church, which he has had from its very birth at Pentecost? Could it be that to get at the seat of the beast in this hour we must cast out this spirit of human potential, and pray that Christ gets His place as absolute Head in His body? A Glimpse Into God's Eternal Purpose Now, may we consider these truths concerning the great battle the church faces in this hour in light of the eternal purpose of God for His Son, the Lord Jesus.

For it is evident that all of the "winds of doctrine" that are at present being blown by tempest squalls into the ranks of Christendom are an attempt, at times quite obvious and in other cases more subtle, to take the focus off of the blessed Son of God and the eternal passion of the Father. His passion? To form a help "meet," a beloved woman in whom the Son would find a suitable companion for all eternity. The enemy's strategy? To cause this beloved of the Son, the church, to offer up something of the earth, something of the dust of this old fallen humanity, as a blatant mockery of the blessed Son of God and His atoning sacrifice--a mockery of the fact that what He is in resurrection life is what the church is to be!

How deeply this satanic strategy has affected the lives of the Lord's people! Back in the beginning when God created Adam, He was giving us a figure, a picture of the One who was to come. God then spoke to Adam something of profound importance, particularly in light of the eternal truth then only foreshadowed.

We read in the Scripture, "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). Here is a profound insight into the eternal purpose and plan of the Father regarding His Son.

God Himself says that it is not good that the man Christ Jesus should be alone! How searching, how profound! God then says, "I will make him a help meet, a suitable companion!" Notice God says He will make one for His Son. Man has no part in either the formation or the maturity of the helper who is being prepared for the blessed Son of God. Man's hands will play no part at all in this work. It would be best for us to be so out of the picture, so far removed from the sphere of God's work as to insure that we do not touch God's work in forming the companion for His Son.

All too many times we get in the way, both in our own life and in the lives of others, and we have to undergo some severe discipline by God to get us out of the way, since the whole work of our being made a suitable mate for the King of Glory--from beginning to end and the whole in between--is His alone! After God decrees His intention for the man to have a helper, the Scripture turns our attention to all the things that were formed out of the earth, and we read in verses 19 and 20 that the many living creatures God formed all passed by Adam and he gave each of them a name.

Yet verse 20b says, "but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." Beloved, here we see the most important truth: all that came from the earth, and was of the dust of the ground was not suitable to be a companion, nor a help for Adam! In this we see a great truth that God will not find and cannot use anything for Himself, or for the pleasure of His Son--as it relates to the qualities of a true companion, a true help, a beloved bride for all eternity--that originates out of the earthliness of what we are in our natural life, or anything that comes out of our own nature, no matter how religious or nice it may look!

The essential nature and character of the beloved companion of our Lord Jesus will be wholly free of anything that originates from man, be it religious or not--a completely different kind of life! Remember, God took something from Adam in order to form Eve, and even so, the church is to be formed entirely from what Christ has planted within her. She is to be an exact replica of His very nature and character. The natural life has one kind of life force behind it, while the spiritual life from the Lord Jesus is altogether different.

Paul said, "As we have borne the image of the [first Adam and in our flesh are of the earthly life], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:49). Just as in our flesh we are exactly like Adam, one day, by the process of transformation unto transfiguration, we shall be like the Last Adam, "...for we shall see Him as He is" (1 Jn. 3:2b). All creation waits for this day of the unveiling of the sons of God, the Lord's eternal help "meet" for His beloved Son! Rejected Offerings!

As we have already discussed at length, the natural life we received from Adam has the power to create all kinds of religious works and deeds along with some very godly looking (on the outside alone) systems of religion. Yet all of these altruistic works and religious deeds originate out of the earthliness of the carnal life and are all, without exception, destined to be rejected by the Lord as unfit to be a part of His beloved and unable to contribute in any way to her preparation for bridehood.

This is the significance of the failure to find any suitable help for Adam from all the things that were formed out of the earth. Never will God find something suitable for His Son in that which is formed from the dust of our own earthliness, the fruit of our carnal minds or the works of our carnal hands in creating our little religious churches and soulical, fleshly programs. Nothing out of that whole realm is acceptable to God!

The sacred cows we have created by our own hands must be smashed if we are to clearly see the Lord's exclusive pleasure, the One who alone is His delight, and who alone is the source from which He will secure a beloved helper.

May the Lord open our eyes to see all the things we are yet doing as an attempt on our part to gain some merit or spiritual increase, and may we be delivered from our inordinate fondness for the works of our own hands, seeing them for what they really are--dung, rubbish, and nothing more than fruitless works that need to be fully renounced with contempt being poured out upon them. Until this happens, we shall be very limited in seeing what the Lord is really after in a bride for His Son and will continue to spoil His work and hinder His intention and make it necessary for Him to continue to bring strong measures of discipline along these lines until we can get detached from all efforts, regardless of their expression, to offer up to Him what is out of the earthliness of our natural lives!

Remember beloved, the flesh is arrayed with myriads of works able to imitate, counterfeit, and masquerade as the Christ-life which is given to us at the new birth, and which is formed in us by the working of the precious Spirit of Jesus. Man at his "best" is often much worse than man at his "worst." It is not only the wicked works of the flesh, those repulsive deeds of sin that we mentioned earlier, that are cursed. The "good," "nice" deeds of the flesh are just as cursed and rejected by Christ.

It is the totality of the flesh, anything that is of the earth, that is the working ground of the spirit of human potential, that which he seeks to bring into the house of God, whether it be the obvious sins or the nice things of the flesh. "Anything," says the devil, "as long as it is out of the flesh and not the manifestation of Christ and His life!" The Preeminence Of Christ Now what about the outworking of these truths as they affect our everyday lives as Christians? Beloved, I believe it is inevitable that each of us individually be brought to a very severe, searching crisis.

This crisis is not a one-time experience but rather an entry into a life of continual crises. I do believe, however, that there must be that initial crisis at which time we realize that the Lord will accept absolutely nothing less than the expression of Christ and what is of Him and by Him, in everything we say and do. This initial crisis oftentimes does not occur when we first become Christians. But nevertheless, the faithful Good Shepherd will eventually bring each one whose heart longs for Him to this very thing.

Then, by God's grace, the revelation must be maintained, resulting in the continual crisis of seeing God's unwavering demand for the preeminence of Christ in everything. How does this crisis affect our lives in terms of the "teaching" and "truth" that we receive? Beloved, so many are very rich with objective truth, have sat under great teachings and have read great authors, but are very unfamiliar with the reality of this crisis. Much, or even most, of the entire Christian life is yet under the government of the natural man, being energized by the impulses of the creature and being ordered by the wisdom of the carnal mind.

Yet, at the same time, the mind is thoroughly exercised and filled with great objective truth. Right here is where the great problem lies--the problem about which the Lord is so concerned. Objective truth means nothing to the Lord and brings no glory to Christ if the steward of the truth is still the creature, via the natural man and all its inclinations--i.e. the religious nature, the drive to "do" something for God, etc.. Much of the work going on today is in fact this--but it is hard to recognize because it is hidden under all the objective truth that at first glance seems all so right.

So the Lord in His own sovereign way is going to turn on the spotlight, and "search Jerusalem with lamps" to discover where this condition is present. Many will be offended at the Lord's dealings because they will

only see the objective truth which is present, which in and of itself is not wrong, but will fail to see that the energizing life behind the truth is rejected of God. Through strong dealings the Lord is going to bring a clear distinction between what is clean and what is unclean.

When that which is unclean (the flesh-life) bears the testimony of objective truth, the Lord is against it, though He may use it to further His own kingdom. Jesus said, do what the Pharisees say, because they sit teaching the Scriptures. But do not partake in what they are, because of their hypocrisy. They had objective truth, but the Truth did not have them and consequently, though proclaiming "the truth," they were being energized by the very spirit of human potential. In our day, the Lord is going to expose a great stronghold of Satan lurking in the midst even of those standing for the deepest, most sacred "truths," that is, where the objective truth is being taught but yet at the same time the spirit of human potential is the controlling and energizing force within.

How we need the Lord to continually grant us His grace, that we may be enabled to stand with Him and be continuously pliable in His hands so that the outworking of His purposes may have full expression in our lives. Only as we receive of the Lord Jesus the grace necessary can we live daily in the good of this crisis--that truly everything we say and do may be springing out of that blessed, heavenly Life that was imparted to us through the new birth, and that the preeminence of Christ can be established in our lives, to the glory of God. !

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