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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

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**Heart Problems, True Solutions**

**1 Peter 1:22-2:3**

**Prayer:** *Father, we just want to come before you this morning, I just -- I thank you for your grace, I thank you for your goodness. I thank you especially for your word, I thank you for the gift that it is. And Lord, this morning as we open up your word, we just again want to pray as we pray each time for the presence of your Holy Spirit, that you would guide us into truth and that this truth would be of permanent value. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Our text this morning is from 1 Peter 1, the end of chapter 1 and the very beginning of chapter 2. It reads: *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the glory falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you. So put away all*

*malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation -- if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

Well, Peter's telling us three things here. First he's telling us to love one another deeply from the heart; secondly, that we have been born again through the Bible, through God's word and that even as the grass withers and the flowers fall, God's word will stand forever; and thirdly, like newborn babes, we are to crave this pure spiritual milk of the word of God. Now there's only one sentence in this group of sentences that somehow seems kind of out of place and it's the very first line of chapter 2. It says: *So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.* We see right there in the middle of all of these statements about the scriptures this command to rid ourselves of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. And I wonder how do you respond to a command like that? I mean do you say, "Well, no problem, Lord, those things were never a problem in my life in the first place." And if you say that, I would ask you are you sure? I mean this must have been a very real problem because Peter was addressing it to believers, so it must have been a problem for everyone. And before addressing these particular sins, God starts out telling us all about the power that is to be found in the word of God. First

it is the power to give us new birth. He says in verse 23: *Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.* And secondly that it's the power that God says lasts forever. He says: *The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of God remains forever;* and thirdly, God says this power has been given to us. He says: *And this word is the good news that was preached to you.* Well now God is telling us that since through his word we have all of this power, here comes this great big "therefore," and the therefore is get rid of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander.

Why do you suppose the Holy Spirit chose those five sins? I mean, why not drunkenness or adultery or rage, disobedience, stealing, I mean after all, sin is sin, isn't it? Well the answer to that question really is yes and no. Yes, any and all sin is enough to condemn anyone because God's standard is absolute perfection and any sin, any sin whatsoever is capable of ruining that perfection. As I've often said, it could be murder, it could be stealing a paper clip. Both have the ability to shatter our perfection and render us ineligible for heaven. And no, not all sins are alike. I've said this before, some sins shout and some sins whisper. And the ones that whisper are truly deadly sins because they escape detection. Sins like drunkenness, adultery, rage, disobedience and

stealing, they all shout. They're right out there, they're right out in front along with their consequences. But notice this list of sins that Peter gives us in our text this morning. He's talking about malice and deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. All of those sins whisper. They're very different from the first group, and this is not just my opinion, this is God's own word. This is what he says in *1 Timothy 5*, he says: *The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later.*

See, here's what makes these particular sins so difficult. You know, if I wake up tomorrow having stolen a car in a drunken rage, believe me, I'm going to know it. I'm going to be very aware of that. If I wake up tomorrow having deceitfully slandered someone I envy, I may well be blissfully unaware of it. Not unaware in the sense that I'm innocent but unaware in the sense that I've successfully deceived myself so well that my capacity to detect my own sin is compromised, diminished or even nonexistent. Whispering sins trail behind us. And it's easy to think out of sight, out of mind, but out of mind is not out of conscience or out of consequence and that is what kills and cripples us as believers. See what we wind up doing is we wind up believing the lies we tell ourselves and the good news is that God tells us that we believers have the power to wrest our lives from the crippling power of the

lies the whole world is very comfortable living under.

So the question we're addressing is if God were to speak to you about these particular sins, would you be able to hear him? I mean one of the main reasons why we don't often hear God speak to us is that we don't put ourselves in a position to hear what he is saying. I said just about a week or so ago that Jesus is constantly calling on us to have ears that actually hear. So what is he saying to us in this text this morning? Well the first step in accessing the power that God speaks of is to realize how pervasive these lies that we live in are. I mean I think it was C.S. Lewis who famously noted that fish have no idea that they are wet. Being totally surrounded by water makes it impossible for them to know what not water is actually all about. You have to be dry at least once to ever realize what being wet is. And so it is with truth and lies, specifically lies about who God is and who we are in relationship to God. See that is an ocean that we swim in, it is an ocean that is so full of lies that you don't even realize it. If the ocean that we swim in is one of lies, you won't know it until you experience truth and Jesus Christ is that truth. Jesus said in *John 14*, he said, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*" You see, Jesus represents a standard of truth that shows us, it really does show us what a lie the entire world lives under. I mean it is a

lie that is so pervasive, it's not like the water that fish swim in, it's the air that surrounds us. Jesus tells us that not only is he the absolute standard for truth but that it is he alone who is that standard. Outside of him, no one can even approach God. I mean Jesus' matter of fact statement is enough to pierce the lie that surrounds us in a way that produces howls of anger and even rage. Are you saying Jesus is the only way? Well, actually no, I'm not saying that. Jesus is saying that. So successful have the lies about God and man been propagated that Jesus's claim to be truth alone has been now relegated to fundamentalist wackos. They're the only ones who buy that stuff. Make that kind of a statement in the world today and you have automatically labeled yourself as a knuckle-dragging bigot. How dare you think that Jesus alone is the only way to God.

And so we have to ask ourselves, how do we get here? How do we get to that place where that's the standard? The epistle of John tells us something that Jesus knew and that God's word absolutely knows and that the world absolutely and unequivocally rejects. *1 John 5:19* says: *We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.* That's everywhere. I mean it's a testimony to the power of the evil one that to even suggest that he has that power and that you have somehow escaped it by clinging to the one who speaks the truth to an ocean of lies is to label

yourself as dangerously off kilter as to one of those born-again. You have to remember that Jesus perfectly captured the essence and the nature of the power that runs this entire world. In the gospel of John, Jesus is arguing with the Pharisees and they're questioning his right to say anything suggesting that he's illegitimate and as an illegitimate son, he's not worthy of any respect whatsoever. And Jesus responds to their attack on his lineage with a blistering statement of absolute truth about their lineage. He says in John 8:44: *"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires."* And Jesus then describes exactly what those desires are, he says: *"He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in it him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me."* Understand, Jesus is describing the person who rules this entire world. Jesus also rather of matter of factly describes why most folks don't believe in him. What he's saying is the ocean of lies that make up your lies, your lives, that ocean is so persuasive that the truth itself becomes something that's literally unbelievable. And it's unbelievable because it stands in such stark contrast to everything the world believes. Listen to what Jesus is saying, he says: *"But because I tell the truth, you don't believe me."* You see, the native language of the kingdom we live in is so directly opposite

the truth that the truth itself appears like a foreign language. Truth is a language that everyone has grown very uncomfortable with, including believers. Jesus said in *John 8:31*: "*If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*"

Well, the question I want to pose to you this morning is free from what? Free from the lie that surrounds us like the very air we breathe. But you have to understand that freedom is not a one-shot transaction, it is a lifelong process. See, when you first came into the kingdom of God, the question of freedom and that is to say freedom from sin, that question was probably pretty obvious because our sins at that time were probably pretty obvious as well. Pretty much in my case these were all sins that shouted. I mean I know in my case I never even gave a thought to the whispering sins because the shouting sins drowned them all out. What God is telling us here is that the truth that sets us free is a truth that never, never stops pursuing itself and that once God is done dealing with the shouting sins which are, relatively speaking, a lot easier to deal with, then he's going to start dealing with the whispering sins because God wants you free from those as well. But you have to be willing to hear God when he speaks to you.

Jesus said in *Matthew 11*: "*Take my yoke upon you, and learn from*

*me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* You have to understand that Jesus's yoke is easy and his burden is light only in comparison to a yoke and burden of living your life in a lie. Malice and deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander, they are all calling cards of that kind of burden, that kind of lie. They're all sins that are based on lies. And they all operate only by getting you to lie first to yourself. I mean the Holy Spirit puts this list of sins right in the center of a declaration of the power of scripture because that's where the power becomes evident. I mean *Hebrews 4:12* says this: *For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.* Scripture is literally telling us that God's word is far more than just printed dots of ink on a piece of paper. It is telling us that it is absolutely unique, that it's active, that it's alive. If we take *Hebrews 4* and apply it directly to Peter's list of sins, we notice right off the bat that malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander are exactly what *Hebrews* is describing, they're all hidden attitudes of the heart. God's word directly exposes and judges the thoughts and the attitudes of the heart. You might be thinking well, how in the

world does a printed word do that? I mean how can nouns, verbs and adjectives get inside my head? Well, they can't on their own, but God has the ability to use those printed words on the page to penetrate our defenses. But there's a big "if" and the "if" is if we are willing to let him. You see, Peter's list of sins are sins that we all know thrive under rocks, they're not pleasant sins, they're ugly sins. And the word of God flips over the rock and it exposes what is under it to the light, and just like those creatures that live under rocks, we scramble to get out of that light and back into darkness because the light in this circumstance is painful. It's only when you realize the value of that light, that is the value of the discipline that you're willing to put on that yoke. You see, it's only when we truly tasted the power over the lies in our lives that the gospel is that we will invite that power into our lives. And God wants us to welcome it. You know, probably the obvious if irreverent question is why should I? I mean, why should I invite God into examining the thoughts and the attitudes of my heart? Why should I welcome being uncovered and laid bare before him? Well, here's the key. You are not inviting God into the process, you are inviting yourself. See, God already knows the thoughts and the attitudes of your heart. We are already laid bare before him. In fact my sins were all there before him 2,000 years ago while he hung on a tree. To accept his discipline is to be willing to see what he already sees, to be willing to know

about myself what God already knows about me.

You know, one of the things that I've spoken of many, many times is these two statements that comprise God's sanctification program for all of us, two statements that God uses to shape and mold us into the image of Christ. I've said this many, many times over the years and I said if you apply just one of these statements, you are literally inviting disaster. If you apply and understand both of them, you will be well on your way to being able to listen to God when he speaks to you about things that you might not hear. And the two statements are these: Number one, God loves you; and number two, you are full of it. You see, from the very beginning of coming to know Christ, we begin this process of sanctification which is the process of shaping and molding us into the image of God's own Son. And what God has told us over and over again is that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And that is to say that God's love for us was there from before our birth and because God's love was always there regardless of our performance, God insists it's always going to be there. God truly does love us, but only God knows just how full of it we all are. I mean there's lots of people who are willing to accept just one of the statements. I mean they park on the statement that says God loves me and they can easily become selfish, self-centered, self-oriented people who see themselves as the center of the universe because

after all, they're the objects of God's love. I must be something. They don't get the point of unconditional election, that God fixed his love on us for no reason whatsoever on our account, that God chose us for reasons known only to him because he says in *Romans 9:15*: *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.* Now on the other hand, if you only appreciate the second statement that you and I are full of it, you can easily make yourself into a lowly worm, unworthy of anything let alone the love of God. You see it is terribly important that you hold both of these statements together, that you understand that God truly does love you in a way that will never diminish or never change based on your attitude because God has seen everything you've ever done, every sin you've ever committed and in fact he saw those sins over 2,000 years ago. So knowing that God knows every sin I've committed, he also knows how full of it I truly am. And yet it is God who insists that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. I mean it's hard for us to understand that God's love for us doesn't change even if we become more loveable, because he's loved us to the max even when we were at our worst.

I got saved in my early 20s, I remember when I hit my '30s, I thought, oh, Lord, I am so much better now than when I was when I was in my 20s. I was a train wreck when I was in my 20s. Then I

got to my 40s and I said, Lord, I was a train wreck when I was in my 30s, how did you love that? Then I got to my 50s, I said, oh, I was a train wreck when I was in my 40s. It keeps going. It never stops and you are constantly made aware how full of it you've been your whole life and the fact is that God still loves you and that's what he's trying to get you to get. My love doesn't change or diminish when you find out who you are. I've known all along. I'm just unfolding it for you. That's the whole process, that's how it works. If you understand God loves me and I am full of it, you can have an attitude of heart that allows your heart to drop its guard and truly hear what God has to say. I mean there's no denying it's painful. And you might say, all right, then why would I take up that kind of a yoke and again we go back to *Hebrews 12:1* which warns us that this process is indeed painful. It says: *No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.* So no doubt the process is painful, but the payoff is -- think of this, the payoff is righteousness and peace. I mean you think that would be a no-brainer. I mean if it's an obvious choice between living a lie and living in righteousness and peace, then why do we so often choose the lie? Well, I think the answer is simple, I mean, we don't trust in God, we trust in ourselves. We don't go to the word of God because we delude ourselves because we don't see the lies for what they are.

We have been conditioned to think that our hearts are trustworthy. They're not.

God says get rid of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander and he says it to Christians because we suffer from these sins as well. I mean have you ever confessed to God the sin of malice? I mean that's maliciousness, that's a desire to hurt other people. I mean how about deceit and hypocrisy? Those are really two sides of the same coin. Have you ever envied somebody enough to slander them? I mean I know I am capable of every one of those sins. And I can go my entire life being caught up in those sins and not even realize it. See, if I'm clever enough you'll never even see those sins in me either and it doesn't mean that they're not there, it just means that I'm clever enough and the world is fallen enough to make those sins socially acceptable. I mean that's how living the lie works. The reason we so easily spot the speck in our brother's eyes and miss the log in our own is that the first person we lie to is ourselves. Again, I go back to Cornelius Van Til who argued "man argues from a pre-rational commitment of the heart." What he's saying there is we like to think that we make up our minds based on the issue, based on truth itself when in reality we don't make up our minds, we make up our hearts. He said we make up our hearts first and then we pretend that it was our minds that made the decision. Many or most of the decisions we make about

ourselves about the choices that we make have the illusion of being made on the basis of truth or fact when in reality there never was a rational decision making process there in the first place. We make pre or sub-rational commitments of our heart and then we dress them up with all kinds of logical reasons afterwards. To put it another way, we choose with our hearts and after having made the decision with our hearts, we look for reasons to make our heart's choice look like it came from truth itself when in fact it came from our hearts. And the proof that the decision actually came from our hearts rather than our minds lies in our inability to change our minds when confronted by facts that dispute our heart's conclusions.

You want an example, just look at Facebook. I mean on Facebook we see these arguments that point to a much greater commitment to our hearts instead of the truth. I mean have you ever seen or have you ever even heard of a Facebook argument in which one person actually said, "I found your facts compelling. I thought all of this through and I'm changing my mind. I now agree with you. Thank you so much for this profitable exchange of ideas." Is that what you got on Facebook? You know, 99 percent of the arguments, the way they happen is when the facts become compelling, the ad hominem is what comes out. You know it. Facts go out the window and you become just an idiot or a fool. Jesus had something to say about

that in *Matthew 5:22*, he said: *"But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."* Ad hominem is just a fancy way to say "you fool!" All ad hominem is is a Latin phrase, which means "to the man," it describes this technique of arguing that shifts from facts to personalities. Do you ever wonder why today so many arguments just end in name-calling? I mean that universities have near riots just for inviting speakers that students now disagree with, that many have so-called safe spaces where people are not allowed to use words that might be deemed harmful or hurtful? I mean it used to be that the way you defeat bad ideas was with better ideas, all of which require free speech. We've now reached the point of deciding that speech itself is dangerous and it needs to be shut down. That's because folks have already made up their minds not with their minds but with their hearts. And should you threaten their hearts with a collection of facts, don't be surprised if the response is an attack on you. Name calling means your emotional buttons have been pushed and that's often because your heart's commitment has been exposed. I mean Facebook is simply a national expression of what we all do individually, we all argue from the heart and not from truth. And because we trick ourselves into believing our hearts instead of truth, we deceive ourselves. I

mean that's what Jesus was getting at when he said: *"Why do you see the speck that's in your brother's eye and not notice the log that's in your own eye?"* We make it so we can't even see the truth when it's sitting right in front of our eyes.

Let me explain how this works on a practical level. See, when I argue with my spouse, my biggest problem is -- and I think most of you understand this, I'm not really listening to what she's saying. I mean I've already made a pre-rational commitment in my heart to my position. So I'm just listening. I'm gathering information. I'm looking for flaws in logic. I'm looking for a place to counterattack. Why? Because I'm protecting my heart's commitment. I hear some of her side but my own heart's commitment to my own position cripples my ability to really hear what she's saying. And here's the point. We do the exact same thing with God and that's why we don't hear him. I mean Jesus spoke to many, many people but only those who had ears to hear actually heard him. And God tells us in this scripture that we go over every single month in *1 John 1:9* he says: *If it we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* And I've said it so many times, that word "confess" is an incredibly important word, it's a compound word made up of two Greek words "homo logeo," "homo" means "the same," "logeo" means "to speak," the word literally means to "same speak" with God. And

what it means is to be on the same page that God is on, to be in agreement with him. What is critical to understand in that passage, what God is saying is if we agree with him about our sins, if we confess them, well then he is faithful and just to forgive them and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But you got to understand what God is saying here. This is a conditional statement. God is saying there's a condition to getting your sins forgiven and the condition is you have to agree with God that sin is sin. I've got no problem agreeing with God that drunkenness, adultery, rage, disobedience and stealing are sins. Like I said, those sins shout. I got no problem with acknowledging those. It's the whispering sins that I have a tough time agreeing with God about. And one of the sad realities of our time is that some sins that used to shout are now whispering sins that are much harder to deal with. One case in point is homosexuality. I mean, it's gone from a shout to a whisper to a non-sin issue because so many churches have failed the homosexual community by re-positioning the sin of homosexuality outside even the idea of sinfulness. I mean I've often said you can take any sin and turn it into an unforgivable sin simply by refusing to accept God's conditions for forgiveness, and that is simply refusing to call sin sin. And like I said, it doesn't matter if it's stealing a paper clip or committing murder, if I refuse to agree with God that sin is sin, I have refused the gift of repentance. Then God's not going to

forgive that sin and that sin can literally become unforgivable not on God's end but on my end. I mean I see today many churches touting how inclusive they are and how they're no longer willing to see homosexuality as a sin issue. And let me tell you, if you struggle with that sin, you are welcome here because you know what? Everybody in this room is a fellow sinner. But the answer to your struggle is not in declaring that your struggle with sin is over because it's no longer sinful. I mean, the solution to malice and deceit is not in declaring that malice and deceit are no longer sinful, it's in admitting, confessing and repenting of them. Declaring homosexuality is no longer a sin issue is literally hateful towards those who are struggling with this sin, and it's hateful in the worst kind of way because if in the interests of being open and loving I'm cutting off the one true path to forgiveness these folks have, that is acknowledging that their sin is sin, and if I think I'm being loving, compassionate and kind in rewriting scripture that way when I've actually served up the very worse kind of spiritual poison and I've served it up as some kind of nourishment, well for me as a preacher of the gospel, that approach reeks of malice, it reeks of deceit, and it reeks of hypocrisy.

God says: *So put away all malice, all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.* You know the same is true with all of our

whispering sins, I mean we have a tough time agreeing with God about them simply because they whisper. That wasn't slander, Lord, I mean I was pretty sure that was true. That wasn't deceit, Lord, they just don't understand me. See every time we commit to our own hearts instead of the truth, we limit our ability to hear God and his word. Jeremiah tells us: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?* So do you want to place your trust in your heart or in the truth? I mean the world insists that you can do both, but you can't.

I saw a commercial just last week for a Broadway musical that was obviously celebrating some pretty raunchy sexuality. In this commercial, the lead dancer, he's dancing through a chorus of scantily clad ladies and men shouting, "This is my story, this is my truth." I thought to myself those four words sum it up perfectly. This is my truth? As if you could lay claim to your own truth? I mean the facts are truth itself doesn't work that way. It's not privately appropriated. It's not my truth or your truth, it's "the truth." In fact "the truth" doesn't much care whether or not you agree with it. It simply is. And Jesus Christ lays exclusive claim to it. *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

So if it's the truth you're after you have no other place to go but

the word of God. So we say, all right, how do you do that? You know, I have no formula, I have no technique to offer when it comes to the how to's of getting God's word into your heart. I know of no easy answers here, believe me, I've tried. I know the only way the word of God gets into your heart is through your eyes or through your ears. And I also know that the more that scripture enters my heart the more scripture I experience, the more I am able to hear God. I was a woodworker for some 30-odd years and the more I learned about woodworking, the more I understood it. As I was exposed to it over the years, the more problems that I would encounter, the more experience I had, the more I was able to kind of work through the problems and see better and better solutions. It's the same kind of thing with computer experts, the more they know about the computer programs, the more they know the work-arounds, the more they know how to work with these things and in the very same sense, the more scripture you know, the more pieces of God's revelation you have, the more his wisdom and grace will shape your solutions to living wisely and conquering whispering sin. I mean, it's really not rocket science. It's God's promise. He says: *You have been born again, through the living and abiding word of God.* I mean we have the limitless wisdom of God right at our fingertips and the challenge is getting it from our fingertips into our hearts.

See, when it comes to the word of God, it's not about formula, it's not really about technique, what it really comes down to is attitude. And again this brings us back to where we started this morning, asking about this command that we find in 1 Peter 2. It's an odd command but it's one that we find often in Peter's letters. It's a command to have an attitude, and that attitude sums up whether or not we are going to welcome or resent God's presence in the sins that whisper as well as the sins that shout. Again this is what Peter says, he says: *So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.* See, that longing that he's talking about, that longing is an attitude.

So we can ask ourselves the question: Do you long for the word of God? I mean no doubt you realize it's an acquired taste and you have to work at it, you have to taste and see that the Lord is good, that his truth is sweeter than all of the lies that we deceive ourselves with. Now for us that literally involves -- it involves cultivating a taste that is directly opposite to what my heart is telling me. And so we use those as clues. When I get defensive, when I start making excuses, when I want to turn and run, I suspect right then and right there God is trying to break through and speak to me. And it's right then, it's right there

that you can stop and listen to what God might be saying. Or you can listen to your heart. And by the way, that heart is not the new heart that God has put in us, that's the old heart that we now call the flesh. It wants nothing to do with your sanctification. Your heart and your flesh will always tell you whatever you want to hear because your heart doesn't mind lying at all, and it will kick and scream at the prospect of being shaped and molded into the image of Christ. You know, it's helpful to think of your Christian life, it's like one of those antique cars you read about, they find them in a barn, it's been buried for years and years and God looks at that car and God tells that car that's us, that there's dirt and there's rust and there's rot but if you're willing to hear me when I speak and I tell you I love you and you're full of it, you'll also hear God when he says trust me, and I'll show you the secret places where that junk has accumulated and I'll help you scrape it and sand it and prime it and paint it and it will be glorious because it will represent me. But it's not going to happen without some pain on your part. On the other hand, you can just slap a new coat of paint on it and hope for the best. See, the evangelical world is filled with rusted, rotting cars with shiny new coats of paint on them. Because folks don't want to go through the pain of actually listening to God instead of their hearts. I mean you can commit to your heart or you can commit to the truth but you can't do both. Commit to your heart and you will have comfort and ease

and delusion. Commit to the discipline of truth and you will have righteousness and peace. Commit to the word of God as a habit and you will learn to crave it as newborns crave milk, see, because it's all a matter of attitude. *Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the one who trusts in him. Let's pray.*

*Father, I thank you for your word, I thank you for the ability that you have to bore in, to take care of not only the sins that shout but the sins that whisper, and Lord those sins that whisper are so much more difficult to deal with. They just love to travel under the radar. And Lord, I pray that you would give each and every one of us the ability to stop and to listen and to hear you when you speak and when that speaking becomes dangerous, when that speaking becomes painful, I pray that you would give us the ability to stop right then and there and really listen to what your Spirit is saying. Give us the ability to get rid of malice and deceit and hypocrisy and envy and slander and all of those things that lie beneath the surface. Give us the ability, Lord, to continue to be shaped and molded into the very image of your Son for your glory, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*