

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

Holiness

2 Corinthians 2:11

Dr. Bruce Bickel

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Bruce: Good morning, men!

Men: Good morning!

Bruce: Good to be with you. Don, do you want to bring us back to some sensibility of reverence? (*Laughter.*) Let’s go before the Lord and know that He is God. (*Music.*)

Merciful and sovereign Lord, we need Thee every hour. More and more as we grow in grace and we become more mature in our walk with Christ, the more we realize that we need You every hour. May it be so that this hour would be a time that You would teach us through Your Holy Spirit, that He would lead us into all truth and that we would exalt the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Well, we’re continuing our study in the books of 1 Peter and 2 Peter on the theme of holiness. Holiness means that we’ve been set apart, that we’ve been sanctified for a specific purpose—to bring honor to the Lord. We’ve been talking about the major themes in the book of 1 Peter which are salvation, submission and suffering.

All of our life is based upon our understanding of the gracious and glorious salvation that we have in chapter one of 1 Peter.

Then Peter moves into the next major theme. When you understand the gracious and glorious salvation that you have in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you understand what it means to be submissive. We are submissive to Him. When we are submissive, then it means that we are entrusting ourselves to God. We submit ourselves to our authorities, but we entrust ourselves to God. There is a difference between submission and entrusting. Jesus submitted Himself to men, but He never entrusted Himself to them. He entrusted Himself to a God who cares. So we talked about how we submit ourselves to our authorities while entrusting ourselves to God to work sovereignly in our lives.

And the third major theme has been the theme of suffering. When you and I understand our salvation, our gracious and glorious salvation, we will understand what it means to be submissive. And when you are submissive, you’ll understand what it means to suffer correctly. So Peter has been teaching us in the recent chapters about how to suffer correctly for the glory of God.

One of the things that we’re branching off on a little bit is the wiles of Satan. How is it that Satan comes to tempt us? A couple of weeks ago I referenced a book that I read several years ago when I was working on my doctorate. It’s by Thomas Brooks. The name of it is *Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices*. You have your handout. It’s important that you follow this handout because we’re going to go through this again. I want us to understand that if we’re going to talk about being holy, if we’re going to talk about being submissive, if we’re going to talk about suffering correctly, we need to understand the enemy. If you don’t understand your enemy, understanding his tactics and his strategies, you and I are likely to be defeated and not live the holy lives that we would

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

desire to do. So that’s why we’re taking a little bit of a tangent here and talking a little about this wonderful work by Thomas Brooks called *Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices*.

Now you’ll see this on your handout. Now I don’t know what kind of a week you guys had, but we went through the first five of these last week. We’ll finish them today. But what kind of a week did you have after you learned all these things? Any response to that?

I had a lousy week. (*Laughter.*) Because I realized, all of a sudden, how blind I had been to Satan’s tactics and strategies. I had just not been as aware of them as I used to be. I found myself constantly being attacked. And I had to say, “Lord, no, no, no! Get behind me, Satan! And Lord, remove those thoughts from my mind.” I have to say that I probably had one of the worst weeks being tempted by Satan that I’ve experienced in the last couple of years.

Now I’m just saying that because this made me more aware of what I’m talking about. All of a sudden I’d become aware of his tactics. I’d become aware of his strategies. That’s a part of our battle. If you don’t understand who he is—his power and his strategies and his tactics—you and I will never be able to defeat him. He has already been defeated.

Participant: That’s right.

Bruce: We need to realize that. We’re not striving *for* victory. We’re striving *from* victory. But we need to understand this. Satan cannot cause you to sin. He will tempt you to sin. Sin is who’s choice?

Men: Ours.

Bruce: Yours and mine. And that’s what I was fighting this week. There were so many times when I thought, “Now wait a minute! I was just about ready to choose to have that thought, to choose to have that attitude, to choose to have that deed or that response which was sinful.” And all of a sudden I was just confronted with it. And I had to say, “No, no, no!” My responsibility is to say, “No! Get behind me, Satan! And Lord, remove those thoughts, because if You don’t do that, I’ll choose to sin.” I just had one lousy week! So I’m not looking forward to this week because we’re going to look at the next seven of these. (*Laughter.*)

Participant: Oh, boy!

Bruce: Now my point is this. Honestly, when you’re aware of that, you just become more sensitive to the temptations you’re under.

Participant: Yeah.

Bruce: And that’s a positive thing for us so that we can do battle. Remember, we are coming from victory. Christ has already defeated him. We need to realize that our position is one of victory. We now just need to fight the good fight, because at the end of the day we can be standing. So let’s take a look at the next seven of these precious remedies against Satan’s devices.

Now in your handout, men, in the bold print I have for you what Thomas Brooks wrote—his words—and then in the non-bold print I just gave you a summary of what he’s talking about in this wonderful book.

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

So let’s pick it up at F., which would be number 6. And that would be this. **By persuading the soul that the work of repentance is an easy work.** That’s one of the things that Satan will do. He’ll come to us and say, “Look! Repentance is easy.” And what it does is that it puts us in the position of the sin of presumption. We presume upon the easiness of repentance and we presume upon the easiness of grace.

Now what he basically says is that repentance is easy and forgiveness is available, so yielding to temptation is not that serious. That’s one of his temptations, one of the wiles of Satan.

Now what does that mean for us? We are tempted to think that we’ll only commit a sin a few times and then God’s forgiveness takes over. I call that the sin of presumption.

First we need to consider this. When we find temptation thrusting at us, how is it that we find the whole thing of repentance? When somebody repents insincerely, what does that do to you? You and I don’t even like insincere repentance. Somebody will say, “She didn’t repent right because her attitude isn’t right.” Well if you and I think that, just think about what God thinks about insincere repentance. And one of the things that Satan is going to come along and do is to have us presume upon God’s grace and God’s mercy, and make us think that repentance is something that is easy. Repentance is something that is very, very difficult because it’s a battle of the mind. Repentance is essentially changing direction. And that is not an easy thing. It’s a fight, it’s a battle. It’s warfare because that’s where Satan is going to attack us at the soul to make us think that it’s easy. “oh, God will forgive us. God loves you. God will forgive you.” Yes, that is true. But we have to be careful not to abuse that because the evil one will come.

His primary issue in dealing with us at the personal level is one of confusion and imbalance. He will try to confuse us. He will try to bring imbalance into our lives by having us think that you can go ahead and have that dastardly little sinful thought because you know that God will forgive you. All you have to do is say, “Lord, forgive me,” and it’s taken care of. You’ve got your fire insurance. That’s one of the things he’s going to do to bring us into the position of what I call the sin of presumption. I presume too much upon God’s grace and too much upon my repentance, thinking that it is easy.

Satan will tempt you to think that God will accept such insincere repentance. He will tempt us to think that God will accept our insincere repentance. The Holy One of Israel will not, if it is not true repentance at all. It is an insulting attempt to manipulate God and to presume upon His grace if you think that repentance is easy.

How many times have you had to really repent? Repentance is not a one-time event in your life. Repentance is a style of living.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: It’s not something that you do once to gain your salvation. It’s something you must constantly do every day. Thomas?

Tom: I think it’s interesting too that Martin Luther makes a point of saying that repentance is spiritual, not physical. So this “beat me, beat me,” and “I’ve got to do this against me because I’m bad; I’m not worthy”—that doesn’t cut it, not in God’s eyes.

Bruce: That’s right. He doesn’t accept insincere repentance. Now that doesn’t mean you have to be perfect. We’re not talking about sinless perfection here, men. We’re not

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

talking about that. We’re talking about a sincere repentance—that you grieve over your sin, that you take it seriously, and that you don’t presume upon the grace of God.

Satan is successful if he gets you to think like this. The devil persuades you to sin now on the assumption that it will be easy to find forgiveness later. He says that it’s easy to sin now because you can find forgiveness later. All you have to do is ask for forgiveness. We need to be careful of the sin of presumption. Yes, Don?

Don: Where is the line between believing God’s promises and presumption? On the one hand, yes, God hates insincere repentance.

Bruce: Mm-hmm.

Don: On the other hand, in 1 John 2 it says that “if we sin, we have an Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous.”

Bruce: Absolutely.

Don: And so I’m just curious as to where-- You know, Jesus said that if your brother sins against you seven times a day and he asks for forgiveness, that you’re to forgive him. And I assume that God is like that also. So where is the line drawn? Where’s the balance?

Bruce: I have no idea. (*Laughter.*) That’s a secret thing of God. But you have to understand this. The thing that Satan will try to do is to confuse you on that issue, to make you think that you are so rotten that God cannot do anything with you. Look at Revelation chapter 12, verses 10 and 11.

Transcriber’s Note: Revelation 12:10-11. *“And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, ‘Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ, have come. For the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered Him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. For they loved not their lives even unto death’.”*

Bruce: He is the deceiver and the accuser of the brethren. He’s going to deceive you into thinking that your sin is so bad, or so frequent, or so repetitious that the Advocate you have, the Lord Jesus Christ, is not good enough to save you. You need to realize this. Here’s your balance. Christ is a better Savior than you are a sinner.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: He’s a better Savior than you are a sinner. You come to Him in repentance. You don’t have to evaluate whether it’s insincere or not. Just make sure that you do it. He will evaluate it for you and let you know through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. But He is a better Savior than you and I are sinners.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: And so we need to recognize that. We do have an Advocate. And He is the One who has paid for our sins and we can trust Him. You may not feel that. But you’ve got to what?

Participant: Believe it.

Bruce: Believe it. You may not feel it, but you’ve got to believe it. Yes, please?

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

Participant: What I’ve come to find is that when I try to do this in my own strength, it’s impossible to do. It’s only through Christ the Righteous living in me to be able to do this. And I struggle with that.

Bruce: Well, you’re not the only Lone Ranger, so here’s your silver bullet.
(*Laughter.*) We all have that.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Repentance is a struggle because, first of all, you don’t want to do it, do you?

Participant: No.

Bruce: We don’t want to do it because sin is so easy. And Satan is going to come along and say, “Look! Repentance is so easy that you can go ahead and have that sinful thought about that person, whatever that is, and all you have to do is ask for forgiveness.” Now then, when you recognize that, it’s a fight. And that’s what I had to do this week. I had to choose to say, “No, no, no!” That’s my responsibility—to say no, under the ministry of the Holy Spirit to give me the strength to do that. You can’t do it in your own strength.

Repentance is something that Jesus produces. Did you ever notice the number of times that the Scripture says that Jesus gives repentance just as much as He does saving faith? He gives repentance. Repentance is something that Christ gives us. And you and I walk in that because He’s our Advocate. All I’m saying is that Satan will try to make that easy and make us presume upon His grace. Yes?

Participant: Would you give a few examples, places where Jesus gives repentance?

Bruce: That’s a whole other subject. I don’t have my notes with me. But just look it up yourself. Go to your concordance and look up the word *repentance*.

Participant: Right.

Bruce: And notice the number of times that Jesus gives repentance.

Participant: 2 Timothy 2:25.

Transcriber’s Note: 2 Timothy 2:25. “*God may perhaps grant them repentance, leading to the knowledge of the truth.*”

Bruce: Start with that. Somebody look up 2 Timothy 2:25. Thanks, Don. He gives repentance just as much as He gives salvation, because part of salvation is what? Part of that is repentance. Repentance is something that the Holy Spirit through the Person and work of Christ produces in us. We have to be careful not to presume upon that.

How about the next one? That should be number 7, or G. **By making the soul bound to venture unto the occasions of sin.** Now what he means by that is this—to fear sin so little that we do not keep a safe distance from it. Brooks characterizes this strategy as “making the soul bold to venture unto the occasions of sin.” In other words, he’s saying that you and I choose to do that because it is so easy. It is so easy to sin and we think of it so little.

How many times have you heard somebody in your church talk about sin? We don’t do that anymore in the church, do we? You don’t hear preachers talking about sin that much. And so therefore we take it so lightly that we think that it’s easy to venture into the occasions of sin.

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

The Christian who is tempted sins only when he surrenders to the temptation. Now notice this. Being tempted is not to sin. It goes like this. You need to keep a safe distance from sin and you choose to do it.

Now be honest. Well, I mean, let me be honest. I can’t speak for you and I shouldn’t do that. I was deeply convicted this week of why it is that I choose to sin. In my case, it’s because I love my sin more than I do Christ.

Participant: That’s right.

Bruce: I love my sin more than I do Christ. And men, that is humbling and convicting. It put me on my knees this week, just saying, “Lord, no, no, no! Get behind me, Satan!”

And I’m not saying that we’re to look for Satan behind every rock and behind every little event. I’m not saying that. All I’m trying to say is that if you and I desire to live holy lives that are pleasing to the Lord, we have to understand his techniques and his strategies. Yes, please?

Participant: This is an example for me, and I’m not sure that it fits you. But I yelled at my wife once. I’m walking away and I walked down, and I got mad at the Holy Spirit. And all the same, when I’m walking, I’ve got to go back and, you know, say what I’ve got to say. And all my thoughts were, “Leave me alone, Holy Spirit! I don’t want to talk to her.” But I found that funny, that those were my thoughts all the way. And so, my goodness, I’m just walking down the street ignoring her and not trying to go back and say, “I’m sorry.” I don’t know if anybody else has gotten mad at the Holy Spirit, but—

Bruce: I appreciate your honesty. I mean, who knows what Satan is going to do? But He’s going to help us to realize that you and I can think so little of our sin that we say, “I don’t need to go back and ask for forgiveness.” We can think so little of it that we’re not going to avoid the sin.

So, however it works, all I’m trying to say is that we need to recognize that we need to be careful that we don’t take sin so lightly that we don’t even try to avoid it. We don’t try to keep ourselves from it.

I remember when I was in the Navy. When I was a youngster, when I came to saving faith, one of the commitments I made to myself—and I’m not saying that this is what everybody else does—because I grew up in a family where there was some alcoholism—not in my immediate family. But my mother’s cousin was an alcoholic and a physician. And I always appreciated the way my dad handled that.

When my uncle would come to visit and he would be drunk carrying his bottle of whiskey, my dad would meet him on the front porch of our house and say, “You’re welcome to come into the house, but you can’t bring your liquor inside the house because my sons are here.”

I always appreciated that. He never rejected the man. He took care of the man. But he said, “I’m not going to expose my sons to this.” And I really appreciated that. He took care of the man—my uncle. But he did not let my uncle bring in temptation by letting my brother and me see the effects of alcohol.

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

When I came to saving faith as a young teenage boy, one of the things I committed to myself was that I’m just not going to drink. I’m not going to absorb alcohol. And I haven’t done that.

So when I got into the Navy, they did not have the same convictions I did. (*Laughter.*) So the temptation, after we would fly our missions and the ship would go into port, was that we would go to the officers club. The first thing they would do is hit the bar.

Now I had to be careful because it was so easy for them to make fun of me because I did not drink. Now I had to be careful. How could I relate to them but not be influenced by them? That was not an easy thing to do. And that was a battle; that was a struggle. So sometimes I would drive them in my jeep to the officers club. I would leave the officers club and then go back and pick them up, because I knew that if I would get too associated with this, I could likely be persuaded to do something against my own conscience and my own convictions.

Now I don’t know what they are in your life. But all I’m trying to say is that you’ve got to think seriously about sin because if you think too little about it, you won’t avoid it. Sometimes you just have to avoid it. That’s why I don’t read certain magazines, see certain movies, or listen to certain kinds of music, because I know that these may stimulate something within me that may not be pleasing to the Lord. And therefore I have to avoid them.

Participant: There you go.

Bruce: That’s what we need to do. Sometimes avoidance is what we need to do. And when I don’t have that desire, I have to say, “Lord, remove those thoughts from my mind because if You don’t and I go down that road, it’s going to be a disaster.”

So Thomas Brooks is saying this. Satan’s technique is to fear sin so little that you and I will not avoid it and stay away from it.

H. By presenting to the soul the outward mercies that vain men enjoy and the outward miseries that they are freed from when they walk in the ways of sin. In other words, he’s saying this. Satan causes us to see clearly the happiness and comfort that flagrant sinners seem to enjoy. Comparison again.

Brooks looks at it this way. *“The evil one shines the spotlight on these men when they are wealthy, healthy, happy and carefree, to assure that the believers notice them.”* He wants to call our attention to the healthy, wealthy and wise. He uses the entertainment industry to bombard us with a nonstop parade of celebrities, athletes, stars, business tycoons, all of them smiling and apparently content, yet all the while unconcerned with the things of God.

So what is he going to do? He’s going to say, “Look what they have that you don’t have. Look what they get to do that you don’t get to do. All of the things that they have, and you’re the have-nots.” He’s always going to call attention to what vain people do and causes us to want to do the very same things. Yes, Don?

Don: Psalm 73 is a very good psalm to read in that regard.

Bruce: I was just going to quote that.

Don: Okay. (*Laughter.*) Don is my great end man. (*Laughter.*) Thank you.

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

Notice that Asaph says this in Psalm 73. *“I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They are not in trouble as other men.”* Psalm 73, verse 3, 5 and 13.

Transcriber’s Note: Psalm 73:3, 5, 13. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They are not in trouble as others are. They are not stricken like the rest of mankind. All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence.

Bruce: Asaph was tempted to regard his own faithfulness to the Lord as worthless. Basically, his view of himself was this. *“My faithfulness is worthless.”* Listen to what he says. *“Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence.”* Surely in vain! He says, (*paraphrase*), *“My efforts to keep clean have been in vain because I look at the other people and what they have that I don’t have.”* Psalm 73 is a marvelous passage to help us to understand that.

Notice how he does this. Satan uses this strategy, this tactic, to nourish disappointment and frustration in God’s people. How come they have it and we don’t? Aren’t we supposed to have the abundant life? It looks like they have the abundant life because of all of the things that they do have.

Why is it that the preachers of prosperity, of being healthy, wealthy and wise are so popular? It’s because it’s a technique of Satan to say, *“Compare yourself to what they have. You can have the same thing. Let’s just make it happen in our own strength.”* We’ve got to be careful not to compare ourselves to those of the world who have what we don’t have. Yes, please?

Participant: I just thought, for those of you who have kids or grandkids, I just want to point out that this is much more pervasive because of social media. (*Unclear.*)

Bruce: Absolutely. Boy, that is absolutely true. Social media does not help us in this regard because it’s always saying that this is what they have but you don’t have. Read Psalm 73. Asaph says, (*paraphrase*), *“Have I kept my obedience in vain? Is there no value to it? Because look what the other people have.”*

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: When John Bishop was here, he mentioned that verse about what you said—Christ saying to His people that you shall have life and have it abundantly.

Bruce: Go to John 10:10.

Participant: He asked us—he asked the whole crowd, *“Does anybody know the first half of that verse?”* There were only two men who did. In the first half, of course, as Don Maurer so well quoted, He was talking about what the devil does—how he deceives you and defeats you and defrauds you. But (*paraphrase*), *“I have come to give you life and life abundantly.”*

Bruce: Here’s the contrast. Look at John 10:10. Sig, thanks for bringing that up. Jesus says this in John 10:10. *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.”* Now who is He referring to?

Participant: Satan.

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

Bruce: He’s referring to the wiles of Satan. Now here’s your contrast. *“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”*

You see, we always quote the second part of that verse and never understand the first. This is part of spiritual warfare. He’s going to come and try to steal the life that Christ gives us by saying, *“Look at the people and what they have. They can sin and have all the things of this world. How come you don’t have it? Why don’t you compare yourself to them?”* And it causes us discouragement. Yes, please?

Participant: Bruce, what you’re just talking about there flies in the face of the Tenth Commandment, *“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, wife, etc.”*

Bruce: Right.

Participant: And then, like what’s brought up in h., I just added six words after your statement. It says, *“Because we could enjoy all this junk without the consequences of these actions.”* There are consequences.

Bruce: That’s a good point, sir. Now that’s the other thing. One thing that Satan does is that he doesn’t tell you the rest of the story.

Participant: Amen. That’s right.

Bruce: He’ll bring up the flagrant sinner who has all of the healthy, wealthy aspects that we desire. But he never tells you the rest of the story—the consequences of those choices.

Participant: That’s right.

Bruce: That’s what God would teach us in the Scripture, about the consequences of those choices. We need to be careful of that. It’s not just looking at one side of the coin. Thank you; excellent point.

Participant: The other half of Psalm 73.

Bruce: The other half of Psalm 73 tells you the consequences. You see, he never gives you the rest of the story. He shows the flower but doesn’t show the dirt that goes with it.

Satan frequently uses this mode of temptation when believers are sad, depressed and discouraged. When you’re sad, depressed and discouraged, that’s when he’s going to throw something and say, *“Now look at them. Look what they have that you don’t have. Is walking in and really being a follower of Christ worth it? Is what you’re doing all in vain?”* Remember this. Satan doesn’t tell you the rest of the story—the consequences of those choices.

Participant: The only thing, Bruce, is that our treasures are in heaven.

Bruce: Amen.

Participant: That’s right.

Bruce: Remember that Jesus says this in Matthew 16:24, that (*paraphrase*), *“If you want to be a follower of Mine, you must come after Me, take up your cross and follow Me. Deny yourself.”* Three character qualities—self-denial, self-sacrifice and self-submission. That is not easy to do. That’s why it’s only by the grace of God that you and I can do that. So we have to be careful of the tactics of Satan which will come and say, *“Compare yourself to this world. Look what they have that you don’t have.”*

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

How about the next one? **By presenting to the soul the crosses, the losses, the reproaches, the sorrows and the sufferings that daily attend those who walk in the ways of holiness.** Now he’s contrasting the other side. Not only is Satan going to come along and say, *“Look what they have that you don’t have.”* He’s now going to come along and say this. He causes us to see the disappointments and difficulties that godly men face. *“Look how they’ve suffered.”*

You see, it’s going to be one extreme or the other. That’s where the confusion comes. It’s going to be imbalanced. He’ll take you to one extreme over here and say, *“Look what they have that you don’t have,”* and the next day he’ll take you to the opposite side and say, *“Look at what you don’t have because of what they do have. Look at the sufferings you have to go through.”* Imbalance and confusion are his primary techniques when he deals with us.

Let’s try to explain that a little bit. Finding the Lord Jesus Christ means that you will share to some degree in His sufferings. Paul says that *“I complete the sufferings of Christ.”*

Now did Christ suffer everything that is possible?

Participant: Yes.

Bruce: No. Christ has a body that is still suffering. And who is the body?

Participant: Us. We are.

Bruce: We are. The body of Christ is still suffering. Christ has a body that is suffering. And to be a follower of Christ, it may mean that you and I are completing the sufferings of Christ. And so we need to realize that this is warfare and it’s a battle, and there are going to be injuries. And Satan is going to come along and say, *“Is it really worth it? Is it really worth it to go through all the damage you go through?”*

Satan prevents us from seeing how difficulty often produces good fruit in the believer’s life. Will somebody look at Hebrews chapter 12, verses 10 and 11?

Transcriber’s Note: Hebrews 12:10-11. *“For they—(our fathers)—disciplined us for a short time, as they thought best, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than present. But later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”*

Bruce: Discipline initially leads to sorrow, but eventually yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Hebrews chapter 12, verses 10 and 11. Satan does not show us that a sovereign and loving God is behind all the trials in a believer’s life.

Now let me just go back and review something we’ve talked about before. Go to 2 Corinthians. I’ll give you an illustration of this. 2 Corinthians chapter 4, beginning at verse 7. Now here is the description of the normal Christian life—normal Christian living.

Beginning at verse 7 of 2 Corinthians chapter 4, Paul writes to the church at Corinth. *“Now we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.”*

Now notice this in verse 10. *“Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.”* That’s the first time he says that,

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

and in verse 11 he repeats it. *“For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.”*

Now the key phrase there is *“we have this treasure in jars of clay.”* Your jar of clay is your physical body, my physical body, the earthen vessels, the clay pots—different translations—and the treasure is the shared life of the gospel of the Lord Jesus. He shares that life with us. And there are times where we will have to die to some things because of the painfulness of this world.

But what happens when you come out of that? You see, if you and I had a fifty-gallon drum here on the floor, and it was full of water, we would only be impacting that circumference of space contained in the drum. But if I gave you a hammer and a nail and a saw and a hatchet, and said, *“Come, beat on that can a little bit—that clay pot, that jar of clay, that fifty-gallon drum. . .”* What comes out of that?

Participant: The joy.

Bruce: The water comes out of that. What is inside comes out and all of a sudden it spreads over to the whole world. It spreads over. And if you had this fifty-gallon drum right here, it would only impact the circumference. But if you beat on it a little bit, the water would fill this whole room.

That’s exactly what Paul is saying. You and I die a little bit because of the pains of this world. But what comes out of us is the life of Christ. And that’s how we live a holy life. And that’s how we impact the world.

And what Satan is going to come along and do is to say, “Is it worth it? Are all those difficulties worth it?”

Brooks says this. *“He will help us see the disappointments and the difficulties that godly people face”* One extreme or the other. *“Look what they have that you don’t have,”* and *“look at what you don’t have in comparison with what they do have.”*

The next one I would say is this. **By working in them to frequently compare themselves and their ways with those that are refuted to be worse than themselves.** In other words, he tempts us to compare ourselves to men who we think are worse off than we are. *“But look what he’s done!”*

You see, comparison does two things to us, men. And neither is good for you. One is going to produce discouragement. They are better than we are. He’s better than I am. Look at what he can do that I can’t do. And you get discouraged.

And the other negative comparison is this. Oh, I’m not as bad as he is. Discouragement or pride. Either one is bad for you. And Satan is going to come along and have you compare yourself to somebody who is worse off than you in your mind, because you’re going to say, “That gives me the freedom to continue to do what I’m doing because I’m not as bad as they are.” He’s going to be very, very subtle in how he attacks us on that. Do you understand how that works? It’s through the difficulty of comparison—comparing ourselves.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

Participant: I don’t know if this Scripture is relevant, but I think it’s in Proverbs 3:5 where it says, *“Flee from evil.”*

Bruce: Absolutely. We’ll get into that in just a moment. One of our responses is to flee.

This strategy of having us compare ourselves to some body who is worse off than we are is an old strategy, one that Satan apparently used on the Pharisee who found himself praying alongside the tax collector. Look at Luke chapter 18. Go to Luke 18 as an example.

Luke chapter 18, beginning at verse 9. *“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves.” Now notice that—trusted in themselves--“that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt.”*

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself prayed this. ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes for all that I get’.”

Now notice. *“I’m not as bad as this man.”* That’s exactly what Satan is going to tempt us to do.

Notice the contrast. *“But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner.’”*

Notice the next verse. *“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

You see, one of the things that Satan is going to come along and do is to come along and just say, *“Compare yourself to somebody else because you’re not as bad as they are.”* See how that works?

Next one. **By polluting and defiling the souls and judgments of men with such dangerous errors that they do in their proper tendency tend to carry the souls of men to all looseness and wickedness.** Now what in the world does that mean? It means this. He encourages spiritual ignorance and unbiblical thinking.

Biblical thinking produces biblical behavior. Unbiblical thinking frequently results in unbiblical living. *“Gross errors make the heart foolish and the life loose,”* Thomas Brooks wrote. *“Gross errors make the heart foolish and render the life loose,”* in other words, not obedient.

He goes on to say this. *“Error spreads and frets like a gangrene, and renders the soul a leper in the sight of God,”* when we have unbiblical thinking.

Now we need to recognize Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 11:3.

Transcriber’s Note: Romans 12:2. *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

2 Corinthians 11:3. *“But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere devotion to Christ.”*

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

Bruce: The Holy Spirit transforms believers by renewing their minds. *“Do not be conformed to the system of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”* Satan will come along and try to bring imbalance and confusion into Biblical thought.

I was at a meeting several years ago with some men who were Christian leaders in the city of Pittsburgh. And the thought came up about something that was going on in the church where the Scriptures were not viewed as sufficient anymore. And his comment was this. This particular issue had to do with the homosexual issue. He said, *“Culture has changed, so how can we not accept that anymore?”*

Participant: Oh, my!

Bruce: *“Because the culture has changed. How can we not accept that and still call ourselves Christians?”* You see, that’s unbiblical thought. Satan is going to come along and say, *“Look!”* Unbiblical thinking produces unbiblical behavior. *“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”* And the real battleground in this particular issue is the sufficiency of Scripture. Everybody says, *“Scripture is my authority.”* But is it sufficient for all acts of faith and obedience? That’s the real battleground. Satan will try to get us to think unbiblical thoughts.

Now here’s another thing he’s going to try to do that is an unbiblical thought. Brooks goes into great detail on this. **He tempts us to think that we don’t need the public means of grace.** Now what do I mean by that? He encourages us to think that the public worship of God, pastors’ sermons, the Lord’s Supper, accountability to a local church and Christian fellowship are unnecessary. Our flesh is all too eager to agree with these temptations. Our flesh wants to cry out, *“Church attendance is legalistic. I can know God’s truth without hearing the Bible taught, because it means to me what it means to me and that’s the important issue.”* Not what the Scripture says, but what does it mean to me?

By tempting us to have a low view of the public means of grace, Satan encourages us to neglect them. How often do you hear that? *“I don’t need to go to church. I’m a Christian. But I don’t need to go to church because I can learn about my relationship with God on my own.”* That’s a very, very subtle temptation that creates unbiblical thinking.

Now the converse is also true, Brooks says. **Satan also tempts us to think that we don’t need private means of grace.** He encourages us to scoff at things like prayer, Bible reading, personal devotional times.

He tells us this type of thought. It’s too hard. Sometimes he tells us that it’s too time consuming. Sometimes he tells us that it’s too boring. Sometimes he says, *“You don’t have enough time.”* The remnants of sin in us cry out, *“I don’t think these spiritual disciplines are necessary.”* to which Satan then says this. *“Then don’t do them.”*

Satan tempts us to embrace all sorts of doctrinal errors. He undermines our confidence in the Bible as God’s error free and sufficient word. God’s recipe for right living, Brooks would say, is this. It’s right thinking.

Participant: Yes.

Bruce: *“We are better equipped to thwart the adversary, the devil, when we are nourished by sound doctrine.”* Yes, Don?

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

Don: Yes, and Satan is so subtle here, because he’ll say, *“Well, you don’t feel like praying and God doesn’t want you to be a hypocrite, does He? So, you know, don’t pray,”* or whatever. It doesn’t work like that. I mean, we pray that God will help us to want to do those things, or read the Bible, or whatever. I find in my own life that private means of grace are sometimes more difficult than public means of grace.

Bruce: Absolutely. That’s why Brooks covers both sides—the public means of grace as well as the private means of grace. Satan is going to come along and say that they are really not that necessary because you can develop your relationship with the Lord on your own, because it’s really just you and your personal relationship. And that can be whatever you want it to be.

Lastly, I think here is an important one. **To work to effect wicked company.** In other words, he persuades us to cultivate close relationships with ungodly peers, close relationships with ungodly people. Even unbelievers know that *“bad company corrupts good morals.”* Look, for example, at Proverbs 1:10-15, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, and so forth.

Transcriber’s Note: Proverbs 1:10-15. *“My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, ‘Come with us; let us lie in wait for blood. Let us ambush the innocent without reason. Like Sheol let us swallow them alive and whole, like those who go down to the pit. We shall find all precious goods; we shall fill our houses with plunder. Throw in your lot among us. We will all have one purse.’ My son, do not walk in the way with them. Hold back your foot from their paths. For their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood.”*

1 Corinthians 5:9-13. *“I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people, not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of ‘brother’ if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church that you are to judge? God judges those outside. Purge the evil person from among you.”*

Bruce: Brooks is very blunt when he says this. *“Guilt or grief is all that good, gracious souls get by conversing with wicked men.”* Guilt and grief are the only things you get by associating with wicked people.

Now we need to understand that we’re to be in the world but not of the world. So we need to understand that there is a point of balance. I have some wonderful friends who are dear to me, but they are very ungodly. And I know that I can have a friendship with them, but I can’t have intimate fellowship.

Participant: Yeah.

Bruce: There’s a difference. I can have friendship. I can’t have fellowship. You can’t have fellowship with those who are not like-minded, unequally yoked. I can’t have fellowship with them, but I can have friendship. I need to draw the line and realize that I can go so far, but I can’t go any farther than that, because if I go farther than that, they’re likely to influence me and Satan is going to say, *“But aren’t you to go into all the world*

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

and preach the gospel? Don’t you need to associate with them and do like the Romans do?” All those things you’re going to hear. You’ve just got to be careful because ungodly people will bring about ungodly results.

But who are your close friends? This is an issue that he goes into a great deal about. *“In whom do you confide? In who’s company do you delight? To whom do you go for help? These people who are close to your soul must be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Men: Amen.

Bruce: You can have friends in the world, but you can’t have fellowship with the world. Do you understand the difference? Fellowship is something intimate between the family of God.

When a Christian forges a close relationship with an unsaved person, notice this. Brooks says this. *“Satan effectively acquires an assistant.”*

Participant: Very good! Wow!

Bruce: Satan acquires an assistant. Now folks, that is difficult to know how to balance. You and I are in the world but not of the world. It’s like a ship in water. You want the ship to be in the water, but you don’t want any water in the ship. You and I need to be in the world. But we don’t want the world in us. And one of the things we have to know is where do we forge our godly relationships? Our accountability can only be with those with whom we have intimate relationships because of the Person and work of Christ. You can have friendship with people in this world, but you can’t have Christian fellowship. Do you understand the difference?

That’s what Brooks is saying. You’ve got to be careful. Who do you confide in?

I told you one of the greatest pieces of advice my father gave me years ago. And that was this. Wherever you go, ask the Lord to give you one brother to hold you spiritually accountable. He didn’t say, *“one friend.”* He said, *“one brother.”*

Now John Bishop was that man from the Naval Academy, whom you met, who taught us a couple of months ago. By the way, John had a mild heart attack. I talked to him yesterday. He’s doing well.

Participant: Good.

Bruce: He’s on medication. The doctor says that he needs to lose some weight and start working out a little bit. *“Take care of yourself and you’ll be okay.”* There was no heart damage.

Participant: Good.

Bruce: But it was just sort of a wakeup call. And John said, *“I’ve just been woken up. I’m going to need to take care of myself.”* So he has appreciated our prayers.

So John at the Naval Academy was the man who held me spiritually accountable. Everywhere I’ve been, I’ve asked the Lord to give me one brother to hold me spiritually accountable. That’s what Brooks is saying. You’ve got to be careful of who those people you confide in are. They just can’t be people of this world.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

Participant: Putting the homosexual issue aside, I’m amazed that our churches—and I don’t think it’s just Anglican or Episcopalian, that a priest will marry two people, but only one of them has to be a Christian. And that’s within the ordinance of various churches. I know for sure that Episcopalian, Anglican and Presbyterian churches will do that. And I’ve always been amazed. Why would a priest or a minister in good faith yoke two people together by the blessing of God that don’t share in Christ?

Bruce: That’s a good question. You’ll have to ask them. (*Laughter.*)

Participant: I’m not talking about friendship, I’m talking about intimacy.

Bruce: Yes, that’s right. You have to be careful of that. Now here’s how—

Participant: As a pastor, Sig, I can say that the other choice is not to marry them and have them continue to live together. Most of the marriages I’ve performed these days are of people that are already living together. And there is an argument which says that you’ve got to go and live in your own separate domiciles before we marry you. But you know what? It is one way of trying to build a foundation of what God has implemented already. And then, hopefully, Christ is going to work to permeate the relationship. In a perfect world, we would do just what you’re saying, Sig. But if we lived in a perfect world, all us pastors would be out of a job.

Bruce: It’s not an easy thing to do, men. The Holy Spirit must be our guide. But let the sufficient Scriptures, His word, direct us in what we need to do.

Let me give you just a couple summary statements here of what Brooks says about how we ward off the evil one. I’ve given you the tactics and strategies. Now let me give you a couple of things he says we need to work on.

First of all, **every Christian is engaged in spiritual warfare.** We need to realize that all of us are involved in spiritual warfare. Satan is currently using one or more of these devices that we just described to tempt us to sin. Vigilance is necessary. We’ve got to be vigilant. That’s the first thing he says.

Secondly, this. **Recognize that temptation is Satan’s handiwork and not just some subjective yearning inside you.** It’s not just something burning inside you; it’s his handiwork.

Thirdly, **reject the common belief that the devil makes you sin.** *“The devil made me do it”* is a good advertising jingle, but it’s bad theology. Satan can only tempt. If you sin, it’s because you choose to sin.

And then he says this. *“When you resist the devil, he flees.”* James chapter 4, verse 7.

John Murray, a theologian of some years ago, writes this. *“There is no external power in the universe that can cause a rational being to sin. That movement, that decision to sin, comes from within.”* Nothing external can make you do that. That’s a choice that you and I make.

And so Brooks would say this. Either flee or fight against it when you’ve identified the tactics of Satan.

Go to Ephesians chapter six, and we’ll close with this. I appreciate you guys listening to all this. It has not been an easy thing to teach because it’s very, very convicting, and there is so much that he gives in these 167 pages on these twelve things that I didn’t have

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

time to go over them. So I just trust that I didn’t confuse you with all this. But go to Ephesians chapter six, please, beginning at verse 10.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.” Now where does our strength come from?

Men: The Lord.

Bruce: It’s from the Lord and His might. The strength that we have is not our own. Men, if you think you can do this on your own, you’ve lost the spiritual battle already.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God,”—now notice—*“that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the evil one.”*

You and I are not to fight Satan. You and I will lose that battle. That battle has already been won. Christ has already gained that victory for us. You and I stand *in* victory; we’re not standing *for* victory. Notice the number of times he says that you stand. He doesn’t say that you fight. He doesn’t say that you take him on. He says that you stand.

“Put on the whole armor of god, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers,. Against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm”—the second time he says *stand*.

“Stand therefore”—the third time he says *stand*. What are we supposed to do to take on Satan?

Men: Stand.

Bruce: Stand. *“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and as the shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.”*

Now notice. Three times he says *“stand.”* Now I want you to go back to Romans chapter five. Three times he says, *“stand.”*

What is it that we stand in? Let’s look at Romans chapter 5, beginning at verse 1.

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we . . .”

Men: Stand.

Bruce: Where is it that you and I stand?

Men: In grace.

Bruce: We stand in the grace of God. That’s how you and I take on the evil one, to thwart his techniques and schemes, the wiles of Satan. You and I stand in the grace of God because we’ve been justified by faith.

“Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” Part 2

That means this, brothers. You and I need to be aware of his tactics, but you stand in God’s grace. It’s in the strength of His power and His might that we stand in His grace. May God be pleased to help us realize that our responsibility is to be aware of when we’re being attacked. But also realize that we stand in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ because we stand in His grace. Thanks be to God.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Let’s pray. Father, this has been somewhat jumbled and somewhat disheveled. I just pray that You would override our ability to communicate these truths, that You’d speak to us through the Holy Spirit. First of all, Father, we pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will be exalted in what we’ve learned, that You will guide us into all truth. Help us to realize that You’ve won the victory over the evil one, and we just need to stand in the grace that You give us. God’s resources at Christ’s expense is where we stand. And may it be so, for Jesus’ sake. And all the Brave Men said,. *“Amen.”*