

## CALL TO HOLINESS

INTRO: A little while ago I heard two heart-cries of those who had taken godly stands in holy living. They longed for some understanding from professing Christian family members. But there was none. My heart wrenches when I hear what happens to some who take a stand against sin in obedience to the Word of God. I pray this message may be a comfort to those who stand on the truth the Scripture presents on what I view as a most important matter.

In Ephesians 6:10-20 Paul closes the letter by warning the believers in Ephesus that we, as Christians do not wrestle against flesh and blood. Our battle is spiritual, and the enemy is none other than Satan himself and his fellow demons. So, let us read verses 10-14:

*10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*

*11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

*13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

*14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,*

*When we get back to the Ephesian messages, Lord willing, we will deal with this whole section in depth. We are only focusing on the command to stand. Let me read verses 13-14 as I would translate them:*

*13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand,*

*14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,*

I believe that there should be no sentence break between verses 13 and 14. It should read, "...and having done all to stand, stan

therefore..." etc. The very first important thing for the one who takes a stand is to have one's loins girt with truth. One of the outstanding demonic attacks against mankind is this matter of truth, but it is not our subject this morning, though it is related to it.

One of the major ways Satan is using to destroy or weaken the Church is to infiltrate the Church with sin. Sin is man's major problem. Sin is why Jesus died. And to infiltrate the Church with sin, truth must be blurred or redefined or left out, and error must be made to look good. That the Church in America is sinking into sin is very obvious to any observant Christian. And the Church's downward slide directly affects the world's downward slide which is equally obvious.

There is a command to an issue in the NT that is one of the most disobeyed commands in the Bible, and this disobedience helps Satan to infiltrate the Church with sin. It is the command for Christians to separate themselves from sinning Christians. It is the call to holiness in a specific area. Some of those commands that call the Christian to holy living have been made to look so ugly as to render them to be viewed as unscriptural. The failure to obey these commands is made to look like it is right to disobey them. The means Satan has used to destroy these commands, in my estimation, is such teachings as unconditional love, unconditional grace, unconditional eternal security, and unconditional forgiveness.

I am thinking this morning in particular of the teaching of Scripture that calls the true Christian to separate him or herself from sinning Christians. This is a part of holy living. The teachings I just mentioned, and especially that of unconditional love, have successfully drowned out almost entirely the biblical teaching of separation from sinning Christians.

Becoming a Christian is still held high, as well it should. But holding such Christians to a godly standard has all but disappeared. I want to zero in on two Scriptures. There are others but these two stand out in particular, to show what the Scriptures teach in the particular area I am addressing this morning.

I have never been persecuted for professing to be a Christian. I have never been persecuted for witnessing for Christ. I have not been persecuted for speaking out against sin. As a matter of

fact, many have said they appreciated that. I have never been persecuted for attending prayer meeting. I have never been persecuted for being a pastor. I have only been persecuted for one thing related to my Christian life so far, and that has been for obeying the Scriptures I will speak about this morning.

Pastor Daryl mentioned the verse in his last message that says this: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." Is that verse true? If it is, then most professing Christians are not living godly in Christ Jesus. My daughter had a Bible school teacher who read this verse and said in all his years of Bible teaching he had never been persecuted yet.

Well, I want to assure you, if you obey the two Scriptures we will be looking at, you will experience persecution from Christians. Persecution is a much, misunderstood subject. Let me recommend our message on [sermonaudio.com/mecl](http://sermonaudio.com/mecl) on this subject.

#### I. THE CALL TO HOLINESS IN GENERAL

I want to mention first, briefly, the Christian's call to holiness. It should come as no surprise to any Christian that the true Christian is called to holy living. What might come as a surprise is what that actually means and what it looks like in real life. We want to look at only one aspect of the call to holy living, but it is a major aspect.

So let us briefly look at holiness. Holiness is one of the major attributes of God Almighty. And what we learn about God is that He is completely holy. 1 John 1:5 says this, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

So we ask, what does holiness mean? What is holiness? To be holy is to be separate from sin. To become holy is the process of being separated from sin. It is called "sanctification." God does not need this process, saved sinners do.

And when a lost sinner truly repents of his or her sin, and turns to Christ in faith, God calls him or her "a holy one." Let me show you that. When Paul begins his epistles he says things like, "to the saints who are at Ephesus." Do you know what the word "saint" means? These words could be read like this, "to the holy ones who are at Ephesus!" If

you profess to be a Christian, then holiness should mark your life. Holy ones are "separated from sin ones." The doctrine of sanctification is the doctrine of progressively growing in holiness. This should be true of everyone who professes to be born again.

Listen to 1 Peter 1:15-16:

*15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,*

*16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

Let me reread that:

*15 but as He who called you is separated from sin, you also be separated from sin in all your conduct,*

*16 because it is written, "Be separated from sin, for I am separated from sin."*

Turn to Isaiah 6. There was a time in that godly prophet's life when he was allowed a little glimpse at God. Isaiah was a holy prophet of God. We begin in verse 1:

*1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.*

*2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.*

*3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"*

*4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.*

*5 So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."*

Let me reread the cry of the angels of verse 3. They cried and said: "Separated from sin, separated from sin, separated from sin, is the LORD of hosts!" What is the major purpose of salvation? What are we saved from? The major purpose of salvation is not to save us from hell. It is to save us from sin. If you find that hard to believe,

study the Bible. You won't get out of the first chapter of the NT to find this truth.

What was the major thing Isaiah learned when he got a glimpse of God? It was that he was a man of unclean lips. James 3:2 tells us that any person who has clean lips is a perfect man. When Isaiah got a little glimpse of God, he immediately got to see himself. Oh, for a fresh vision of a holy God by those who profess to be Christians!

Here is the clear command of Scripture: Be holy! Be separate from sin! And here is the clear warning: without holiness, no one will see the Lord!

We go now to the one area of holiness I want to address this morning. It is obedience to the call of holiness with regard to a specific area of Christian life, which is that the believers are to separate themselves from professing Christians who are living in sin.

## II. THE CALL TO HOLINESS IN A SPECIFIC AREA

### A. 1 Corinthians 5

Let's begin by reading 1 Corinthians 5. There are other Scriptures directly related to our subject, but we will look at only two. Also, I will not expound on the passages but just read them and briefly comment.

Verse 1:

*1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles – that a man has his father's wife!*

A professing believer had taken his step mother as his wife. I would expect the dad has passed away. The word translated "sexual immorality" in the NKJV is more correctly translated as "fornication" in the KJV. Just a word here. Our modern translations have all fallen into the error of translating the Greek word *pornea* in certain passages as *sexual immorality*. It is that, but it is more specific. I won't take time for that this morning. Any careful Bible student can check this word. The NKJV, though a better translation in numerous areas than the KJV has also fallen into the error of most, if

not all modern versions regarding this word. I will read it as fornication from here onward.

Verse 2:

*2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

The Corinthian Christians, who viewed themselves as very spiritual Christians, were proud of their liberties rather than dealing with this sin. This believer should have been taken away, and we'll see later what this means.

*3 For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.*

*4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Paul says, "I am not there. I do not need to be there. I have already judged this man as though I were there. You are to excommunicate this man in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will be attended with my spirit and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ." Verse 5 calls this excommunication as delivering this person over to Satan. The purpose is that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. What I understand is that if this sinning Christian does not repent, he or she will be lost. I see no other option here.

If this sinning Christian is delivered to Satan, there is some hope of repentance and salvation. If not, there is little hope left. Now the modern teaching of unconditional love or unconditional eternal security etc.. would condemn such an action as is clearly instructed here. However, the facts are that this action is the real biblical *agapee* love of the NT. Jesus said, "If you love Me keep My commandments." This is one of those commandments. As real love disciplines

erring children, so real love disciplines sinning believers.

Verse 6:

*6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*

*7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*

*8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

The communion meal of the Christian Church should be kept without leaven, as we so clearly learn from the Passover the Lord instructed for Israel. Sin is leaven. To fellowship with Christians in the Church who are living in any such sins as mentioned here, is to have leaven present. And what is the danger of leaven, which here pictures sin? It slowly infiltrates the entire lump of dough. That is what sin does. That is where many, many churches are today.

Verse 9:

*9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with fornicators.*

*10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.*

Now Paul tells them that he has already written to them not to keep company with fornicators. But today we do that in the Christian church in the name of love. Paul did not here mean the fornicators of the world. We expect them to live in sin. He is talking about sinning Christians. And what is the very clear command? Do not keep company with them! Explain this to almost any believer today and you will get a negative reaction! But why? Is this not clear enough? Would you not think that those who love the Lord and the Word of God would desire to learn the truth? Did Paul not say, "...having your loins girt with truth?"

Verse 11:

*11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner – not even to eat with such a person.*

So what we learn is that this separation is to occur for major sins such as immorality, covetousness, reviling, drunkenness and a whole list of other sins could be given here. And what is the clear command? Do not keep company with them! Could it be spelled out more clearly? For those who may listen to this message to whom this is new, I ask you, do you really love the Lord and the Word of God? Then consider this passage honestly and objectively.

Verses 12-13:

*12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?*

*13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."*

So Paul clarifies that this action of separation is from professing believers, not from the lost. In verse 11 Paul says this is to be practiced with anyone who is named a Christian. When a person professes faith in Christ, they are among those who are named Christians. Some, in order to avoid this action, conveniently say they never truly got saved. Others say, "I don't think so or so ever got saved." When anyone professes salvation and they live in sin, they have put themselves among those who are to be treated as this passage instructs. Whether anyone is truly a Christian others can never be known for certain. We take their word for it. It is their profession to which they are held accountable. Whether a person is truly a Christian or not, is not the point. The point is their profession. When one professes to be a Christian, that is the most solemn profession they can ever make.

And what does Paul clearly say here? Put that sinning Christian away from yourselves! How clear is that? And note that Paul calls this person an evil person. He is

evil! Paul does not mince word. This is not politics, it is Christianity!

Notice another matter in this chapter. What we hear over and over today is, "Judge not lest you be judged." I understand that this has become one of the most often quoted passages of Scripture in modern times and it is wrongly interpreted. We cannot take time for that here. Just note that Paul says in verse 3 that he has already judged this person. And don't say, "Oh, that was Paul." Paul instructed the believers at Corinth to do the same, and he calls on us to do the same.

So what is the instruction of this passage? In verse 2, if a fellow-Christian falls into sin, it should be mourned and the person should be dealt with. How can you do that without making a judgment? Answer? You can't. In verse 3 Paul says that without being there, he has already passed judgment! He did not judge to condemn the person to hell, he judged the situation and what should be done so that the person might be spared hell.

And as he goes on, the conclusion is that this person must immediately be removed! Removed from what? The church! In verses 12 and 13 he says that it is God's job to judge those outside the church, but it is the Christian's task to judge those in the church. In verse 13 he calls this sinning Christian an evil person. How would that go over in most churches today?

So what is the biblical command of this chapter? If you have a professing Christian who is living in such sins as are listed here, that person must be removed without delay! Remove this person and don't fellowship with him or her. Yes, don't even eat with him.

Now let me just say that some argue you must love the person. To not eat with such a person means not having communion with them, but you must still love them. That is true. But if you truly love them, you will obey this passage. That is the loving thing. Verse 7 says purge out the old leaven (7). What does that mean? What does it mean to not company with them (11)? What does verse 13 mean, "put away from yourselves that evil person"?

If one objectively seeks the truth, the command here is too clear to argue.

But maybe someone will listen to this message and say, "That is ridiculous! How could God expect believers to do such things?" Answer? We have all but forgotten what holiness means. Holiness means separation from sin. And we have gotten so used to sin that it hardly affects us. Scripture says: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty. Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. Without holiness no one will see the Lord.

If we could see God's judgment for just a moment, if we heard those who said to the Lord, "Lord, Lord," and then heard the Lord saying, "Depart from Me you workers of iniquity" we would get some idea of how important holiness is. Scripture says without holiness no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).

If it seems that what is taught in 1 Corinthians 5 is too demanding, we will be shocked at what Paul teaches in his second letter to the Thessalonians. So, we go to 2 Thessalonians 3 to see what further Paul has to say about separation from sin.

To conclude this point: What is the clear instruction in this passage? If a professing Christian lives in such sins as listed in this passage and other passages list more, then a believer is to separate from them.

#### B. 2 Thessalonians 3

We begin in verse 6 of 2 Thessalonians:

*6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.*

When you study 1 & 2 Thessalonians you find that this disorderly walk Paul is referring to here is laziness. And in this verse Paul says the Christian is to withdraw from such a professing Christian. It is not a severe excommunication as that of 1 Corinthians 5, but it is a withdrawal.

Now I ask you, is this what this verse actually says? Does it actually mean this? Or is this a suggestion?

Well, read the verse any which way you want, it says exactly that. "Withdraw from every professing believer who is lazy."

Now laziness is not exactly in the list of major sins. But it is a sin that is a bad testimony for a Christian. We go on in verse 7:

*7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;*

*8 nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,*

*9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.*

*10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.*

*11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.*

*12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.*

Here we clearly see what he means by being disorderly. Now I ask you, if you obeyed this command, what would the modern Christian think of you? You would be viewed as so extremely legalistic you should be shunned! Yet I ask, does the Bible say the words we just read? Are these my words? No! God Almighty inspired those words and meant for Christians to obey them.

Verse 13:

*13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.*

*14 And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

*15 Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

Now there is a significant difference between dealing with lesser sins like laziness, than the major sins mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5. But the common denominator is separation from such people. Paul had warned the Thessalonians when he was first there. He warned them again in 1 Thessalonians, and now in this letter it is time to take a stand. They have been disobedient to all his patient instruction.

To conclude this point, not only are we not to company with believers who live in bigger sins, but we are to withdraw from those who are a bad testimony. This includes such things as laziness.

## II. THE COST OF OBEDIENCE

Now I want us to look for a moment at the cost of obeying these Scriptures. In other times of church history, there were different things that were costly for Christians. Believer's baptism had the death penalty 500 years ago. But in every age there are things Satan is attacking in particular. Martyn Luther said something like this, "If I preach the Gospel but don't preach on that which Satan is attacking at that point, I am not preaching the Gospel." But today almost the entire evangelical community is unaware of the commands we have just read. And almost the entire Christian community is very aware of the teaching of unconditional love, and some of the other unconditional teachings I have mentioned.

For those who take the Scriptures seriously, surely they will objectively consider such Scriptures as we have this morning. But in our day of all the unconditional teachings, we cannot even hear such passages. We can read over the words and the words do not register. When they are pointed out, the clear meaning is so far from today's thinking that we deny it can mean what it says. The voice of these Scriptures is drowned out by false teaching on love and forgiveness and grace and eternal security. So securely has Satan set the church up in those teachings that for a Christian to separate from sinning Christians comes at a phenomenal cost to the one who obeys these clear commands. And that cost is not at the hands of the world, but at the hands of fellow Christians. Satan lashes out with a vengeance on those who obey these Scriptures to such a degree as to dishearten the most solid believer.

The Christian who obeys these commands will be ridiculed, shunned, maligned and marginalized. He will be called judgmental and legalistic and unloving and unforgiving and a host of such things. I have in my family those who have separated from their original partners and now are married to another while the first partner is alive. I have taken a stand on the matter. Let me tell you what happens. The sinning Christian is pitied and supported. By some members of my family I am viewed as the evil person. Some do not like what this sinning Christian is doing, but when it comes right down to it, they just silently go along with things as they now are. Do you know what that is? It is supporting sin.

Let me ask you a question: If a professing believer marries a partner of the same gender, and you attend the wedding, are you supporting that sin? When you attend a wedding of a divorced person whose first partner is alive, are you supporting divorce and remarriage? Of course! If you visit with or associate with professing Christians who are living together without being married, are you supporting that sin? Of course. Anyone who has been that sinning person knows what I am saying is true.

When you bring up passages like 1 Corinthians 5 and such subjects as we have just mentioned, you will not likely meet with a reasonable response. The violence such a passage or subject will get is appalling. Doing violence to exegesis and proper Bible interpretation is OK, if it gives a more favorable answer.

Here is what I have heard: Oh, its easy for you to take this stand? Really? Then I ask of you one thing; look at these Scriptures sincerely. Determine in your heart to obey God rather than men, and see how easy it is! It is so hard that few maintain their obedience for long. It is enough to wear down the most, hardy Christian.

To those who don't take a stand, it is much easier that way. But even for them, there are many uncomfortable moments when the conscience clearly is troubled. Such people are also put into very awkward predicaments. As hard as taking a stand is, it does make some things easier. A clear conscience is worth a huge price.

One of the things Satan will do if he can is infiltrate the Church with sin, and then keep that sin in the church using the Scriptures to do so. No Scripture will he use more than the Scriptures on love. It is true that Christians should love one another. But Christians who truly love one another would obey the word of God on this subject.

One of the major problems with love is our understanding of what it means. In the last 100 years or so, love has grown from true agapee love into "unconditional love." And it has become an unbiblical love. Next Satan will tell you that grace is unconditional. God will extend grace to sinning Christians. What that means is He will overlook sin and give you one chance after another without negative consequences.

His grace has no limit, that is true. But that grace will help you overcome sin, not overlook sin. What we must understand is that all undealt with sin will someday be met at judgment. And some, by giving in to sin, slip into sin altogether. And now they are told that if you were saved you can never lose your salvation.

Well, I can assure you that no one loses their salvation. You don't live for the Lord and then one day you find you have lost it. It doesn't just disappear one day. What happens when we live in sin long enough, we forfeit our salvation. We throw it away. We do not lose the Lord. We throw Him away. It is the Lord who loses us! Jesus said to God that of those He had given to Him, speaking of the 12 apostles, He had lost none, but one. He lost one. How? That one allowed Satan to enter him through his love for money.

### III. THE ONLY HOPE REGARDING THIS CALL

And now, to those of you who have obeyed these Scriptures and are paying the price, let me encourage you. You see, the only hope that other Christians will get to hear this area of truth is if you maintain your stand. As you well understand, when you take these Scriptures seriously, not in word only, but in actual deed, you will suffer at the hands of professing Christians. The sinning Christian is accepted, and those who take the stand are viewed as the bad person.

Why does this happen? Because your life is a reproof to professing, disobedient, Christians. Those who say such things as, "Oh, we must love them." Or, "Oh, we are walking with them through this time of difficulty," or any such things, will find your actions a reproof to their disobedience. When we violate the voice of conscience because we are afraid of the price we will pay if we obey that voice, we react to those who take a stand. And we gravitate to those who support us in the name of love or whatever else they may use. Those living in such sins want one thing more than almost all others and that is acceptance by other professing Christians. Those who "love" these sinning Christians also want acceptance from other Christians in their acceptance of those living in sin. And oh, the violent reaction they feel within when someone has the courage to do what the conscience is in agreement with.

When someone takes a stand based on the Word of God against sin among believers they will experience negative reactions. This has the name of persecution. Satan hates very little more than those who live right and stand against sin because their love for God exceeds their fear of man or of his tactics.

Then there are those who have sinning family members. They might never have considered accepting certain things, but when it enters their family or when your stand affects their family, now they will stand against you. For many the bond of blood is stronger than bond of belief. Why do they react to the one who stands? It shows up their own failure to stand. And then, as long as they can ridicule you or make you look bad before others or find agreement from others, they feel justified in their disobedience to the Word of God.

Now many of you have taken the stands I have mentioned. How many of you have become discouraged? How many of you have seen that because you have taken a stand against some sin, you are made to look like the villain, and the one who is living in sin is pampered in the name of love?

I have a brother who has never been married and has lived with a woman for over 30 years. Both he and his live-in have professed to be believers. I spoke to him numerous times before he lived in this sin and separated myself from him when he began to live in sin. I come from a family of

14 children. I expect that all of them profess to be believers. To my knowledge, not one of them has taken a stand with this brother. By not voicing their concern or by visiting with him, and not confronting the sin, they are, in actual fact supporting him.

And I have heard that it has said by one sibling that they know the stand I take is wrong because of the pain it causes the one against whom the stand is taken. But the stand I take does not cause enough pain to cause them to change because too many others still support the sinning member. And here is my position: "I cannot change his situation. He is the one living in sin. He can change everything in five minutes, by repenting and doing things according to Scripture. But he refuses. Why am I viewed as the bad person?" Now, unless the Bible lies or unless my brother repents, he will go to hell.

And what is the Christian told? "You must love him. You must walk with him." But that is not what Paul said. That is not what God says. And when you do this love thing, you now you seal him in his sin. He is now confirmed in his sin.

The only hope there is for Christians to wake up to this horrible infiltration of sin into the church is if some Christians become obedient to the Scriptures. They will not hear it from their pulpits. The only message many of your family members will ever hear about the teaching of biblical holiness in this area is if you take a stand. If you talk about what you believe, that will be OK to most. If you walk what you believe about it, you will suffer for it. That is the red line. But your stand is the only hope, and this is the only place they will be faced with this biblical teaching. It is their only chance for a wake-up call to the Scriptures on this point.

The only hope for the Church and our country is if Christians will return to holy living. And one important area of holy living is to separate from professing Christians who are living in sin until repentance for disobedience takes place. We may experience a revival by dealing with some sins but for lasting revival to come, we will have to learn to know that God is holy, and in His presence, sin is not tolerated.

It is important to realize that our obedience to these truths by actually living them is the only message the people we touch will ever hear of them. They will not hear this in their churches, and I would be most happy if I had to stand corrected. If you talk about these truths and say you believe them, it will not likely change anything. When you practice what you preach, now the dam breaks, and you suffer.

The support most sinning Christians get from most professing Christians is enough to drown out the message you are giving, but it is, it seems to me, their only hope of ever realizing this truth.

Don't grow weary. If others live godly lives but fail in this area, don't withdraw from them, unless there is a valid reason for doing so. Be patient. Don't give up. Don't get frustrated. Be kind. Point them to the Scriptures. Open the Bible and say, "What do you think this means?" We may not see a change in our time. Truth regarding this matter may be drowned out altogether. Things may not even change before the Lord returns. But our obedience to the Word of God should not depend on the outcome. It should depend on what the Bible says.

CONCL: So we conclude. Pastor Daryl's message last week was what we need to keep focused on. Paul says in Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." For those who obey the Scriptures regardless of the cost, the glory is not here, it is coming.

A.W. Tozer, that great preacher of by gone years said something like this: There is a question that every denomination, every church, every church board, every church member, every evangelist, every Christian has to answer at some time. And I quote him now, "The question is this: Shall we modify the truth in doctrine or practice to gain more adherents? Or shall we preserve the truth in doctrine and practice and take the consequences?"

May I ask us as a church, what shall we do? May I ask all who listen to this message, what will you do?

Let me close by reading the hymn, "Once to Every Man and Nation."

Once to every man and nation,  
comes the moment to decide,  
in the strife of truth with falsehood,  
for the good or evil side;

In the matter we are speaking of, some of you have already chosen what you will do. Some listening to this message may now have this decision before them. If you have listened to this message, you will make a decision, but which one will it be? In the strife of truth with falsehood, which side will you take?

We go on in the hymn:

some great cause, some great decision,  
offering each the bloom or blight,  
and the choice goes by forever,  
'twixt that darkness and that light.

Then to side with truth is noble,  
when we share her wretched crust,  
ere her cause bring fame and profit,  
and 'tis prosperous to be just;

When the truth under consideration is not being practiced, it is noble to stand with the truth alone. It takes a brave Christian to share the wretched crust of truth. Others hate it. Others deride it. Others debate it. Others slander you, reject you or malign you, but you say with Martin Luther when he stood before a room full of Catholic Cardinals and bishops: "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. So God help me."

When once that despised truth becomes accepted by the majority, and then you also side with it, who now knows where you really stand?

We go on in the hymn:

then it is the brave man chooses  
while the coward stands aside,  
till the multitude make virtue  
of the faith they had denied.

The brave man takes his stand while the truth is rejected by the crowd. The coward, well, he may not outright reject the truth, but he will stand aside. And then as time goes by, by and by, it may be that the truth begins to take a hold because of the brave

few. And then, when the multitude speaks up for the truth, do you know what happens? Nobody says, "These people were right and we were wrong." They go along as if they always believed this truth.

We go on in the hymn:

By the light of burning martyrs,  
Christ, thy bleeding feet we track,  
toiling up new Calvaries ever  
with the cross that turns not back;  
new occasions teach new duties,  
ancient values test our youth;  
they must upward still and onward,  
who would keep abreast of truth.

What is this writer saying? There are always new Calvaries before us. We meet things that we have not met in the same way before. And these new places are new Calvaries; that is new places to die, new truths attacked that need to be stood on.

We go on:

Though the cause of evil prosper,  
yet the truth alone is strong;  
though her portion be the scaffold,  
and upon the throne be wrong;

It is amazing how evil prospers. It is the mystery of iniquity. In our topic, if you take a biblical stand you will meet the devil. Evil prospers even among so-called believers. Jesus Christ and the Apostles, what did they face? Fierce unbelievers? Well, maybe a few. Mostly they faced professing believers. Menno Simons, Martyn Luther, George Blaurock, what did these men face? Fierce unbelievers? No, a professing church. This professing church had churches world-wide. They used the Bible to burn the Christian. But I have been amazed at how strong truth is. On this issue we addressed this morning, evil prospers. Truth may make it onto the scaffold, but on the throne sits that which is wrong.

We go to the last few lines:

yet that scaffold sways the future,

and behind the dim unknown,  
standeth God within the shadow,  
keeping watch above his own.

I ask you, brother sister, how much can you take? How long will you stand, or will you stand? It may be that this truth will never even make the scaffold, but truth it still is. The truth refuses to change.

And to add what Pastor Daryl spoke of last Sunday, the glory which will someday be revealed will not be worth putting on the balances with the pain that the true Christian must endure if he will stand on truth. Lift up those feeble hands. Straighten out those crooked knees. You have faced nothing yet our Lord did not face, nor have you faced anything yet which we were nor promised if we entered the path of truth.

And in closing, I would encourage us to take some time today. If you are listening on-line or listen in the future, the day you listen to this, go by yourself somewhere, and decide if you will obey the Lord in this area of holiness. And for those who obey these Scriptures, commit yourself before the Lord to maintain your stand regardless of the price. Expect no rewards here on earth. Pin your focus on the future.