

The Conquering of the Disciple

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- [0:00] Before last, we took up the topic of the great inner conflict of the disciple, a fierce struggle between the cravings of our insatiable flesh and the indwelling Holy Spirit, emphasizing the need for an ongoing crucifying of the flesh and a walking in the steps of the Spirit.
- And since that talk, some of you have approached me and asked if I might not say a little bit more on this vital topic, moving from the forest to the trees and indeed down into the individual weeds, getting really, really practical.
- So that's my hope this morning, to take up this crucial topic of sin slaying and try to thicken the description of the path to victory as concretely as possible.
- And this is an arena, or at least it can be, of great frustration and even anguish for many Christians.
- They attempt to slay their sin, but never seem to succeed at it. I wonder if you've heard of Samuel Johnson.
- [1:23] He was, here's some excerpts from his prayer journal. He was a professing Christian, and it starts in 1738.
- That's at least as early as I've found some of these references. He writes in 1738, Oh Lord, enable me to redeem the time which I have spent in sloth.
- But you keep working through his dictionary, and 20 years later, you still see an entry like, Oh mighty God, enable me to shake off sloth and redeem the time misspent in idleness and sin by a diligent application of the days yet remaining.
- Of course, two years later, enable me, Lord, to shake off idleness and sloth. Then two years later, I have resolved to resolve till I am afraid to resolve again.
- Let me shake off sloth. A few years later, my indolence since my last reception of the Lord's Supper has sunk into grosser sluggishness.
- [2:30] My purpose is from this time to avoid idleness and sloth and to rise early. Five months later, resolved to rise early, not later than 6 a.m. if I can.
- A year later, I purpose to rise at 8 a.m. Because though I cannot rise early, it will be much earlier than I now rise, for I often lie in my bed until 2 p.m.
- And several years later, still, I am not yet in the state to form any resolutions. I propose, I purpose, and I hope to rise early in the morning at 8 a.m.
- And by degrees, eventually at 6 a.m. Then 1775, okay, six years after that.
- When I look back upon my resolutions of improvement and my amendments which year after year have been made and broken, why do I yet try to resolve again?
- [3:35] I try because reformation is necessary and despair is criminal. Therefore, resolved, rise at 8 a.m. Then a couple of years, several years after that, I will not despair.
- Help me. Help me, oh my God. Resolved, rise at 8 a.m. Or earlier to avoid idleness. And this is just a few years. This is 44 years after his first entry about sloth and just a few years before his death.

Okay? So, a familiar frustration? An ineffectual fight against sin. What can we do? Is there any hope?

Will our battle against our sin be like Samuel Johnson's effort against sloth and just kind of drag on more and more resolutions? What is the path of promised victory?

That's what we want to look into. And to lead us into that sought-out territory, there is a pivotal principle the Apostle gives us in Romans 8.13, where Paul writes, If by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

[5 : 08] If by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. And this is where we want to begin to kind of pull on the threads of sin slaying.

And let's not fail to notice, in passing, the stakes in this matter. Are they not remarkably high? None other than life and death are in the balance here.

As the full statement of the Apostle reads, Romans 8.13, If you live according to the flesh, you will die.

But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. As John Owen, Puritan John Owen famously put it in lapidary succinctness, Be killing sin, or sin will assuredly be killing you.

So if we are to live, we must be putting to death the deeds of the body. Incidentally, by deeds of the body, Paul means the deeds of the flesh.

[6 : 25] It's clear from the parallelism of this verse that we're looking at. That is, the stuff in us that comes out of us when we are acting out of hostility toward God, or in subordination to him, or unbelief toward him.

That's what we mean by the flesh, or the deeds of the body. In a word, sin. Okay? All that falls foul, or falls short, of the perfect humanity set forth in Christ.

So that's the target of our zealous efforts at extirpation. And extirpation, it must be put to death, it says.

Not simply wound, or periodically prune. Just a little off the top, please. That should be sufficient. No, we need to put it to death. The axe must be laid at the root of the tree.

And for if we let our flesh prevail, what we think, feel, and do, be shaped decisively by our flesh, what we think, feel, and do, apart from or against God, we will die.

[7 : 38] We will die. So, the vital question becomes, how do we manage to put to death the deeds of the body? And notice how, in our text, how it emphasizes the need to battle this flesh in a particular way.

In a particular way. Do you notice that? If by the spirit, you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

So this is critical. This is critical. The Christian is not simply one who tries to put to death the deeds of the body. Lots of unbelievers do this too.

Everyone from dieters to ascetics perform all kinds of acts of self-denial against their acts of the body.

Therapies and self-help manuals decant multiple methods of doing this. And there's a whole new spate of them. Every new year they come out to try to assist us in getting control over our habits and these sorts of things.

[8 : 46] Self-disciplined, kind of Ben Franklin types abound, armed with all kinds of resolutions for self-improvement, just like Samuel Johnson. All these resolutions for self-improvement.

And again, neither does just being a Christian guarantee that we will go about seeking to put to death the flesh in the right or effectual way.

And often our efforts can feel like they're amounting to just a miserable failure. Remember Samuel Johnson's unavailing efforts here.

So, the apostle is adamant here, it must be by the spirit that we do the killing.

No other way is effectual. So our question naturally becomes, how is this done? What does putting to death the deeds of the spirit by the spirit mean?

[9:48] What does that mean? Now, the apostle is not quite as explicit here as we might wish that he were, but we're not without resort. For the context that we have, that this verse is in, gives us a good clue as to what he means.

For he's just explained, same chapter, verse five, so Romans eight, five, those according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit.

Okay, verse five. So it's likely that the way we put to death the flesh by the spirit is by setting our minds on the things of the spirit.

Okay? And if this is so, then the question becomes, what are the things of the spirit? What are the things of the spirit? Well, without wanting to unduly narrow the identification, it is interesting that there is one place in the New Testament where the exact phrase occurs, and it's again from Paul's pen, 1 Corinthians 2, 14.

Okay? I'll read that. 1 Corinthians 2, 14. The natural person does not accept the things of the spirit for they are folly to him.

[11:15] He is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. And in the context, what he is talking about here, I should read it from verse 12. Now, we have received not a spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God that we might understand the things freely given to us by God.

And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the spirit interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. And the natural person does not accept these things of the spirit.

So, what are the things of the spirit here? Well, the words, the words taught by the Holy Spirit given to Paul to teach us in his, in the New Testament writings.

In other words, the apostolic words that we now have in the apostolic writings. The scripture. The voice of the spirit heard through the inspired words, apostolic words that we now have in the scripture.

Okay, so, so, I want to suggest that to set our minds on the things of the spirit certainly involves setting them on the word of God as we now have it in our Bibles.

[12:30] So, this is my central claim and I'm quite confident that we are in solid, on solid ground here. Incidentally, a corroborative piece of evidence that we have made a right identification, things of the spirit, the word of God, is in Paul's discussion in Ephesians 6 of the whole armor of God.

You remember that? Okay, and if you look down through that whole armor of God, there's only one piece of that armor with which you can kill.

What is that? Do you remember? Well, the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. Okay, the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.

Okay, so, and as further and decisive support for this contention, does not Jesus do exactly this?

When he is faced with temptation, remember you get in Luke 4, different places in the Gospels, when he's faced with temptation by Satan coming to him, how does he respond to that?

[13:45] He says no, but he quotes scripture. That's right, he actually comes back with scripture and he sets his mind on, the things of the spirit which is the word of God, the scriptures.

That's exactly how he does it. So, I want to suggest that we put to death the deeds of the body by the spirit, okay, by means of the spirit, by taking our minds and setting our minds firmly on the word of God.

Okay, so it's the word of God that is the instrument in killing our sin as we set our minds upon it. The word is the means by which the vigorous action of the spirit is released.

We set our minds upon it. That's what we need to do. So, how does this practically work itself out? I find Paul's remarks in Galatians to be really helpful in filling this out.

Particularly in Galatians 3, about verse 5, which gets at what we do, what we do, such that the Holy Spirit is at work.

[15:11] Okay, and Paul is asking in Galatians, in Galatians 3, 5, he's asking them, now think back, Galatians, when the spirit of God came to you and how did the spirit work effectually in you?

Okay, and then he asks them a question. He says, does he who supplies the spirit to you and work miracles among you, does he do so through works of the law or by hearing with faith or by hearing with faith?

So he's asking the Galatians, now remember, how is this miracle working power of the spirit unleashed in your lives? How did that work? Two options.

Was it trying to make things happen by performing the works of the law, just obeying commands? Was that how it happened? Gong, wrong answer, thank you for playing, no, no, second answer, or by hearing with faith?

Hearing with faith. Bingo, right answer, you win. So, and incidentally, this is one of the grand points of the whole epistle of Galatians, that you are actually sanctified, you are made progressively holy by the same means and principle by which you were justified.

[16:37] Originally, when you came to Christ, you heard a wonderful promise and you believed in that promise and you were justified. And you know what? It's just the same when it comes to sanctification.

You have a promise and you set your mind on that promise and you believe that promise, you ingress that promise and you will be sanctified. You are sanctified in the same way in which you are justified.

And that's Galatians in a nutshell. So, that's what he's saying. And notice, notice how Paul doesn't just say by faith.

By faith. He adds something else. Notice, hearing. Okay? Hearing by faith. Okay?

So, why does he add hearing there? How does accenting hearing make a difference? Well, because the Spirit is supplied by our hearing.

[17:41] He works his miracles in our hearing. Okay? And this is vital. If you want the Spirit released to work with power, you need to hear the Word and believe it.

Okay? Hear the Word and believe it. So, when you are battling with sin, what is your first act in this fray? Okay?

Listen. That's your first act. Listen. Hear something. Get something into your ear.

Okay? Martin Luther used to say, the ear is the Christian's organ. The ear is the Christian organ. What do you mean by that? Not seeing a crucifix?

Isn't the eye? No! It's the ear. Okay? We need to hear. So, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Okay? So, don't minimize the importance of hearing.

[18:47] Okay? And by hearing, I'm not saying necessarily it has to be acoustic out loud. Just like when you read a book, you're actually hearing it in your mind, aren't you?

You're hearing it acoustic. Ambrose used to do this. Almost all reading used to be out loud. It used to be acoustic. So, anybody that would read silently like we do was a marvel. And Bishop Ambrose was one of those.

And people used to come and actually just watch him because his mouth would be moving, but they wouldn't hear anything. But he was hearing something. Okay? When you read it, you hear it.

So, that's what we mean here. So, I need to hear it, even if it's an inner hearing. So, don't just say, oh, when temptation comes, I'm just going to trust God.

I'm just going to trust God. Well, good. But how does that play out concretely? That's still too vague. It's just too vague and amorphous. I need to get a concrete promise about something that he tells me, promise or his character, and trust that concretely.

[19:54] So, how does this play out? How does this play out? Well, when the flesh kindles something seeking to conceive sin in me, how do I try to kill that?

Put it to death. Okay? I need to hear the word and listen to a promise. And that's what energizes the spirit to do his killing work.

Okay, let me give you an example of this. In fact, turn to John 14. Okay, John 14 verse 1. This is a helpful example of this. See, this is precisely what we see Jesus doing for his disciples.

He sees them starting to get anxious. Okay, uh-oh, he's saying something about going away and the anxiety is starting to bubble up and they're about to give themselves over to fear.

Their hearts are about to be troubled. And, uh, what does he tell him? He gives him a promise. Okay, he says, let not your hearts be troubled.

[21:02] Okay, believe in God. Okay, good. But that's still too vague, too concrete. Believe also in me. Okay, I'm the concrete embodiment of God here. Believe in me. Okay, but even that's not quite enough.

He's going to give him something more to hang on to. Notice how he goes to a specific promise. Okay, in my father's house, there are many mansions. If it were not so, I would not have told you.

And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you unto myself. That where I am, there you may be also. So, notice how anxiety is starting to come up.

Okay, whoa, whoa, whoa, no, believe in God, believe in me, focus, me. And here, I'm going to give you a concrete promise and put your trust in this promise.

See, he gets a word of promise into them in their hearing, and then they're able to put their trust in that, and they're able to be at peace, and their heart not be troubled.

[22:04] And this is what we need to do. Okay, if I, oh my goodness, I'm this old now, and I'm not married yet, and I need a spouse, oh my goodness, my life is coming undone, what do you do?

Okay, well, is there some sort of promise that addresses that? You know, Abraham, God, what will you give me? What will you give me? Abraham, I am your exceeding great reward.

I think you need to give me something I, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, you tell me you are my exceeding great reward. Genesis 15. Okay, there's a concrete thing that he says. I hear that, I listen to that.

Okay, okay. Yeah, yeah, there you go, exactly, exactly. I remember dropping Vienna off, my oldest daughter.

She was going to kindergarten, and she was so excited for this, and she was there, everything was all ready, and she was just so happy and excited, and dropped her off. She had her lunch packed, her lunch box, and I picked her up at the end of the day, and she was crying.

[23:16] And, you know, Vienna, what happened? Oh, everybody thought my lunch box was silly. So they made fun of me because I had the wrong lunch box.

I don't know, it didn't have the right logo on or something. And you can see she's about to give in to these soul-sinking thoughts, I'm not loved.

What do we do? As we're driving home, we're just trying to get her hearing some word, you know, and try to put to death those soul-sinking thoughts of I'm not loved.

Zechariah 2.8, you are the apple of my eye. He who touches you touches the apple of my eye. Jeremiah 31, I don't know, three, I have loved you with an everlasting love.

And on and on and on. And you can fill those in. And it just began to lift it up and gave her something concrete. And even for kindergartner, this works.

[24:27] You can do this. You can do this. Scared of getting on a plane? I see a lot of people scared of getting on a plane. Oh my goodness. What if it goes down?

Oh, there's just a lot of empty air between me and the ground. Deuteronomy 33, 27. Underneath me are the everlasting arms.

What do I need to do? I need to tell myself that. I need to hear myself hear the words underneath are the everlasting arms.

fear not. I am with you. Be not dismayed. I am your God. I will help you. I will uphold you by my victorious right hand.

I will uphold you. I trust in those promises and a peace begins to distill into my heart.

[25:27] And that sin that's about to conceive of anxiety is put to death by means of the spirit. About to leave.

I should have tried this one. About to leave home and head out for college. I think uh-oh. Whoa.

Leave my father's household. I am with you and we'll watch over you wherever you go. Genesis 24 15. You are the God of my fathers.

He will be with me in the next generation. You slant with concrete promises. And even the little ridiculous things.

I'm late. Oh my goodness. I'm oh there are I'm not going to make it to study school in time. There are roadblocks that are just going up. There's a race. I'm supposed to tell you what am I going to do? Oh no.

[26:30] I'm getting farther away. I'm getting farther away. Whoa. The Lord reigns. Let the earth rejoice.

I can't control this but he is in control. He reigns. I can rejoice. I can rejoice. Weary in the are in your labors for others.

Proverbs 11 25. Whoever waters others shall be themselves watered of God.

I can trust you God. If I water I'll just keep watering your garden. I can trust you. You will water me. You'll water me. Are you here?

I'm saying do you come unto me all ye that weary and are heavy laden? I will give you rest. Okay, I'm coming Lord. I'm going to keep pressing in, but I'm going to keep coming. Is your lot one of tribulation, maybe leading to self-pity and discouragement?

- [28:04] Well, kill it with this word. I had a chance to share it this morning with someone who was just starting to sink. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Jesus says, in this world, you shall have much tribulation.
- Yep, you got that right. Your assessment is sound, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world. This won't be the last chapter.
- He's overcome the world, so we can be of good cheer. So again, you get the concrete promise, and you hang on to that, and you just ring out its sweetness, and that's how the uprising of the flesh will be put to death.
- Death. Afraid of dying? Fear of death? Again, I've done this many times, not too many times, but several times, right as a person's dying.
- It is fear, you know. Hey, remember, Jesus says, John 11, I am the resurrection and the life.
- [29:14] Whoever believes in me, even though they die like everyone else, yet they will live again. Do you believe this? Then you're at rest.
- Spurgeon, this morning, did anybody read morning by morning? Spurgeon, this morning? Affliction. And the lovely verse was, I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction.
- Isaiah 48, 10. As you hear that, I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction, does that not distill like a soft, cold shower on those flames of affliction, assuaging the flurry.
- It's like an asbestos armor against the heat of affliction. Yeah, I might be afflicted, sure, but I have chosen of God.
- He's chosen me. He's chosen me. Death, too. When you pass through the waters, I always think of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and crossing that river.
- [30:35] when you pass through the waters, I will be with you. And through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. Isaiah 43, 2.
- You hear that, even in that last hour, and that trembling hand will be stilled, because you're feeling him holding it. Hard time giving up ill-gotten gain.
- This is oh, gee, you know, but if I come clean and I just tell him how much I really made, that I won't have this money anymore.
- I have so many to use this money and nobody's going to find out. I'm feeling that the Lord's convicting me, but what a loss this would be. Remember God's words to Amaziah.
- Remember King Amaziah. He's trying to get himself out of his problems, so he's hired all these Egyptian mercenaries. Remember? And then the prophet comes and says, don't trust the Egyptian mercenaries. But I've already, just tell him to go home.
- [31:42] Tell him to go home. But he says, oh, but I've already paid him a thousand talents. I don't want that, I don't want to have loss of all that money. Remember what the prophet tells him in 2 Chronicles 25, 9?
- the Lord is able to give you so much more than that. So much more than that. That verse has helped me to put to death the inducement of flesh to, well, no, no, I just got to hang on to this.
- No, it's ill-gotten. No. The Lord is able to give you so much more. Don't worry about that loss. Don't worry about that loss.
- And that's just, you know, hearing that and trusting it, it's just chemo on just the cancer of the flesh. Lust enticing you away.
- Yeah. Matthew 5a says, the pure in heart shall see God. I want to see God. Do I want to cloud my eyes so I can't see God well?
- [32:59] I don't want that. No. And then you turn away. Poll of pornography.

Rejoice. Proverbs 5, 18, 19. Rejoice in the wife of your youth. Let her breasts satisfy you and fill you with delight at all times.

I don't want to lose my capacity to have my wife satisfy me sexually. So I'm not, I'm not going to create some sort of composite fantasy that's not going to allow me to be delightfully satisfied in my wife.

you walk away. Don't think you can face tomorrow?

Too many troubles. I just can't make it. It's just overwhelming. You and I often will wake up and we'll kind of grab each other's heads in the morning. At night, usually the way we've gone to bed is, we'll just say, sufficient thereof is the evil of each day.

[34:15] There's been a lot today. Guess what? It's done, it's okay. We're just going to close our eyes and it's sufficient. And then we wake up in the morning, clasp our hands and say, okay, remember, Lamentations 3, before we even think of our checklist, before we think of what we got to do, what we're facing today, the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

His mercies never come to an end. They are new. new. Every morning. Every morning. Okay, we got a new morning.

Who knows what we're going to face. But one thing we know, we've got new mercies to meet us for these new challenges. And you believe that promise, you've heard it, we say it to each other, we hear it, and then you're ready to go.

You leap out of bed and you lean in looking for those new mercies. So this is what it means to put to death the deeds of the body by the spirit, the deeds of the flesh by the spirit.

What's going on when we meet our flesh's blandishments with scriptural truth? death? What's happening there?

[35:35] Well, we're engaging in a battle of stories. A battle of stories. You see, because the flesh, the flesh, when it kind of rears its head, it's telling us a story.

It's trying to bring us into its story. And the story that it's trying to tell us is, sin will satisfy you.

this really is your heart's desire. And it's just an isolated indulgence. It's contained.

It won't spill over into anything else and mess up your life, create any ripples. It won't lead to anything seriously harmful. Oh, and it's so worth it.

We're being given a story and urged to come and live within the story that our flesh is telling us. And stories have to be met with stories.

[36:46] And the scriptures give us a very different story. That any life worth the name of life is to be had in Christ Christ and Christ alone.

That God is actually the fountain of living water. And these other things, they're cisterns. And they're broken cisterns that can't even hold water.

Sin is a murderer. whisper. And it whispers softly, only that it can draw us near enough to stab us fatally.

Its pleasures are poisoned. When is it ever delivered on its promises? Oh, it promises big.

When is it ever delivered on those promises? Sin is a liar from the beginning. It courts me in order to enslave me.

[37:58] Its steps go down to death. No, I don't want to live in that story. Not the one it offers.

I see the face behind the incitement. And it's the face of the enemy of my soul. Get ye behind me, Satan.

See, that's the story that the Bible is telling us. And when we meet sin with scripture, we're meeting story with story.

And if we encounter sin solicitations and the alluring story that it does tell us, without our own story that we're living in, we'll likely succumb.

It's kind of like an actor that's torn from her drama and she has no storyline to guide her or govern her. Then she's just adrift. and she'll just get sucked into a different story.

[39 : 08] Well, when we understand this dynamic, an implication becomes pretty forcefully clear, does it not? Are we living within the biblical story?

Do we know the drama in which we are to perform our part? do we find that drama compelling? Is our consciousness steeped in that drama, in that story?

Are we steeped in the story? And to respond to sin's suggestions with scripture isn't simply to quote some isolated atomistic Bible verse, like we're reading from a fortune cookie.

it is to apply rather a piece of the rich fabric of that story. And with really the entire weave of that story behind it.

To speak scripture in this way is multum and parvo. It's just much and very little compass. promise. So the scripture that we hear, the promise that we hear, is just bringing a whole world view, isn't it?

[40 : 30] The whole story. But we want to have the portal, the gateway, be some concrete scripture. scripture. Okay? So I ask, are we living within the biblical story?

Are we, as we seek to grow in it, finding it more and more compelling, more and more complete? It accounts for everything. More and more real.

More and more beautiful. Are we more and more confident from tried experience, that it always keeps its promises?

It really is true. Sweeter than honey. For it is the expression of the one who is altogether beautiful, and who alone has the words of eternal life.

And another cheering reality, this scripture, or sword of the spirit method of slaying sin, is to do so, we said, by means of the spirit, and he, the spirit, is undertaking with us.

[41 : 53] So we're not alone in this endeavor. For part of the spirit's work is to bring the words of scripture to our minds.

God's is also doing that. Because I don't know about you, but I think, uh-oh, I might not remember scripture. I don't have a very good memory. I don't know. No, no, no, no, no, but you're not alone here.

The spirit is going to help do just what is needed and bring the scriptures to mind. you remember John 14, 26, Jesus is telling his disciples and reassuring them, the Holy Spirit will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

And I know that that's a reference to the apostles, but it has broader application to all of us disciples. This is something that the spirit will do. John Owen writes, Christ has said many things, things gracious and heavenly to his disciples.

He had given them many rich and precious promises to uphold their hearts, but knowing full well how ready they were to forget and to let slip the things that were spoken, and how coldly his promises would come into their assistance when retained only in their natural faculties, and made use of by their own strength.

[43 : 15] To obviate these evils, to put away these evils, Jesus tells them that this work he committed to the charge of another who will come, who will do it to the great purpose, the comforter who is in you.

He shall bring to remembrance and apply to your souls the things that I have spoken, the promises that I have made, which will be unto you as life from the dead.

See that? So that's going to be the Spirit's work to help out here. The Spirit brings these promises of the Word to our minds. And then not only that, but also the Spirit works upon our affections so we will savor these promises, that they will appear to us sweet, surpassingly sweet, and we will say, yes, this is what I need.

This is worth trusting in. The Spirit causes us to lay great stock in these promises, to treasure them, delight in them, and to experience them as food for our souls.

We may have read the promises a hundred times before, but when the Spirit comes and enlivens them, to quote John Owen again, we may have found no more savor in them before than the white of an egg, but when those same promises are brought to remembrance by the Spirit, the Comforter, who is with us, then how sweet they become and how full of life and power they are.

[44 : 59] How often, continues Owen, when the spirits of the saints are ready to faint within them, when straits and perplexities are round about them, that they know not what to do, or whither to apply themselves for help or supportment, doth the Spirit that dwelleth in them bring to mind some seasonable, suitable promise of Christ that bears them up quite above their difficulty and distractions, opening such a new spring of life and consolation to their souls.

as that they who but now stooped, yea, were almost bowed down to the ground, do stand upright and feel no weight or burden at all.

So the Spirit takes the promises and makes them become with their promise or glorious in our eyes. And by its glory or weightiness in our souls, that's what prevails to slay our sins, to slay our flesh.

So this then is how we by the Spirit put to death the flesh. We set our minds on the things of the Spirit, which is principally the Word of God and the promises that Christ makes to us.

and behind that promise the person of Christ. This is to slay the flesh by the sword of the Spirit.

[46 : 39] And this Christ-appointed means, which the Spirit energizes, that's what renders effectual this attempt to slay our sins.

And as this is so, okay, we see how critical the role of the Word is in this work of the Spirit. Okay, yes, the Spirit brings the promises to mind, but think about it.

We have to have them in our minds for the Spirit to work upon them. We have to hide them in our hearts that He might be able to bring them out of our store and placard them before our eyes.

We can't just restrict the Spirit's bringing Scripture to us by highway billboards that we happen to pass when we're driving through Amish country in Pennsylvania and somebody wrote a promise on a billboard or maybe some sort of sky writer over Daytona Beach.

sure, the Spirit can use that, but let's not restrict the Spirit bringing Word to us that way. We need to sow a rich store of Word in our hearts, and this is critical for the war on the flesh.

[48 : 05] As David writes, Thy Word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Okay, Psalm 119, verse 11. So, since we wanted to be concrete, let me ask you concretely, what measure might you undertake that the Word of Christ comes to dwell in you richly?

Colossians 3, 16. How will you begin to make your heart a storehouse of the rich, abundant grain of the promises of God to you, that are all yes and amen in Jesus?

Okay, what will you do? Here's a suggestion to Spurgeon has a, you know, some of you know his morning and evening.

We've talked about that morning by morning and evening by evening. He's got another one like that. It's even shorter, just one paragraph each instead of a page each, called Faith's Checkbook.

Okay, and every day he's got another little promise that he gives and a little exposition of that to kind of apply it and help you to trust it and believe it.

[49:23] It's a wonderful little portion to feed on every day. Spurgeon's Checkbook of Faith. A fat portion it is always too. And maybe let the Apostle Paul supply the first pearl.

Okay, we want to have like a necklace of all these promises and kind of string these pearls on the necklace so we always wearing it about our neck and have them at hand. So we'll let Paul supply the first pearl of promise as you string the needed necklace and that promise is this.

If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. You will live.

All right. Well, thank you team. Stop there. And we might have three or four minutes.

Any questions, comments about this? Yes! Chris? My struggle is how do I determine promise versus situational reading in the Bible?

[50:31] For example, it would be ridiculous for me to think the promise of Abraham and the many nations applied to me. Yes! So how do I discern between that?

Excellent question. Yes, yes. So, yes, sometimes they're very specific and contextualized.

Okay? Your wife, Abraham, who is well advanced in years shall give birth to a son. Okay? So sometimes you can see that this is very, very contextually spoken to an individual at a particular time and place.

But the vast majority of promises are simply spoken to the people of God. And the other thing that you can do is you know that the God who has spoken this promise, his character has not changed and his goodwill to his people has not changed.

So I bet you there's some sort of application of this promise to me, even though it wasn't specifically spoken to me. As again, Paul writes, all the promises are yes and amen in Jesus to the people of God now.

[51:50] So you can think, is there some sort of disposition of God that this expresses? That same sort of disposition is true of me.

Okay? He has promised that I will not be killed by an arrow. Okay? I might not be worried that that's how I'm going to lose my life. But does that mean that my life is in his hands and he will protect me?

Yes. And even though that promise has been spoken in terms of maybe a pestilence that stalks by night or an arrow that flies by day or the other way around, you kind of have an intuitive sense that he's watching out for me and he has, he knows the number of days that he has for me even before I live one of them.

so you kind of subtly get to know the language of scripture and how to do the translation work. Sometimes it's hard to give precise rules about how to go about it because it's a language.

How do you give rules for translating a language where there's certain idioms in Japanese? Well, yeah, you just get a feel for the language. So the more you're in scripture, the more you're going to get a feel for the language and how to translate those idioms.

[53:07] But that's a great question. Yeah. O team, I'm seeing that time and if it's correct, we probably better head up. See you, Lord willing, next week and we will continue on.

I haven't touched it, so I couldn't have found it up. I can't carry it. I can't carry it. I can't carry it.