

The Inability of Unbelief

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[0 : 00] When we think in terms of the inability of unbelief, there are several different categories that could describe their inability, but the principal one that we are going to concern ourselves with this morning is their inability to behave.

And this is precisely what Romans chapter 8 and verse 7 and 8 refer to. The mind set on the flesh is hostile, that is, in a state of enmity with God, toward God, for it, that is, the mind set on the flesh, it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.

And those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Now, just briefly, let me describe what that means.

There is a very real and literal sense in which we are all in the flesh, just by virtue of having a physical body and walking about. It is a fleshly body. But when the scriptures, and this text in particular, uses the phrase being in the flesh, it doesn't simply mean being alive as a human being. It is talking about living and functioning in accord with the old Adamic nature with which we were born. That's in the flesh, as opposed to in the spirit.

[1 : 38] And it is, of course, purely a spiritual reality. But it is the spiritual reality that is within us that determines the behavior that we produce without.

It is out of the abundance of what is inside that we manifest it outwardly. I have some propositions that I want you to consider, and then we will move to several texts that will buttress this idea.

And I don't mind telling you, what we are talking about this morning, on the one hand, is a very simple thing. And at the same time, it is really rather complex.

And I hope we will be able to touch on both aspects of that so you can see how this thing comes together. Here are the propositions I want you to consider. The inability of unbelief is really in the plural.

Inabilities. For unbelief is fraught with numerous inabilities. But today we focus on one in particular, as found here in Romans 8.

[2 : 49] The ability to please God is the greatest ability we have. The inability to do so is man's greatest deficiency.

Along with the deficiency is the lack of desire. The flesh wants only to please itself. Our flesh also. That is true of the Christian. In the flesh. We want to please ourselves. Not only the unbeliever, but the believer as well. Those who think otherwise are self-deceived.

Today we shall be plowing some familiar ground. Yet in some respects it is very unfamiliar. We plan to explore, or begin exploring, the behavior of unbelief and their inability to be anything other than what they are.

So how can we fault them for that? Yet, they are faulted by God, and they are faulted by us. They are faulted because of sin.

[4 : 05] They are responsible for their sin, and yet they are merely doing what comes natural to them. They can't do anything else. And Romans 8 makes that very clear.

They that are in the flesh cannot please God. It is simply beyond their capacity to do so. And we as Christians have utterly unreasonable expectations if we expect unbelievers to behave Christianly.

They do not have the ability to do so. And it is something that comes very easy to us. Because how many times have you found yourself listening to something on the radio, watching something on TV, shaking your head in complete disgust and saying, I don't know what it is with these people.

Why do they have to be so raunchy? Why do they have to be so dishonoring to God? Why do they have to be so vile in their behavior and in their attitudes and in the stuff that you see that comes out?

Why do they have to do that? Somebody ought to put a stop to it. It isn't right. It's polluting the nation and all the rest. And I couldn't agree more. But you've got to be reminded, they are doing what to them just comes naturally.

[5 : 37] This is all they have to work with. And yet, at the same time, they are accountable. We cannot just give them a pass and say, well, after all, that's their nature.

What else can they do? So there is a tendency on the one hand, and this is where it is somewhat simple, to fault them for not being what we think they ought to be, which of course is more like us. And yet, they are being all that they can be, which is all that they've got to work with. So, how can you really blame them when they are just doing what comes natural?

Can you blame a dog for behaving like a dog? Or a pig for behaving like a pig? What do you have unreasonable expectations of it?

It's just going to be what its nature is. So, on that score, how can you fault people? Yet, God faults them.

[6 : 46] God condemns this kind of behavior. It starts all the way back in Genesis, and it's condemned all the way through Scripture, and it will be condemned in the future.

So, while man is, on the one hand, just acting out of his own natural, ingrained inclination, doing what he, by his Adamic nature, programs him to do, so that he can't do anything else, yet at the same time, he is held accountable for that.

And on the one hand, you might see that this appears to be some kind of a contradiction, and yet, it really isn't.

And I think that as we examine a number of verses that are here before us, I hope that this becomes clearer. A couple of more propositions, and then we'll get to the texts. It is a problem, and it surfaces repeatedly and dramatically with our cultural, moral, and political scene.

Diverse worldviews are vying for ascendancy. I'm not sure that we have ever seen such a heated battle as we have on our hands today in our culture as regards the issue of morals, behavior, positions taken, etc.

[8 : 17] We are, and we have been for some time, a very polarized nation. And of course, each side of the issue is firmly convinced that if the other side would just be reasonable, agree with us, and see everything like we do, problem solved.

all would be well with the world. But everybody knows that isn't going to happen. We have this dichotomy that has existed from Genesis 3, and it continues today.

And the more the earth is populated, the greater the division becomes. We Christians have our standards and our values, and I do not apologize for them at all, and I'm not suggesting that you do so.

But you have got to remember when you make demands that the world and what we would call our opponents, when they take the positions that they take and they do not agree with us, it is because they are doing just exactly what you should expect them to do.

And they are behaving just exactly as you would expect them to behave. They are busily engaged in being who and what they are.

[9 : 49] And so are you. So Christians need to get real regarding this and stop faulting people who do not see moral and spiritual issues and values as we do, recognizing that they are only being what they are.

They are being and doing what comes naturally. So, what are we going to do to address this? You can do one of two things.

Well, there are probably more than two that you can do, but there are two that really come to mind. And the first one is a real temptation, and that is to crank up a political moral machine that is intent on turning this all around.

And that was the basis and the driving force thinking philosophy behind the moral majority when it started with Jerry Falwell back in the 1980s.

And the idea was to recapture the culture. And how do you do that? You do that by putting the right people into political office.

[11 : 14] That sounds good, but it doesn't work. That's all that's wrong with it. I'm not suggesting that we should deny the political process.

I'm not suggesting that we should not campaign for righteousness and morality. I am not suggesting that we should not seek to put the most qualified person in office.

And by the way, there's a big hubbub going on now about pastors being able to endorse people from the pulpit. Some, I take it that some 100 churches across the nation have already formally notified the IRS that we are going to endorse political candidates and we dare you to try and take our tax exemption from us.

They are just hoping that they will do so, so that they will be able to muster a test case that they think will go all the way to the Supreme Court. And the idea, of course, is that if you muzzle pastors and prevent them from endorsing candidates or political parties, you are violating the pastor's freedom of speech.

And yet, at the same time, there is an argument to be heard that a pastor should not engage in political partisanship because the church is on the receiving end of a tax benefit so that when people contribute money to the church, they are able to deduct that from their income tax.

[12:47] And for every dollar of money that is deducted by churches is that much more money that the average American taxpayer has to pay in order to make up for the difference.

So, it's a two-sided coin and there are legitimate arguments on both sides of that issue. I have always taken the position here, I think you would probably consider it an insult to your intelligence if I were to tell you who you should vote for.

So, I've never had an inclination to insult your intelligence and I've never done that and I wouldn't. But I can tell you this, you should vote for the individual or the party that you believe best represents your personal, moral, spiritual, value system.

You should vote your values. You should vote for the individual that you think would be most likely to support your positions.

I think that's true of anybody. If you are a flaming liberal or a flaming conservative, that's the inclination that you have and that's the way to go. So, there is a tendency to think that if we can put the right people in, then we will be able to overturn Roe v.

[14:11] Wade, we'll be able to do this, we'll be able to do that, all kinds of things, because our people will be in the driver's seat. Well, I would not deny that the probability of things morally and spiritually being a whole lot better or at least somewhat improved are real.

I would not deny that at all. But I certainly cannot see that as a solution. And I'll tell you why. Because the problem is not a political problem. It's a spiritual problem.

And spiritual problems have only one solution, and that is a spiritual solution. And at the expense of sounding like a broken record or playing a fiddle with one string, and I guess I do, but it's the only string that's on the fiddle as far as I'm concerned, and that is nothing changes a culture.

Nothing changes people's mindset. Nothing changes people's value system like regeneration of the human spirit. The answer lies in people coming to grips with the spiritual reality of who Jesus Christ is, why he came, what he did, why it matters.

And once people embrace that, then they have a new base of operation from which to work. They have something new with which to think. They have a new standard of behavior.

[15:35] behavior. Because when Jesus Christ comes in, he really makes a difference. And it isn't just in your eternal destiny. He makes a difference in your worldview, in your outlook, in your value system, in your desires, in your estimation of solutions.

He makes a radical difference across the board. So the name of the game is the same as it has always been. And that is I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it.

is the power of God through faith unto salvation. And I might add for it and it alone can do the job. This is precisely why Paul wrote to Timothy, his young protegee.

And when Paul wrote this, so far as we know, it was the last thing he ever wrote. And I think we can probably safely say that if a man suspects that what he is writing is the last thing he will ever write, he's likely to give it some pretty serious thought.

Plus the fact that it was inspired by the Spirit of God. So he said, all scripture is given by inspiration of God as profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, and righteousness to the end that the man of God may be mature, thoroughly furnished, equipped, outfitted unto every good work.

[17:00] And then he goes on in the next chapter and says, I charge thee before God who shall judge the quick and the dead, and the Lord Jesus Christ at his appearing, that you preach the word, because that's the only thing that will really do the job.

Since all scripture is given by inspiration of God, it is profitable, etc., for all this, that's why it is critical, Timothy, that you preach the word. Nothing else will get the job done.

Nothing else can get the job done. But we know there is often a temptation, especially in our modern culture, to find all kinds of substitutes for preaching the word. And yet, none of it works. The only thing that works is that which God has provided for the problem. That's what works.

The balm of Gilead is the only thing that is a real remedy. Everything else is just, maybe good intentions, maybe good motive, but it will not accomplish the job.

[18 : 10] Problem is, this has to be done, not in a major movement, or grassroots effort, it has to be done by individual believers, one, at a time.

And frankly, that's kind of discouraging from the get-go, isn't it? I mean, how many millions of people do we have in this country? And we're going to encourage people to pick them off, as it were, one at a time.

And yet, you know, that is precisely what happened in Great Britain in the 1700s, when the nation was steeped in profligacy and debauchery and depravity, the likes of which you cannot imagine. Some would say even a lot worse than what we see today in our own culture. And it was through the efforts of Whitefield and the Wesleys and the Great Awakening that a spiritual revival swept over that land and it was incredible.

And one of the very first things that was affected was people's behavior, the way they treated each other, the standards that were changed.

[19 : 46] And the next thing you know, institutions began to arise that didn't even exist before. And I'm talking about orphanages for children, institutions for the insane, hospitals for the infirm.

All of these things began springing up. Why? Because there was a new mentality in the population and it made a difference.

this kind of spiritual awakening is something I've never experienced. I've just read about them.

Happened in Wales, happened here in the United States during the colonial period in the 1700s.

They said things got so spiritual you couldn't find a tavern open for miles. Now granted, people may take different avenues to reflect their behavior, but old debts were settled, old relationships that had been injured and ruptured were healed, people were apologizing and asking for forgiveness.

It was a wave that just swept over the country and it was called the Great Awakening. It was in the time of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield.

[21 : 04] Never seen anything like it since. Not in my, certainly not in my lifetime. time. But is it possible for this to happen? No doubt it is possible.

It is available. And I'm not providing a formula or saying this is what we need to do to guarantee revival.

Someone has said genuine revivals do not come in an evangelist suitcase. You know, sometimes evangelists go around the churches, the congregation gets all whipped up into a fever pitch and everything is wonderful and it lasts about three or four days.

But I'm talking about something that is wrought by God, that is lasting, that is deep, it is not window dressing, it really impacts individual lives.

And it can only come about through the vehicle, the proclamation of the gospel. And yet, I want you to realize this, this is where it gets tricky and sticky and very difficult.

[22 : 08] Do you realize, bottom line is this, you have to communicate a message to people that they do not want to hear. And you know they don't want to hear it.

And that in and of itself is enough to make us shy away from it and hold our peace. We don't want to take the heat for telling them something that they don't want to be told.

how do you go about doing that? Very carefully. Very diplomatically.

It is difficult, maybe even impossible, to clearly communicate the gospel to someone without their thinking, you're being judgmental of me.

You are disapproving of me. I'm just as good as you are. What makes you think you are right and I am wrong? People are offended at the gospel.

[23 : 14] And do you know what? They are supposed to be. They are just revealing what their true nature is.

Paul talks about in his epistles in Galatians and in Romans, he talks about the offense of the cross. It is offensive. People are offended by that. Because when you present the cross to Jesus Christ, you are telling them they are deficient.

They don't measure up. They don't have what it takes. You are telling them they aren't good enough. Now tell me, what normal person would not be offended at that? And that's exactly what you have to tell them. Now, don't try to tell them in those precise words. But that's the message you have to get across. And that's the message they have to buy before they will embrace the Savior.

[24 : 19] And that makes it really difficult. How many times have I told you there are two parts to the gospel? One is very difficult. One is very simple. The difficult part is for an individual to come to the end of himself and recognize he cannot do it.

He can't be what he needs to be. He can't do what he needs to do. He cannot clean himself up in such a way that God will accept him. He can't do it. Period. Can't.

That is a bitter, bitter pill to swallow. And most people have never swallowed it. I can do it. I can handle it.

I'm better than most people. I'm not as bad as a lot of people. And on and on and on we go. That's the old flesh talking. That's the hard part of the gospel.

Coming to a realization that we are undone, unable, incapable, dead in trespasses and sins.

[25 : 26] That is not good news. That's bad news. Is there anybody here that likes to be a bearer of bad news?

Now, I'm not saying how you have to communicate that. It depends on the individual and their personality and all the rest. But let me tell you. If you cannot in some way communicate the bad news to people, they are not in a position to embrace the good news.

Because it is the bad news being bad that makes the good news good. This is precisely why people are not standing in line in throngs to receive Christ as their Savior and their salvation.

It's because why? What's the point? I'm okay the way I am. You're okay and I'm okay. And if you're okay, you don't need a Savior.

You can handle it. You can do it. Whatever it is that God expects or wants, you can provide it. You will. You're a nice guy. You can handle it. And that's where most of us are.

[26 : 51] It's completely erroneous, but it feels good to believe that. You're okay. I'm okay. Only when people understand they are not okay, they are as bad off as they can be.

they are already under condemnation that is just and righteous from a holy God. If they really understand that, a new sensation of desperation will rise up within them and they will look for some way out.

That's when Christ is presented. as the Savior. That's when he's the solution. Problem is, you can't get them to the second part until they have realized the first part.

How do you go about telling them? As I said, very carefully, you may anger them, you may isolate them, separate them, they'll see you coming, they don't want anything to do with you.

and someone has said, a lot of times people have to get mad before they get saved. They get mad, they get offended at what is being, at what the assessment is of their character and their personhood.

[28 : 25] And very often the response is, I'm not that bad. good. And, as humanity goes, people comparing themselves among themselves, they're probably right.

But you've got to compare yourself with the standard that God has set. And God's standard is Jesus Christ. How do you measure up to him? That's the issue.

If you're like me, you come up maybe somewhere around the ankles. That's not good. so you need a Savior.

This is the solution. It is the only solution. It is an adequate solution. It is a God-ordained solution. One person at a time has to come to this experience of embracing Jesus Christ as one's personal

Savior substitute, being regenerated by the Spirit of God and made a new person on the inside.

It is a divine dynamic that does this. No psychiatric couch can accomplish it. No self-help program can accomplish it. No wish list of resolutions to begin the new year or whatever will accomplish it.

[29 : 45] Let's face it, we are in our flesh, we are in such a mess and it takes God himself to remedy it. And that's exactly what he does when we come to faith in Jesus Christ.

The problem is, as it always is, it is a spiritual problem. Unregenerate people think and behave as they do because of what is in them by nature.

They are acting out and believing out of the only capacity they have. This is all they are and all they can be unless the very source of their being is changed.

This is why it's called a new birth. It's just like beginning one's life all over again with a whole new game plan.

Only God can affect this. A new spirit, a new disposition, a new nature, a new capacity and ability. It is clearly a supernatural event.

[30 : 53] It is regeneration, conversion, salvation, and it is dramatic. Anyone who experiences it will never ever be the same again.

It becomes a new creation in Christ. How is this to be realized? Well, as we've been saying, it is only by providing information to unbelievers that they do not want to hear.

It is by providing information to unbelievers that they do not want to hear. It is good news that they do not believe nor receive as good news.

in fact, it is often angrily rejected with the accusation that the bringer of good news is being judgmental, and they are right, because God has already pronounced judgment upon them, and we are mere echoes, yet we are the ones who take the heat for delivering the message to them.

Isn't this a curious and complicated thing? it kind of presents a conundrum. How do you go about this? And I do not think anyone can rationally deny what we have been saying about the necessity for doing it, the difficulty for doing it, the mistaken thinking that people have when you present the gospel, and as much as you can say, I'm telling you this for your own good, they don't believe that.

[32 : 34] They don't believe that. Your kids don't believe it either when you tell them that, right? It's a favorite parental line. I'm only telling you this for your own they think it's just because we want them to think like we think.

That's not it at all. We want them to think the way God wants them to think. And they need to be aware of the fact that what we are presenting to them is something that we ourselves have experienced.

Most of us can recall the time when we first heard the gospel and tend to reject it. In fact, upon the hearing of the gospel there are only three possibilities that I can think of that anyone can reflect.

One is obstination.

What does it mean to be obstinate? It means to be mulish. The digger heels in and say, no, I won't.

[33 : 46] This is what God repeatedly charged the nation of Israel with. you are stubborn and a stiff necked people. And that's a human trait.

We all have some obstinacy in us. We all vibrate and reject certain things.

We dig our heels in and we say, I will not be moved. You're not going to make me. And that's being obstinate.

But there's a lot of it out there. And many times, many times, this is the initial reaction. A rejection of the message. Right off. And, there is also the possibility of procrastination.

Most people who come to faith in Christ do this also. This is kind of like a series of steps that we go through in our psyche, in our mind, when we hear the gospel.

[34 : 52] First response is, reject it. I'm not that bad. I don't need that. I'm okay as I am. I am pleased with me.

Why wouldn't God be? That's an obstinate reaction to the gospel. Or, many times, we hear it truth.

And, we say, well, now, I don't think that's the case. I don't think that's true. Look, this person that told me this information, all of this business about Jesus dying on the cross, and they've got religion, and all the rest, you know what?

I'm really happy for them. I'm glad they found what they're looking for, and it satisfies them. I'm happy for them, but that's not for me. That's not my cup of tea. I just don't see it that way.

He's got his truth, I've got my truth, and they're different. I'm happy for him, but that's not for me. But they're thinking about it. They're mulling it over. And, who was it, Bill Faye, the evangelist that offered the idea that just about everyone has to hear the gospel 7.3 times before they accept it?

[36 : 09] And many times they are in process with this procrastination. Maybe they're even thinking, you know, I probably ought to do something about that. I probably ought to do that. I probably ought to receive Christ as my Savior.

I probably ought to ask God to forgive me my sins. And, and, one of these days, one of these days, I'm going to get serious about that.

One of these, but first, I have to clean up my life. There are certain bad habits, things that I know God would not be pleased with, and when I go on top of those things and get a few of these big projects behind me, then I'll think seriously about that.

That's the procrastination. But both of these are very common and very ordinary, and they involve a process, because I'll tell you what happens when we first hear the gospel, whether we reject it or whatever, we have been notified.

We've been put on notice. We've been given something to think about, and the seed has been sown. And what takes place is a gestation.

[37 : 28] Just like in a baby, when the seed is sown, and the male sperm fertilizes the egg, conception takes place, and there is a gestation period of about nine months while that little baby is in process.

And so it is spiritually, when you hear the gospel, the seed has been sown. There is germination that can take place, and there is a gestation period that begins, and it may be days, it may be years. Each time you hear something else about the gospel, there is a little more growth, a little more development, a little more gestation, until finally you come to the place of where the light comes on. Now, here is something that also very frequently takes place, is that people, during this gestation period, germination period, people just get little bits and pieces of truth, of the gospel.

But they never make a connection. Someone would say, they have never been able to connect the dots. things, they have got a lot of fragments of spiritual truth that are out there floating around, but they have never been able to comprehensively see it all come together so that it comes right down to them.

[39 : 16] This is what it is, and this is how it affects you. What are you going to do about it? I don't know how many times I've had the privilege of explaining the gospel to someone, and I don't do this in three minutes.

I may take 45 minutes or an hour and present the whole nine yards. You've got to begin with the fall. You can't begin with John 3.16. You've got to go back to where all of this mess started.

Francis Schaeffer said there was a time when you could begin with the gospel of John in 3.16 because people already knew and had the history. Today, they don't have the history.

They don't know beans about what happened and how it began and the fall and the result and the chaos and everything that came in, the promise of a Messiah, his coming, the Redeemer, all the rest.

They don't know that. They don't have that frame of reference. So you've got to go back and explain all of this to them, and more than once I can tell you, after you present it all like that, people sit back and say, well, you know, I've never heard it like that before.

[40 : 28] And what they're saying is, all I had before was little bits and pieces that I couldn't connect. And when you give them the whole story, they're able to make the connection.

And the baby is about to be born. The gestation period is coming to an end. they've been able to see how it comes together.

And then, going through this process of obstination, procrastination, submission.

Submission. This is the glorious surrender. surrender. This is the only real battle that you win by surrendering.

and when you surrender, you submit yourself to the authority of Jesus Christ, you willingly, volitionally, place yourself in his hands for your salvation.

[41 : 39] You see him as your substitute. You embrace him as your personal savior. savior. And when you do, God regenerates you then.

He does that personally, individually, dynamically, and instantaneously. You don't sign up for something and take a bunch of classes.

Now, you may do that, but that's not going to affect your salvation. Salvation is by grace through faith. It is not institutional. It does not come through this church or any other church.

Not the Catholic church, not the Protestant church, not the Jewish synagogue. It comes by grace through faith. It is an individual, personal thing.

One of the descriptions is given is that we pass from death unto life. When do you do that?

[42 : 44] well, of course, everybody does that when they die. That's not what it's saying. It's not saying we pass from life unto death. The text is saying we pass from death, spiritual death, alienation, separation from God.

We pass from that unto spiritual life. And as our passage says in Romans chapter 8, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

You are in Christ or you are not. Christ is in you or he is not. You are regenerated or you are not.

You have passed from death unto life or you have not. It is a crisis act. The realization of it may take time for it to happen, for it to develop, but there is a point in time known to God, even if you don't know it, when you passed from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son. God knows exactly when that was. When was that for you? Maybe you say, well, I don't really know when that was for me.

[44 : 04] Okay. But do you know that it was for you? Maybe you cannot name day, hour, place, time, all the rest, but do you know in your heart of hearts that that has taken place?

Have you passed from death unto life? This is the thing that changes everything. This is what makes you a new creation in Christ.

The only solution for this nation's problems or any nation's problems is a super abundance of people who are in Christ and they have something different to think with, a different value system, different standards.

And then as they reflect them and act outwardly, you have a changed culture. power. And Congress can't do this.

Federal judges can't do this. Only God can do this. old story.

[45 : 19] Old as it can be. In closing, I want you to turn to Ephesians chapter 5. The plot will thicken as we get there. Ephesians chapter 5.

On the one hand, we ought not to be unreasonably demanding of unregenerate people for their behavior.

Remind yourself, they are not the enemy. They are the captives of the enemy. And they are where you used to be before you came to faith in Christ.

So on the one hand, we can count, we can cut them some slack for being what they are, but at the same time, we're supposed to engage in the unpleasant, necessary process of rebuking them and reproving them.

And this is exactly what Paul is saying here in Ephesians chapter 5. Look at this text, if you will. Well, for time's sake, well, let me just, we've still got five minutes, let me just begin with this.

[46 : 38] Chapter 5, verse 1, Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love just as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice as a fragrant aroma.

But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you as is proper among saints.

Now, note, if you will, he is not talking to ain'ts. He is talking to saints. You do not make these kind of demands of unregenerate people.

They cannot comply. They don't have the ability. There must be no filthiness and silly talk or coarse jesting which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty that no immoral or impure person or covetous man who is an idolater has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God, that is, people whose lives are characterized by these things.

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. That's not you. That's them.

[47 : 51] That used to be you. That isn't you anymore. Because you are now a saint. Paul is assuming that as he writes this. And then he says, do not be partakers with them for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Walk as children of light. He's saying, be what you are. Be what you are. Walk as children of light. For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

Trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, darkness, but instead even expose them, reveal them, rebuke them, denounce them. What are you rebuking, exposing, denouncing, and revealing? What? Sin. Sinful behavior, sinful activities. And the reason God hates sin so much is because he loves people so much.

And sin hurts people whom God loves. So you expose them. It is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

[49 : 21] All things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason, it says, awake, sleeper. This is the person who is sleeping dead in trespasses and sins.

And arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. Wow. What other message is there that can actually awaken people from the death of a spiritual, moral death but this?

Nothing. So when we expose them, we have the unpleasant but necessary business of denouncing sin because apart from sin, you don't have a gospel to preach.

You see how all of this comes together? And you see how on the one hand it's very simple, on the other hand it's very complex. And I think that it is the complexity of it that keeps us from more fruitfully engaging in it.

Questions or comments? Okay, roving microphone, where are we? Up here, Chuck McConkie has a comment.

[50 : 51] Okay, Mark, back in the Romans 8 passage, you finish there with the last half of verse 9, but the first half of verse 9 there, the if phrase there kind of leads us maybe to believe that maybe the Holy Spirit does or does not live within us, but it's a very strong passage, it's a first class conditional phrase, and we certainly have the Holy Spirit within us, but sometimes when we get up in the morning we're dull, and we really don't think about that.

And that right there is the first steps in the process of allowing us to apply spiritual resolution to spiritual problems.

Those without the Holy Spirit cannot, as you said, but those of us who do have the Holy Spirit, if we don't recognize it, and a lot of times it's like being Superman, if we don't take our cape off, then the Holy Spirit's not going to work through us.

And there are certain frustrations. This is probably the first election that I've ever come up through that I have to make a choice between two people that I don't want.

I wish I could vote against both of them, but our democracy is a little deficient in that point.

However, the one thing I can do is pray for them.

[52 : 47] And that's sometimes we think of that as a last resort, but it really ought to be the first.

Yeah, right. Pray for them. Oh, no.

Has it come to that? Thank you, Chuck. Anyone else before we close? I just want to conclude with this admonition, invitation, whatever, consideration.

You may be here this morning as a thoroughly, there isn't any other way to be regenerated other than thoroughly, but as a completely regenerated individual, and you know that you enjoy the forgiveness that Christ purchased for you, and you have by an act of the will exercised your volition and put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

And it's entirely possible that every single person here has done that. I would not be surprised if that were the case. At the same time, you may be here and discover that you have perhaps heard some things this morning that you never heard before or had never really considered.

I would just urge you, if that is the case, and I'm telling you this for your own good, don't engage in being obstinate.

[54 : 18] At least procrastinate. At least say, I don't think what this guy says is true at all. But I'm going to put it on the back burner and give it some serious thought.

I'm going to put off doing anything. But I do want to think about this. At least be intellectually honest about it and consider it as a possibility.

I do not claim to speak with any kind of authority or what shall I say?

you. Well, I just try to reveal what the scriptures are saying and I don't want to be the authority and I am not the authority and I am not qualified to be the authority.

God is the authority and you will have to weigh whether or not these things from the scriptures are really true, whether this is really from God. I believe it is with all my heart. and if you have already weighed that or maybe you have been in guest station for some time and you are ready to bring this thing to an end and it is time for the baby to be born, then that can take place right here and now.

[55 : 34] You do not have to join anything, you do not have to sign anything, you just need to do business with the maker of the universe. And I am going to close in prayer and give you an opportunity to do that.

Loving Father, we are so grateful for this wonderful old gospel. It cannot be improved upon because it has been devised by you.

Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan. Oh, the grace that brought it down to man.

Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary. And Father, if there is one here this morning, who has never made that decision, never finalized it, never really said yes to what you've done for them through Christ, let this be their moment of decision.

Delay no longer. Look for no more excuses or delays. Simply acknowledge a morally bankrupt condition, which is true of all humanity, and say, Lord Jesus, I want you to apply your work on Calvary to my case.

[56 : 56] I want to trust you as my Lord and Savior. I want you to take this life of mine that you own and purchased with your own blood, God, and I want you to do with it as you please, and I want to submit my will to you.

Thank you for dying that death for me. Amen. If you made that your prayer, tell someone. They want to be of encouragement to you.

Talk to me. I am available, and I'd be happy to talk with you here, your place, anywhere. You just let me know your willingness.

You are dismissed.