

The Mind – A Battlefield

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

[Audio starts mid-sentence] that England ever experienced. And it was the same time, you remember, as the French Revolution was taking place in 1789 and the conditions leading up to it. And so England was kind of set for a French Revolution, because the people cared only for themselves. The churches were absolutely empty, the Anglican clergy were not simply absentee landlords as -- that was the situation with all the property, but they were absentee clergy. They passed, not only their summers but their springtime and winters on the French Riviera, and their curates ran their churches for them. And the result was the country was in the absolute depths of decadence.

The kind of thing you'd see when you'd go down a street in London is 'Drunk for two pence', 'Dead drunk for three pence, and straw to sleep it off free'. And it was that kind of situation that filled the country. And really even though we ourselves are not at all as obvious as that here in America, yet we know that one of the problems we do have is an incredible movement of religion among us, with an incredible high rate of crime and immorality among us.

And really it's like the stagflation problem that we're facing. We're facing certain factors that should never be found together in an economy. And it seems as if we're facing the same thing in religion and morals. Never probably have more of us gone to church than go to church now in America. And yet never has immorality been so rampant or crime been so widespread. And it is strange that it is so like the 18th Century.

What is really amazing is that when Wesley started preaching in England in about 1740 that was the situation. And he faced people who were not interested at all in what he was saying. And yet after about 10 or 15 years -- he used to preach outdoors because they wouldn't let him preach in the churches. He didn't preach nicely enough for them. And so he had to preach in the coal fields, and he had to preach out in the moors, and in any natural amphitheater that he could find. And that 10 or 15 years later you found thousands, and thousands of the poorest people and the most immoral people listening to him, and listening to him intently.

And then after another 10 years you found that England had been transformed. And this drunken, hopeless, immoral, rabble that filled England during the first 20 or 30 years of the 18th Century were transformed into some of the most saintly people that England has ever seen. And it all came about of course, through the incredible truth that you were not only forgiven through faith, but your life was changed through faith. And that was it because these people had been told for years by their parents, and by their own ministers, how they ought to live. But they were not able to live that way. And they fell again, and again into their drunkenness; and they fell again, and again into their immorality and their prostitution, because inside their hearts weren't really changed.

And so every time the temptation came from without their hearts that had never been changed rose to it. And of course, what Wesley began to preach was not only are your sins forgiven through your faith that Jesus has died for you, but your heart is actually made clean through your faith in the fact that that old heart was destroyed with Christ on Calvary, and you could receive a new heart through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And that's probably, you know, what we most need in our nation today. We most need to be able to

see that it's not a matter of receiving forgiveness of our sins through faith, and then trying to climb up that weary hill of self-discipline and effort and attempting to make ourselves what God wants us to be. But it's seeing that all those efforts are hopeless and that there's only one way our heart will ever become clean. And that is if God's -- the Holy Spirit speaks the second time into our lives and cleanses our heart by faith.

And unless you and I are really moving into that kind of victory, what we share on Sunday evenings so often just becomes another 'works righteousness' to us, because it's all built on the premise that your own heart is clean. And your own heart only becomes clean when you are prepared for God the Holy Spirit to fill every corner of it. And you're only prepared for that when you're prepared to identify yourself completely with Jesus.

And that's what prevents us coming into full victory. It's not that we haven't read enough books. And it isn't that we haven't gone to enough services. And it isn't that we don't understand enough. It's because we really have not seen that it's only through faith that a clean heart comes about in our lives.

And, loved ones, that's it. That's the miracle of it, that your dear heart can never be cleansed by all the books that you'll ever read, or all the discipline, or all the power of positive thinking that you'll ever engage in. God the Holy Spirit has to cleanse your heart. And he'll only cleanse it when you're at last able to believe that he will cleanse it.

And here's the strange thing. And I say from my own life, you're only able to believe that if you're willing to bear a clean heart in your own life. And that's it. And you may say, "Oh brother, I want a clean heart." Loved ones, you'd have a clean heart tonight if you wanted a clean heart. The moment you say, "Lord, will you make me clean," that moment Jesus comes through and he makes you clean.

And what you and I need to decide in our own heart is how long can we go on with a halfhearted kind of service to our God? And that's what we do. And really when you read hymns like that [referring to Charles Wesley's "O for a Heart to Praise my God"] you realize again what victory is all about. It is not a slogging it even with Satan, "I lost my temper; I have to control my temper." It's not that. It's not that.

I've told you so often, "A clean heart is a heart in which temper does not rise." That's it. That is our great privilege. That is the great privilege that God has given us through Jesus' death. Not through our own efforts, not through trying hard, but through our faith in Jesus' death. It is possible to live with a heart in which temper does not rise, in which anger does not rise.

And loved ones, anything less than that is not salvation in the scriptural sense. And really when God tells us, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your strength, and all your mind," he means that, with every bit of your heart you love God. And out of this center -- you remember, Jesus said, "Out of your belly, out of your inner most being will flow rivers of living water." And that's salvation.

Salvation is not, "Oh, if I'm in a state of recollection I can sense God's presence and I can feel a little love to him. But if I'm not in a sense of recollection, if I'm not well prayed up, then I won't be able to feel it." No, salvation is that out of your heart rises the thoughts, and the feelings of Jesus' own heart, because you've allowed him to circumcise your heart. That is to cut

it out and to replace it with his own heart. And that is of course what Ezekiel always promised us, "I will give you," God said, "A new heart and I will write my laws in your heart."

And oh, I'd just remind you that that's what God promises. And anything less than that is torture. It is torture. And I don't know about all the business of, "Do you ever sin?" I'm sure you sin a thousand times when you don't know, and a thousand times when you do know! But the center of it is that your heart is clean. And oh you remember, that little story of the little girl who was blind and was writing a letter to her dad, and wanted to write it the best she possibly can. And so she got, you remember, her page and she decided, "I'll put strings across with thumbtacks. And I'll put a string there and a string there, and another one there, and another one there, and then with my pen every time I hit the string I'll know that I should go up again. And I'll get a letter that is so well written that my dad will not believe that I do not have sight."

And so she did that laboriously. And after about 15 minutes she had the strings ready and so she got down to it, you know. You can guess she often didn't feel the strings at all and so the letter, if you had seen it, was chaotic. It was up and down everywhere but of course the mum told the dad how it had been done. And of course, when he sensed the intention of his daughter's heart, he thought it was the most beautiful letter he had ever received.

And that's it! It's the intention of the heart. God looks at you, and he looks at me and he says, not so much even, "Oh is your life a perfect life?" I don't know honestly that he's all wrought up about that. I mean, normally it's probably the result of a clean heart, but I don't know that God's all wrought up about that.

But he looks in to see your heart, and is it a heart that is clean and that wants only him? And if you say to me, "Oh well, no. I mean I want other things at times." Well loved ones, that's where you deal with God. Do you come to the place where you want God and him only, and where you want his will and his will only? And that's the only thing that will ever enable him to do the mighty work in your heart. And oh, that's it! What we need is a work done in our hearts that changes us and makes us supernaturally pure and clean.

When you gossip, ah! It's not that the gossip is the big deal. It certainly wreaks havoc. It certainly destroys lives, and creates chaos in the society. But actually the gossip is not the heart of it. It's the heart inside that produced the gossip. The heart inside that is so lacking in fullness that it has time to talk about this person, or that person. That's it! It's the same with criticism. Criticizing other people, oh yeah it tears them apart. It brings great sadness and pain to people. It destroys reputations. It wreaks havoc in the society. But really it's not the criticism that is the heart of sin. It's the heart that produced the criticism. It's a heart that lacks love. That's it. And when the Savior looks down with his heart of love bent towards you, and he sees your heart not filled with his love for others. He sees your heart not wanting the best for your friends. That's what grieves him. That's what crucifies him afresh.

So it's interesting. It's not so much actually even the positive evil. It's funny to say that! It's not so much the positive evil that you and I do. It's the lack of that full love that God has for us. It's the lack of that in our hearts that grieves him beyond anything else. And of course that will only come when the Holy Spirit fills you and sheds abroad in your heart that love. So I would encourage each one of you to day-after-day, to wait for that and to expect it.

It was interesting in those old meetings that they used to have in the Eighteenth Century, they

waited night-after-night. They expected! Each person expected, "The Lord Jesus will touch me clean tonight." And it was. It's interesting – it was interesting to me, to see how some loved ones in the States here would get kind of worked up about that, because it's interesting in the old days people waited with expectancy. It wasn't a, "Oh, what am I doing wrong? What am I doing wrong? It hasn't come to me." It was a complete confidence that, "The Lord will touch me as he touched my brother. And he will touch me when I am ready for that work to be done."

And so it was always a hopeful expectancy. And oh, I'd encourage you to that. And that's really what the body here, of Jesus, is meant to be. It's meant to be a place where all of us can 'window shop' as long as we want. And I'll tell you that now, "Window shop as long as you want. Window shop!" I have 40 or 50 more years; you have 40 or 50 more years to window shop. You can keep window shopping. But really, there comes a time when you yourself have to decide, "Alright I've seen, I've seen what God wants for me, and now Lord, I'm going to expect that every moment. Every service I'm going to trust you to do this work in my heart."

And I don't know how many of you got into the thing -- and I know others did, "Oh well, I'm waiting for some big deal." Well, maybe. Yes, I suppose you are waiting for some big deal. I suppose there's no way around that. And some of us don't like that, and we don't like the idea that there is a moment when God does a work. But it was so with our new birth. There was a moment when we were dead, and there was a moment when we were alive. And so yes, I suppose there is a moment.

And I suppose you can't get around that. There's a moment when you marry. You can be engaged for years, but you have to marry sooner or later. There's a moment when you die. You're probably a long time maybe dying, varying on which disease you have. But there's a moment you're dead. So really, life is full of its moments. And there is a moment when God touches you clean through the baptism with the Holy Spirit. And oh loved ones, we are meant to be a people who expect that every moment. And only if you expect it 'now'! You remember, old Murray [Andrew Murray, 1828-1917, was a South African writer, teacher, and Christian pastor.] says, "Oh, you're waiting for it are you?" "Yes, I'm waiting for it." "When is it going to happen?" Oh, it's going to happen any time." He said, "No, no, unless you say, 'It's going to happen now.' Unless you expect it this moment, God can do nothing."

And faith is a sense, "Lord, I'm on believing ground; I'm in a consecrated place." "Satan, see is there anything in me that you have? Is there anything in me that will not yield to God? Is there?" And you say that with confidence because you know there is not. And then Satan has no answer to give you. And at that moment God witnesses that you're fully consecrated. And the blessed Spirit of God cleanses your heart by faith, and fills you with a fullness of Jesus such as you've never experienced before.

And so loved ones, I would I'd encourage you to go for that. Don't go for anything less. And really, expect it every moment. And that's the heart of victory. Otherwise, I'll tell you what we produce. We produce a horde of imitation Christians who are always trying to behave like Christians but don't feel like Christians inside in their hearts. And so, it is real and true. And the words -- I didn't know John was particularly going to do that hymn -- but the words are true:

"A heart from sin set free,
A heart that always feels Thy blood
So freely spilt for me.

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My great Redeemer's throne,
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone."

I don't know if you've the trouble with guidance that I always had, but it is because there are too many voices speaking inside your heart. And when this takes place in your heart suddenly there is just one voice:

"Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone:

A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true, and clean;
Which neither life nor death can part
From Him that dwells within."

But loved ones, it is possible. And it's not popular stuff. We don't like that stuff too much. We like a kind of 'worldly' kind of goodness that looks okay on the outside but lets you have what fun you want on the inside where nobody can see. But really, it won't 'cut it'. And it will not move this religious movement into revival. The only thing that will move this present religious movement, 'moral majority', 'charismatic movement', 'church renewal' movement -- the only thing that will move it into revival is if God can get hold of a few people who are prepared to go right to the very deepest part of their hearts and open that to him.

And that's always been the case. Wherever there has come revival, whether it's in Africa, or Britain, or here in America, it has always come when at last God got hold of a group of people who wanted God and God only. And that's really what Jesus, I believe, is calling us to. Actually it's interesting. It doesn't take a great number. That's the fallacy, as you probably realize, about the number game in these days, where we're all getting great numbers. "Let's have vast churches." Actually, the great movements of God don't start with great numbers of people. They start with just a few people who are prepared to give everything to have Jesus dwell in their heart by faith.

And oh, some of you -- I know the old business. We protest, and we'll hem and haw. And we'll rationalize, and we'll say, "Well, do you mean this or do you mean that?" Well, I suppose those that have ears to hear will hear, and those that have eyes to see will see. But loved ones, if you sense in your life that you think it is possible to come into a place where you're clean the whole way down, where if I sliced you open you'd be clean the whole way, if you have any sense of that, I'd encourage you to go for it with all your heart. And to go for it as a definite work of God that will be done.

And you remember how we've joked at times, if you could in fact take your heart out, and your head, and your mind with all the feelings and thoughts that it has now, and then we could project it all on that screen, would you be embarrassed or would you be really happy? And of course you can see what a transparent life is about, can't you? You can see a transparent life is a life where the heart can go on that screen. And you can see that that brings a great trust in people, can't you? I mean, that brings tremendous trust in your friends. I mean, suddenly they feel, "This guy," "This girl is real. What they say to me, that's what they're saying when I'm not with them." And boy, that brings a trust and a confidence that nothing else can.

So, it changes society you see. It just transforms society when you have that. It transforms husband/wife relationships. It transforms relationships in the office. The big thing is, it takes the strain out of your life. It's so good you don't have to be able to think, "Can I show them this? No, I can't show them that. Can I show them this? Oh, I can't show them... oh, I can show them this!" Oh, it's so good -- it's so good to be able to be yourself. And you don't care because you know it's clean the whole way through. And loved ones, that's what Jesus has called us to. And that's what he's calling you to this evening really.

I should get to the subject of the evening which is in fact in 'the mind'. Okay. Okay. Loved ones, maybe you'll take your Bible -- and we're trying to talk about 'the mind': 'a battlefield'. And maybe we can just get a little done before the end of the time. Perhaps you could just turn and keep your Bible open to Genesis 3. And it probably is good for us all to realize that Satan's original approach to men and women was through the mind, and so it is actually, with you and me.

It is interesting, the mind has to be kind of satisfied or at least it has to be duped or deceived in a reasonably complicated way. The mind demands that it be satisfied in some way. It's willing to be lied to and deceived but it does demand some kind of rationalization. And you've probably seen that in your own temptations haven't you? Or your own sins, you've found, "Well, I need some good reason to do this. I feel I ought to have a reason. Oh yeah, that's the reason. That's the reason." And, "Well, I'm going to speak to this person about my other friend. Well, I know that's wrong but... Oh, here's a good reason for it."

And so once you get a good reason you go right ahead. And it's so even with -- it's interesting, it's so even with the most physical of sins whether it's drugs or whether it's sex, it's interesting that the mind requires to be able to justify itself in some way. And so that gives you a clue that Satan normally still approaches us through the mind. And normally that's where the trouble begins. And I think most of us have found the sinful act is not the point of the problem or the temptation at all. The battle was lost way back in here. [Points to his head] The battle was lost way back in there.

And all we guys know it with the old Penthouse pictures and that kind of thing. We know the sin, the adultery, the fornication is committed in there. [Continues to indicate his mind] That's where the battle is. Satan's job of course is to persuade us, "No, no, the battle isn't there at all. You can think of this thing without pursuing it at all." But he knows if he can persuade us to get the mind deviating at all then he can get us the rest of the way. And so it is in every sin and every temptation, the battle is lost up here. [In the mind] It's not lost with these hands whether it's stealing or killing. It's not lost with the feet. It's not lost with the body. It's lost up here [in the mind] -- hours, maybe even days, maybe even months, maybe even years, before the actual crime, or the sin, or the immorality is done.

So you get that same plain truth set forth there loved ones, if you look at the well-known account of the fall in Genesis 3:1. "Now the serpent..." And you remember, Satan was hidden in the form of the serpent. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature..." And you get that even in the idea of 'subtlety and the mind' coming in right there, "That the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?"'" And that is addressed to the mind, you see, and actually not much to the memory because it was pretty easy to remember what God had said, but it was addressed to the mind, "Is this what God said?" And our mind is what keeps us aware of the things that not only God has said to us in the past but the things

that he is saying to us through this book. [Holding the Bible]

So, Satan's attempt usually is to deal with us on this question of, "Does God's Word say this?" And if he can possibly rationalize that in some way he'll do it. Or, "Has God said to you in the past this?" Usually that's his approach. "Does God's word say this?" Oh, I know one well known one for me is Philippians. If you look at it, it's the key to worry, Philippians 4:6. And it is really the key to a worry free, anxiety free life. This is the way to live, this way. "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." And that's so plain and simple. And that's the way we're meant to walk.

And so we're in a situation in the office where there is just conflict. And we are in the middle of it. And all kinds of people are criticizing us and opposing us. And this word comes from us straight from God's heart, "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer," through prayer, "With Supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." "Let me know that you want me to work in the office situation and clear it up." "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

But Satan gets in and he says, "Well now, have no anxiety about anything that you were not responsible for creating. I mean, that's what that verse means. But let's face it. You took part in this mess in the office." Or, "You took part in this mess that you have in your job;" or, "This mess in your personal relationship. Now, you can't have 'no anxiety' about that. I mean, that's part of your problem. You have to work and do something to put that right."

And Satan has this way of getting into God's word and misinterpreting it to our hearts so that we begin to read this, "Have no anxiety about anything." Yeah well, that's OK, anything we haven't caused ourselves, any mess that we have not ourselves created. But boy, I've created this mess. It's up to me to work myself out of it -- whether it's a financial mess, or a professional mess, or a personal relationship mess. And Satan gets in there and takes a good promise of God's word and misinterprets it and twists it.

And loved ones, that's where often many of us lose the whole glorious assurance of this verse which is so plain and so categorical, "Have no anxiety about 'anything!'" "About anything!" Have no anxiety about anything at all! Even if it's something you're going to face tomorrow morning, "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God."

And then Satan often gets in there and says, "Well, I mean, that means the old Reese Howells business." [Rees Howells, 1879 - 1950, founder of The Bible College of Wales, known for his intercessory prayer.] "That means get down and slog through for all night prayer session. That's what that is. Really, 'In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;' it means you have to get down; you have to slog through until you come maybe in the early dawn, just as dawn is breaking you come to an assurance that God has heard you prayer."

Well loved ones, it's interesting the Bible just says, you know, "Let your request be made known to God." But so often Satan comes in and takes a good simple word of God and twists it and perverts it. Or, he comes to you and he says, "Did God really tell you when you made that resolution about getting up at five in the morning, did God really said that to you? 'Hath God said?'" And you

begin to think, “Well, I don’t know. Well, you know, maybe I’ve just been reading 'Power Through Prayer' by Bounds [“Edward McKendree Bounds, 1835-1913, Methodist minister and devotional writer] and that’s true. Maybe I thought of it myself. Maybe I did! And well, well let me ignore it tomorrow anyway and I’ll see how it goes.” And that’s what Satan does.

Or, I don’t know if you’ve made vows to God. I don’t know if you’ve made a vow to God, you know, “I commit myself Lord, to do this.” And God’s word says of course, “Always pay your vows to God.” But Satan gets in on you and says, “Did God ask you to make that vow to him?” And then you begin to back off.

So loved ones, it’s always our minds that Satan begins to approach. And he tries of course, to deceive us into thinking, “Oh well, God didn’t really say.” Now, maybe you’d go back to Genesis 3 and you’d just read that question, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?’” And then in Verse 2, “And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.”’”

Now, do you see that sentence, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden?” Now, that’s a lie. That’s not what God said. Just look above in that column to Genesis 2:16, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden,’” so Eve was right there, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.” That’s what God said. God didn’t say, “You shall not eat,” as Eve says, “Of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden.” He didn’t. Look at what he said in 17, “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it lest you die.” And that’s Satan’s aim, to get you to just swing God’s word a little. Just swing it a little.

Actually, you can see how important the swing was, if you look back in Genesis 2:9, “And out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden.” That was the very tree God wanted them to eat of and it was, “In the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” There were two trees in the midst of the garden and what Eve said was, “Oh, God said you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it lest you die.”

And loved ones, that’s Satan’s method with us. And we may think, “Ah, it’s not important. It’s not important what our minds understand or what they grasp of God’s word.” Loved ones, it is. And I don’t know if you’ve read Nee [Watchman Nee, 1903-1972, a church leader and Christian teacher in China and author of several books including "The Normal Christian Life"] on that point but he says, “If God gives you a revelation about something, cherish it. That will be life to you. Cherish it and nourish it, and live upon it. Don’t be careless about it.” And I do think a lot of us have made this error of taking God’s word both in this Bible and especially his “Rema”, his word to us in our hearts, we’ve taken it lightly. And we have in fact, become careless with God’s commands to us.

And that’s why I think, many of us find our lives flat and empty. And we wonder why we’re losing the sense of God’s presence in our lives. And it really is because we’re very careless in our minds about treasuring every word that God gives us -- and not so with Jesus, you remember, because he said, “You’ll not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” And then you remember that dear writer said, “Thy word have I hid in my heart that I may not sin against thee.”

Now so often we say, "Oh, that's just memorizing scripture. We keep memorizing scripture because it has a mental effect on our wills." Well, that is true, but the most precious meaning of that is, when God speaks a word to you personally that is precious. And I don't know how many of us have had that, but I think you know there comes a moment when it's as if another person is speaking to you -- not maybe, even vocally, but you just know, "That has come from somewhere other than me." Now, that's a word from God and that's to be hid in your heart so that you may not sin against him.

Now, Satan's attempt is always to change that and twist it around. And then loved ones, if you go back to Genesis 3:3 then, "But God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" And then Verse 4, Satan takes another step, "But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die.'" "You will not die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

And that's what Satan does, if he can entice you forward a little to change God's word, and he can see that you're not really treasuring the words that God has given to you, once he can see that then he knows he has begun to disentangle you from the Creator. And he comes through with a direct contradiction, "You won't die. You won't die if you do that."

And I don't know how often he has said that to you, but certainly to me very often, "You won't die. You won't die if you miss a day of prayer. You won't die. You won't die if you miss the Bible study in the morning. You won't die." And it's incredible, if you think of it, it's incredible for how many months we will slide down the hill of spiritual decadence 'listening' to that voice! And not getting back to our Bible study! Not getting back to our prayer! Not getting back to paying our vows to God! And Satan is still saying, "You will not die." And we're even then beginning to cry out, "Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord? Where is that soul refreshing view of Jesus' word?" "Where is that vivid sense of God, and his love, and his presence?" And still it's Satan saying, "You will not die." And we dumb-dumbs, we say, "Yeah, yeah, we will not die!" And we're half dead already! And we have no sense of God's life in our hearts!

But Satan got us to the point where we not only question God's word, but we began to treasure it less in our own hearts. And then we accepted his complete contradiction of it. And of course it's always a quid pro quo. It's always, "I'll give you this, 'For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.'" And Satan always gets into our minds on that level of, "There's another way to do this. Now let's face it, there is another way to do this. There is certainly -- God was right. That is a way, but there is another way."

I think all of us have found our minds coming to that fatal position where they're beginning to side with Satan. And they're beginning to say, "Yeah, yeah, there is another way to do this. There's an easier way. There's a way that isn't quite so hard." And it comes in all forms, God tells you, "You have to say to this person in the office, this. You have to. That's the only way to bring my peace and my life into that situation. You have to go and say that to them." Or, "You have to go to this friend or this relative and you've to explain this to them. That's it. That's what you've to do." And then Satan gets into our minds and says, "Did God tell you to do that? Now are you sure he told you to do that, or did you think of that yourself?" "Well, maybe I did think of it myself." "Yeah, well you see, here's another way to do this. You don't need to speak to that person, that's kind of embarrassing. You don't need to go to them that way. Actually, you just need to pray for them, you don't need to say a thing."

And so loved ones, it's that 'slip'. I don't know if you have that saying. But we have in Ireland, "There's often a slip between the cup and the lip." And it's that 'slip'. The cup comes but there's a slip before it gets to the mouth. And old T.S. Elliot says, "There's that gap between the thought and the action. And that's where we lose our souls." And really there's only one way to walk with the Father in joy, and that is to obey him immediately, and fully, and completely, and to reject Satan's attacks on our minds by which he gets us to try to rationalize the whole thing and see that there's a better way to do it.

So loved ones, there is a delightful to walk. Really, there is. And it's a way that is free from all kinds of rationalization, and all kinds of questioning God. It's a way of instant obedience to his dear Word and refusing to allow Satan to get in there. I know. I sympathize with you because what we all think is, "It's not Satan at all. It's just my own thoughts." And don't you see that's the very heart of Satan? He appears as a shepherd. He appears as an angel of light. He appears as a wolf in sheep's clothing. He appears as the normal action of your own human mind. That's it. That's his joy, to speak to you in such a way that you conclude, "It's just my own thoughts."

And if he can get you to do that of course, you are doubly lost. Because after you get away down that road, you begin to say to yourself, "But that was my own idea." And of course, it isn't. It's never your own idea. Do you see that? Old Sauer [Eric Sauer, 1898-1959, born in Berlin, Germany, wrote five books, one of which was "Dawn of World Redemption"] you remember, says, "One of the reasons we are a forgivable people is that sin was not our idea." It wasn't. Sin started from Satan. And sin is his idea. And that's one of the reasons God is willing and able to forgive us, because we are a people, in some sense, who were duped and then went after the deception with all our hearts. So loved ones, No! Don't accuse yourself. Rather follow hard after God's dear word to you when it comes, and refuse to be deceived by Satan into rationalizing with your mind.

What I'd like to share next day is how God intended our minds to be used, and then Satan's rationalization about how he thought we should use it, and of course, the chaos that has come to our own lives.

We're going to have a fellowship upstairs, so if you want to pray and seek God for the fullness of the spirit then you should just stay here, or go into the prayer room. But if you want to come up and get to know some of us, do come up into the lounge.

And this week, well how about just the simple life? Why complicate it? How about the simple life? How about just doing what God tells you?

Let us pray. Dear Lord, we thank you for that simple life. We thank you that it is just, "Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus." And Lord, we see that so often Satan has used our own minds against us. And Lord, we confess that to you, and especially in this realm of subtly changing your directions to us. Lord, you love each one of us here in this room with an individual love. And you have given each one of us individual directions that nobody else has received. And Lord, we are responsible for following those, because those very laws that you give us personally are life for us. Those will be life for us if we obey them.

So Lord, we thank you that you do speak to each one of us personally and that Satan will often come in and say, "But oh, he didn't tell so and so that." But Lord, we see that doesn't matter. You are dealing with us individually. And so Lord, when you tell us to do a thing, we intend to do it from

this day on. And we intend to stop rationalizing with our minds and destroying your life before it can get to us. So Lord, we reject Satan and all his works. We renounce him and all his works. And oh Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to obeying you and the voice of the shepherd in every detail the moment we hear it.

Now the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with each one of us now and throughout this coming week and forever more. Amen.