

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Between Two Worlds

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7

TITLE

Fighting For The Soul

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1 Peter 2:11-12



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It's good to see you. I hope you've had a great week, and if you have and you had a Bible, if you want to turn with me to 1 Peter 2. If you are new here with us, we really are glad that you are our guest, and I hope that this time will be encouraging to you. If you are one who is, at this point in your faith journey, simply considering Christ and His claims and what the Bible says, we're really glad you're here, and we pray this time will be not only helpful to you, but that God's going to use this time in His word to actually propel your heart to believe in Christ. That is our hope.

If you've ever asked the question though, "I feel like I'm out of place. How do I live in this world?," 1 Peter is your book, and that's what it's written for. 1 Peter is written by Peter, a man who followed Jesus, knew Jesus and had a low moment in his life. When he was isolated and fearful, he was asked a question, "Aren't you one of His disciples?" and three times in one night, he denied even knowing Christ, his very Savior and Lord. Jesus said that it was going to happen, and He also told him before it happened that after it happens, you're going to repent, and after you repent, I want you to make it your life mission to strengthen the hands of brothers and sisters in Christ.

From that moment, 30 years have passed, and now, it is really difficult to be a Christian in Rome. There's such an enormous amount of suffering that's taking place because of their faith and association with Jesus, that as Christian persecution broke out, many of these believers had to flee for their life to different parts of the Roman Empire, and when they got there, there was confusion as to how to go about living. Peter knew that they were isolated, and isolated, he knew that they were vulnerable, is that without all the support structures, just like he was alone that night and how he gave way, he was fearful. He's concerned about them, so he writes them a letter, and what he really does is he says, "Look, I know that when you trust in Christ, that you became a citizen of heaven, and yet, you are also a citizen here on the earth," and sometimes it's really difficult to balance living in two worlds, two kingdoms, in particular, when those worlds and kingdoms do not value the same things, when virtues in one place are not virtues in the other, when there's a leader in one place and leaders in the other place, and those leaders, they're not in alignment. It can be difficult to know how to live, and that's why he wrote 1 Peter, and so we have made it all the way up to chapter 2 verses 11 and 12, and so we're going to look at...

I promise you though, the last two services, I just almost got into verse 12, okay, so verse 11, it really takes some time, so if you're wondering like, "He's not going to get to verse 12," it's going to happen. It's like sliding it at home right at the very end, okay, and so let me pray for us, okay? Father in heaven, we love You. We thank You that You love us. Thank You for sending Christ to us. Jesus, we thank You for Your sacrifice for us.

Spirit of God, we confess to you that we need You to see the glory of God in the face of Christ. I pray that as we open Your Word, that You would pour Your Spirit out upon us, that we would see and behold. I ask God that as we read Your Word, that we would feel the weight of glory, that we would feel the weight of conviction, that we would feel the weight of forgiveness and the weight of Your presence, and we want to be with You. We want to be near You, and so we draw near to You in worship as we sing and worship, as we open Your Word

and worship, as we listen, as we respond and we think how to apply it to our life, and so would You please speak through weakness and glorify Jesus in this moment. I pray in His name. Amen.

One thing that's true about every one of us is that we all protect our treasures. It's true of everybody, of every culture, every kingdom, everybody protects the treasure. Just a few months ago, there was a mother in Chicago who was dragged 500 yards underneath her car because she refused to let go of the back of the car while the car was being stolen because her little boy was in the backseat. We all protect our treasure. We all become very motivated to protect our treasure.

Every family protects its treasure. Every culture protects its treasures. Every kingdom protects its treasures. Now, one of the challenges that we have as we live in between these two worlds is that we're a part of two different kingdoms that treasure different things, and therefore, sometimes it's difficult to know what we're supposed to protect while we're living here on what's treasured there is not treasured here. The kingdom of heaven, if you know Christ the Savior, the Bible says that, "You're a citizen of heaven, and that's your primary place of loyalty."

The kingdom of heaven, we're told is filled with joys unending, but when the Bible seeks to describe heaven's treasures, really only limits the two, the glory of God in the face of Christ and the souls of man created in the image of Christ. Souls and glory. The glory of God is the greatest treasure of all. Make no mistake when I say that there's more than one. It doesn't mean that those are of equal value or equal substance.

The glory of God is the greatest treasure of all. When you think about pictures, when you think about glorious things, you're going to look at this picture and you're going to see the sun and you're going to see beauty. I want to encourage you, do not make the mistake of thinking of this is the glory of God. It's not. It's like the glory of God.

When the Bible seeks to use descriptions to talk about the glory of God in the face of Christ, it uses a lot of different metaphors, a lot of different images and a lot of different realities. One of those is light. In 1 Peter 2:9, we looked at this last week, he says, "This is what we are, and we've been created so that we can proclaim the excellencies of Him, who called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light," and so oftentimes, the Bible uses the word, things like magnificent light, splendor, regal, royalty. In fact, when you think about the word, light, you turn to the end of the Bible, what you find is there in heaven, there's no sun, and there's no moon, stars. There's no due power. It's not there, and the reason it says is it says because heaven itself is illuminated with the glory of God in the face of Christ, and so there is this greatness within Him that literally emanates from Him, and it just overwhelms people with brilliant light.

Well, the Bible also seeks to describe the glory of God when it comes to character, that God Himself, when you think about characteristics that are noble, excellent, true, praise-worthy, you're talking about God. He's not only the perfection of every good thing, He's the essence of every good thing. In other words, when you

think of life characteristics such as humility, such as mercy, grace, generosity, kindness, love, righteousness, you're not only looking when you see that in God at the perfected form of those things, you're actually viewing the source, the essence of those things. It means that the glory of God means that He's not only loving, He is Love. Then, the Bible seeks to explain to us that the glory of God also represents the fact that God is the Source of all goodness.

In other words, when you think about the goodness of life, breath of life, when you think about the goodness of beauty, the goodness of justice, the goodness of truth, or there is an origin of all of that goodness, and it is God Himself. All beauty, justice, righteousness, it flows out from Him, just like that light, but then, there's one last metaphor that the Bible uses. It's actually the translation of the word, glory, and it's the word weight. Not like I'm waiting at the store for my wife to finish, but I feel the weight. The glory of God is something that we feel.

When it's felt, it feels heavy. There's a weightiness to it, that when you see the glory of God, what happens is it changes. It feels heavy, and so it changes the way that you make decisions. When you see the glory of God, it feels heavy upon you in the way that you speak, how you love people, how you do your work. It changes everything about your life when you have come to the place when you've seen the glory of God.

This is the greatest treasure in all the world. It is the glory of God. Then, we get to the soul of man, and its value is so immense, not only because it's eternal, it's going to live forever, but also because the soul of man is the window through which we see the glory of God, through which we feel the weight of God, through which the heart is told to treasure and love the glory of God. You see, when you think about these two images, like the one is the source and the window is simply the avenue where that source comes into our life. God created us not just with a soul, to be a soul so that we are like a window that can see and can acknowledge and can feel the glory of God as it comes to us, but the reality is, is that sometimes the soul, even among the Christian can be so bruised and battered and boarded up, that people cannot see, that our own lives cannot see the glory of God, and so these two things, they're so treasured within heaven.

They're treasured on the earth, and yet, we live in a world and we live in a culture that has different treasures. You ask people in America today who don't know Christ, "What's the greatest treasures of America?," and they're not going to say the glory of God in the face of Christ and the souls of man. No, engrossed by the treasures of money, and power, and pleasure, and sex, and freedom. One of the defining marks of American culture today is the weightlessness of God. He doesn't matter.

He's inconsequential. His prerogative is treated like a feather on a scale, instead of a bowling ball or a backpack of bricks. His word is like a pebble in the shoe of social progress. It's an irritant. If we could just get rid of the pebble, then we could make such advancements.

He is exchanged. The worship that is due to Him is exchanged and it's pressed and pushed on the created order, Romans 1 tells us. It says that when we become absolutely foolish, it says that we exchange the glory of God and worshiping God for the created things. In other words, every single heart within the world, we long, we long for the pleasure that's found only in God, but when our soul is boarded up and we cannot see the glory of God, we still have that hunger, and so we look for other things, and the things that we look at are those things that reflect a measure of the glory of God, and so we look at things like gender, and we begin to worship that. "If I could just be a man, or if I could just be a woman, then I would be content and happy and satisfied."

"If I could just have sex with anything or anyone that I wanted, then I would be happy. If I could have all the possessions that I can see with my eye and my heart wants, then I would be happy in my life." He is exchanged and He is seen as weightless largely because of the American disregard of the human soul. Most of us don't think very much about our soul. We come to faith in Christ, and we say, "Well, I have ..." It's saved, but it can also be protected.

It can be cherished, it can be loved, it can also be mistreated. It can be boarded up, it can be battered, it can be bruised. America doesn't care much for the human soul. If we were to stand out on the corner and we would say what Jesus said, "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?," many people within our culture would say, "Soul? You take the soul."

"Just give me money and sex." We don't value what immense treasure it is that we are a soul with the capacity to see and treasure the greatest treasure, and that is the glory of God. You see, the soul that feels weight of God's glory, it can feel it. So many times it is boarded up, and so Peter is looking at these believers. They're living in this world. If he was looking at us, he would look at us living in this world, and he'd say the same thing. What you're going to find in these two verses, the first one is aimed specifically at protecting the treasure of the human soul, and then the second verse is aimed specifically at the treasure of the glory of God.

This is what He says, verse 11, "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation." Christ is speaking through His Spirit through these authors, and so it is Jesus who has something to say to us this morning. The first thing we find in verse 11 is that Christ urges us to protect our soul by abstaining from sin. Now, when I say protect our soul, keep in mind that He is writing to Christians, and I am assuming that the majority of you are a Christian, and so if you hear that and you say, "Oh, I'm supposed to protect my soul," that means I'm supposed to trust Christ.

That is absolutely true, but He and I in this moment are actually thinking since you have already trusted Christ, your soul is already saved, it still needs to be protected. It still needs to be guarded so that you can continue to enjoy the light, the glory of Christ. In order to be motivated to protect our soul, we must first

agree with something, and that is that we are sojourners and exiles. We are strangers, that's what sojourners is, strangers, aliens. We're different from the people around here, and we're exiles.

Exiles, it's simply someone who lives a long way from home. You see, if you and I, we don't, not just envision ourself, but agree with God about what is true about us, and that is that we are sojourners and exiles, then what's going to happen is this, is that we're going to live our life as an echo of a culture that belittles and neglects God, and so if we want to actually protect our soul, we have to see that we're from a different place, that we're not home, that we're visitors here, and we're going home. When we trusted Jesus Christ, you notice in verse 9, it says that we became a people for His own possession, and that's how we became exiles and sojourners. We were purchased. We were bought by Jesus' blood.

That was the price He paid to own us. You may not like to think of it in this way, but if you're a Christian, you are literally owned by Christ. We are His possession. We are His. That means that He has Creator rights over us. That means He can look in us and He can give us an instruction that's binding upon us, and here, He gives us that instruction, and He says, "I want you to abstain."

Abstain means to hold yourself back from. In other words, there's something there that you want. There's something there that is dangerous. There's something there that's pleasurable. Whatever it is, abstain means hold yourself back from. Then, He tells us what we're supposed to hold ourself back from, and that is the passions of the flesh.

The passions of the flesh. Now, you look at that and you think, "What does that mean exactly?" It's really interesting. This word, passions is used just repeatedly through the New Testament in particular. It's a word, it's actually two words put together in Greek, and it's the word "epithymia."

"Epi" means epic. It means epic desire, inordinate desire. It's where we put all of our hopes in something really, really small, and we have bigger hopes than whatever it is can hold it up. It's usually an idol. It's why the Bible calls these typically idols, idolatry within our life.

Abstain from the passions of the flesh, epic desires. In the movie, Lord of the Rings, of course, there's a ring. If you ever seen that movie, everyone's looking it. Well, that ring is intended to be a metaphor of a number of things. One of them is epic desire, or we look at it and we think, "If I can just have it."

That's why oftentimes in the movie, when people look at the ring, there's this sense of longing in their face. They're intentionally trying to look mesmerized by it. This is what we do. This is how we look when we're envisioning this epic desire that is not God. He calls it passions of the flesh.

These epic desires, they can be for simple things. In the book of Galatians 5, we read these words. It says, “The works of the flesh are evident, sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, and dissensions, and divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies and things like these.” In other words, when He says, “Abstain from the epic desires of the flesh,” what He’s saying is this, these are the works of the flesh. It means that we have an epic desire for something here. We have an epic desire for alcohol.

We can have an epic desire for another person’s stuff. We can have an epic desire to get our way in an argument to the place that we can divide. We can have epic desires for sex, for pornography, for anger, for ... We can have epic desires for things that are sinful, but that’s not the only form of an epic desire, for they can also be placed on good things that we turn into god things. You remember if, unless you’re new, then you don’t remember, there’s a parable that Christ told.

A parable, it means that it’s a story with intent. It’s a story in our language, but it has spiritual intentions, and He speaks of a sower that’s sowing seeds out into a field, and it says that those seeds fall on four different kinds of soil. The first is on the path, and there’s ... Literally, it’s as hard as a rock, and so the birds just come and they take it. Then, there’s some of the soil that’s thrown, and it falls upon soil that has rocks underneath it, and so it’s really, really shallow, and so it shoots the root down, but it can’t go very far, and so when it’s really hot or if there’s any kind of trouble, suddenly, the plant dies.

The third, he says, is planted in good soil, but that soil is populated by thorn bushes and vines. They reach around and wrap around and choke out the life of that seed, and the last, he says is good soil, that we’re all supposed to want to be, that soil, that digs down and it bears forth fruit. Well, His disciples didn’t quite understand, and so they waited until everyone was gone and they said, “Hey, can You tell us a little bit more about what that story was about?,” and so He begins talking about the fact that the seed is the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus, and then each one of those soils is a condition of the heart. It’s us. We are one of those, but when He gets to the third soil, this is what He says. Notice this.

He goes, “Others are like the ones sown among thorns. They,” meaning the people, “Are like those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and deceitfulness of riches and the “epithymia,” desire,” same word, “For other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.” These can be good things. You see, money is a good thing, isn’t it? It can be used to purchase all kinds of ways, to be generous with other people that take the gospel to the ends of the earth, to feed people who are hungry.

Money is a good thing, and yet, you can have an epic desire for money that actually gets to the place, that it blinds you completely from the life of Christ, from the glory of Christ, a love for money so much so that you would literally trade in your family, you would trade in your children, you would trade in your integrity in order to have more money. That’s an epic desire. Sex is a good thing. God made it. It’s a good thing. There’s all kinds of value that He has literally loaded into the very reality of sexuality.



It's a good thing, and yet, when you make an epic desire out of sexuality, what happens is it distorts our own view of beauty. We can trade in long-standing relationships and covenants before God and one another because we simply have to have more of it. It becomes an epic desire. Triviality. Triviality ... All of us have hobbies, right?

Many of us like to watch sports, play sports, many of us like Facebook, Xbox, video games. You think, "Don't. Please don't touch these. Just take a step back," right? I want you to think about it though, right? All by themselves, like any of those can be used for good things, and yet, if they become epic desires, if they become epic, you can literally squander away your life doing things that when you look back over those 20 years, or you give yourself four hours to Xbox a night, you are literally trading in four hours of every 24 for nothing.

It can become epic desires, and when they are epic, they become gods, but here's the reality, is that when the glory of God, that's not an epic desire, what happens is it wages war against our soul. It can be amazing things. It can be things like constitutional rights. There are some people ... Aren't you thankful that you have constitutional rights?"

I'm thankful, and yet, they can become epic desires, so much so that everybody in our sphere of influence, everything that we would post, everything we would talk about, it would be not the glory of Christ, but, "I demand to be able to buy a gun," "I demand to be able to do this or to do this, to speak this way, to hire this way." You mean good things. They're wonderful things, right? They're an amazing thing that we have here in America, and yet, they can become epic desires, and when any epic desire fills our heart that it's not the glory of God, what happens is that desire wages war against our soul, that if we do not learn to abstain, what happens is we literally lead our soul to the slaughter, which is why in 1 Peter 1:14 he says, "Do not be conformed to the passions." The word is again the epic desires of your former ignorance.

In other words, before Jesus Christ was a part of our life, before we saw the light of the glory of Jesus Christ, we had passions that aligned to not knowing Him, passions that aligned to not seeing that glorious light. Peter is simply saying, "For the good of your soul, don't go back. Abstain. Abstain. Care for your soul."

What I want to do now is I want to give you, I know, this is crazy, four, four applications of, how do we protect our soul by abstaining from sin? How do we do this? Okay? The first is this, let's learn to recognize the passions of the flesh. Sometimes they're very obvious.

It's like they're just standing right there. We know when God says, "Don't do it," it becomes an epic desire. We have to do it, we feel guilt. We know what it is. Sometimes it's very clear, but sometimes it's very camouflaged. Sometimes it's camouflaged, and so we need some tools to help us identify ours.



What is our epic desire? Let me give you a few questions, four, in fact, to help you learn how to recognize the passions of the flesh. First, what desire, when acted upon, creates feelings of guilt? When you want something so bad, and then suddenly, you go and do it, and then you do it or you have it, and suddenly, you feel absolutely defiled and dirty, that may be a clue as to an epic desire. Let me also just put this one in the past tense, what desire, when acted upon, created.

Why that's important is this, is that if there is something in your life that you continue to go to, even as a believer, and it creates feelings of guilt and you continue to do it, you can sear your conscience to the place to where you do not feel the guilt and shame as you once did, but that doesn't make it anymore right, and so the first question is simply this, "What is it that you want so bad that when you get it, you feel bad that you got it?" The second question I would encourage you to ask is this, is, "What desire when it's withheld draws your strongest emotions?" You want something so bad and you can't have it. It's not just the disappointment, you're devastated. That may be a clue as to what your epic desires might be.

The third question you can ask is, "What desire when threatened leads you to vilify its threat?" This is really something that you're going to understand especially if you live here and you love basketball, is we typically assign a loyalty around a particular team. They wear that jersey, and we love that team, and if that team becomes an epic desire, this is what happens, you don't just not root for the others, you begin to hate the others. You begin to see that particular shade of blue or red run out and literally, instead of just thinking, "Hey, I'm rooting for this team," we look and we think, "Wouldn't it be awesome if they all just tripped right now, they just fell on the ground?," and their coach walks out. He walks out because he always likes to come out last, and he comes out and he walks out, and there he is, and we think, "Oh, man, wouldn't it be awesome if he just broke his foot right now?" There's a lot of us that we literally, we don't just not root for them, we begin to vilify them, and this is why this is so important.

Idols, idols are very weak, and so they require their worshipers to protect them, and so if you have an idol and you feel like you have to protect that idol from its competitor, it's a good chance it's an epic desire. Last question I would ask myself and I would encourage you to ask is this, is, "What desire if it were lost would lead to ultimate despair?" You remember Jonah, the story of Jonah? He's called and, "I want you to go over this place, and I want you to share the truth of God with them," and the prophet of God, he doesn't want to go, and the reason is because he hates those people. They're the enemies of national Israel.

Eventually, through a lot of circumstances, God gets him there. The story gets him there. He preaches. It's a very simple sermon. They repent, and all of a sudden, they do. They repent, and you would think that a pastor would be really happy, that much fruit would come like, "Hey, repent," and they all do.

They're like, "Wow, that was really powerful. We should probably keep this sermon," but instead, it says he gets so angry with the Lord, and the reason is because we're told that he has this epic desire for Jewish nationalism. This other country, this other country who was the enemy of Israel was now seeing some measure

of blessing, and so Jonah actually ends, and in chapter 4, he says, “God ...” God comes, He goes, “Are you right to be angry?,” and he’s says, “I am absolutely right,” and then he says this, “Just go ahead and take my life.” In other words, “I have nothing to live for.” Let me tell you something, if your epic desire that’s not God is something, that if you lost it, you don’t want to live anymore, it’s really not worth your heart.

You’re made for more than that, and let me encourage you, when you find your epic desire, you ask this question and you’re like, “You know what? These are the things. These are the things,” unless they’re specifically forbidden in the Bible, don’t impose them upon other people. Some of you, you go, “You know what, man, that four hours of Facebook every day, I should probably stop doing that.” That’s an epic desire, but that doesn’t mean that everybody that has Facebook on their phone is struggling with it in the same way, and so be careful not to impose your rules of what is healthy for your soul upon somebody else. The first thing we need to do is to learn to recognize the passions of the flesh, and then second, let’s confess sinful passions as God describes them.

We need to confess these sinful passions and we should do so as God describes them. One of the problems that we have is that we try to sterilize our sin, and so we sin with our mouth, and then we confess to God or to the person that we sin against, then we say something like this, “You know, I probably said too much.” I’m mean, that’s like weak, weak confession. “Oh, I said too much.” No, instead, maybe what we ought to say is something like this, “Look, I slandered you, an image-bearer of God.”

“I judged your motives, I sowed seeds that discord among relationships within God’s people, and I liked it.” Now, all of a sudden, we’re into a confession that actually has power, because now, we’re beginning to agree with what God saw, which was the horror of that sin, the disregard for God and for people in that sin, and so what we need to do is we trace our sin to its source, and then we confess it to God. Then, James tells us to confess our sin to one another. Why this is so important, it’s for this reason, to find a trusted friend and then say, “I want you to know, you heard that sermon. I have these epic desires and I need to tell somebody so that you can pray for me.”

These are some of the epic desires that I have in bad things and in good things that really are covering up my soul so that I cannot see the glory of God with the magnitude that I want to. Why we tell it to people is because sin is like a cockroach, you turn the lights on, and the roaches run. Confession to one another is sort of like turning the lights on. The more light, the more sin runs, and so many people, they say, “You know what? I want to get well, but I don’t want anyone to know.”

You’ll never get well. The third thing I would encourage us to do is let’s make no provision for our sinful passions. We must be aggressive in eliminating the very triggers of temptation in our life, those things that trip us up. Remember, Jesus said, “Look, you’ve heard it say, ‘Don’t commit adultery,’ but I tell you, everyone who’s looked upon a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in its heart,” and then He says this, Matthew 5:29. “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away,” that

everyone in here who's ever struggled with lust knows you don't need to have any eyes for you to continue to sin the sin of lust.

He's not actually telling us to gouge out physical eyes. He's actually telling us through the source of a metaphor of saying, "Look, look in your life those very triggers in your life that you make provision for your flesh and be aggressive in eliminating them." For some of us, we're like, "You know what, this computer, this is the place. This computer screen is the screen that I give away my soul. All the time, I soil my soul over and over and over again, but I can't get rid of the computer because this is where I do my emails," and so we make provision by justifying the trigger in our life.

You want to be free? Be aggressive in eliminating those triggers. Make no provision for the flesh. The fourth, let's take our sinful passions to the cross. I can't tell you how important all of these are, but this one is important, right? Take your sinful passions to the cross.

Our instinct is not to run to Calvary, but to Sinai. Sinai is the place where we got the law, where we get the instructions, and the reason that our heart loves to go to Sinai is because we love to self-loath. When we feel guilty, we want to beat ourselves up because we feel better when we've beaten ourselves up, because we've done it again, right? "I'm a terrible person, I'm a terrible person," and we try to punish ourselves, and in punishing ourselves, we feel like that we're getting rid of our guilt. Here's the deal about self-loathing now.

Self-loathing always hates the shame, but it doesn't necessarily hate the sin, and therefore, four or five days later, when the shame is worn off because we've had four or five days of victory, we still have no power to resist the temptation when it comes upon us again because we still love to sin. That's why we have to take it to the cross. When we go to the cross, what you find there is Jesus hanging there. I know He's not there now, but in your mind, you imagine Jesus dying on the cross for your sin, paying the price, bearing the shame in your place. You see, it's on the cross that sin loses its power.

The power is desire, because now, we're steering at a superior pleasure. I want you to know something. For years and years and years, I've counseled people and myself in terms of what is required to actually repent, meaning, to actually have freedom over a particular area, and I always says these things. I say you need light, you need aggression and you need a superior pleasure, and that's what these are. Light is confession.

I need people to know aggression is getting rid of those triggers. Third thing, superior pleasure. Here's the deal, if in time you tell a lot of people and you get rid of your computer, but you never find a superior pleasure in Jesus Christ, eventually, you'll return. We have to find in Christ that light of glory, it's there, and so I encourage you to protect your soul by abstaining from sin. All right, point number two, you're ready? Christ invites us to pursue His glory by living with honor.

Let me just say just a few words. You're like, "Man, it's already late in the game. He's going to start a new point." The good thing about this point is this is actually the thesis for the rest of this book. It's verse 12, so we're going to come back to this over and over and over again.

You see, Peter knew that a battered soul, it feels apathetic and it feels unworthy to take the gospel. In other words, if you give your soul over to an evening of triviality or sensuality, you don't wake up the next morning longing to sing, longing to share the gospel, longing to read your Bible, and so He begins with defense. He says, "Play defense. Protect your soul," but then he says, "But now, now that you've protected your soul, let's play some offense." He says, "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles, that is among unbelievers honorable." It's interesting that Paul calls for the same thing and the same order.

He says, "Flee youthful passions," that's defense, "And pursue," that's offense, "Righteousness, faith, love, peace along with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart." You see, wanting the world to see more than what we are against, what we're trying to fight against, He says, "Now, let's play offense." We do that by keeping our conduct honorable, by living lives of love, by doing a good job at work, by loving our family, by having a humble attitude towards one another, by being generous with our things, our resources, and the reason that we do this is because, He says, "So that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God." That's the point, is to glorify God because He's the glorious One of the day of visitation when Jesus comes back for us. Alexander MacLaren was a pastor last century, and this is a quote from him.

He says, "The world takes its notions of God first from the people who say that they belong to Him." Oh, Christian know. They, meaning, the unbelievers read us a great deal more than they ever read the Bible. In other words, this is not only a fight for our joy and our soul, it is also a fight for their joy and their soul. Do you know who gets on an airplane to go tell people about Christ, or who goes across the street and tell people about Christ? People who have seen the light of Christ because their soul is clean enough for that light to come in, and they're absolutely stunned.

"I have to share this with other people." Do you know as Christians who will not go to their neighbor and who will not go to the nations? Among many other things, it is people who are so defiled in their soul that it's been a long time since they've seen the glory of God in the face of Christ, and so let me encourage us as a Church family, let's pursue an honorable life for the glory of Christ, if a thousand of us ... There's been over a thousand of us who have been in this room this morning, if a thousand of us would protect our soul and pursue an honorable life within our own circle of influence, just imagine that Christ would become heavier in that circle of influence within our own community. For those of you who are here and you're contemplating, you're considering the gospel of Jesus Christ, but you're confused by the lives of those who claim to have already trusted Christ, let me acknowledge to you that we are under construction, and just like a construction site, that is a mess until the very end, is that we are growing, but we are not there. We've not arrived, so let me encourage you to look at Jesus.

Look at His life. Look at His love. Look at His mercy. Look at His death for your sin. Look at His resurrection. Look at His power.

Look at Jesus and you see the perfection of honorability, and then look at your heart. Look at your epic desires. Look at all the things that you thought would satisfy your soul, and you still haven't found what you're looking for. Let me encourage you to put your trust in Jesus today. He is the honorable One, and He is the glorious One, so let me pray. Father in heaven, we love You, and we do pray for those that are considering trusting Christ, I ask, God, that You would give them courage even now to reach out to You to admit that they're a sinner, to admit that they need a Savior, to believe in Christ and confess Christ as the Lord of their life.

I pray for those of us as a Church family who have already seen the glory of Christ, and yet, we live in a world that so frequently tempts us to defile our soul. We ask that You would purify our hearts. We ask that You would help us to have the courage to lay aside every epic desire that is not a desire for You. Help us to be people who are marked by honorability, and so as we sing to You now, we pray that You would be glorified. We want to build our life upon You, and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.



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