

Title: **“WHY AM I THUS?”**
Text: Song of Solomon 6:11-13
Subject: *The Believer’s Inward Warfare*
Readings: *Psalm 73:1-28*

Introduction:

John Newton, the great Anglican preacher who wrote that hymn we love to sing, “Amazing Grace,” wrote another hymn that is found in very few hymnbooks today. It goes like this...

“Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought;
Do I love the LORD, or no?
Am I his, or am I not?

If I love, why am I thus?
Why this dull and lifeless frame?
Hardly, sure, can they be worse,
Who have never heard his name!

Could my heart so hard remain,
Prayer a task and burden prove;
Every trifle give me pain,
If I knew a Savior's love?

When I turn my eyes within,
All is dark, and vain, and wild;

¹ Every time God allows me to preach, let me be certain that I...

1. Deliver a message. — Don’t ramble.
2. Deliver His message.
3. Tell only what I know by experience.
4. Deliver the message in the power of the Holy Spirit.
5. Make Christ the object of my message.
6. My motive is the glory of God.
7. Deliver the message in the language of the people.
8. The message grips my own heart. — If it doesn’t grip my heart, it won’t grip anyone else’s heart!
9. Preach in love.
10. Expect people to believe.

² Date: Campus Church, Welwyn, ENG — (PM April 22, 2007)

Danville (PM May 6, 2007)

Tape # Z-26a

“WHY AM I THUS?”

Filled with unbelief and sin,
Can I deem myself a child?

If I pray, or hear, or read,
Sin is mixed with all I do;
You that love the LORD indeed,
Tell me, Is it thus with you?

Yet I mourn my stubborn will,
Find my sin, a grief, and thrall;
Should I grieve for what I feel,
If I did not love at all?

Could I joy his saints to meet,
Choose the ways I once abhorred,
Find, at times, the promise sweet,
If I did not love the LORD?

Lord decide the doubtful case!
Thou who art thy people's sun;
Shine upon thy work of grace,
If it be indeed begun.

Let me love thee more and more,
If I love at all, I pray;
If I have not loved before,
Help me to begin today.

When Rebekah found two nations struggling in her womb, she asked (Genesis 25:22) the Lord the same thing. It is a question every believer often asks — *“Why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD”* This is exactly what Paul experienced (Rom. 7:18-21).

“I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing...The evil which I would not, that I do...When I would do good, evil is present with me.” — Why? Why am I in this condition? Why is sin so prominent in my nature? Why is evil always present with me? Why is there a constant warfare in my soul? These are questions that I am frequently asked by concerned souls who honestly acknowledge their sin. And these are questions I frequently ask myself.

“WHY AM I THUS?”

The Word of God alone supplies us with the answer to them. — *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6). It is as simple and as profound as that. All true believers are people with two natures — *“Flesh”* and *“Spirit.”* Those two natures are constantly at war with one another. The spirit will never surrender to the flesh and the flesh will never bow to the spirit. We do not live after the flesh or walk in the flesh. We live after the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. And those who walk in the Spirit do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Yet, we never escape those lusts. We will never be free from *“the body of this death”* until we have dropped this body in death.

Painful as this condition is, it is best for us, while we live in this world, that we live in this condition for three reasons:

1. We must never forget that the only thing that distinguishes us from other people is the distinguishing grace of God (1 Cor. 4:7).
2. We must never forget that our only ground of acceptance with God is the blood and righteousness of Christ (1 Cor. 1:30).
3. We must never become content with our existence in this world (2 Cor. 5:1-9).

Let’s turn to the Song of Solomon and see what the Spirit of God teaches us about this conflict that rages in our souls. We will start in chapter 6, at verse 11.

(Song of Songs 6:11-13) *“I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded. 12 Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib. 13 Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.”*

In these verses our Lord speaks to his church, not in her time of shame, sleeping in carnal ease; but he speaks here to his church in her very best condition. She had just begun to again enjoy his blessed fellowship. Christ has now returned to his spouse. The breach she had made by her neglect, he had healed by his grace. There was now a sweet renewing of love and fellowship.

“WHY AM I THUS?”

In verse 11 our Lord speaks to his beloved church and says — Though I had withdrawn myself from you and gave you no comfort for a while, even then I had my eye upon you, even then I was watching over my garden with tenderness, love, and care. Though you did not see me, I saw you. I will never forsake the apple of my eye or the work of my hands. — *“I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.”*

In verse 12 our Savior tells us how that he was overcome by our broken, aching hearts and how anxiously he returned to his people who cried after him. — *“Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.”* It is as though he said — I could hide my face no longer. My love for you compelled me, with irresistible force, to return to you. Almost before I knew it, *“my soul set me on the chariots of my willing people”* (See margin).

Illustration: Joseph hid himself from his brethren, because of their evil actions, to chastise them. But he could no longer refrain himself. His loving heart broken, he burst into tears, and said, *“I am Joseph”* (Gen. 45:1, 3).

1. **We ought to be a willing people, seeking Christ always in love, faith, and hope.** These will be like chariots to bring him to us.
2. **If we continue seeking the Lord, he will return to us in due time.** — *“No chariots sent for Christ shall return empty”* (Matthew Henry).
3. **Our Lord will return to us, because of his own grace, love, mercy, and faithfulness.** We can do nothing to win his favor. He is gracious, because he will be gracious. He loves us, because he will love us. He returns to us, because he will return to us. He is faithful!

In verse 13, the Lord Jesus, having returned to his beloved church, courts her, wooing her heart, and invites her to return to him. *“Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee.”*

THE SHULAMITE

Solomon chose his bride and espoused her to himself, giving her his name. “Shulamite” should be translated “Solyma”. The Hebrew word is the feminine of the name “Solomon.”

“WHY AM I THUS?”

The Lord Jesus Christ has made us so thoroughly one with himself that he has given us his name. He is our Solomon, and we are his Solyma. We gladly take our husband’s name. (Compare Jeremiah 23:6 and 33:16.) All that our Lord Jesus Christ is, he has made us to be by his marvelous grace.

(Jeremiah 23:6) “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

(Jeremiah 33:16) “In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.”

- This name “Shulamite” or “Solyma” means “**Perfection**.”

We are perfect in Christ. We are complete in him. Being washed in his blood, we are spotless. Being robed in his righteousness, we are glorious, holy, and pure.

- This name “Shulamite” or “Solyma” also means “**Peace**”.

“Therefore, being justified, by faith we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” We are no longer at enmity with God. Our consciences no longer accuse us. Peace has been made for us with God. The warfare is ended. God’s sword has been sheathed in our Savior’s heart. Justice no longer cries against us, but for us.

“RETURN”

Our Lord graciously calls for us to return unto him. Four times he says, *“Return, return, O Solyma, return, return.”* So you see how willing Christ is to have us in his fellowship and communion?

- Return to me.
- Return to your first simple faith.
- Return to your first tender love.
- Return to the place where we first met — The cross.

Now catch these next loving words. Our Lord says to his beloved, he says to you and me — *“Return, return, that we may look upon thee.”*

“WHY AM I THUS?”

Our Lord seems to say, “You have not been with me much lately. You have neglected my Word. I have seldom heard your voice, or seen your face. Return, return unto me, that I may look upon you. If you return, I will look upon you again. I will show you my face again.”

- I will look upon you in love.
- I will look upon you in forgiveness.
- I will look upon you in kindness.
- I will look upon you in pleasantness and satisfaction.

But then, in the second part of verse 13, we hear the bride, the church, the people of God speaking. Being convinced of her own sin, being full of shame, she confesses her frustration with herself. She thinks that there is no beauty in her, nothing in her that he could want to see. “*What will ye see in Solyma? As it were the company of two armies.*”

She is saying, “There is nothing in me but conflict and confusion. In my heart two armies are at war. If you look upon me, you will see a raging battle, good fighting evil, light contending with darkness. I am not worth looking upon. I am a house divided against itself.” Is there something in that language that you can relate to, something that is true to your experience?

Proposition: This is a true and accurate description of God’s people. All God’s elect experience inward conflicts between the flesh and the Spirit continually.³

Divisions: I want to talk to you tonight very plainly and honestly about these inward conflicts which cause us so much pain and trouble.

1. These inward conflicts are facts in every believer’s life.

³ A man that is regenerate and born of God consisteth of two men, namely the “*old man*,” and the “*new man*.” So that one man, inasmuch as he is corrupt with the seed of the serpent, is an “*old man*;” and inasmuch as he is blessed with the seed of God from above, he is a “*new man*.” Inasmuch as he is an “*old man*,” he is a sinner and an enemy to God. So, inasmuch as he is regenerate, he is righteous and holy and a friend to God, so that he cannot sin. One man therefore which is regenerate well may be called always just, and always sinful: just in respect of God’s seed and his regeneration; sinful in respect of Satan’s seed and his first birth. — *John Bradford*

“WHY AM I THUS?”

2. This conflict is caused by and begins with regeneration.
3. These inward conflicts do have some good effects.
4. These inward conflicts will soon be over.

A FACT OF LIFE

These inward conflicts are facts in every believer's life. The believer's life is not all sweets. It is not all joy and peace. Faith in Christ will bring some bitter conflicts, which will cause God's child much pain, much toil, and many tears. All of you who are God's children know what I am talking about. The struggles between the flesh and the Spirit are evident enough to you. To the unbelieving, unregenerate religionist, true Christians are confusing paradoxes.

- We are the happiest and the most mournful people in the world.
- We are the holiest and the most sinful.
- We are the richest and the poorest.
- We are men and women who possess perfect peace, yet we are always at war.

We see traces of this conflict throughout the Song of Solomon (1:5; 3:1; 5:2).

Song of Songs 1:5 “I *am* black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.”

Song of Songs 3:1 “By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.”

Song of Songs 5:2 “I sleep, but my heart waketh: *it is* the voice of my beloved that knocketh, *saying*, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, *and* my locks with the drops of the night.”

We see these inward conflicts throughout the Psalms of David (Psa. 42; 43; 73).

We see this inward warfare in Paul's description of his own daily experience of grace (Rom. 7:14-25; Gal. 5:16-18).

(Romans 7:14-25) “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am

“WHY AM I THUS?”

carnal, sold under sin. (15) For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. (17) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. (19) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (20) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (24) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (25) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

(Galatians 5:16-18) “*This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (17) For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (18) But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”

And we see these terrible inward conflicts in our own daily experience.

God’s saints have had the same struggles that you and I now have throughout the centuries. *John Bunyan* wrote a book about his conflicts of heart and soul — **The Holy War**. *Richard Sibbes* wrote another book entitled — **The Soul’s Conflict**.

1. We all have a corrupt nature within us, a nature that can do nothing but sin.
2. We also have within us a righteous nature, which would draw us into perfect conformity and union with Christ.
3. Between these two forces of good and evil there is no peace (1 John 3:7-9).

1 John 3:7-9 “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he

“WHY AM I THUS?”

might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

TWO NATURES

This conflict is caused by and begins in regeneration. Spurgeon said, “The reigning power of sin falls dead the moment a man is converted, but the struggling power of sin does not die until the man dies.” **A new nature has been planted within us; but the old nature is not eradicated.** Do not think for a moment that the old nature dies in regeneration, or even that it gets better. “*Flesh is flesh.*” (Noah, Lot, David, Peter.)

We need no proof of what I am saying beyond an honest examination of our own hearts and lives.

- Our Thoughts
- Our Prayers
- Our Bible Reading
- Our Worship
- Our Love Of Self
- Our Love Of The World

From time to time we have all found by bitter experience the truthfulness of the hymn —

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it!
Prone to leave the God I love:
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

GOOD FOR US

God could remove all evil, but he chooses not to! These inward conflicts do have some good effect. Without question, we will look back upon these days of great evil with gratitude, and see the wisdom and goodness of God in all of our struggles with sin.

- Our struggles with sin humble us and curb our pride.

“WHY AM I THUS?”

- Our struggles with sin make us lean upon Christ alone — “*Salvation is of the Lord!*” “*Christ is all!*”
- Our struggles with sin cause us to prize the faithfulness of our God (Lam. 3).
- Our struggles with sin upon this earth will make the glorious victory of heaven sweeter.
- Our struggles with sin make us rejoice to know that “*salvation is of the LORD.*”

It may be that we will one day see that God allowed us to fall into one evil to keep us from a greater evil; or to make us more useful in his hands.

BLESSED END

These inward conflicts will soon be over (Phil. 1:6; Jude 24-25).

- We shall be free from sin.
- We shall be perfect.
- We shall be triumphant.

Jude 1:24-25 “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.”

Application:

Children of God, so long as we live in this world we will be “*as the company of two armies.*” So I give you this one word of admonition — “*Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*” (Jude 1:21). Rest your soul upon Christ. He is your Sabbath!

AMEN.