

Total Commitment

by Ralph Sutera

The sermon emphasizes the importance of total commitment to Christ, dealing with the spirit of pride, and trusting God to perform the good work He has begun in us.

Duration: 1:14:03

Scripture: Romans 12:2, Ephesians 6:10

Topics: "Commitment"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal anecdote about his childhood and the intensity his mother instilled in them before visiting their Catholic relatives. He emphasizes that God sets us free from bondage not just for our own enjoyment, but to move us towards productivity in the kingdom of God. The speaker uses a cartoon analogy to illustrate how intensity can lead to productivity, comparing it to water flowing downstream and blessing communities. He concludes by discussing cues to determine whether we are operating in the flesh or in the spirit, such as the motive to exalt self and the disturbance of peace.

Transcript

In your moment this evening, I had manuals, booklets, with 21 questions for you, all printed, ready to go, and I left them at the house. So that means you have no choice, you have to come tomorrow night to get them. We'll have them here tomorrow night, OK? But tonight, it's not a sermon tonight, but it'll sound like it, I am answering questions that are most asked about being committed to Christ.

Questions that people most ask. I'm going to deal with six or seven of them, and when you get the booklet tomorrow night, you'll have 21 of them, with the answers, all written out for you to enter into. See, we really believe that it's not enough just to respond in our spirits, there needs to be understanding as to what's happening in our hearts and lives, so there'll be long range effects in our lives for the days to come.

So anybody with spiritual needs tonight, just listen and glean in what it is God wants to say, and learn about what we can anticipate as far as being totally committed to Christ. Well, yes, absolutely, absolutely. OK, questions that are most asked about being committed to Christ, questions most asked.

OK, we get started with this, my prayer for the day, so far today God, I've done alright, I haven't gossiped, been greedy or self-indulgent, I haven't lost my temper, I haven't been grumpy, nasty or selfish, I haven't whined, I haven't complained, I haven't cursed, I haven't eaten chocolate, or charged anything on my credit card, I'm really good, glad about all that. Sounds like a good day, doesn't it? Hmm. But, in a few

minutes I'm going to get out of bed, and from then on I really think I'm probably going to need a lot of help.

Well, you see, it seems to be alright when we're in bed, OK? Here, now I'm going to answer some questions, going to answer some questions. Questions. If the spirit of pride that we said last night, we've been saying through this week and Lou's been preaching, if that is the root sin problem, if that's the root sin problem, and we say we have dealt with it, what happens after I've dealt with it? What then is it when I'm tempted to be proud? Now, how many believe that you have dealt with that spirit of pride, that root problem, during these days and nights together? You believe by the act of your will, you've dealt with that.

How many believe you've done that? You've surrendered that to God. Let's see, raise your hands. OK, that's one.

Now, how many have been proud since then? There's one, two honest people, three, OK, have been proud. I think this brother is proud over the fact that he dealt with the spirit of pride. You see, it's very subtle, isn't it? Very subtle.

OK, now what happened then? If you dealt with that spirit of pride, and now once you were proud, what happened? You say, well, it just doesn't work. Toss it all overboard. No, no, no, no.

Let me show you the difference. Here's the difference. There's a big difference between the spirit of pride and the sins of pride that result from yielding to temptation.

See the difference? There's one, spirit of pride, sins of pride. Big difference between the two. Well, what does that mean? It's a difference between a temptation to be proud on a certain occasion or a controlling spirit that permeates your lifestyle, your whole being.

See, it's one thing to be tempted, proud in certain situations. Then altogether different from this, a spirit that controls and contaminates and it permeates everything about you. That's the spirit of pride.

Top one is the temptation to be proud. OK, let's see if we can understand that more. The temptation to the sin, sin of pride, is the same as any other temptation.

What does that mean? It means it's the same as being tempted to gossip, evil thoughts, envy, jealousy. So, now you're tempted to be proud. That's just the same as any other temptation.

When you yield to that temptation, you deal with it the same way as when you yield to any other temptation. So, if you gossip, say, Lord, the Holy Spirit convicted you about that. Remember last night, I said when you begin to walk in the spirit, it's almost like a dagger to your heart when you grieve that spirit.

So, you deal with it. You say, God, forgive me and cleanse me from that gossip. Same thing with the temptation to be proud.

If you yield to the temptation to be proud in a specific instance, God, forgive me, I allowed that temptation to take over me. I've sinned in pride in that instance. I ask God for forgiveness, cleansing, just like you do with any other temptation to which you yield.

So, don't let temptations run over you, even the temptation to be proud. Don't let them run all over you. You see, you've seen this.

Temptation, shh, get away, get away, get away, get away, get away, get away. And then it goes on to say, why let temptation build a nest in your hair? You see, you can't stop this. The temptation will always come, but you certainly can stop that.

You don't have to allow it to build a nest in your hair and give in to it. See, the scripture makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that God will, with the temptation, make a way to escape that you can be able to bear it. There's a way to escape.

We need to believe that God has the answer for us. Well, now let's learn a little more about that. The spirit of pride is what influences, controls, contaminates the entire being, our actions, our responses, our decision making of a calmly minded Christian.

That's the spirit of pride. See, it influences, it controls, it contaminates our entire being, our actions, our responses, decision making of a calmly minded Christian. That's what we have settled when we say, I'm dealing with the spirit of pride.

We surrender all that so that we don't have to live like that any longer. That's what we're talking about. Well, here, dealing with pride after we've made that total surrender to God relates to yielding to or resisting temptation.

Not a struggle as to who is in control of your life. That's what we settled. But here it is, it's a matter of I yielded to that temptation or I resisted the temptation.

If I yield to that temptation to be proud, I repent. If I resist the temptation, I rejoice. Just like dealing with any other temptation.

I hope you're listening, it will keep you out of bondage. Because the devil will tell you, see, you dealt with the spirit of pride. Now look, you were proud there.

And it'll make you think that you've completely gone back to being controlled by that spirit. No, no. You yielded to a temptation to sin in pride.

Altogether different. Make sure you grab a hold of that. Well, here's one.

I thought I gave everything to God last week. Especially if the meetings go on a week or two. And just think, I thought I gave everything to God last week.

And guess what? God showed me something else this week to make right. What happened? Look what I put. Aren't you glad he doesn't show you everything at once? Yeah, that's for sure.

You're glad he doesn't show you everything at once. You're gonna be glad about that, sure. Now, when that happens, you know what it is? It's a sign that God is continuing to reveal things to you and to cleanse your life.

So, whenever God shows you something else that you need to make right, there's your prayer, there's your prayer. Yes, Lord, what else? What's the question? And whenever God puts his finger on something, you deal with what it is that God is putting his finger on. See? That's a sign he's continuing.

Do you remember we heard that message about the spirit of pride? Do you remember what we heard? That that spirit of pride is the blinder that God does not have access to our hearts. And once we've dealt

with that spirit of pride, now that blinder is gone. Now God can begin to point his finger.

All right, what about this? What about this? What about this? And what about this? And the answer is, yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord. In a number of crusades where we go in churches, a man made for us a little wooden sign. And we often bring it to a church and let it stay.

We put it right on the pulpit, right in the front of the pulpit. And it's only two words long. Yes, Lord.

And that stays the whole time. Boom, right there. So, when everybody comes and listens to the sermon, all they're saying is, yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord. The only negative about reviving is my unwillingness to say, yes, Lord. That's the only negative.

When God gets us to that place, you see, yes, Lord. When he puts his finger on something else, we say, yes, Lord, that too. Yes, Lord, that too.

Yes, Lord, that was included. Yes, Lord, that was included. Yes, Lord, I see it.

And we keep on growing in grace. A pastor said, some of the most spiritual people in my church now are those who confess the most sin. And the most spiritual people, quote-unquote, are now the ones who are hiding their sin.

You understand that? In other words, sometimes we go to a place, and it's amazing. Some of the people who are open to God and are confessing their sin are now the most spiritual people. And some of the people who, in quotes, prided themselves as being the spiritual people, but were not willing to be honest with God when God was showing them some things, they are the ones who are now hiding their sin.

It's amazing to see the difference. You see? Why? Because of spiritual pride. They could be some of the pillars of the church.

You know what I mean? Some of the pillars, the founders of the church. And in some places, I've seen that the pillars of the church are just as dead as the pillars in the church. You see? And because of pride of grace.

Oh, I've got it all put together, so I don't need it. That's a tragedy. The difference between walking in the spirit and walking in the flesh.

Why? What is it? It's not that we don't have any more problems. No, that's not the problem. That's not it.

No, no. Here's the difference. Now, there's a willingness to agree with God about sin and deal with it.

When we walk in the flesh, we argue with God. We tell God, no, it's just a little Christian mistake. And we all make Christian mistakes.

We reason it out. Now, God, it's not that bad. No, but when we walk in the spirit, we agree with God and we're willing to agree and deal with it as sin.

Not that we've arrived. But there's a whole new agreement with God as to what is sin. You see? So, God's showing you more next week.

It's not negating what happened last week. It's actually substantiating it. It's actually confirming it.

Why? Because life is a process. And all of our previous dealings with God are a part of allowing God to bring us to the place now where we say, yes, Lord, that too. So, just let God do it.

Just let Him keep on doing it. Don't resist it. One pastor said to me, he said, will it ever end? How long must I eat humble pie? You know, we have to deal with our pride.

How long must I eat humble pie? Will God keep on showing me things to make right? And here's my answer. Yes, until you get to heaven. So, cheer up.

There are worse days ahead. See, as long as we're in this life, we're here in the flesh. And, you know, and there was a man standing close by who heard me talking to the pastor like that.

And guess what he said? He said, Pastor, humble pie is delicious. It's the way into happiness and growth. I love that.

Humble pie is delicious. It's as good as coconut custard pie. Maybe a little better.

See, it's the way into happiness. It's the way into growth. So, just keep walking in humility.

Let God keep on. Let the process continue now that we've said, yes, Lord. Just let it continue.

See, a lady said, as long as I'm here, there'll always be the mixture of victory and human frailty. But look at that. This is what I like.

Look at this. But now, the ratio has changed. What does that mean? She said, there'll always be frailty, human mixture of victory and human frailty and so on.

Now, the ratio has changed. You know what she's saying? She's saying before, it used to be two defeats and one victory. Two defeats, two steps back and one forward.

Two steps back, one forward. But she said, now the ratio has changed. Now it's two victories and one defeat.

Two more victories and one defeat. See, the ratio changes. That's growth.

Growing in grace and the knowledge of our blessed Lord. Well, how do you know? How do you know when you're in the flesh or when you're in the sphere? Well, we can say a lot about this, but just a few cues. Here's one.

Is the motive to exalt self? Is the glory of God supreme in what is taking place? Is the glory of God the thing that is ultimate in your mind? Is your peace disturbed? See, let the peace of God rule your heart, it says. Let the peace of God govern your heart. Let the peace of God be the supreme guide, the determining factor.

If your peace is disturbed, you know that's not of the Spirit. Is it demanding your rights? Is it demanding your rights? Is the situation demanding your rights? Is there a spirit of revenge in the situation that you're

trying to get? And is it for self-gratification, just to make me feel good and just to enhance my own personal lifestyle? And is the result Christ-centered? Is the result Christ-centered? Are you trying to write that down? No? Look at it again. Is the motive to exalt self? Is the glory of God supreme? Is your peace disturbed? Is it demanding your rights? Is there a spirit of revenge? Is it for self-gratification? And is the result Christ-centered? That's a good test, how you know whether or not you're in the flesh or whether you're in the Spirit.

You could say a lot more, but that gives you a cue how we can determine. You see? The road to spiritual growth is always under construction. Always under construction.

Yeah, it really is. It's always under construction. See? In 2 Peter 3.18, grow in grace and in the knowledge of God.

Growing in grace, knowledge of God. And the idea, we'll read the scripture a little bit later, Philippians 1.6 as well. It's always under construction.

See? It's always under construction. Always under construction. See it? Always under construction.

See? Then the scripture says, He which hath begun good work in you, he's the one who's going to perform it. We'll read that in a moment. And sometimes it's like we're being bopped on the head.

All kinds of ways that God ministers to us. Always under construction. I think we'll just let that picture keep playing all night.

So, we get the message. So, I don't have to say anything more. Just let it keep going.

Say, how much under construction is there? Always under construction. Oh, let's go on. There we go.

Is that the helmet of salvation? Yeah, yeah. No, no. Yeah, that's the helmet of salvation.

That's right. It saved you from that pounding. Okay.

Let's stand together. This is the night with all the questions. Let's read.

Let's read. In Philippians chapter 1. Philippians chapter 1. Why don't we stand again as we read? Philippians chapter 1. Verse 3. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Always in every prayer of mine for you all making requests with joy.

Now, I stopped there long enough to say how do we know that St. Paul was a southerner? Because he said, you all. Hey? You know he wasn't a Canadian. See? Look at that.

He said that in every prayer of mine for you all making requests with joy. For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. Now, watch this.

Verse 6. Being confident of this very thing. That he which hath begun a good work in you does not have the ability to keep it going after the meetings are over. Is that what your Bible says? Well, maybe that's what the reverse vision says.

Or the devil's perversion. That's what the devil will tell you. See? After it's over, it's over.

No, no. Being confident of this very thing. That he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Now, who's going to perform it? The one who has started it. He which hath begun the good work in you. He's the one doing the performance.

He'll perform it. Not your ability. You know what it is? It's your availability to God's ability.

Making yourself available. But now, here's the key. Being confident of this very thing.

He which hath begun a good work. He, he. Who is the he? God.

Now, if what you think has happened to you is something that man produced. Something that somebody twisted your arm and made you make some kind of a decision. If you think it's something that's just an emotional spurt or somebody, man did for you.

Then I have news for you. After tomorrow night, your, in quotes, your reviving is all over. It won't last long.

But if you are convinced that God has begun it. That it's a supernatural work. It's a supernatural God who's doing it.

Then you have every reason to believe that He will perform it. That's an important truth. Grab ahold of it.

Look at verse 8. God is my record. How greatly I long after you all. See that southerner, you all? In the bowels of Jesus Christ.

And this I pray. Now he's praying. Saint Paul's praying.

That your love may get less and less after the meetings. Is that what it says? I pray that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment. You know what? In knowledge, that means it's going to be an intelligent love.

It's going to be learning love, knowing love. It's an intelligent love. That means you're past the baby stage.

You're growing in knowledge. And in all judgment, means you have the ability to make right judgments. Wisdom! That's his prayer.

That we'll get past the baby stage and on to loving him more and more with knowledge and judgment. And look what else. That you might approve, verse 10, things that are A+.

Doesn't everybody say A+. Mine says excellent. And when we went to school, excellent was A+.

That's the way we were graded. A plus was excellent. See? That you may approve things that are excellent.

You say, well, I'm as good as the average person in the church. Well, you haven't said much for yourself. The average Christianity is not worth talking about.

There's a normal Christianity that's far above the average. So, he's praying that we can approve things that are A+, excellent, not C-. That you may be sincere, mean transparently honest, without offense, till the day of Jesus Christ.

Now look here. Being forgiven of your sins. Oh no.

Being filled with the fruits of righteousness. Oh, that's past the baby stage. Now we're moving from forgiveness to being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.

That's his prayer. And we can believe that if we're sure that God has begun the work, we can trust Him to continue to do it. You may be seated.

We're so excited. What's wrong? What's wrong with the rest of you? What's wrong with the rest of you? We're so excited. What's wrong? Whatever happened to your sparklers and your bubblers? Don't they work? You ever seen people who get so excited about what God's doing? And here's what happened.

Some people got so excited and they looked at the rest of them and said, what's wrong? What's wrong with the rest of you? Well, let me see. Maybe there's another. Oh, no.

Okay. All right. Here.

Let's go this way. Why don't I feel like other people felt? I made the same commitment they made and I don't have the same feeling. What's wrong with me? Okay, let's put both of those two together.

Let's put both those two together. Lou and I were in Owens Sound, Ontario a number of years ago. The first night of the meetings, it happened to be in that crusade, I was doing the opening night with a teaching session on the truths that we've been talking about.

And there was a lady, a mother and a daughter sitting off the second or third row and her husband. The mother and daughter, they were the bubblers. They were so excited.

Oh, they were watching. I was using the transparency. And oh, they were so excited.

And the mother would turn to her. The father wasn't like that. He was normal.

Weren't you glad there was at least one normal one? No, no, no, no, no. They were so excited. And they went on like that through my whole session.

When I got done, when I got done, it was the first night in the meetings, I didn't even get off the platform. Those two, that mother and daughter come running up on the platform so excited. Oh brother, so nice to see you here.

It's wonderful. And they said, brother, brother, it's wonderful to see that the Lord has been teaching you some of the same truths He's been teaching us. Isn't that right, honey? The mother to the daughter.

Isn't that right, honey? Yes, mother. Oh, it's wonderful. They were just bubblers.

The next statement the mother made to me. I'm still on the platform. Brother Ralph, aren't the people in this church dead? Aren't the people in this church dead? Hmm.

When I finally got to the back of the church, people were shaking hands with me on the way out, other people. And you know what they said to me? Brother Ralph, don't mind those two. We're not all like that.

These two are saying, brother, aren't all these people dead? And I said, don't mind those two, don't mind those two. We're not all like that. Well, you know, the truth is those were two godly people.

That mother was a godly woman and that daughter was one of the godliest teenage young ladies we'd had in the crusade. And you want to know something else? Those people in the back on the way out who said, don't mind those two. We're not all like that.

They were godly people as well. Oh. See? God wants us to get our eyes off of people.

That's it. See? Why don't I feel like other people? I made the same commitment. Is there something wrong with me? No, no, no.

There's nothing wrong with you. Let's learn something about that. No two people alike, not even twins.

Sure, you know, one is good looking and the other one isn't. You know that. See? There are different levels in our emotional tickers.

Different levels in our emotional tickers. See? There they are. There we are.

See? You know, anybody who studied the temperaments, books of temperaments, you know they say there are basically four temperaments. Sanguine, melancholic, choleric, phlegmatic. And they talk about the different strengths and weaknesses of the temperaments.

Well, you say, where is Lou? Which one is Lou? I'll tell you which one is Lou. This one right here. See that smile? See that smile? That's Lou.

Well, you say, where are you? I am the best of all four of them. And everybody said Boo! Boo! Boo! Boo! My point is very simple. You can see, you see, that's the happiest he'll ever get.

That's the happiest he'll ever get. That smile right there, that's the happiest he'll ever get. They're all different.

See, the point we need to understand, see, God does not make carbon copies. He doesn't make it in snowfall, nor does he make it in twins, see? See? Which one am I there? Which one? See? He doesn't make it, see? Now, look at that picture. Look at that, see? Look at that picture, see? Look at them, see? Oh, look at that.

Look at that. So what do we learn about that? Here's what we learn. People are not the same.

That's what we learn. That's what we learn. But different does not mean better.

And different does not mean worse. Different simply means what? Different. That's all.

That's all. We're just different. See? It's about time we learn that.

Quit trying to make everybody like you. You know, if you try to make everybody like you, you know what you've done? You have now compounded our problem. See? See? Okay.

So get your eyes off of people. And God warns us, He warns us about comparing ourselves with other people. He says those who compare themselves with themselves and with others are not wise.

Well, that's a nice way to say it in the Scripture. Well, if you're not wise, you know what it is? You're foolish. Foolish.

Oh, He warns us against that. Get your eyes off of people. But here's what to do.

You just be sure that your commitment is right. Be sure the commitment is right. And you let God take care of your feelings.

You just make sure you've made the right commitment. Get your eyes off of people. Recognize that we're all different.

See? And then here's something else we need to be aware of. You know, some who are bubblers and say, Well, I just don't feel like it. I just don't feel like it.

Be careful. Satan has ways of attacking us with wrong thinking patterns when we are physically exhausted. You know, I even had one lady who's here tonight confess to me that she almost slept through my message last night.

See that? She even has her hand up right now. And she's about to fall asleep tonight. I can see it.

You see? She's at the morning session this morning and she's getting weary and that's why we need to close the crusade tomorrow night so she'll live. All I'm merely saying to you is but she got the message just the same. I'm merely saying to you, be careful.

Don't think, don't read too much into your thought patterns when you're weary. The devil attacks when that's true. See? And you cannot equate reality through your feelings.

Reality is not through your feelings, the way you feel. It's through faith. By the way, you should be interested to know this.

That the word feeling is only mentioned, are you ready for this? Two times in the whole Bible. And neither time does it have anything to do with your salvation. And here's some people who just depend on their feelings to know they're saved.

Neither time has anything to do with salvation. Now, see, am I not supposed to feel good? It's wonderful if God gave you a wonderful feeling and rejoice. That's wonderful.

But I'm saying, you don't base your salvation on it. Your salvation is based on, in faith, on the word of God. A dam does not break every day.

The same powerful water that flows downstream and now becomes productive, the only change is intensity. Have you ever been where a dam breaks? Well, it doesn't happen every day. But if the... You know what a dam is.

It's a body of water that is being held back by some kind of a construction holding the water back. If that dam breaks, all at once, that water gushes. The intensity is great because of how it's been held back.

And it goes... Well, what happens if you go downstream a little way after that dam breaks? Did the water change? Did the water change? Yes or no? No! It's still water. H₂O. The only thing that changed was this.

The intensity changed. Now it begins to flow downstream. The most intense place is the place where the dam broke.

You don't swim there, you get crushed. But you go downstream. People fishing, people swimming.

And now that water flows downstream and now that water begins to bless communities as it flows downstream. That's important, what I've just said. Watch.

Why did I say that? See? Here's the hidden message. The water moves from intensity to what? Productivity! It begins to bless communities. The water.

Water. The resource of water. Now what am I saying? You see? Even though the intensity of what God has done in your heart and life during these days may change because we're moving past where that breakthrough took place.

What kind of breakthrough? Well, our lives have been all dammed up. Prayerlessness, worldliness, carelessness, sinfulness, laziness. All those things all dammed up.

And now in some of our lives during these days there's been a breakthrough. The dam has been crushed. And now we're moving downstream and some are even sleeping while we're moving downstream.

See? But you see, we're moving downstream. And now what does God want? He wants to move us from the intensity of the breakthrough now to productivity in the life of the church and into the kingdom of God. You know what He wants for some of you? He wants some of you to pray about volunteering, to start studying to be a teacher in your Sunday school.

He wants some of you to act in leadership capacities in your congregation. He wants some of you to be involved in visitation programs in the church. He may want some of you to write letters to needy people.

He may want some of you to be involved in a jail ministry or street ministry or whatever. Now how do you want to use that intensity? Moving to productivity. You see, God doesn't set us free from bondage just so we can sit and soak and sour and just wait for everybody to sweeten up around us.

He doesn't set us free just so we can be like a happy holiness huddle. Oh, isn't God so good and we're wonderfully enjoying the things of God and we're getting fatter and fatter and fatter as we sit on our backside and do nothing. No, no.

He wants to move us to productivity in the glory of God, in the kingdom of God. That's what's all about. Well, somebody sent me some old cartoons that are classics.

Here's one of them. Look at this. Look at this.

Here's a man building his house of religion. See here? See them here? And look at this. It says, It will wobble, brother, till you get to bedrock.

And then you begin to see. See? He's up there. He's waiting for the next log to come next.

Two by four, four by eight. Where? Look, see? And this one down here saying, hey, look, it's going to wobble. This house is going to wobble if you don't get to bedrock.

Look, look, look. Look at this here. See? It's going to wobble if you don't get to bedrock.

See? Look at that. Look at that. See? There's your quake.

Look at your feeling. See? It's going to wobble until you get to bedrock. There's bedrock.

Thus saith the Lord, the Word of God. It's going to wobble. And if you build your religious house or your spiritual house, on feelings, on all kinds of things that shake, you're not going to make it.

Not going to make it. See? So build your life on the solid rock. Jesus Christ.

The rock. I'm on the rock. Hallelujah.

I'm on the rock just for today. No, no. To stay.

See? For feelings come and feelings go and feelings are deceiving. My warrant is the Word of God. Not else is worth believing.

I'll trust in God's unchanging Word till soul and body sever. For though all things shall pass away, His Word shall stand forever. Who said that? Martin Luther.

Martin Luther. Coming out of the Roman church. Now, here's a picture of it.

Look. See? See? See the feelings are like on a roller coaster. See up here? Like a roller coaster.

But, here's faith that's built on the fact of the Word of God. Here's the foundation. This can come and go any direction.

But that's not where the foundation is. It's on this that we build. There's another picture.

The same thing but another picture. Look at the feelings of being dumped off. Oh, look.

I like this one. Look at this one. See? He's falling out of the car.

Seems to me that ever since I've made my commitment to the Lord, my... Satan is bothering me more now than ever. Wow. Is that so? I thought it was going to be rosy.

Satan's bothering me more now than ever? Well, I wonder what that's all about. Hmm. If not, watch.

You ought to check up on your commitment. Because, see, the devil can't stand it when you begin to respond to God. You know, some of us, when we get serious about walking with God, it's the first time we've upset the devil.

We are consciously aware that we've given the devil some business. He doesn't like it. See? Huh.

That's interesting. When you look at the Scripture, victory and conflict come together in the Scriptures. The struggle with self ends, but the battle against Satan intensifies.

See? We've settled the issue of that spirit of pride, but the battle against Satan intensifies because he does not like it. He does not like it. See? You can accept being dead indeed unto sin in a moment's time, but God will take the rest of your life to work it out.

See? It's a crisis and then a process. Well, Christ is an example of that. When did Christ die on the cross? When do they say they crucified Christ? What time? They say generally about nine o'clock in the morning.

Most say He was crucified. How long did it take Him to die? About six hours, they say. Sometimes, some say at noon.

Some say about three o'clock in the afternoon. See, He was crucified at nine, but it took Him several hours to die. You and I can accept being crucified with Christ in a moment's time, agreeing with God about that, but it will take the rest of our lifetime working out the process of daily being crucified with Christ, walking that death union with Him.

See? And that's a process. Well, we need to be sure it's Satan. Be sure it's Satan.

Be sure it is Satan. See? The Bible says we're to examine ourselves to see whether or not we're in the faith. But God is the one who searches the heart.

See? I, the Lord, search the heart. I try the reins of man to see what is in the heart of every man. If you search your own heart, you know what the problem is? Because the heart is so deceitful, we wouldn't even be honest with ourselves.

So, you just let God do the searching. Let God put His finger on it. Now, we can be sure whether or not we're in the faith, whether or not we've genuinely been born again of the Holy Spirit, but you let God do the searching of the heart.

Don't try to pick yourself apart. No? Otherwise, it becomes morbid introspection. Always try to find something wrong with yourself.

Always try to find something wrong with yourself. And you should have been in my morning session this morning when we talked all about that. Self-worth and self-acceptance and all those things.

Self-image, all that. Okay? See? Now, when we think of Satan, most people think of that. That he's like a serpent.

He is. Okay. Now, I'm to probably the most important part of the evening.

And if there's anybody sleeping near you, punch him, wake him up. And if you have the tendency to fall asleep, I'll tell you how you'll stay awake. Sit with your feet two inches off of the floor and you will not fall asleep.

Hold your feet two inches off the floor. You know what I'm saying? It's the most important thing I'm going to say now. How can you tell the difference between when God the Holy Spirit is speaking to you and when Satan is tempting you? How can we tell the difference? Tomorrow night, when you come and you receive the manual, you'll have all this in the manual, all the scripture and everything for each point.

How can we tell the difference? First of all, let me just show you the verses you have here. This one says, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but he's given us a spirit of love and of power and soundness of mind, sound thinking. That's what God has given us.

Okay? But this one says, Satan, you are of your father the devil, and the lusts and the works of your father you will do. He was a liar from the beginning and he abides not in the truth and when he speaks, he speaks a lie because he is the father of all lies. Okay? So my point to begin with right here is you have a choice to make.

You're either going to agree with God or you're going to listen to Satan. Choice we make. Alright, well, what happens? When the Holy Spirit speaks, he gives you a sense of God's holiness.

When Satan speaks, sense of your own worthlessness. You're just worthless. When the Holy Spirit speaks, he makes you God conscious through the Word.

When Satan speaks, he makes you self-conscious through your own feelings. When the Holy Spirit speaks, he generally deals with one issue at a time in a gentle, quiet manner. When Satan speaks, he throws the whole book at you at once in a clamoring manner.

By the way, if we believe that the Holy Spirit is the heavenly teacher, the Bible says the Holy Spirit leads us and guides us into all truth. He's the heavenly teacher. And you know what about the teacher? You know about the heavenly teacher? He never gets mixed up on the lesson and he never gives the pupil or the student more than he can handle.

And it's one lesson at a time the Holy Spirit speaking. When the Holy Spirit speaks, he always speaks in clarity and he's very specific. When Satan speaks, it's in confusion and very general.

So, somebody comes to me, says, Brother Al, I've got a problem. I say, well, what is the problem? What's your problem? Well, I don't know. I don't know.

I'm just so mixed up. I'm just so confused. Well, tell me.

Well, tell me. I am just so confused. I'm just all mixed up.

Well, tell me. What is your problem? I'm so mixed up. Now, you answer me.

Who is doing the speaking? Who is doing the speaking? Who? Tell me. Satan. The Holy Spirit is always clear.

The teacher is never mixed up on the lesson and what he's saying. And whenever you find yourself like that, you know you need to resist the enemy. You know that's not coming from God, that's from Satan.

Well, when the Holy Spirit speaks, he's correcting us. When Satan speaks, he is accusing us. Point his finger.

Big difference. Big difference. When the Holy Spirit speaks, he is convicting us.

Oh! Boom! I've grieved that Holy Spirit. He convicts us of our sin. When Satan speaks, he is condemning us.

Big difference. Big difference. When the Holy Spirit speaks, he talks to us about unconfessed sins, things we have not yet dealt with.

When Satan speaks, he speaks to us about confessed sins, things that we have already put under the blood. We've already settled the issue with God, between us and God. And the Holy Spirit goes, Satan goes fishing.

Do you remember when Lou talked about when he buries our sins in the depths of the sea to be remembered against us no more forever? And he said, and the problem is, that when the Lord comes to the top of the sea, he puts a sign saying, no fishing allowed. And guess what happened? The devil went

fishing. Where he shouldn't be.

And he pulls out of our past those things that we've already dealt with, and we've already put under the blood. And he says, look at them, look at them, look at them, look at them. Whenever you find that, you know that that's not from God.

When the Holy Spirit speaks, he talks to you about unconfessed sins. Those things that you've not yet seen before. Those things that you've not yet put under the blood.

And God, the Holy Spirit, ministers to you and says, yes Lord, that too, and you deal with it. Big difference. Big difference between the two.

When the Holy Spirit speaks, he encourages you to obey. And he entreats you. And there's hope.

When Satan speaks, discourages you to despair. Torments. You're helpless.

One is hope, the other is helpless. When the Holy Spirit speaks, he confirms the issue. There's peace, there's peace, there's peace.

And the issue is confirmed. When Satan speaks, pressure. And he leaves you frustrated.

When the Holy Spirit speaks, he leads you into a life of balance. When Satan speaks, it's a life of bondage. Life of bondage.

When the Holy Spirit speaks, always in sincerity. When Satan speaks, subtle. He's very subtle.

He even comes as an angel of light. Subtle, he comes as an angel of light. Interesting indeed to see that.

The devil at your heels. The older I become, the more I'm impressed with the subtlety of Satan. This is a professor from a seminary in Texas, a great man of God.

He said, Satan always fogs in the area of the crucial. Never the area of the trivial. You know what he's saying? He's saying, Satan is so subtle.

He fogs in the things that are really important, that you cannot see them clearly. But the things that are trivial, that really don't matter too much, he makes them look as if they're large. He makes those things look as if they're important.

And you see? And that's why a church can be split over the fact that they couldn't decide on which side of the platform the piano should be. Isn't that a great spiritual decision? Or a fuss of a church because they couldn't, they didn't agree about the color of the drapes in the nursery. Isn't that profound? And he makes those things look big.

And he fogs in the things that really matter, that we cannot see clearly. Satan the deceiver and liar? Look at that. That's some picture.

Look at that. See? There's a Bible. Even distorting God's truth.

See? The fact that people come to your house and use a Bible is not a sign for truth. The devil knows how to use the Bible even. You've got to be very careful.

Very careful. He loves to snatch God's word from us any way he can. See? Loves to snatch, any way he can.

Now, what have I just said? When God speaks, what do we hear? When God speaks, look at this. He does what? He gives you a sense of his holiness. He makes you God-conscious through the word.

One thing at a time. Clarity and specifics. He is correcting us.

He is convicting us. Encouraging us to obey. Dealing with unconfessed sins.

When the devil comes to you, right there. When the devil comes to you and talks to you all about the sins you've already put under the blood. When he's talking to you about your past sins, you know what you need to do? You need to resist him and tell him about his future.

His future. That you've read the last chapter of the book. That he's a defeated foe.

And you resist him accordingly. When God speaks, he confirms it with peace. He leads you into a life of balance.

That's when God speaks. But how does Satan work? Well, he isolates you. You're the only one who's ever had that problem.

You know, you get the feeling you've got a problem that God has never faced before. Nobody else has it. You're isolated.

Almost like in a class. All to yourself. And when he does that, then he makes you feel bad.

He depresses you. Of course you ought to feel bad. Of course you should feel bad.

After all, you're the only weak person around. You're the only one with that problem. You ought to be depressed.

This is Satan's faith. And then he points his finger right at you. See? Who are you going to blame? You're the only one with the problem.

Who are you going to blame? See? Satan works in lots of ways. But that's just a little bit of you. There it is.

And I like that. That's the same thing I've just said. But look at that picture.

Oh, what a headache. Yes? Well, listen to it. Now, why should we not live that kind of life? You know why? Because we have armor.

Because we have the armor of God. And you see? And when you read Ephesians chapter 6 and you begin to see all the armor of God, you see? There is the helmet of salvation. And you see? And there's the sword of the Spirit, the word of God.

And there is the shield of faith. And there's our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. And there's our loins girt about with truth and the righteousness of God in our lives.

And all these things. And you study it. You study it in Ephesians chapter 6. All the armor we have.

The armor of God. The armor of God that we have. And guess what? And when you read and study about the armor of God, it lists it all.

And then it says, And above all, above all, take the shield of your feelings. Is that what it says? No. Shield of faith.

It's a shield. Faith is a shield. A shield is protection.

And it is above all. It is above all. It is above all.

Somebody says, Oh, well, you go by faith, but I live by my feelings. I say, alright, go ahead. You can go second class if you want to, but I'm going first class.

You can go by the caboose, I'm going by the engine. Take the shield of faith. There it is.

I love that picture. Look at that. See? See that? There's the shield.

See? Faith. Here's the word of God, the sword of the spirit. Here's all the armor on.

Here's the gospel of peace. See? Evil and high places come, but look at the protection we have. And there's the helmet of salvation.

Look at the strength that is in all that. I love that picture. Well, having said that, before I get to this, let me just share with you something that Lou and I learned as children.

As an Italian Roman Catholic family, we basically would go visit our relatives who were in Catholicism after our conversion to Christ. One half hour on the way there, we would come to the Brooklyn Bridge. For that first half hour, we could be talking, five children in the car at the time, we could be talking about all kinds of things.

When we got to the Brooklyn Bridge, mother would say, all right children, now it's time for us to get ready for battle. We're going to relatives. Get ready for battle.

What do you mean? Because mother and dad were going to witness to our unsaved relatives. And we as the children were the prayer support behind mother and dad as they witnessed to our relatives, to our aunts and uncles, their peers. And so, guess what we would do? Right at the Brooklyn Bridge.

Never did find out why mother picked the Brooklyn Bridge, but you see, once you get off the Brooklyn Bridge, you are in New York, in Brooklyn, New York, from New Jersey into New York. So there's the divide, Brooklyn Bridge. And we would, in the car, we would literally put on the armor of God.

As children, we would put our hands on our heads, and we would put on the helmet of salvation, the protection of the helmet of salvation. And then we would reach down and grab our feet. That's when we could reach and reach.

And we would, and our feet sharp with the preparation of the gospel of peace. And the sword of the Spirit in our hands. And the shield of faith.

And the breastplate of righteousness. We would put it all on. Visibly putting it on.

And then mother would say, when we get finished, alright now children, here's the way the enemy attacks us. Through our minds. Our thinking.

And mother would remind us of the story in the Old Testament, how the blood of the rams and the animals would be put, the sacrifice would be put on the door posts of the Israelites in Egypt. And when the death angel would be over, the death angel could not touch any home where the blood of Christ was applied. Protection of the blood.

And mother would say, alright boys, children, now we need to protect the protection of the blood of Jesus Christ over our minds. Our thinking processes. And we would actually put our hands on our foreheads like this.

And mother would say, alright, let's pray. And we, by faith, plead the blood of Jesus Christ against all the forces of hell that would invade our minds. And we claim the protection of the precious blood of Jesus Christ to be ours even now.

Amen. No, you didn't have to say amen. That's what we said.

And when we would do that, mother would say, alright now children, we are ready for battle. And for the next half hour, before we got to where we were going on the Brooklyn side, we were quiet. No more loose discussion.

Just quiet, preparing ourselves for that battle. Hmm. It would be worth considering making that a practice in your everyday experience.

Putting on the whole armor of God for your protection and the covering of the precious blood of Christ. It would be great to even teach your children to do that for their protection as well. Well, why is that so important? Let's learn something about Satan and what God can do.

Five things Satan cannot do. Here. He cannot penetrate the blood of Christ.

That's what we just said. He cannot. Why? You see, the blood of the cross was Christ's victory over Satan.

And it's our victory as well. Sin. And then, see, he cannot stop God's ultimate purposes in the world.

See, he cannot keep the church from prevailing. He cannot keep Jesus from returning for his bride. And he cannot confess Jesus as Lord, come in the flesh.

Satan cannot do that. And he cannot penetrate the armor of God when it's done in the power of the Spirit. And he cannot compare with our position as, look, heirs of God joined heirs with Jesus Christ.

Satan doesn't get anywhere near that. See? Alright, having said that, I need to ask you a question. Why? Why can't he do it? Here's why.

Because of the finished work of Christ on the cross. Because of our union with Christ. Because of our being filled with the Spirit, walking in the Spirit.

And because of who we are in Christ. Now, what does that mean? What does that mean? Here. What does the Bible say? That's a part of a scripture.

What does it say? We what? Have the mind. Does it say we shall have? Hmm? Does it say we had the mind of Christ? What tense is that word? What tense is that word? Present tense. We have.

We have. If you're born again of the Spirit, you have. We have.

We have. It's present tense. The mind of Christ.

Well, when you witness the people, you talk to them about their need of Christ, they look and say, Oh, you've lost your mind. You've lost your mind. Well, you say, thank you.

My Bible says that when I'm a Christian, I receive the mind of Christ and I'd rather have his than mine. Any day. Then they look at you, finally say, Oh, you're cracked.

Say, thank you. That's where the light shines through. See, my point is simple.

Some of us have never understood that, that we have right now the mind of Christ. Not you shall have. We have right now the mind of Christ.

Present tense. You're born again. Having said that, see, there's the verse.

God has not given us the spirit of fear. We read that. Now, let's see if we get this.

The enemy is less than God. Do we believe that? How many believe? He's less than God. OK? We believe that.

OK? Now, the enemy is less than you and me. How many believe that? A few hands less. He's less than you and me.

But most of you say yes. Well, here's the question. Why can you say, Well, why can Satan have so much power in my life if he is less than me? Hmm.

Why? Sure. That's right. I heard it here.

See? Satan doesn't have to be greater than we are to victimize us. All he needs is permission. You just let him.

You just give him permission and he'll take it. He'll take it. Christ never gave him permission.

See? Greater is he that is in you. Look at that. The indwelling almighty spirit of God.

Greater is he that is in you. See? The anointed one. See? Than all the force of hell.

Than he that is in the world. Greater is he. See? That is super power.

Not your power. It's God's power. In you.

Okay? If that's true. If he's less than you and me. Why is that true? How do we know it's true? Do you know why? Because we are what? We are what? Heirs of God.

Can anybody explain that? Can anybody try to tell me what it's like to be an heir of God? I must say to you that of all the spiritual concepts that I've tried to grab a hold of, that is probably one of the hardest ones that I can grab a hold of. What is it like to be an heir of God? I know we're gods too. But an heir of God?

An heir of God? Yes.

We're ambassadors for Christ. We're taking his place. Oh, we're taking his place.

That's good. Good. Well, I'll give you.

He adopted us. What's that? He adopted us. He adopted us.

To his family. We are partakers. You're partakers.

We're adopted. We're partakers. What's that? Everything he has.

Everything he has is ours. Okay. But that's not easy to explain.

See, and there's exactly what you just said. Look at this. Look at Ian Thomas.

Everything God is, we have. We cannot have more. We need not have any less.

Well, it's a nice definition. I'm not so sure how much I can really grab a hold of. Anyhow, let's bypass that because we can get on to something that's easier for us to grab.

You know what it is? It's this. We are what? Joint heirs with Christ. Joint heirs with Christ.

Now, those are legal terms about ownership. Joint heirs. Now, in my country, there are several ways you can own property.

And I'm sure it's true here too. But you can either be joint. You have something in joint tenancy.

Joint tenants. Or tenants in common. The term tenants in common is used in our language.

Tenants in common. What's the difference? The difference is, if I'm a tenant in common, I can own half of something. And my brother can own half of something.

And so we have common interests. But if we are joint heirs, it means we both own it all at the same time. And oftentimes, Lou has an instrument that we travel with, that he plays the accordion.

And you see, if we were tenants in common, in owning that instrument, if he were to pass away, I'd have to cut that instrument in half, give half of it to his wife, because it's his ownership, and I would keep the other half. Hmm. If we were joint heirs, that we owned it completely, he owned it and I owned it, 100% his, 100% mine.

We're joint heirs, joint heirs. He owns it completely, I own it completely together. Guess what happens? If he were to die, oh, if I were to die, if he were to die, it's all mine.

If he were to die, it's all mine. I would sell it. It's all mine, I'd sell it, I'd sell it.

And if I die, he can have it, he can have it, he can have it, he can have it. It's all his anyhow. The truth is very simple.

Now, take that into the spiritual. Are we tenants in common with Jesus Christ? Yes or no? No. What are we? Joint heirs.

Oh. All his and all ours at the same time. Oh.

All his and all ours at the same time. You know what that means here? Everything that belongs to Jesus is available to us. You know what it means? It means Jesus and I are brothers.

See, if he is the son of God, I am a son of God, I am a child of God by adoption into the family. If Jesus is God's son and I am God's son, then what does that make? It means that Jesus and I are what? We are what? Brothers. And so what God has for Jesus, he has for me because I'm a joint heir.

I'm on the same level with Jesus as far as God is concerned in relation to ownership. And there's nothing cheap about that. See? And when the joint heir, when one person is gone, all that he owns belongs to the other.

And look at this. Jesus went back to his father. And he says, now you enjoy everything that I had while I was on earth.

Here it is. It's ours. It's ours.

See? So he went back to the father and said, all right, all power is yours. On earth. While I've gone back to my father.

See, a minister commented, he said, the Lord seemed impressed on me as I heard this truth. Stop grumbling in who you were and start reveling in who you are. That's what it's all about, see? And we're joint heirs of Christ.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me. Jesus, look at this. We're going to sit with him.

We're going to sit with him, see? Because we're joint heirs in my throne. Even as I've overcome and have sat down at the father's. And it's all because of the cross.

All because of the cross. Taking all of our sin and shame and all the difficulties of our lives that we try to solve on our own. They can be settled at the cross.

No wonder the songwriter so beautifully said it. He said, my faith has found a resting place not in device or creed. I trust the ever living one.

His wounds for me shall plead. I need no other argument. No other argument.

I need no other plea. It's enough that Jesus died. And that he died for me.

Enough for me that Jesus saves. That's what ends my fear and doubt. Sinful soul I come to.

He'll never cast me out. My heart is leaning on the word. The written, the written, the written word of God.

Salvation by my Savior's name. Salvation through his blood. My great physician.

He heals the sick. The lost he came to save. For me his precious blood he shed.

For me his life he gave. I need no other argument. I need no other plea.

It's enough that Jesus died. And that he died for me. And for you.

Amen. Amen. Let's stand as we pray.

Lord God I pray. Thou will deliver us from any fear and doubt and unbelief. May we become believing believers.

Trusting you to do a divine work in every one of our hearts and lives. Lord for some of us we've been in the doldrums of despair for so long. Deliver us.

Bring into us a whole new realization as to who we are in Christ. And may we walk in the Spirit so we need not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Spirit of the living God fall fresh on us.

Deliver us from half-hearted commitment. And may we make a full surrender of all that we are and have and hope to be into your hands even tonight. Have your way.

Thank you and praise you for it. In Christ's name we ask it. While we're praying.

Could there be some of us who say you know I just needed to hear this tonight. I needed to hear this. I needed this.

I need for God to set me free. And to set us free. Could be a marriage.

It could be an individual life. It could be a whole family situation. Broken relationships.

Whatever it may be. It could be the deep hurts of the past. The unforgiving spirit of the way I've been treated in the past.

Whatever it may be. The wounds of so many things that have just torn my life apart. And I've never put them yet under the blood.

Tonight I want to make a full surrender. Totally to God. All these areas.

Pray for me. Pray for me. I need that touch from God tonight.

Pray for me. Would you express that by quietly slipping your hands up. Place them down.

Yes. There are hands that are being raised. Hands are being raised.

Yes. You may place them down. Dear Lord.

Filled by your spirit. I pray. That you will take the word that has been spoken tonight.

And bring about genuine peace. And release. And spiritual victory.

In everyone who recognizes that need tonight. And I pray that there will be such a sense of your presence. In every life as we leave this place.

To know that we've made that full surrender to all that you are. And that all we can be for your glory as we make it. Have your way.

Have your way. And right where we're standing. Why don't you deal with whatever God put on your heart tonight.

Whatever way he spoke to you. Whatever point got to you. Ask God to deal with you about it.

You confess it. Forsake it as sin. Deal with it as sin and forsake it.

And ask for a fresh cleansing. And surrender that all to God at the cross. And ask him to fill you with the spirit in that area.

Where you have allowed that self-life to continue. Right where you're standing. And thank him for the victory.

Right where you're standing. Put it in your own words between you and God.

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