

A Human Weakness

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 November 1982

Preacher: Harry Robinson

[0 : 00] Some of you may not know the Reverend Singh Chuan Eng, who is the rector of St. Paul's Church in Singapore and who has come to study at Regent College for a year.

We've been able to sort of co-opt him into helping us during the year that he's here studying. So if you haven't met Singh Chuan and his wife and son, I hope that you will.

They came in quietly through the summer, and perhaps a lot of you missed getting to know him, so I hope you will get to know him. I asked him this morning particularly to lead us in prayer for that part of the world in which he lives and in which he has worked, and I'm grateful for his participation in this service.

I want to tell you what the answer to the current recession is, now that you have got caught even gentry.

I want to tell you that I mean it. It's a whole, it's totally a matter of logging. You know that when the trees are cut and they come crashing down and these great big machines pick them up, strip them, and drop them into the river, and the river carries them out to the sea and they're put in wraps and brought to the sawmill, and there they are cut up and go to various parts of the world, that you know that if that all started to happen again in British Columbia, that our problems would be solved.

[1 : 40] Well, Jesus talks about logging too. Turn, if you will, to page 6. Matthew, page 6 in the New Testament section of the Bible, Matthew chapter 7.

And verse 3, where in the midst of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own?

For how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite.

First take the log out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. Now, there's basically just two very simple questions there.

Questions that you're asked to think about. And it's the questions that lead you into the very depth of what human nature is all about. Jesus says to us, very simply and directly, Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, and you don't see the log that is in your own?

[3 : 15] Why? We all do it. There's no question about it. It's something that is part of human nature. And Jesus puts his finger right on the reality of our human nature when he asks us that question.

Why is it important and intriguing to us to see flaws in other people? It's possible that they should be so famous as to have them written up in the papers.

Why do we do that? Why do we do that? Why do we do that? Why do we do that?

Why do we do that? What is there about human nature that compels us to do it? Why, when you husbands look at your wives, do you see the speck and miss the law?

Why does human nature behave in that way?

[4 : 24] What's wrong with it? Why do you see the speck and miss the law? Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, and don't see the law that is in your brother's eye, and don't see the law that is in your brother's eye? Why do you see the speck and miss the law? Why do you see the speck and miss the law?

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, and don't see the law that is in your eye?

Why do you see the speck and miss the same-see the speck and, don't see it. Jesus is putting his finger right on the heart of the human problem.

And it happens again and again. In a million different circumstances, in all our lives, we do it. You see the contrast is there, because the thing which is almost so small that you can't see it, you manage to see.

so big that you can't miss it, you ignore altogether. And so Jesus gives you that question and says, think about it. Why does it happen that way?

[5 : 39] The difficulty, of course, is that it's so accepted that it does happen that way that we don't bother feeling badly about it. That's just the way we are.

But we don't see the amazing contradiction that lies at the heart of each one of us because that's true, that we can see the speck in our brother's eye and can't see the log in our own.

Question number one, you can contemplate that from morning till noon each day. The second question we'll do from noon till midnight each day, and that's this question.

It says, how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye when there is the log in your own eye? Question number two.

One has to do with the way we think about our brother. The other has to do with the way we relate to him. This too is universal.

[6 : 43] We so much desire to help people with their problems, which we see so clearly. We have such a grasp on their problems.

We can see what they need to do. We can see how they should do it. We can see everything about it. It's right there in front of us, and we could correct it in a matter of minutes.

If only they would let us. We could do it so quickly and so easily. Wouldn't the world be a better place if only they would let us do it?

Jesus says, right? Why do you have such a strong desire to do it? And yet you have no desire to have the log in your own eye.

Now, if there was a picture of the perversity of human nature, it comes clearly into focus. When you think about those two questions, you begin to know all about yourself.

[7 : 53] Why do you want to take this back out of your brother's eyes? It's in effect, this question. Why do you want to take God's place in somebody else's life when you won't give God his rightful place in your life?

You know how those two questions end up in Jesus' sermon? He says, watch for it now, you hypocrite.

That's what he says to you. Now, a hypocrite is, this is the only place, by the way, in the whole of the New Testament where hypocrite is in the singular form.

It points to an individual and says, you hypocrite. Then he says that what a hypocrite means is that you have the appearance of religion, but you are a source of death and corruption.

This business of seeing the speck in another person's eyes, indeed of wanting to move in and take it out, has the appearance of religion. And yet, it's death and corruption because it doesn't bring us to the heart of the heart of the Lord.

[9 : 22] Now, question. There's a definition of a hypocrite in your prayer book, which Cannon Robinson read to us this morning.

If you want to turn to it, I'll show it to you. It's on page four. And it says, in line four of that exhortation, that we should not disassemble nor clothe before God our manifold sins and wickedness.

In other words, what the word disassemble means is sort of like playing a shell game with God, you know, that you try and confuse him as to where the source of the problem is.

You keep him guessing as to whether you're really good or really bad. And you keep disassembling, making things appear to be one thing when they are in fact another.

Or else you try and cloak them or hide them altogether. You don't want to acknowledge them. Now that's what happens as a result of hypocrisy.

[10 : 41] That you establish a completely deceptive relationship to God. And you reinforce that relationship, God tells us, by saying, why do you do this?

Why do you behave in this extraordinary way? It's totally illogical if you think of it. And yet we all do. Well, this is part of that sermon which talks about blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.

And what does it mean to be poor in spirit? But to come to the place where you recognize that the thing that most needs to be done is the log in your own eye needs to be dealt with.

Then you begin to discover something radically revolutionary about the Christian faith. Do you think the Christian faith is running around spotting specks in other people's eyes and then offering to help them with it?

You are sadly mistaken. That is corruption and death. You want to know what Christian faith is about, what poverty of spirit is about.

[12 : 11] You want to know what righteousness that exceeds the righteousness that describes in Pharisees is about it's about the law and the logging operation that's required to get it out.

You see how terribly crippled we could be as a congregation because of this kind of hypocrisy?

would mean that there would be inflation, there would be recession, there would be all sorts of those problems spiritually so that as a church, though we have all the outward form of it, nothing's happening.

No business is being done. No transactions are being affected. No money is changing hands. Nothing is happening among us spiritually because of this.

There is literally a kind of log jam that damns the river of the flowing of the grace of God and something has got to break that log jam so that the grace of God can move freely among us and between us and the whole process of being the church of Jesus Christ can begin.

[13 : 38] We can be enhanced, be developed. That's what Christ is saying. You see, what he asks us to do here, instead of this disassembling and cloaking and making things appear to be what they are not, he says, the thing that you have to do is to confess with a humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart the end that you may obtain forgiveness that the log may be removed by his infinite goodness and mercy.

You say, Lord, all right, deal with the log in my life. You see, that really is, I must say to you, it's a crucifying experience because you are asking Christ to deal with you at the level where the whole of your life, and I feel badly talking about you because I know that I'm talking to me too, but I'm talking to all of us, that the whole of our life is in a sense corrupt and rendered totally ineffectual by the fact that we go on seeing the speck and missing the law.

We even say, I'll help you with that and will not allow God to do what he wants in our lives, to be God to somebody else, but not to allow God into our own lives to do what he wants to do.

That's why it's a crucifying experience to come to the place where you say to the Lord Jesus Christ, I want to deal with the log in my own life.

Now that, I think, is very harmful and very difficult and absolutely essential to really understand the revolutionary nature of the Sermon on the Mount, to really come to grips with it.

[16 : 01] And I think it's so essential to our life as a congregation that I don't think we can exist very long apart from it. The economy stagnates in recession, so as a spiritual community, we stagnate in the spiritual recession when all our religion never gets beyond spotting the speck in another person's eye and offering magnificently to help him with it and not to allow Christ to deal with the log that is in our own eye.

Well, that's the kind of ministry that I think has to be at the heart of our lives.

Even as Jesus says, you hypocrite in the singular, so I think he's saying to us individually that we have to deal with this.

We have to face the crucifying experience that we are meant to be crucified with Christ. Unless we die with him, we don't live with him.

I think to have the log removed is a death-like experience. I really do. So much is our life structured around seeing in 3D technicolor on a large screen the insignificant failures of others and then putting the telescope backwards to look at ourselves and our own problems.

[17 : 55] And I see this as this is our stewardship Sunday. And I don't know what to say to you on the stewardship Sunday. that there are probably thousands or more people that are related in one way or another to this congregation.

If you want to know in light of this passage what's wrong with our church, take yourself and multiply by a thousand things you would get ahead. And we want to address that problem in ourselves.

We want Christ to address it in us. I don't see that we can escape the consequences of this and of looking to the fact that what we would like to see happen is Christ meet us in this area.

And we be given the grace and faith to allow him to deal with the log in our own eyes. Come to terms with that. To recognize that in coming to terms with that, then the whole thing begins to make sense.

Everybody else begins to make sense. People are seen in an entirely different way. The whole structure, fellowship of the parish is seen in an entirely different way.

[19 : 30] That's great. God, we ask that you will give us grace to ask these questions of ourselves.

Why are we so able to see the speck in our brother's eye and not to see the log in our eye? Why are we so willing to help him deal with that speck in his eye, so unwilling to deal with the log in our eye?

Help us to think about these questions until we recognize that this label of hypocrisy, death, of death, covered up by seeming good, which is in fact corrupt.

We may see that reality in our lives, that we may be given grace to allow you to deal with it. We may be willing to be crucified with Christ, which you have called us to.

anything that that may mean for any of us. Grant this, we ask, in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.

[21 : 05] It came everyone whose heart stirred him up, and everyone whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering. Hymn number 541.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[25 : 14] light enough. Amen.

that heaven and the earth is thine, for all things come of thee, and of thine own will be given thee. Thank you.

Thank you. I am the God who has promised to hear the petitions of them that ask in thy Son's name. We betheak thee mercifully to incline our ears, as we have now made our prayers and suffocations unto thee, to grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to thy will, we may effectively be obtained, the relief of our necessity and the setting for thy glory, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The blessing of God Almighty, Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, may continue to be able to receive all of you. Thank you. Thank you.

Good morning, everybody.

[27 : 57] This beautiful, sunny, warm morning. It's nice to see you all. Especially, we should welcome back Cannon Robinson, who's been away for a few months.

Nice to have you back with us. Pat Patterson's away for a week's holiday. Well, a deserved holiday. Those of you that brought winter boots for the Polish people, would you please leave them at the back?

The church will pick them up and make sure they're looked after. The young people of our parish, 30 to 40 of them, are up at Camp Chehalis this weekend.

And please pray they have a safe journey home this afternoon. Would you, all of you, please stay for coffee after the service in the North Lounge?

Thank you. I turn you over to, Herb Hansen has a few things to say. Thank you, Ken. Originally, after this service, this being Stewardship Sunday, we had planned about 100 to 120 visitors.

[29 : 09] We'd be having a luncheon and then commence a one-week visitation, starting today, to visit each of the parishes on our parish list. The job would have been about five visits each, and the job would have been shared by many and like both.

140 letters of inviting visitors were sent out, received about 33 who replied, and for very good reasons, suggested they were not going to be able to make the visit.

Another 23 agreed to visit five homes each. As a result, we didn't hear from the others, by the way. As a result, we decided we were going to, in order to have an effective stewardship campaign, we're going to have to change our plans.

One of the alternatives, clearly, was to mail out one of the packages, but that would have cost us the neighborhood of \$300 to have this envelope delivered.

So we selected the alternative. And that alternative is that these envelopes have been grouped in bundles of five. We would like each of the congregation here on their way home to church for this afternoon to drop off five envelopes to people who are on our parish rolls.

[30 : 29] They happen to be arranged in postal code sequence, so the likelihood of them being within one block, or at most two, is very high. It's simply a matter of knocking on the door. I'm from St. John's, and I've been asked to deliver this.

The contents inside the envelopes, which we said in here sealed, are self-explanatory, so there needn't be any in a book. You are yet to understand that.

We are void, you may be nuevo, although to help people could reproduce this ■■■- La importation of another stops in your hearts. The number stops from the refugees that aren'tohada, is nem polygraphic white matters.

not an omnipotence which operates from one to twoith, or other contaminants■■■ of the refugees to another away- Namely Bend Gesellschaft