

Maintaining a Cutting Edge

by Ross Ulrich

To maintain a cutting edge in serving the Lord, we must abide in Christ, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, staying in a continual, moment-by-moment relationship with Jesus Christ.

Scripture: 2 Kings 6:1, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 4:6, Hebrews 11:6, 1 John 1:9, 1 John 2:1

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Ross Ulrich preaches about the importance of maintaining a cutting edge in our Christian walk, emphasizing the need to address sins of the spirit such as selfishness, fear, unbelief, worry, unforgiveness, and slothfulness. He urges believers to reflect on where they may have lost their spiritual power and to turn to the old rugged cross for restoration. Through confession of sins and reliance on the cleansing power of Jesus Christ, believers can regain their cutting edge and walk in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Greetings again in that name above all names that we were singing about: The Alpha and Omega, the Lord of Glory, the great I AM, Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. May He be lifted up here this afternoon.

Let's bow our heads for prayer. Father, in the name of Your Son Jesus, we approach Your throne. We have no other place to stand, Lord. God, my own righteousness is as filthy rags, and in this flesh of mine that dwells no good thing. Oh, God, I don't come in the name of Ross today, not in the name of Zion Christian Fellowship. I come in Jesus' name. Oh, what a standing you've given us there, Father. Thank you, thank you, Father, for that precious blood that washed our sins away. Thank you, Father. Lord Jesus, You are the head of the body. May you alone be exalted here this afternoon. I pray Lord that in Your mercy, you would let us see more of Thy glory today. Open our eyes, Lord, that we may, as we gaze into the mirror of Your word we will see more of Thy holiness, [and] more of our need. I do plead for your mercy upon my self, and upon each one of us, God. I confess my need of you, God, and confess that you are all I need. Come down, Lord, in the power of Your Holy Spirit, there this afternoon, and though the weekend. Oh God, teach us to walk in the Spirit, Lord, that this dark world, growing rapidly darker, may see the glorious light of Jesus Christ. All glory be unto You Lord Jesus Christ, in Your name we pray, Amen.

You may turn with me for a text to Second Kings, Chapter 6. "And the Sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, 'Behold, now. The place where we dwell with thee is too straight for us'," (That's an old English word for "too narrow for us", their house was too small. They had outgrown their house.), " 'Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make a place there where we may dwell'. And he answered, 'Go, ye'. And one said, 'Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants', and he answered, 'I will go'. So he went with them, and when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water, and he cried out, 'Alas, master, For it was borrowed!'. The man of God said, 'Where fell it?'. And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and he cast it in thither, and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, 'take it up to thee', and he put out his hand, and took it,".

There was a wonderful miracle here. Interesting. I've never seen iron swim, I don't expect I ever will, but it swam here. I have no doubt about this. This is a true account. I believe the word of God. I have no doubt at all that this happened just like the word of God says it here. It's not difficult at all for God to make iron swim.

We want to draw some lessons from this story today. I have titled this message "Maintaining A Cutting Edge", Or subtitled, "Walking In The Spirit". We'd like to see, first of all, the cause, and then the calamity, and then the cure, because we see in verses 1 to 3 where these sons of the prophets realized that their house was too small. And they said, "Let's go cut down wood and build a bigger one,". It wasn't a problem, it just needed to be done. As we look around, today, what is the house where God's servants dwell? What do we call that today? It's the Church. I'm not talking about this building, I'm talking about the church building universal: you and I. It's the house where God's servants dwell. And these sons of the prophets realized that their house is too small for them, and that's still the problem today. God has called us to, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," and to expand the Church of Jesus Christ, to preach His name. That is the calling that He has called us to today.

We are stones in the Temple of God. As God says in Ephesians Chapter 2, the last few verses there stating with 19, "Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the Household of God...", (We are the family of God), "...and are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ Himself, being the chief corner stone, in whom all of the building fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye are also built together for inhabitation of God through the Spirit,". It's in Peter where he says that we are living stones. If you are born again, if you are a child of God today, you are a stone in the building in the temple of God, the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies where the spirit of God dwells. Isn't that a wonderful thought? An awesome thought, that we are part of the temple of God?

Well, God has called us to be laborers together with Him. Over in 1st Corinthians Chapter 3, Paul says in verse 9 and 10, "For we are laborers together with God. Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of the God given unto me as a wise Master Builder, I have laid the foundation and another built thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth there upon,". So it's clear from the scripture that God, yes, Jesus Christ, has promised, "I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," there in Matthew, but He's called us to be fellow laborers with Him. We are to be builder of the Church with Him, and this is the cause that is in our hands. God has put this cause in our hands. It's a real cause, it's an eternal cause, and it's a battle. This is the cause that we are in.

Satan is not happy to give up any of his subjects to become citizens of the Kingdom of God, and so anyone who sets themselves to build the kingdom of God is going to run into trouble like these sons of the prophets ran into trouble when they started to build. When they went out to cut wood, to build their house bigger, they ran into trouble. And you can count on it! The devil is going to try to give you trouble when you set yourself up to obey God, to serve God, and to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Satan will not be happy with you. You can expect opposition if we are in a warfare.

"Is there not a cause?", like David said. Yes, there is. We are to preach the gospel to every creature. There in Mark chapter 16 it says, "And He said unto them, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and be baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned,'". We can't force people to believe, we can't make people born again. That's not our calling. God has called us, Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned us, to preach the gospel to every creature. That's our commission.

And I am blessed that this church is involved in reaching out. If that's not happening in a church, it's not healthy. Something is wrong where a church is not reaching out. Where an individual is not reaching out, something is wrong. It's not healthy where an individual is not sharing the gospel. And you don't have to be a Christian for a year or two years, or go through some special evangelism classes to do it. You don't have to. Someone said, "Evangelism is just one beggar telling another beggar where to get a good meal,". You can do that, can't you? The things that excite you are what you talk about. If you see a bad accident on the road, when you get to work, or wherever, or the grocery store, what do you talk about? After September 11th, what did people talk about? The things that excite us, the things that mean something to us, those are the things we talk about. You don't have to be a theologian to witness to your next-door neighbor or the person you work with. But if Jesus lives in your heart, it will just come out.

Sisters can also preach the gospel. This isn't just brother's work, this is sister's work also. You can also preach the gospel. And, in a way, you have an opportunity that we men don't have. You look more distinctive than us men in some ways. In our society today, women have so far removed themselves from God's order, that you look so different. I know you know that, because when you go out, people ask your questions, and look at you funny, maybe not to much in this community, because they are used to plain people. But in some places, people will really stare at you, and it's an opportunity to share the gospel. I've heard some discussions on that once, and someone said, "Well, why is it that the sisters look so different? Maybe us men should do something to look different," and another said, "I think the reason it is that way is because God wanted it that way, because in society, who do people watch? The women. The men are watching the women, and the women are watching the women. Did you ever notice that? It just seems that way. What an opportunity for our sisters to preach the gospel!

I just want to encourage us, there is a cause, and the cause is the eternal kingdom of God, and souls. One soul is worth more than the whole world. It's good to go out and have tracts stuffed somewhere in your pockets or your purse, to be ready and just share a word, reminding people that the Lord is coming again, asking people if they are ready to meet Jesus. Just a word, it doesn't have to be a sermon.

Well, let's look at the calamity back here in these verse we read in Second Kings. When they got out there and started cutting down wood in verses 4 and 5, "So he went with them...", (the prophet Elisha), "...and when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water, and he cried and said, 'Alas, Master, for it was borrowed!'," ". What good is an axe without the head? What good is it? Just imagine, there he is, he's felling a tree, and as he's felling that tree, the head flies of

and goes into the river, and he can't get it back, and all he's got is this stick in his hand. Well, he could keep working, couldn't he? He could keep beating on that tree with a stick, but what's he going to do? Is he going to accomplish anything? Is he going to cut the tree down? What's he going to do? He's going to wear himself out, and accomplish nothing, right? Much energy would be expended, and little or nothing accomplished. Too often, our work in the kingdom of God is like that, isn't it? Too often, that's what our lives are like in trying to serve the Lord. This happens when we try to serve God in the power of our flesh, and with my own strength, rather than with the anointing and the presence of the spirit of God. This is what happens. It's like trying to cut wood with the handle of the axe! The cutting edge is gone! And can work feverishly, you can expend energy, and in the final analysis, very little is done, and you are worn out.

As I already said, Satan fights against those that are serious about serving the Lord. And if he can't outright stop you from being a Christian, he'll try to make you ineffective. If he can't get you to turn your back to God, he'll try to bring something into your life that makes you ineffective in winning others to the Lord, and shining the glory of God.

Let's look at some promises of God in Acts Chapter 1, then in the book of John. Acts Chapter 1, verses 4 and 5, "And being assembled together with them, Jesus commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the father 'Which,' saith He, 'Ye have heard of me,'. What was the promise of that Father that they were supposed to wait for? It was the Holy Spirit. "For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence,". Why did Jesus give them this commandment? He's just about to go back to the Father in heaven, and he tells them, "You wait in Jerusalem. Don't go out and try to do my work. You wait in Jerusalem until you have received the promise of the Father,". Why did He say that? Well, Jesus knew that without the Holy Spirit's power, we just wear ourselves out and we really don't accomplish anything for eternity. But look at verse 8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me in both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the Earth. Hallelujah. "You shall receive power," that word power is the Greek word "dunamis" where we get our word "dynamite". "You shall receive power", God's dynamite power, God's miracle working power, "after that the Holy ghost is come upon you".

If we lose our cutting edge, brothers and sisters, it's not a small thing. It's not. It's worse than trying to plow with horses. It's like hooking the plow up to a tractor that has no engine. You just don't get anything done. You just sit there. It's like trying to cut a tree down with an axe handle. It doesn't work if we lose our cutting edge.

Let's go back to John chapter 14. there are some beautiful promises here that the Lord gave us. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the son,". If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. Glory! "The works that I do he shall do also, and greater works than these shall he do,". That's quite a promise, and I have to confess, I fall far short, but let's not water down the promise and make it fit us, let's try to make our lives fit the promise. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the son.", "If you ask anything in my name, I will do it,". The promise of answered prayer! There it is! Beautiful Promises!

Now, let's go to the next Chapter. I believe this Chapter gives us the clue as to why many times my life and your life fall short. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that

beareth not, He taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean with the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bring forth fruit of itself lest it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without Me, ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and they are cast into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. So shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so hath I loved you. Continue, ye, in My love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love,". Now, a quiz: What's the key word in those first 10 verses? "Abide". Nine times, it was there: "Abide". And the word "continue" in there is the same Greek word, so it's there ten times. In those first ten verses, the word "abide" is in there ten times, and I really believe this is the key to spiritual power in our lives, brothers and sisters, and to the reason, many times, we are just knocking on wood. Glorious promises, here. But we must abide. He is the vine, we are the branches. It was the Lord through brother Hudson Taylor that brought out the beautiful truth that: "You know what a vine looks like? You're all acquainted with vines? Ok. Let's say here is a vine. Now, where is the vine, and where are the branches? Well, where are the branches, let's answer that. Well, we'd say this over here is the branch, right? Well, where is the vine? Is this the vine? The whole thing is the vine, isn't it? Isn't that beautiful? Christ is the vine, we are the branches, if we are in Him, it's not us trying to do something with our own power, it's Christ in us! He does it. He's the whole vine. All we need to do is abide in Him, and He'll do it through us,". Oh, the beauty of that, the rest in that, that we can just grasp a hold of it. But we must abide, brothers and sisters, we must abide.

In the first two verses here he is talking about the branch that bears fruit. What does the Husbandman do to the branch that bears fruit? He prunes it, he purges it. When a tree bears fruit, that's great, we like that. But, we prune it. We take a knife out, and cut off some of those branches, and God does the same thing in our lives. When we become Christians, and the fruit begins to come out in our life, we are full of joy, and we are able to minister to people, what happens? You get into a trial, it could take any form or shape, or maybe the ministry you felt God leading you into, the bottom drops out of it, and you think, "What is going on?!" It's just the Lord purging us. It's just the Lord pruning us. He doesn't want to destroy you, He wants to bring sweeter fruit, He wants to bring bigger fruit out of your life. That's His whole purpose. He's not trying to destroy us, so when those things happen in our lives, don't back off, just hold fast. Abide in the vine. That's what we do sometimes, we say, "Well, I wasn't expecting that. If that's what it's like, I'm not sure I can handle this. I'm not sure I can go on," and start backing off. Just abide in the vine. Just keep your faith in Jesus. When those prunings come, when those trials come, just hold on, He wants sweeter fruit next year.

To abide means to just stay there. I get the picture of Enoch who walked with God, day in and day out. I had a brother mention this morning about walking with the Lord. Galatians 5:25 says, "If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. And if we're born again, we have the spirit of God in us,". If we are born again, it is because we have been born by the Spirit of God. If you don't have the Spirit of God dwelling in you, you are not part of His family. Romans 8 is very clear on that, "If any man have not the spirit of God, he is none of His,". So, if you are born again, you have the Spirit of God, but there is a difference between living in the spirit, and walking in the spirit. Yes, you can have the Spirit dwelling in your heart. You can be alive because the Spirit of God has begotten you again, and you are part of the family again, but we must learn to walk in the spirit of God. It means a continual, moment-by-moment relationship, and with brother

Steve, I must confess that I need to preach this message to myself. I feel like a little child just learning to pull myself up along the sofa. I feel like God is just beginning to open my eyes to some of these things of walking in the spirit, but that's my heart. I want that walk with God, a moment-by-moment relationship with Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 5:18, God, through the apostle Paul said, "And be not drunk with wine, where is an excess, but be filled with the Spirit,". Amen. We must be filled, with the Holy Spirit, brothers and sisters. Not only to fight this warfare. You know, we are fighting an enemy greater than ourselves. We need a power greater than ourselves. We are not match for the devil. But not only for the extending of God's kingdom, but for our own personal holiness in this wicked world. We must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Do you ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Ask. It's right to ask for the Holy Spirit. It's right to ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Some of us in our backgrounds were a little afraid of that, because of some of the excesses of some Charismatic groups. But let's not be afraid to ask God to fill us with His Holy Spirit. It's a free gift, and He wants us to be filled. Paul was talking to people who were already Christians when He said, "And be not drunk with wine, where is an excess, but be filled with the Spirit,". If they were going to get all they were going to get an all that they needed at the new birth, why was he bothering to tell Christians that? Well, we're leaky vessels, and we need to be filled, and filled, and filled again. I do, we all do. Ask, and seek, but don't seek for power, seek for Jesus. You want power? Satan's got a lot of power, and he's got a lot of counterfeits out there that look pretty good. Don't seek for power, seek for Jesus.

Well, we must not grieve the Spirit. Part of learning to walk in the Spirit is learning not to grieve the Holy Spirit. Ephesians Chapter 4, verse 30 says, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption,". Think how it was when you were courting. Remember those days when you were courting your wife-to-be, or your husband-to-be was courting you? Do you remember those days, and you wanted to please the other person, didn't you? You girls learned what your boyfriend likes, his favorite foods, and you would fix those for him. And you guys, too, you wanted to learn what flower was her favorite, what color was her favorite, and you wanted to please each other. [When] we need to learn to walk in the Spirit, we need to learn what pleases God, what grieves God. These are things we need to learn. Well, how do we know what pleases God and grieves God? Well, He tells us in His word. What is it grieves the Holy Spirit? Plain and simple, one word: sin.

Turn in your Bibles to Second Corinthians Chapter 6. We'll start with verse 16, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the Living God as God hath said, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people','". We are talking about walking in the Spirit. Here, God says, "I will dwell in them, I will walk in them, wherefore...,". Whenever you see the word "wherefore", or the word "therefore" in the scripture, go back to see that it's there for. Because God has promised to live in us, and walk in us, the almighty God, the Holy God, "...come out from among them [unbelievers], and be ye separate' saith the Lord, 'and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you...'" Now, we can't go out of this world, we still live in this world. But we're not to be buddy-buddy with them, and we're not to touch the unclean thing. '...and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters', says the Lord Almighty. The Lord Almighty says, "I will be a Father unto you", "I'll be your daddy", "What do you need?". Do you remember how it was when you were little? When you were hungry, you went to daddy and said, "Daddy, I'm hungry," or Momma, and you'd go and say, "I'm hungry". You didn't have to go out into the field and work when you were a little child like that, food was there. Our God has said, "I'll be your daddy," but there is a condition: " 'Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate,' saith the Lord, 'and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you','".

Now, let's look at Chapter 7, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,". We have our part to do, to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. God does His part, but we have our part, also. And I think that all of us here know, pretty well at least, what the filthiness of the flesh is. You know, it's those external things. We all know that stealing is wrong, God's not happy with stealing, we all know that fornication is wrong, pornography, we all know those things are wrong, those things grieve the Spirit of God. We all know, but sometimes we are caught in some minor ones like overeating. I appreciated the thoughts on that, brother. That's one that catches us here in America. But, for the most part, we know that these works of the flesh grieve the Spirit. I'd like us to ponder a little bit this afternoon on the sins of the spirit. Not the flesh so much as the sins spirit. It seems that when a person first comes to Christ, the things you think of right away are the sins of the flesh. Those are the simple ones, the A-B-C's, if I can say it that way. You know it was wrong that you stole, you know it was wrong that you lied, God's Holy Spirit will have you go back and make some of those things right. But God wants to take us further than that, brothers and sisters. He says, "Having therefore these promises...". What's the promise? God wants to dwell in us, and walk with us. Almighty, God, can we get a hold of that? The Almighty God wants to walk with us. He's promised to be our daddy. He says, "Having therefore these promises, let's cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,". After you are a Christian for a while, the Holy Spirit will begin to work on the sins of the spirit. Those inside things where nobody else sees but God.

Remember, we are talking about losing our cutting edge. I can see the picture of that man out there with his axe handle, and he has to stop working, because he lost his cutting edge. And we are talking about walking in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is that cutting edge. It's a cutting edge. My eloquence, my education, my arguments, they won't do any eternal good without the Holy Spirit. We must have the Holy Spirit. It's dangerous for us to live in a state of grieving the Holy Spirit. Not only do we lose the power, the fullness of the Holy Spirit, but if we persist in that condition of grieving the Holy Spirit, knowing there's something in my life that's not according to God's word and I'm not willing to deal with it, it's very dangerous. Not only do we lose the power of God's Holy Spirit in our lives, but it leaves an area for the enemy for the enemy to get a foothold in our lives again. Maybe some of you have experienced that in your life, where you were set free from sin, and you were a newborn Christian, it was glorious, but after a while something happened, and it seemed like the enemy had a hold in your life again. How does that happen? I believe it's when we grieve the Holy Spirit, then He speaks to us with His gentle voice, His, still small voice.

God doesn't force us to do anything. God's not going to have robots walking around in heaven. He doesn't force us, but he pleads with us. He says, "This is the way. Walk in it,". And He just gently reminds us. If we don't listen, he just gets out His stick and spans us. But if we continue to harden our hearts, it opens a door for the enemy to come into our lives. And spiritual oppression comes into our life. It can even result in bondages, physical bondages, in our lives. I believe there are many Christians that have spiritual and physical bondages in their lives, areas of sin that they are under, sin is having dominion over them again. Is that the will of God? No! And many Christians are suffering with sicknesses that they don't need to suffer under, simply because the enemy has got a way into their life, and they are not filled with the spirit of God to rise above those things. They are living under the oppression of the devil, and that's right where Satan wants us. He doesn't want you to have your cutting edge.

I had to think of Samson in relation to this. You know, he played around with sin. He did. He had a hankering for the Philistine women. And for a while it seemed like he was getting by. In his first encounter,

it seemed like God used it to glorify His name! But it wasn't right for him to marry a Philistine girl, and he had no business down there with those Philistine girls. And the time came when he was under bondage. He played around with Delilah, you remember. Nothing happened, and still nothing happened. A little bit deeper and a little bit deeper. There came a day when he lost his power. He told the depths of his heart, she cut off the hair of his head, and she said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!", and he said, "I'll shake myself as the other times," but he did not know that the spirit of God departed from him. That's a sad scripture. They captured him, gouged out his eyes, and put him in prison. They made a mock of him, they laughed at him, they would gather for sport while he went round and round grinding in their prison house. I'm afraid that's what Satan does with many Christians today. Many Christians have lost their cutting edge! They are not walking in the power of the Holy Spirit! They played around with sin, and the Holy Spirit has spoken to them, and they played around with sin, and the Holy Spirit has spoken to them, and finally they lost their power. Satan has gouged out their eyes, they are going around and around, and Satan is just making sport of them. That's not God's will for us, brothers and sisters! That's not God's will for you! If you are in that condition, it is not God's will for you to be under the bondage of Satan.

Let's talk about a few sins of the spirit. Turn to Galatians Chapter 2 verse 20. It seems that sins of the spirit are such that unless you are listening to the quiet voice of the spirit of God, you don't hear it, and you don't see that you are in that condition. Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. The first phrase is what I want: "I am crucified with Christ,". I believe that cuts right across the main sins of the spirit. Maybe the main sin of the spirit is selfishness, selfishness and pride. We can't walk in the spirit unless we are living a crucified life, because the way the spirit will direct, many times, will be contrary to what the flesh wants, "what I want", and so to walk in the spirit, we must be crucified with Christ. We must live that way daily. Not, "I was born again back there", but, "I am crucified with Christ today also,". I am crucified with Christ.

We said that this is what grieves the Holy Spirit: sin. S-I-N. What's in the middle of sin? What do you see there? "I"! That big "I" is in the middle of every sin. That's selfishness, "wanting it to be my way".

The thing about sins of the spirit is, they don't stay in the spirit. They start to manifest in many ways, many different ways. Are you troubled with anger, rage, maybe sometimes uncontrollable, and hope that the preacher doesn't come around right then? You know, when you fly off the handle, and the words are just going? What's at the root of that anger? Selfishness; "My will got crossed by somebody, my rights were withheld by somebody," it's that big "I". Are you troubled with lust? An uncontrollable lust? It's that selfishness again. "Pleasing myself", "I want to gratify myself", that's what it is. This thing just shows it's ugly head. It doesn't just stay in the spirit.

I pray that if there is anyone here today that's in bondage to the old devil in any of these things, that you'll be set free today through the power of Jesus Christ. You can get your cutting edge back (we're going to talk about that when we close).

Another great sin of the spirit is fear and unbelief. They go together, they are like Siamese twins. Fear and unbelief. Hebrews 11:6, who can quote it? "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Without faith, we can't please him. Many times we doubt God. He gives us promises, and we are just not sure. That's unbelief. Second Timothy Chapter 1, verse 7 says, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Are you troubled with fear? Are you driven by fear? These are

some sins of the spirit that God is able to deliver us from.

Worry is from the same thing, unbelief and fear. Just another form of it. Philippians Chapter 4 verse 6 says, "Be careful for nothing...", (that's old English for "Be worried for nothing", "don't worry about anything"), "...but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God;". Are you plagued by worry? It's a sin. God says, "Don't worry about anything;", and if you are a worrywart (I'm not talking about a temptation to worry that comes and you put it out), you know what I'm talking about? You just worry, and worry, depressed, and stew, it gets your stomach tied up in knots. People suffer physical problems because of these things, many times. Unbelief, that's what it is. We need to call it what it don't we? That's what it is?

These are some sins of the spirit that many times, we lose our cutting edge, because we have grown in the Lord. We're not out fornicating, we're not out stealing, we don't have pornography up on our walls, we've put those things away. But the Holy Spirit begins to talk to us about some areas. He's probing deeper into our lives, and many times we don't want to deal with those things. God wants to set us free, that's all He wants to do! He wants to fulfill us, He wants to raise us up to sit with him in heavenly places, if we'll let Him. Many times, we lose that cutting edge because we're not willing to let the Holy Spirit deal with these things in our lives, these things of the spirit.

Unforgiveness is another one, and that can be very real. It's very real in the human experience, because we all have to relate to people, and none of us are perfect, and all of us are different. So differences arise and feelings get hurt. It happens, it happens in marriages, it happens in churches, it happens at work. People hurt other people. Now, what are you going to do with it? You have a choice: You can forgive them, or you can just hold that thing in your heart. And it's difficult for you to talk to that person, and you don't want to pray for them, and you'd be secretly happy if something bad happened to them. Unforgiveness in the heart. These things bind us up, and we lose the power of God's spirit in our lives, because these sins of the spirit. We can go to Church, and sing the songs, and say "praise the Lord", but our daily life, many times, lacks the power of God's Spirit because of these things, these sins of the spirit.

Slothfulness is one of them. There would be a number, I don't have a comprehensive list, but slothfulness is another one. It begins in the spirit. I pondered this some, I think that it has to do again with this big "I", and maybe closely tied to selfishness and pride, this matter of slothfulness. But Proverbs says slothfulness "casteth into a deep sleep". Not only does it show up in their work, but you can be slothful in spirit, you can be slothful in your thoughts, how you think, a lazy mind, and it casts into a deep sleep. It's not something that you can just wake up from, shake yourself, and be out of. Without the power of God, it's very, very difficult to get release from slothfulness, that thing is tough.

Well, let's look at the cure, back in Second Kings Chapter 6, "but as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell in the water, and he cried and said, 'Alas, master! For it was borrowed!'. There's a sense in which our power is borrowed, isn't it? Our overcoming power, our power to do God's work, to ascend His Kingdom, it's not our power, it's just given to us by God, we have it on loan. "And the man of God said, 'where fell it?'. Now, I want you to take notice of that question. That's a very important question: "Where fell it?". Where did you lose it? Think back in your life, Christian. Are you in bondage? Did you used to be free and now are in bondage? Do you remember when you used to have a testimony and a zeal for the Lord, and now you don't? Where fell it? Ask God to help you to remember ("God, where did I lose it?"), and He is faithful, and He will show you the place. "And he showed him the place, and he cut down a stick," just and old stick. What good is an old stick? You know, that's what the world says about the cross. They don't

understand the cross. They make ornaments out of it, and hang it on their necks and on their rear view mirrors, but they don't understand the cross. That old rugged cross: That's our power. That's our power, that's our deliverance. That's why Paul said in Galatians Chapter 6, "but God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. That's our power, brothers and sisters. That's how we maintain this walk in the spirit. "Jesus keep me near the cross", that's it. Where fell it? When you see the place, take that old stick, the old rugged cross, and apply it to that place, and the iron will swim, and you can reach out your hand and take it again, and you will get our cutting edge back. It's not hard, brothers and sisters, it's not hard.

Verse 1st John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Praise God for the blood of Jesus Christ. It has not lost its power in these two thousand years. It's still able to wash our sins away, whether sins of the flesh, or sins of the spirit, it's effective. It will wash clean.

I'll close with these verses in 1st John Chapter 2, the first 2 verses, "My little Children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins, but not for our sins only, but also the sins of the whole world,". God doesn't want us to sin, no. But sometimes we do, and when we do, don't cover it up. That's the enemy's trick to make you ineffective. You know, you fall into a sin, but now you are a Christian, and you are supposed to be living a Holy Life now, but you've fallen into sin, what are you going to do about it? Satan tells you, "Just cover it up, don't say anything, just go on living your Christian life," and he knows fully well that you have lost your cutting edge. He doesn't care if you just go on living your Christian life. He'll be happy to let you go on trying to live your Christian life, as long as you don't confess your sin. He doesn't want you to just open up, and let the Lord Jesus invite you. Just be honest, be real, "come to Him all who labor, and are heavy laden," are you tired of chopping with the axe handle? Come to Him, He'll give you rest, take His yoke, and learn of Him.

Do you have a cutting edge in your Christian life?

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