

What is Our Sinful Nature? #1

Romans 6:6

Sermon Transcript by Reverend Ernest O'Neill

I don't know how many of you saw the movie, loved ones, Chariots of Fire, but you may know that Eric Liddell, British Olympic gold medalist in the 400 meters at Paris Olympics [1924], died in the Japanese prison camp, as a missionary. You probably saw that on the screen at the end of the movie. But, you probably don't know what is included in a little life story of his that is published in England that he called his wife, whose name, I think, is Florence, into his little cell in the prison camp, or his little room there, and just before he sighed his last, he said, "Florie, it's full surrender," and then he died.

It's just good to see that the apostolic testimony is so solid and so continuous. That the dear guys that we admire are the guys that have paid it all. And really, if you're like me, that's what I want to be. You want to be somebody who has paid it all, who has made a full surrender. So, that's what we talk about, loved ones, on Sunday evenings. That full surrender business and really there is no life without it. Without full surrender, you have a pack of wishy-washy, milk and water religious people who are off putting to any good red-blooded, solid sinner.

And really the only people who are winsome and attractive to a good, healthy, red-blooded sinner is a child of God who lives like a child of God, inside and out. That's true. So, those of you who saw the movie, that's really what attracted people. The guy would not compromise whatever it cost him. Really that's the only kind of person that, in the last analysis, counts.

I don't know what you all think about all the talk about persecution. We're great people for talking about persecution, and suddenly slipping out of the bit of difficulty that we're in ourselves in this life. We need to be careful of that. We need to be careful that we don't do all this great heroic talk about when the Communists come and take over our land we will all of numbers on our foreheads and all that kind of stuff. We talk big about that stuff, and are preoccupied with it and we are missing the opportunity to pay a price here in our own offices or our own schools or here in our own lives or in our own homes.

When somebody takes advantage of us and we have the choice to squeal, get our own back or we have the choice to go down in the dirt like Liddell and countless other people who have followed Jesus down the Calvary road. So, it is important for us that we're realistic, and I would pray that we as a family of God would be realistic. There's plenty of persecution around us and plenty of hardship, if we would be what we are, instead of being wishy-washy and refusing to speak up when we ought to speak up and refusing to forebear and be kind and be patient and shut up when we should shut up. Really, God has plenty for us, if we're willing to do those things. I pray that he'll teach us that and he'll make us heroic Christians.

Loved ones, would you like to look at a verse and I think I could help all of us to start at the same point tonight, even if you haven't been to the previous evenings of the series that we're on. If you look at Romans 7, I could show you a verse that would summarize what we have been saying.

Romans 7:24, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" That's what most people think is the normal state of a Christian. Most people think that's the normal state of Christians. Most people think that's the best that Christianity can be. Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death? Or, if you want it put literally, you will find it a few verses further up in verse 15. Most Christians say, that's me. That's the conflict.

That's the battle of faith. "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." Verse 24, "Wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Most people say, that's where I am. That's where all Christians are. That's the battle of the Christian life. That's what it's going to be like until we get to Heaven and then we'll be delivered. And that is lie, lie, lie, lie, lie. Because that defeat is not the final word that God gives us in this dear book.

The final word he gives us in this dear book is in the next verse, in verse 25. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord!" He says that because of the victory that he presents in the previous chapter. Romans 6:6. "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin." So, in the whole of chapter 6, you remember, Paul presents the victory over sin that God has wrought for us by crucifying us with himself on Calvary. Then in chapter 7, he begins, you remember, in verse 1, "Do you not know, brethren, for I am speaking to those who know the law," I am speaking to you Jewish Christians. Don't you know we're now free from the law as well? Not only has Jesus freed us from the power of sin in our lives but we're freed from the law as the chief guide of our lives. Because in Romans 8:2, we have now the Spirit of Jesus within us to guide us. So, we receive guidance as to the good we are to do by the Spirit of Jesus inside us.

Then, of course, he has a parenthesis there in Romans 7 in the last half of it in verse 7. He says, "What then shall we say? That the law is sin?" In other words, he is saying, you see, we are now free from the law, brother Jews, because we now have the Spirit of Jesus within us to tell us what is good. But then will we say that the law is bad? Then, you will remember from verse 7 to verse 24 of Romans 7, he has that little parenthesis, he says, no, no, it's not bad. When I was a Jew living under the law it showed me how evil the sinful nature was. So, no, it's not bad. You remember, he says in verse 13, "Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure."

So, in that parenthesis, he says, when I was a Jew under the law, this was the situation, the law showed me how evil the sinful nature was and how impossible it was for me to be delivered from it. Then, in verse 25, he says, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord!" Then, he summarizes the situation as a Jew, "So then, I of myself [I am my own, without any deliverance by Jesus and his death] serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin." Then, he gets back on to the track. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." [Romans 8:1] Remember, that's the way we were able to see clearly how these verses fit together.

You remember, last Sunday, I tried to deal with the question, well, then, why do so many of us who are carnal Christians, not Jews at all, but are carnal Christians, why do we identify so closely with this description of a Jew under the law? You remember, I mentioned, well, because he is trying to obey the law. So are we. We respect the law and so does he respect the law. His will is that, we are both the same. We find we can't obey the law. We find we can't. We find moral defeat within us. Yet, we are both the same in that we have our sins forgiven. The Jew, you remember, could say,

“Blessed is the man whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord will not impute iniquity.”

So, we are the same as a Jew in that we are forgiven our sins. But, we are also the same as a Jew, those of us who are carnal Christians, because we are not delivered from the sinful nature that keeps us from doing what we know is right. That’s why so many of us identify with that chapter. Even though it describes a Jew under the law who has no power of the Spirit to enable him to obey.

Loved ones, I think many of us are in the same situation and what I would like to talk about a little more tonight is this sinful nature and just what it is and how it was produced. Because, of course, the truth is we are delivered from our sinful nature by faith. Most of us think we’re delivered from it by trying and by effort and by working at it and trying to obey. We’re delivered from our sinful nature by faith, by faith in Romans 6:6. "That our old self was crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed and we might no longer be a slave to sin." You remember, Paul says that plainly, he says, "Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.[Romans 6:11] So, it is by faith.

But, you know that we will only exercise faith if we see there is no other possibility. Most of us live in defeat today because we do not really see the hopelessness of our situation. We do not see the mighty power of the sinful nature. We’re not afraid enough of the power of sin, that’s it, really. We’re not sufficiently afraid of the power of sin. We’ve been brought up in our society to think that we can do anything and we can solve anything by reading the right book or going to the right class or taking the right course at the university or having the right company or having the right counseling.

So, we get used to the idea that everything is manageable. Well, the fact is the sinful nature is not manageable and it does not matter how many books on temperament you read. It does not matter what great friends you have to reinforce you. It does not matter how many Basic Youth Conflicts [Bible Conferences by Bill Gothard] you go to. It does not matter what you try to do. There is only one way to be delivered from the sinful nature and that is through faith in your death with Jesus and the destruction of that sinful nature in him.

There are many of us who like to talk as if this kind of message is self-righteous. It is the very opposite of self-righteous. The self-righteous people are those of us who are carnal Christians who are still trying to overcome the sinful nature by the very thing that we accuse the victorious life people of believing, such as works of law. We so often will charge somebody who teaches that you can be freed from the power of sin with getting into works of law. We are the ones that are guilty of works of law. We are trying to suffocate or strangle that carnal nature to death. We are trying to beat the sinful nature down by the effort of our own will power.

The fact is, loved ones, as Jesus bore our sins on Calvary so he bore our sinful nature and he destroyed it there. And he will destroy it in your life, if you are willing to exercise faith for that. Above all, as he required you to let go of your sins before he could bear the guilt of them away out of your conscience, so he requires you to let go of your sinful nature before he can cleanse you from it. That often is the rub for many of us. We want this, we want this, we want to live victoriously but we don’t want to let go of the sinful nature.

What is the sinful nature? Could I just ask you to look kindly and patiently again at this thing because I don’t know how much God speaks. You can guess how often I’ve looked at this over the past 15 years and yet God speaks to me again and again about the reality of my sinful nature. What is the

sinful nature? The sinful nature is human nature full of sin, that's it. A human nature that is full of sin. It's our own human nature perverted by the power of sin. That's our sinful nature.

Sin is the life of Satan that deceives and perverts and rules forcibly anybody that he can get hold of. So, sin is a life power. It is a life of Satan. That is why, you remember, Paul says, "it's no longer I that do it, but it's sin that dwells within me." [Romans 7:20] That's why you, at times, feel this isn't just wrong I'm doing, this is some power that is bigger than me. I cannot control this temper. It's bursting out. I cannot control this lust. It is getting away from me all the time. You feel that because it's bigger than you. It's the life of Satan, Loved ones. It's not just a little tendency that's wrong in you. It's the life of Satan and the life of Satan gets a hold on you because of your sinful nature.

The sinful nature was produced by the life of Satan at the very beginning. So, what you were given is a human nature like this. It doesn't matter whether we all agree with every issue. It doesn't matter if you're dichotomous and you have a spirit and body. That isn't the issue. So, don't get caught up. Jesus was so good. Don't strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Don't do that. Just see that this is one way of looking at our human nature. We have a spirit in our innermost part of us. We have a soul, a psychological part of us that the psychologist talks about. We have a body that we can all see here. God's plan was that we would live dependent on him and his Holy Spirit, not dependent on the world, but dependent on him and his Holy Spirit.

Then, we would walk with him as dear children, loving their Father and trusting him. We would therefore begin to operate like that [outward from our spirits] in conversation with him in prayer and communion. We would know through intuition what he wanted us to do in our jobs, in our marriages, in our homes, in our everyday lives. Our conscience was given as a kind of gyrocompass to keep us right and to judge us in the light of that and to keep reminding us what God wanted us to do. Our will was the link between our conscience and our soul. God wanted our will simply to obey our consciences, just obey our conscience. And our conscience would direct our minds, not to let our minds wander all around wherever they wanted to go; but to direct our minds to think certain thoughts at certain times. So, that our emotions as a result would be guided by that. Because you know you can't immediately feel anger. You can think about somebody who makes you angry so your mind really governs your emotions.

Then, that they would express themselves through your body and to the world and fill the world with God's own love and with his own beauty and his own purity.

Of course, we refuse to do that and Satan tempted us by the independent life that he has within himself to use the world to get what we needed instead of depending on God. So, he said, listen, you can get what you need from the world. And that's exactly what we started to do. We started to get from the world what God wanted us to get from his love.

If you have a dear father who loves you, of course, you have a great sense of protection. He'll protect you whenever you're in trouble. You have a great sense of value because he sets his eyes upon you and says, you are my child, you are special to me. You have a great sense of happiness because you are with him all day and what we did under Satan's influence was we turned to the world for the security that we could get from things and the significance that we could get from people and their opinions and the happiness we could get from experiences and circumstances and our whole nature was perverted.

That's what a sinful nature is, you see. It's a human nature that, instead of working from the inside out as it was meant to, from a dependence on God's love and a closeness to him. It is more tied to the world of people and things and events and it works from the outside in. It's perverted. That's a sinful nature.

You see, I tried to indicate how it affects you. Your mind was there to understand what God put into the intuition of your spirit. If you've read Einstein's life, any of the lives of Einstein, you'll find that he would often go to bed at night with an insoluble problem in connection with relativity. Then he would get up in the morning and the old mind would begin to make explicit and begin to understand what he had inside of him. You remember, he was the one that wrote, "All ideas come from God." He knew it. He knew that the ideas he had were already inside him by intuition and what his mind was doing was understanding those and explaining them in thought and word form so that other human beings would be able to comprehend. That is what our minds were meant to do.

Of course, we perverted the whole thing and we began to use our minds to manipulate the things in the world for our own security, to manipulate people. You know the way we do it. To manipulate people to praise us and give us some sense of significance and value. That happened throughout our whole being, loved ones. Our will, instead of obeying our conscience, became just a servant and slave of our mind and emotions. Our will ceased to be executive in our personality. And I put it to you, where is your will in your life?

How important is your will in your everyday life? Isn't it true that most of us rarely exercise our wills. Oh, we're stubborn, but we're not stubborn because we exercise our wills. We're stubborn because we're governed by our body and our body wants rest or it wants food or it wants something else and we're stubborn. We hold on but we virtually operate as if we have no wills. Now, loved ones, that's what a sinful nature means.

The reason you and I are not able to obey God so often in our own Christian lives is, most of us, though we died (because that's what happened when we turned against God, our spirits died) though we died, yet we heard that because Jesus had died for us, our Father would forgive us and we believed that and God received us back to himself and gave his spirit to us. So, his spirit came into our spirit but as soon as it got to here, it came up against a blank wall because it found not a nature that was used to operating from the inside to the outside, but it found a sinful nature that was used to operating backwards and used to be operating from the outside in.

You remember, Galatians described it, the desires of the flesh are against the desires of the spirit to prevent you doing what you would. [Galatians 5:17] That's what happens. The two powers come up against each other and carnal Christians are ones who have an incredible conflict going on eternally in their soul level where the Spirit touches them. Most of them, of course, are fairly useless for God's service because they are half converted people. They are people who have the power of God within them but have a sinful nature that has been trained to be the servant of Satan.

So, Jesus comes into you or to me and finds not a servant, not a soul and a body that are trained for his service but he finds a soul and body that are constantly operating the other way and are still the servant of the world and of things and people and circumstances. So, Loved ones, that's why you're unable to obey God. It's not because you don't want to, is it? Because Jesus' Spirit makes you want to do certain things.

So, you go into the office and the dirty joke is told and the Spirit of Jesus rebels against it and

is made sick by it. And you feel I should say something, but your whole nature is trained to please those people in your office and to be popular with those people. You've trained yourself to become dependent on them for your sense of significance and value and importance. You know if you spoke at all they'd think you were just old-fashioned and square and not at all a modern young guy or girl that they think you are.

You know what to do. You walk bravely away so that your poor ears will not be soiled by the dirty joke. But, all in all, you feel, well, that wasn't exactly Eric Liddell. [British 1924 Olympic gold medalist who wouldn't compete on a Sunday] It wasn't exactly Paul or Peter. And, yet, our lives are dreamed away on that kind of compromising performance when God gives us an opportunity to witness. It's the same all through our lives. Now, that's the sinful nature, Loved ones.

What you and I are so often doing by reading the books, the temperament books, they tell us, what they do is they describe this sinful nature. You know every time you read the books on temperament, they describe that to you so I suppose it's good. Gives you a little brainwashing, makes you feel, yeah, that's the way I should be. But then it results in a kind of hopeless task that partly builds up your pride because then you try to be like that and so you try little tricks. You try remembering scripture and you try little tricks about thinking of the good things in people so you like them instead of criticize them. But, it's all human tampering and tinkering because the fact is this sinful nature has not been produced by you but has been produced by the power of Satan's life. So, it is a supernatural creation and is a unitary evil. Have you discovered that?

Have you worked on patience for a while? You just get patience straightened up and then you decide, okay, I better work on purity. So, you begin to work on your lust and you just get lust straightened up and patience has got out of line again. You know you pray and you pray and you pray this time and you pray that time and you run out of hands and you run out of prayers. Because it's a unitary evil. The sinful nature is one whole human nature that is perverted. It's not just a wee bit wrong here or wee bit wrong there. It's the whole thing has been perverted by the power of Satan's life in us and that happened way, way at the beginning, you see.

That's another thing, I think, we're slow to understand. You remember, I showed you the old Bible this morning that's dated 1608. Do you realize that this old sinful nature was produced not in 1608, not even in 1 AD, whenever that magical year took place. Not even in 2000 BC. That sinful nature was produced at the beginning of creation of mankind and that sinful nature has been passed down by Adam to his children. Right on down through your great-grandparents and mine, right to us. It is as old as the race itself. But, most of all, it is created by a supernatural power of Satan.

Loved ones, that's why, have you found, that you try to make it do what you want it to do but it will not do it? You remember that verse Romans 8:7, "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot." Have you found that? The mind of the flesh, that is, you see, the mind that operates from the outside in is hostile to God because it is part of Satan's equipment. It is part of his creation. It is part of his perversion and it's hostile to God and it can't be anything else but hostile to God.

So, you find yourself so often in the same situation as these dear people, you remember, in Acts 5:1, "But a man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own?"

And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.' When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him."

Ananias and Sapphira were hybrid monstrosities. They were children of God in a sense but they were still children of the devil. So, they weren't even as happy as dear old pagans. Have you noticed dear old pagans who don't care about God at all, they're happy as Larry? But, the carnal Christian is not as happy as an old pagan because he is in some sense a child of God and yet he's not as joyful as a child of God because in some sense he is a child of the devil. Because in one way he's looking out for Jesus and in the other way he's looking out for himself. That was Ananias and Sapphira. Let me do a bit of good for God. Sell the land and look as if we're real servants of Jesus and let's give some of it but let's keep some looking out for ourselves. Is that not us? I think from my own experience. Is that not where our carnality shows itself? That we're not abandoned, we're not abandoned. We're keeping an eye on ourselves. We're ready to serve God, ready to sacrifice but keeping a watch on ourselves so that we don't hurt ourselves.

And we're looking out for Jesus partly, but mainly we're looking out for ourselves. Loved ones, that is an impossible task that drives you to mental despair. That drives you to an insane asylum, that stuff. I mean you are better settling to live for the devil's straight. At least, life is uncomplicated. But, to pretend that you are living for God and be really on the lookout for yourself, it is so wearing.

I don't know about you but I remember the old carnal nature tired me out. You are continually worn out and you read about these heroes of the faith and I often wondered, how? Where do they get the energy from? How can they keep going? Because I was worn out just meeting my responsibilities day by day. The fact is we are worn out because we are serving two masters. We are keeping a lookout for ourselves and we're pretending to serve Jesus.

It's the same, you remember, a few chapters later in Acts 8, about a magician, you remember, that was converted by Philip. Acts 8:9, "But there was a man named Simon who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the nation of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. They all gave heed to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is that power of God which is called great.' And they gave heed to him, because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed."

Then, you remember, the apostles came down to pray for these converts to receive the Holy Spirit. In verse 18, "Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me also this power, that any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' But Peter said to him, 'Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of inequity.' And Simon answered, 'Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.'" But, how many of us, have been like that? "Give me also this power that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

I don't know how many of you have sought the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I don't know how many of you have sought it as I sought it at the beginning for the power that it would give me in my life so that people could see that I was a real Christian and that I had power to witness and that God was owning me. And, so that I would live a victorious life and wouldn't have so much miserable frustration with myself. So, it goes on and so that I with this and I with that and I with the other. You see, what the apostles said, "Pray that the Lord, if possible, may forgive you and may forgive the intent of your heart." Loved ones, that's it.

The carnal Christian is one who appears to be going for God's glory but all the time the intent of his heart is on his own glory. So much so that, even when he seeks the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he seeks it so that he will be able to speak in tongues or so he will be able to exercise the power of healing. Or, so that he'll be able to witness and everybody will see that he's a good, regular Christian. It's nothing to do with that at all.

It's so that Jesus will see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. He has taken all that part of you that wants to get significance from our opinion of you. That's it. All that part of you that wants to seem important in our eyes and he took that into his own heart on Calvary and he allowed his Father's wrath to destroy it and burn it out. That's when he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

We seek to be delivered from that so that he'll see that it was worth it. That's it. Not so that we'll be big guys or great girls or good men or good women or important people, but so that our Savior will see that it was worth it. That we don't want it either. If it caused that agony to you Lord, we don't want it. If it means us dying with you and being crucified with you as far as what other people think of us, then Lord that's good. We want rid of this sinful nature, whatever the cost. So that you, yourself will see if the travail of your soul is satisfied. So, that then you'll be free to be yourself in us.

But, loved ones, carnal Christians are people who have always an eye on the driving mirror to see where they have come from. Then, they are always looking ahead to see where they are going to. They are always concerned with themselves though trying to appear as if they're concerned with God. That's sinful nature, I could almost use bad language about it, is a wretch. There is no dealing with it, loved ones. There is no compromising with it. There is no fooling around with it. You will not beat it. I'll tell you that. You won't beat it. You've tried for years. I've tried for years to beat it by will power and by all kinds of routines. You won't. That sinful nature is so ground into you and is so intimately connected with Satan and the power of hell and the pit that there's only one who can deliver you from that and he has done it. He says to you, "If you have faith that I did, then you will be free from it this minute." Does it take time? It doesn't need to take time. It takes honesty and it takes truthfulness and determination.

This is a lady, Jane Cooper, who was known for the victory of her life and the purity. She writes, on May 2, 1761, "I believe while memory remains in me, gratitude will continue. From the time you preached on Galatians 5:5," I don't know what that is, loved ones. Galatians 5:5, "Through the Spirit by faith we wait for the hope of righteousness." That's it. You enter into deliverance from the sinful nature and righteousness through the Spirit by faith.

"From the time you preached in Galatians 5:5, I saw clearly the true state of my soul. That sermon described my heart, and what it wanted to be; namely truly happy. You read Mr. M--'s letter, and it

described the religion which I desired. From that time, the prize appeared in view, and I was enabled to follow hard after it. I was kept watching onto prayer, sometimes in much distress, at other times in patient expectation of the blessing. For some days before you left London, my soul was stayed on a promise I had applied to me in prayer: 'The Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to his temple.' I believed he would and that he would sit there as a refiner's fire."

"The Tuesday after you went, I thought I could not sleep unless he fulfilled his word that night. I never knew as I did then the force of those words: 'Be still and know that I am God.' I became nothing before him and enjoyed perfect calmness in my soul and knew not whether he had destroyed my sin; but I desired to know that I might praise him. Yet, I soon found the return of unbelief and groaned being burdened." Some of you have said, 'Well, I tried and then I fell back.' Well, that's it. It's a deep thing.

"On Wednesday, I went to London, and sought the Lord without ceasing. I promised, if he would save me from sin I would praise him. I could part with all things, so I might win Christ. But I found all these pleas to be nothing worth; and that if he saved me, it must be freely for his own name's sake."

"On Thursday, I was so much tempted, that I thought of destroying myself." Some of you have said that, and thought, oh, isn't that bad. Well, I'm sure it's not healthy mindedness as the psychologists describe it, but it's needed. It's necessary. You have to come through. There are hard places to come through. "On Thursday, I was so much tempted that I thought of destroying myself, or never conversing more with the people of God; and yet I have no doubt of his pardoning love; 'Twas worse than death my God to love, and not my God alone.' [verse from a hymn]

"On Friday, my distress was deepened. I endeavored to pray, and could not. I went to Mrs. D., who prayed for me, and told me it was the death of nature. I opened the Bible on, 'the fearful and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.' I could not bear it. I opened again on Mark 16:6-7, 'Be not afraid; you seek Jesus of Nazareth. Go your way; Tell his disciples to go before you into Galilee; there you shall see him.'" God always encourages a sincere heart. "I was encouraged, and enabled to pray, believing that I should see Jesus at home. I returned that night, and found Mrs. G. She prayed for me; and the Predestinarian had no plea, but 'Lord thou art no respecter of persons.' He proved he was not by blessing me. I was in a moment enabled to lay hold on Jesus Christ, and found salvation by simple faith. He assured me, the Lord, the King, was in the midst of me, and that I should see evil no more. I now bless him who had visited and redeemed me, and was to become my 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.' I saw Jesus altogether lovely; and knew he was mine in all his offices. And, glory be to Him. He now reigns in my heart without a rival. I find no will but his. I feel no pride; nor any affection but what is placed on him. I know it is by faith I stand; and that watching onto prayer must be the guard of faith. I am happy in God this moment and I believe for the next. I have often read I Corinthians 13 and compared my heart and life with it. In so doing, I feel my shortcomings and the need I have of the atoning blood. Yet, I dare not say I do not feel a measure of the love there described, though I am not all I shall be. I desire to be lost in that 'love which passes knowledge.' I see 'the just shall live by faith,' and unto me, who have less than the least of the saints, is this grace given. If I were an archangel, I should veil my face before him and let silence speak his praise." And, she, of course, why, it is quoted that she lived 20-30 years of victorious and pure life that all around her attested was a life of victory and freedom from sin.

So, no, it's not time. It's determination. It's belief that there is such a victory and that Jesus has wrought it for you and that it is to be received by you through faith. It is through faith, loved ones. I would encourage your hearts to see it and, next Sunday, I'll try to talk about the original sin that produced the sinful nature, but really you don't need any more information. You need Jesus, really, and you can meet him tonight. I pray that somebody will have a good miserable time tonight.

Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. This is the meaning of the period of lent. You remember, the pope said lent is a period when we examine ourselves in regard to our sins and we mourn over our sins. It's true. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. There is a dealing with that old sinful nature by which God is able to deliver you from it. Just once more. You were crucified with Christ. That old sinful nature of yours was destroyed with him. If you really believe that and are willing to live free from it, he will free you from it to light and fill you with His Holy Spirit. I pray that somebody will come in.

Let us pray.

Dear Lord, we would bow before you and acknowledge that we need this. We have no doubt of that. Many of us who are carnal Christians here tonight, who still have to battle to keep the temper down, still have trouble with the lust rising up in our heart, still have trouble with envy and jealousy, Lord, we need to be delivered from this nature of ours that seems more fitted to serve Satan than it is to serve God. Lord, we believe what your word says in Romans 6, that our old self was crucified with Christ so that the body of sin might be destroyed and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. Lord, we could say with Paul, we know this, we know that our old self was crucified. We do know it, Lord. Intellectually, we believe your word. But, we want to know it in our own experience. We want to know it spiritually in our spirits. We want to know it in our own experience so that our wives and our roommates and our friends will sense a new peace and purity, a new Christ likeness that goes right to the bottom of our hearts. Lord, we want a clean heart because that's what you died to bring us. You died to take away our sins and, oh, Lord Jesus, we would seek you so that you will see of the travail of your soul and be satisfied. 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 week and evermore. Amen.