

TRUTH COMMUNITY

- TEACHING GOD'S PEOPLE GOD'S WORDS -

How to Motivate a Godly Heart #2

Selected Scriptures

GraceLife: 2/7/2010

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I am here this morning to speak to you of your soul, to speak to you about your heart and that which should shape your heart as you go through life under the watchful eye of an omniscient God. This is about your soul this morning, something intimately applicable to every one of you and to me as well.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to finish what I started last week. What we started last week was a message that I called “How to Motivate a Godly Heart.” Really what it is about is the things and the convictions that should shape the way that you approach all of life. We are trying to see clearly the implications of being a Christian. Christianity is meant to be lived. There is no such thing as a true Christianity that doesn’t impact your life profoundly. There is nothing of a Christianity that does not change the way that you think and the way that your heart affections go and the way that you live and the things that you say—Christianity is totally transforming. If you don’t know something about that, of a life that is inclined toward biblical truth, you are just not a Christian—I don’t know how else to say it that way. If your heart is not somehow moved by biblical truth, you are not a believer in Christ at all because God puts His Spirit in you and gives you a new nature that is inclined to truth, that is moved by truth, that loves truth, that loves Christ and wants your life to conform to the things that God has revealed in scripture—that’s fundamental, that’s implicit in true salvation.

And so, just to say at the start, if you are not a Christian, understand that you must lay hold of the work of Christ and you can only lay hold of Him through faith. There is nothing that you can do, no religion that you can follow, no candles that you can light, no works that you can do to save yourself. You have to recognize your sin and turn from it profoundly and then receive Christ and rest in Him alone for the forgiveness of your sin. Trusting Christ means to receive Him and to rest in Him, to trust Him completely and wholly and exclusively for His righteousness to bring you to heaven, for His shed blood to forgive you of your sin—there is no other way to God. Jesus said:

I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but through me.

If you are not a Christian, that’s where the message of this morning starts, that’s your only obligation, that’s your exclusive obligation is to come to Christ. But if you are a Christian, understand that at a most profound level, God’s truth is designed to change you and to shape your character. From the moment of your new birth in Christ till you are with Him in heaven, there is a transforming impact, a progressive change that takes place in your life as the Spirit of

God conforms you to the character of Christ. God's truth is designed to change you. Listen to Romans 6:17:

Thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.

Listen to this again:

...you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.

The teaching is addressed to your understanding, it is addressed to your mind and as you understand the truths of God, the truths of scripture, they move the affections of your heart, they change the way that you desire things, they change your motivations and falling out of that ever-transforming heart is obedience to God—that's the way it works. That's why we teach at Grace Church, that's why we address your mind at Grace Church instead of trying to whip people in to a frenzy with a lot of emotional antics or syrupy music or anything like that. We teach again and again and again because the teaching addressed to your understanding is the process that launches that transformation, you cannot bypass the mind in Christian sanctification, it starts there, you obey from the heart the teaching to which you were committed—that's the way it works. God made us with a mind and we are intended to use it and as we use it, it changes our affections, it changes our desires and that's where change comes from in the Christian life, it's a continuum, it doesn't start above your neck and stop there, it enters through your ears and then it goes in to your heart and comes out of your life and lets you do and say and think and feel and love, what you love beloved is changed by these things.

Now, in that passage in Romans, understand that the Roman Christians had been converted; teaching came to their mind and moved the affections of their hearts. Paul says they separated from their prior sin and became obedient—that is the divine pattern. So, here is what I want you to get from that little bit of introduction. What moves your heart to obey the God of your salvation, where does the power come from? The power to live out Christianity as it is meant to be lived, the power to obey comes as you contemplate the multi-faceted splendor of our position in Jesus Christ as born again believers in His all sufficient sacrifice on the cross for our sins to save us from hell and deliver us one day in to eternal heaven. Nothing will stir your heart to delight and to the fulfilment of duty like the implications of true salvation unfold in to your life. Understand, oh, please understand that what we are about to talk about is not a list of moralistic objectives that you are supposed to go out and pursue. This is not self-righteous works that cause you to boast in your own character.

No, what we are about to discuss, what we discussed two weeks ago, are God-centered affections of your heart, things that you hear and as a believer you respond to and say "Yes, I'd love those things, I understand those things, I want to be moved by those things. All glory to me would be if my life were increasingly conformed to the truth that I see so plainly in scripture." It's about the affections of your heart that we are talking about. And understand, again by way of introduction, the point of these things is that, and all this is so crucial to understand. You take

these things and you think about them, you meditate on them throughout the course of life as you are at the traffic light waiting for the light to change, you ruminate on these things, as you are lying on your bed before you go to sleep, these things are being rehearsed in your mind. And in every other point where you have conscious freedom to think on something like this, you are not engaged in the necessary activities of the day, as you meditate on these things consistently over time, they start to flow like life-giving blood through your spiritual vanes.

And then, as you are being faithful to contemplate these things, then when duty calls, then when temptation beckons its bloody finger to come over here, then when those things have been coming through your mind, these truths about God and salvation, your response to duty and your response to temptation is framed by that truth that you have been meditating on through the course of time, your response is framed by truth (oh, please listen to me) not by your fickle feelings of the moment, not by the temporary desires, temporary pull of temptation or response of sin, rather your heart is framed by these truths in a way that gives you the power to overcome them because your affections are with the truth of God, with the living Lord Jesus Christ rather than the temporary appeals of this world, that doesn't just happen, that comes as your mind assimilates truth and embraces it deep in your heart.

And so my dear friends, when you are fearful, when you find yourself slack in duty, when you are discouraged, when you find yourself sinful, when you find yourself indifferent, you come back to these things, you rehearse them in your mind and you keep doing it until these truths, these powerful warm truths of God begin to thaw the frozen affections of your heart and quicken you toward trust and obedience to Christ, that is the pattern. If you find yourself stuck in the spiritual mud as a believer in Christ, that is how you start to get your way out of it. It is not about suddenly starting to try harder, it starts with the contemplation of truth, in a loving, submissive frame of mind that says God, I embrace this and oh, how I want this to move my heart.

Our consideration of these truths has stemmed from our study of 1 John. You recall that John told his readers:

I have written these things to you so that you may not sin...

He wanted his readers to be holy in their conduct, he wanted them to live righteously. And to the extent that I can do that, I want to just place myself right in line with that same motivation that he had for his readers then, that's my desire and motivation for you here this morning, that you would live righteous, godly lives, full of love for Christ. John said:

Do not love the world nor the things in the world...

Separate yourself from those ungodly desires and ambitions that are tied to the environment in which you live and embrace the unseen spiritual truths, the spiritual realities of Christ and let your life be framed by them.

Now, last time when I was here, two weeks ago, last time when I spoke, we considered many motivations to pursue holiness. I promised you nine, I gave you six, I said I had 15, now I have

17. (laughter) I'm going to land on 11 Lord willing. I have all 17 here with me, but there's no way that's going to work. So we started with six, we're going to do five more today.

I want to review those first six real quickly. If you missed that message, get the CD. Last time we considered these things, I'm going to race through these. I'm probably going to look at my notes because whenever I look up, I get distracted and start talking about other things. I'm going to go through these quickly, so forgive my lack of eye contact here for just a moment.

Last time we said what motivates a godly heart are several different considerations:

1. The Person Who Saved You

The wonder of the love of Jesus Christ, given on the cross, poured out in life's sacrifice to redeem you from sin, the wonder of His love should make sin unthinkable to you. As a settled disposition of your heart, you say "Sin is unthinkable. It is unthinkable that I would violate the love of Christ by engaging in the thoughts and actions of the very thing that He died to deliver me from." That becomes a framing conviction of your heart. When someone is struggling in their marriage and there is no biblical ground for divorce, one of the things that should keep them there is to say "Oh, it would be so wrong for me to violate the love of Christ by doing that which He has forbidden." It is the fundamental conviction of your heart that says sin is unthinkable because you don't want to violate the person who saved you.

2. The Purpose of Your Salvation

God saved you in order to deliver you from the corruption of this world not to give you permission to engage in it. The whole purpose was to deliver you from the corruption of this world. And so (making eye contact once again, I just can't resist it) my friends, my Christian friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ, understand that as a believer in Christ, the time for you to tolerate sin in your life, the time for you to tolerate sensuality and spiritual mediocrity in your life is over—it's over. Remember the purpose of your salvation, the whole point was to deliver you out of that corruption so that you could live righteously in this world. Consider the purpose and then guide your life, gear your life, set your heart upon living consistently with the purpose for which God saved you—consider the purpose of your salvation.

3. The Purity of Your Conscience

You consider the importance of a clear conscience. You consider the blessing that it is to lay your head on your pillow at night without guilt gnawing at your soul and say "I treasure that clear conscience, I want to preserve and deepen and develop that clear conscience. I'm going to avoid that which would wound my conscience, which would violate my conscience." The purity of your conscience becomes the motivation of holiness.

4. The Prayers of the Righteous

Jesus taught us to pray "Do not lead us in to temptation, but deliver us from evil." If you are

obeying Christ in your prayer life, you are consistently and over time asking Him to lead you away from temptation and to deliver you from evil, to help you live a righteous life—that's part of righteous praying. Understand that if you are praying that way, you have to ask yourself "How can I pray that way and then pursue sin? How can I pray in one breath 'deliver me from temptation' and then with my next breath say 'I'm going to pursue this over here'?" That's unthinkable. The basic requirements for some measure of integrity before God as you pray would compel you to turn away from sin if that is the heart prayer of your life. We can't tolerate that kind of duplicity, it's unthinkable.

My point here as we talk about these things is that you hear these things and you say "Yes, that is right, yes that is true, yes I want to conform my life to that" and that becomes a conviction that shapes your response when the time of temptation comes. When your feet start to walk toward evil, when your mind starts to engage wicked thoughts, you step back and say "No, I don't go down that path, I've been praying to the Lord to lead me in to righteousness, so how can I pursue this? There is no disconnect between my prayer life and the way that I live when I'm not praying, no, I want there to be consistency between the two and so I'm going to separate myself from such duplicity."

5. The People of God

You consider the people of God because beloved, your sin makes it easier for other Christians to justify sin in their lives "He did it, I'll do it," or it simply saddens them to see your rebellion against God. In any case, don't be so selfish as to pursue sin in your life in disregard to the impact that it has on the people of God.

6. The People of the World

You consider the people of the world, you consider those that are lost in sin, those that are headed toward eternal destruction to suffer the wrath of God upon their sin, those who if they died, would be unforgiven, who would have no hope of heaven, but rather would face an interminable eternity of judgment and punishment from the righteous hand of God on their lives. Beloved, that is the nature of biblical truth. People who don't know Christ have that as their destiny. Now, think with me for a moment, God saved you to be a light to them.

Would you pursue sin at the expense of your testimony to people who are headed to hell? Would you wear the banner of Christian? Would you wear the mantle of Christian over your shoulders and live a life of sin and by your lifestyle communicate that sin is not that serious, that God is not serious about His wrath and hell is not really something to be fear all that greatly? Is that what you are going to live your life like? You have got to consider the people of the world. Your life matters to people, it speaks to people. And what we as believers in Christ must do is to say "I recognize that responsibility and I embrace it. I embrace the opportunity to live righteously if somehow God might use my life and my lips to communicate to someone the urgent necessity of them turning from sin and receiving Christ. You consider the people of the world.

Those were the six things that we covered last time. Now we come to new material, I'll slow down a little bit here.

7. The Providence of God

You consider the providence of God; the power of this should hit you mightily. Remember that God is sovereign over all. And as I am saying this, turn to Matthew 6 for a moment. God is sovereign over all. He is intimately involved in all of the details of the universe. He knows the numbers of hairs on your head, and He sees when a sparrow falls to the ground. He is actively involved in feeding the birds of the air and that means that He sees your secret life. God sees your secret life and when you consider the totality of biblical teaching (oh, get this, get this) God is either going to bless you for your obedience or is going to expose your sin and discipline you for it—it's a given reality. Look at Matthew 6:4, Jesus says:

Do your giving in secret where no one sees and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

The providence of God is a promise of blessing upon your obedience. Look at verse 6:

When you pray, close your door, pray to your Father who is in secret and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

It is just you in the presence of God and God sees that, God sees your humble, tender heart, pouring out your heart before Him in prayer. Jesus says, when you approach spiritual life like that, the providence of God guaranties that He will bless that, He will reward that, He will honor that. He says a similar thing about fasting in verse 16, God blesses secret obedience as well as open obedience, I guess you could say.

But, now think with me on the negative side. Think of the many biblical examples where God exposed hidden sin and displayed His power to thwart the plans of the wicked and to expose those who were hiding their sin. You could think of Joseph's brothers who sold him in to slavery, only to be exposed toward the end of the book of Genesis. You could think of the power of a king like David who sinned with Bathsheba, murdered her husband by proxy, hid it for a year or 18 months. God exposed it; He brought Nathan with a simple parable and exposed that sin. You can think of the book of Esther, where Haman was hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordechai to be hung on the very next day. Scripture is filled with this, of God exposing sin that men tried to hide. You could think of modern examples, can't you? Golfers found out that all of the wealth and conniving in the world cannot hide sin when God determines to expose it. False professing Christian teachers who live double lives are exposed one after another after another, the awfulness of their duplicitous lives, thought to be righteous, suddenly exposed as their partners in sin betray confidences or whatever means. Understand that God exposes sin. Now, listen to this verse from Proverbs 10:9. Write that reference down and go look it up later. Remember, we are talking about the providence of God being the motivation to obedience and holiness. Proverbs 10:9 says:

He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out.

Here is the question for you my friends. Answer this question deep in the holes of your heart and answer carefully. I am talking to you about something really important. Here is the question. In light of the fact that God's providence guarantees the blessing on obedience and the exposing and discipline of sin, here is the question to ask yourself. Which side of God's providence do you want to be on? Do you want to cultivate a life of obedience and be surprised by His blessing, or do you want to cultivate hidden sin and guarantee that sooner or later He is going to expose that and the shame of being exposed as a hypocrite and a liar is made manifest for all the world to see, to say nothing of what is seen in the courts of heaven. I ask you, which side of providence do you want to be on? That should powerfully motivate your heart toward obedience, obedience that no one sees, praying in secret, obedience in relationships, godliness and relationships.

George Whitfield, when he was preaching one time said, "I'm here on a mission from God, I must be heard and I will be heard." I feel that way right now, I must be heard on this and I will be heard on this. Your answer to the question, which side of providence do you want to be on, your answer to that question will either motivate you toward holiness or harden you in sin. Galatians 6:7 says:

Do not be deceived because God is not mocked, but whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

I wish I could fall on my knees and beg you to take this seriously. I wish I could fall on my knees before those of you that are hiding a life of sin, a life of hardness of heart toward the things of God, a life, metaphorically speaking, with your arms folded across your chest against the tender pleadings of Christ for your repentance. I wish I could beg you to soften your heart before a sovereign, holy God so that you would cultivate a life of receiving His blessing rather than His judgment and discipline. Because you can either trust God's providence to bless you when you obey or on the negative side, you can trust God's providence to expose you in shame if you sin in secret. Don't trifle with the living God beloved, don't trifle with Him, don't fool yourself in to thinking that you can get away with that because God is not mocked and the hardness of some of your hearts is mocking Him even now and I wouldn't want to be in your shoes.

8. The Punishment Against Sin

The punishment from God for sin is separation from God and eternal damnation in hell. Revelation 21:8 says:

For the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death.

Eternal damnation upon heart sins as well as external life sins. My friends, if you claim to be a Christian, how can you indulge the things that prompt the eternal wrath of God? How can you do that? Doesn't the fear of God just strike you deep in your heart when you contemplate such things? It does, doesn't it? The fear of God, we are dealing with eternal realities, we are dealing

with the holy, righteous, wrathful God who Psalm 7 says suffers indignation every day against sin and you will add to that indignation with your own life? You will treat sin so casually? What are you thinking? You are not thinking. If that's your approach, you are blinded and self-deceived if you can think you can cultivate a life of indifference to God and still know Him in heaven. No, no, no. This exposes a life that is not truly believed in Christ. It is a sober warning to the Christian who does believe in Him, but has strayed from the path of serious obedience and heart commitment to Christ. The punishment of God against sin, hear it again, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death.

What else can I say? If the word of God won't sober you up, there is nothing that my human words can add to it. Sooner or later you have to come face to face with what you are going to do with your destiny, how you are going to respond in your heart to the spiritual realities that the Bible speaks about. If you are indifferent to these things, then don't mock God by coming here and pretending to sit under the word of God week after week after week. If you are indifferent to these things and you don't care if your life changes and you are going to do what you want, then don't mock God that way. Far better to humble yourself in private before God and say "Oh God, I am so sorry, I have trifled with sin, I have minimized the importance of your wrath. I have acted if it wasn't an issue, God in fear and trembling I come before you in repentance. Shake me out of my lethargy."

9. The Promise of Christ's Return and His Reward

Turn back to the book of 1 John for a moment. 1 John 3:1, we will study it more closely in a few weeks. But see these things all wrapped up in the first three verses, even things in the earlier points. John says:

Behold how great a love the father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God, and such we are.

He calls them to consider the person who saved them, consider the love that God bestowed on us that we would be called children of God. Look at verse 2:

Beloved, now we are children of God and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. WE know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him just as He is.

If you are a Christian, your destiny includes a face to face gazing upon the wonderful face of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is a guaranteed biblical certainty, stated in the simplest of languages there in verse 2. We will see Him just as He is. The promise of seeing Christ, the promise of His return for us, He said I won't leave you as orphans. Verse 3, if that's true, if you know that hope in verse 3:

Everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself just as He is pure.

If you understand your destination, you shape your journey to get there accordingly. If you are going to see the glorified face of the risen righteous Lord Jesus Christ, then you are going to

form your life to His kind of purity, you are going to want that, oh beloved, you are going to want it. I am not going to have to tell you to obey in light of those truths, your heart is going to be motivated that way, you are going to be drawn to that—“I’m going to see Christ face to face and be like Him,” that changes the way that you view the world and surrounding temptation and discouragement. In light of the return of Christ, you put aside the ambitions and lusts of this world for sake of obeying Him.

Write down this reference, you don’t have to turn there. 2 Corinthians 5:10:

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one maybe recompensed for his deeds in the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

My friend, how would you like to maximize your eternal reward? How would you like to maximize the blessing of that day when you receive your reward from Christ for how you had lived? If you have any clear thinking about you, you are going to understand that in an ultimate sense, that is the day that matters. This life is simply preparatory for that day of reward and you view each day, each opportunity, each temptation in light of that eternal reward and say “I’m going to cultivate, I’m going to sow toward obedience toward loving Christ rather than loving this world because I want that day to be as good as it can possibly be for me because that’s going to be my eternal reward that is with me forever.” We want to maximize that and understand that when temptation presents itself to you, it is detracting you from that great day. If you let temptation put its hook in your nose and pull you down a different path, understand that you are diminishing what could be the glory of that day.

I want each one of you to have the greatest possible eternal reward on that day—that’s all I care about right now at this moment. I want you to have the maximum reward on that day, that’s why we are talking about these things. And if I, in my sinful, selfish condition, could want that for you, imagine how much more God is calling you to obedience so that you would have the maximum reward on that day. This is God, calling you, pleading with you to follow Him in this life and make that day as good as it can possibly be. Consider the promise of Christ’s return and reward because when you do, you are going to purify your life to the live now so that you can approximate what you will be then.

As we consider these things together and we reflect on our lives and realize that we still sin and fall short of the glory of God, the Bible describes and by experience the maturing Christian knows in his own heart the sense of groaning, seeing the glory of these things and yet feeling a sense of groaning in our remaining sin. Even as we aspire after the glory of these truths, we shape our heart, and we say yes, that’s what we want, we still feel the weight of indwelling sin.

And you consider these things and if you are like me, you groan when you see sarcasm coming out of your mouth or whatever it is and say “Oh, yes, I want that, but there is a weight in my heart that tends to hold me down.”

But beloved, these final two points should be a rich encouragement to you. You ask the

question, who is adequate for such things as these? Who is adequate for these eternal realities revealed in the scriptures? You are conscious that you fall short of these things even as you embrace them as the desire of your heart. The true believer knows that that sense that “my redemption will not be complete until I am in heaven. In the meantime, I have the remnant of sin that rears its head.”

In light of that, I want to give you two final considerations that will motivate you toward holiness and away from worldliness—glorious, wonderful truths of the gospel.

10. The Pardon of God

Consider the free and full forgiveness, unconditional forgiveness of sin that Christ purchased for His people with His life blood on the cross. Yes, you have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, yes even when you embrace all of these truths and acceptant as the defining convictions of your heart and life, you realize that in varying degrees in each one of you, your laziness, your lust, your bitterness, your temper, your prayerlessness, your ingratitude rear their ugly heads and you feel the weight of that, it does not mean that the pursuit of these godly things is over or that you have been insincere all this time. When that sin rears itself even as you are pursuing these great truths as the convictions of your heart, remember that the basic premise of Christianity is that God, by sovereign prerogative, based on the atonement of Christ, has forgiven you of all of your sins. And as a believer, you may go to Him freely and confidently, knowing that He will receive you in forgiveness and compassion that dwarfs your comprehension and your ability to understand. We serve a heavenly Father who has forgiven His children. Listen to Isaiah 55:6-7 and listen to the promise of the pardon of God:

Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return to the Lord and He will have compassion on him and to our God for He will abundantly pardon.

Compassion and abundant pardon are waiting at the throne of God when you come and confess your sin before Him, beloved. He is well acquainted with your sinfulness, so don't think you are going to drop a surprise on Him. Rather, trust His compassion, trust His promise of pardon, for Christ purchased with His own blood the guaranty of that pardon and it belongs to you now in union with Christ.

Hear these words of encouragement and this call to spiritual higher ground. You do not need to wallow in past regrets about your sins and failures. You do not need to fear your future failures in light of this encompassing promise of the pardon of God. God is full of compassion and abundantly pardons those who turn to Him. If you are hearing these things and you are conscious of where you are falling short, understand, the door to the throne of heaven is open, where every repentant sinner that would come and confess sin and seek the pardon of God. He never turns away trembling humble sinner—never.

The people who invoke His discipline are those who mock Him by hard-heartedly continuing in sin despite what they know about the truth of God. You humble yourself before the throne of

God and find this abundant pardon and there, in the glory of full forgiveness, there you find even more motivation for godliness because you are so humbled at the work of Christ on your behalf. You are so humbled that God forgives all of your sin. You are so humbled by the consciousness of forgiveness that your heart melts before Him and says “Oh, God, thank you for this abundant pardon and now my heart is just deepened in its desire to follow you. I want nothing to do Lord with the world that brought me in to the sin that needed to be forgiven. I want nothing to do with that corruption of heart that motivated me unprompted to seek it on my own. God, I see your pardon and I love you for it. Please help me to follow you.”—that’s the idea.

Finally:

11. The Power of the Spirit

As you contemplate all of these wonderful, wonderful truths, perhaps one of the crowning glories of these convictions of your heart is the recognition that you are not alone in the pursuit of holiness. God Himself dwells in the believer’s heart through the Holy Spirit. God Himself has taken up residence in you and the Holy Spirit energizes and prompts your obedience. You have the supernatural power of God, Ephesians describes it as the resurrection, power of Christ Himself, dwelling within you, helping to animate all of this to fulfillment.

There are three aspects of this power of the Spirit that I want to consider:

First of all, the Spirit of God gives you understanding in the word of God. If you are still in 1 John, look at 1 John 2:27:

As for you, true believer, the anointing that you received from Him abides in you and you have no need for anyone to teach you, but as His anointing teaches you about all things that is true and is not a lie and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

The Holy Spirit illuminates your understanding with the deeper comprehension of the things of God, revealed in the word. You have the power of the Spirit to help you in your pursuit of godliness.

Secondly, the Holy Spirit produces the attitudes of the godly life. You don’t just come up with these on your own, the Spirit is causing these to bubble up like a fountain in your soul, a spring of life, bubbling up again and again. Galatians 5:22-23:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The Spirit of God somehow dwelling in your own heart, pulsating with these spiritual attitudes that cultivate a life of obedience—you are not alone, that’s the point. Remember the power of the Spirit.

And finally, Philippians 2:12-13 where Paul says:

Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Here is what I want you to see on this point. The thing you must see is that you are not left alone merely to your native abilities and self-effort to pursue holiness. Let me say that again, it's italicized in my notes, it must be important. *You are not left alone to your native abilities and self-effort to pursue holiness.* God has given you His Spirit to enable you to do that which you cannot do on your own. He cultivates your understanding, He stimulates righteous desires, He brings all these things to mind as you walk with Christ. Yes beloved, you must make the effort, yes beloved, you must meditate on these things and embrace them as convictions in your heart that frame your character and frame your entire approach to life—yes, yes, yes.

But as you do so, the Spirit of God Himself is working to conform you to the image of Christ. You can pursue holiness because you understand and trust the fact that the presence of the Spirit of God in your life means that God will accomplish more in you than you can do on your own—that is glorious, that is ennobling, is empowering, it is encouraging. Paul said in Romans 8 "The Spirit helps us in our weakness." Beloved, if Jesus Christ could feed 5000 men with five loaves and two fish, you can rest assured that God who saved you is able and will do exceeding abundantly beyond all you ask or think according to the power that works within us.

And so, armed with that confidence, rise and glorify the one who saved you from sin and who has given you a treasure that words cannot measure, glorify the one who tongue cannot describe. Glorify, obey pursue holiness with all of your heart and glorify the one who will bring you to heaven, where you will dwell with Him for all of eternity.

We understand that the challenge of living in the midst of this fallen world is great, we assume that, but we are undaunted, we are undeterred because we, as believers in Christ, rest in the pardon and the power of God to fulfill that to which He has called you.

And so my brothers and sisters in Christ, run with endurance the race that is set before you.