

Filled with the Holy Spirit

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Bible Text: Ephesians 5:18
Preached on: Sunday, June 24, 2007

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I do want to encourage you this morning to open your Bibles to the book of Ephesians chapter five, in your New Testament the book of Ephesians chapter five. And we are going to be all over Ephesians today, but we are going to stay in Ephesians.

I brought a little prop with me. Many of you all are familiar with this. Fifteen years ago this was given to me. This is the real deal, so to speak. This is a megaphone and this was the one thing that I took from my university when I left it.

When I went to Baylor University one of the last things I ever thought that I would do in life would be to become a cheer leader, but for three years of my life I spent my life on the field both in Waco, Texas and all over the country leading cheers for lack of better terms.

Now, let me set something straight real quick because those of us who went to Baylor are very proud of this. We are actually called yell leaders. There is only two colleges in all of America who do not call the cheer leaders. They are called yell leaders. It is Baylor University and Texas A&M University. The reason for that was up until the early 70s they were the only two colleges in America that did not have female cheer leaders. They were all male cheerleaders and they didn't do any of the stunts and the throwing and stuff. They simply did these choreographed yells.

But due to Title IX in the early 70s Baylor University being a private school was not able to handle the financial burden of having to have equal access and equal financial for both male and female students and so to this day Texas A&M University is the only college in America that has an all male yell leading squad.

The reason I share that with you is this. Every summer even as college student we would do what you see our high school and our junior high students in this community do. You go to what they call a cheer camp. It is a place where you go to refine your skills and to become better at what you do.

Now I have never been to a high school or a junior high one because I didn't participate at that level in my life. I was on the field as an athlete. But when I got to college I found out that Division I cheerleading is a sport. I had more injuries as a yell leader than I did

as a player due to the fact that when girls fall from 15 feet those elbows hurt when they hit your teeth. There is a lot of stuff that goes on there.

But, nonetheless, every summer we would go to a university and there at this university there would be over 100 Division I cheerleading squads. Now let me put that in perspective because usually we just think of the SEC, ok? The Old Miss and Mississippi States, the Alabamas, the Tennessees, the Floridas and such. I am talking everything from UCLA to Syracuse, from Wyoming to Florida State. Every Division I school that you see on TV play were there, over 100 Division I colleges.

Because of the position that I held on the cheerleading squad I had a very unique thing. My job—this will scare some of you—they gave me a wireless microphone. They had a sound system hooked up on the student side. They gave me the microphone and said, “Say what you want to say and do what you want to do.”

It is a frightening thing. My job was to actually choreograph between the student body, the cheer leaders and the football team what needed to be done, what yell needed to be do. So for all intents and purposes when we would go to cheer camp I was the, quote, head yell leader. Why? Because I was the one who choreographed everything that took place.

We would get together at a special meeting every day those that were the, quote, heads. There would be about 100, 110 of us and we would discuss different issues. Everything from team unity to situations with the administration and all the things that come up.

One day we were discussing how to you get a student body or how do you get a group of fans who do not want to cheer, to cheer? How do you get them to act crazy at a football game when they have no apparent reason for acting crazy?

Now, understand, Tracy and I went to a small private school that was not known for its football. When I did recruiting for Baylor University I used to joke to them. I said, “Guys, don’t come for the football, come for the girls.” Ok? That was my tag line because the girls were beautiful—case in point, hello. Ok, but football, a little lack luster.

So we are discussing all this stuff and there was a young man who was leading the conversation. He was a former four year alumni and cheerleader at his university. He was now the coach at his university and he was heading up this discussion.

And in the midst of all this I raised my hand. I said, “Sir, I have got an interesting question.”

He said, “What is that?”

I said, “I know where you cheered for four years.” And I said, “I know they weren’t any better football than we were.” I said, “I know it was a school about the same size. I know these things.” But I said, “How do you get your fans to do what they do?” I said, “I have

seen you all on TV. Those guys go nuts. They go crazy.” I said, “The people, when they come to a Baylor game, they are more interested in their date and the fashion show than they are the football game.” Don’t believe me? Ask Tracy. If you want to see the latest fashion show, just go to a Baylor football game. I mean it is 110 degrees in August and girls are wearing heels. Guys are wearing sport coats. I mean it is impress your date or somebody time. They are not there for football because usually the football is not worth being there for.

I said, “How do you do it? What do you do so good that we are missing out on?”

I will never ever forget his response. He said, “Jeff, you want to know how we get our fans to act so crazy at the games?”

I said, “Sure, give it to me.”

He said, “Lots and lots of beer.”

That is what his answer was.

I said, “What?”

He said, “That’s right.” He said, “Our fans show up.” He said, “They are three sheets to the wind. They are drunk as skunks and when you have got somebody who is drunk you can do anything with them on a football field.” He said, “You don’t have access to that at Baylor, do you?”

I said, “Well, we are not supposed to.” I said, “There is a few of them.”

And then he began to explain. He said, “Jeff, you need to understand something. It is not what we do on the outside that makes our fans do. It is what is already on the inside of them when they show up.”

Today we are going to be in Ephesians chapter five, a simple little verse. And then we are going to go all over the book of Ephesians. But let me say from the outset that whether you want to believe it or not, we live in a world where the Church of Jesus Christ has become incredibly apathetic, anemic and to the point it hardly makes any difference in our world.

We live in a world today where 95 percent of local churches are not growing. We live in a world today in the United States of America where there is not one county from California to Maine that has a greater percentage of Christians today than they did in 1995. We live in a world today where people are more and more resilient to the message of the gospel.

And let me state for you, by the record, that the reason is not because of what we are doing on the outside, but the lack of what we have got on the inside.

Listen. We have got better musicians. Hopefully we have got better preachers. We have got a lot more comfortable facilities. We have got more materials. Go to a Christian book store. You can find a book on every topic in the world. So why is there apathy?

Look at verse 18 of chapter five in Ephesians. It says, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”¹

Now some of you all who went down to the honky tonk last night just got real scared on me, all right? Now I am going to state something very clear. The Bible is clear from the beginning to the end and even here in Ephesians chapter five that drunkenness is sin. You can’t debate it. You can’t argue it. Look at it. It says, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.”²

But I have got some relief for you. I am not here to talk about alcohol. That is a no brainer. That is a black and white issue. We shouldn’t even have to debate that issue. But why tucked right here in verse 18 of chapter five is there this verse on alcohol?

If you were to go home today and read Ephesians from the very first verse until the end of chapter six you will find no other reference whatsoever to alcohol or even an allusion to alcohol. Listen. Verse 18, though it references alcohol, is not about alcohol. What the apostle Paul is saying is simply this. Just as it is obvious that a person who is drunk is in sin, it should be but often is not, it should be as obvious that a person who is not filled with the Holy Spirit is in just as great a sin.

Listen to me. A lot of you woke up this morning and you thought about people you know or you mentioned people you know who hung out last night, went three sheets to the wind. They hung out in the bars. They hung out in the honky tonks. They did all this stuff that we like to point fingers at.

I have got some scary news for you. Are you ready? If you are here this morning at church and you are not filled with the Holy Spirit of God it is just as sinful as if you went to the honky tonk last night and got lit up, folks.

The problem is this. We want to point our fingers at the world and go, “Why aren’t they more like us?” The reality is they have become more like us. The reality is this. They are just honest about it.

It says here, “Be filled with the Spirit.”³

Now the book of Ephesians, for those of you who may not be aware, it is six chapters long. The first three chapters are all doctrinal. I mean it is heavy duty Bible teaching.

¹ Ephesians 5:18.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

The last four chapters instruct us how do we live out what we believe. And the tough here is verse 18. “But be filled with the Spirit [of God].”⁴

What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Now, for those of you who have a background or such and for my friends who have a Pentecostal or maybe even a slightly Charismatic background this is where we are going to diverge and go in different paths, because I am going to make a statement based on God’s Word that when a person gets saved, when a person gives their life to Jesus Christ. When they ask him to forgive them of their sins—listen to me—you get all the Holy Spirit you are ever going to get. That is it. The Holy Spirit does not move in stages. He is not a credit card. He is not an installment plan.

I have friends of mine that say, “Well, after a while you begin to do this and this. Then you get more of the Holy Spirit.”

Listen. I got a problem. If when I get saved I don’t get all of God, then I get all of hell. Did that communicate? If when you get saved you don’t get all of God, then you get all of hell because I need all of God to forgive me of all my sins if that makes sense.

Well, let me tell you what the Bible does say. It says that once we are saved there comes points in our life where we experience a filling, so to speak. I mean, after all, the apostles dealt with this.

Acts chapter two, based on chapter one, Jesus told these guys. He said that, “Just wait here in Jerusalem seven days. The Holy Spirit is going to come upon you. You will receive power. You will be my witnesses Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth.”

They waited around. The Holy Spirit came. Folks, they had... I mean I tell you they had a party in Acts chapter two. I mean they did. When Pentecost shows up, when the Holy Spirit comes like a mighty rushing wind it says that there were tongues of fire on their heads.

Now, folks, I have got some news for your Pentecostal brothers. Pentecostal is not a denomination. It is actually a Jewish holiday, 50 days after what we know as Passover and Easter, ok? But nonetheless there were no other tongues of fire anywhere else in Acts, ok? But they had this incredible event, tongues of fire on their head. I mean this is an event. We knew God showed up, right? That is in chapter two.

Do you realize that two chapters later in Acts chapter four it says that the apostles had a prayer meeting and at that prayer meeting they were filled with the Holy Spirit? And when they were filled with the Holy Spirit it said that the building shook. It said that they spoke with boldness. Let me tell you what happens. It is not a matter of how much God you have, it is how much of you does God have? And the reason we have an anemic

⁴ Ibid.

Christian community in our world today is not because God has entered our lives, it is because we have not turned over our lives to him.

What does it mean today to be filled with the Spirit? Because if you are a believer in Jesus Christ and you are not filled with the Spirit of God, folks, listen. You are living the same sin as a drunk alcoholic. That is what Ephesians 5:18 says.

Let me give you four Cs today to kind of hang your hat on. The first mark of someone who is filled with the Holy Spirit, the first C, is that they are converted. You cannot fill up a container that cannot be filled up.

I want you to turn in chapter two of the book of Ephesians, chapter two verses one and two. As you are turning there, outside of Romans chapter eight this is probably my favorite chapter in the New Testament. The book of Ephesians chapter two describes the difference in a lost man and a saved man.

Beginning in verse one it says:

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world,
according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh
in the children of disobedience.⁵

It states there that before a person is saved there is a spirit of disobedience in their life.

You know, there is some things that we do as adults that really bother me, particularly when it comes to Christianity. One of them is this. We seem to somehow give different levels of the salvation experience.

Let me give you an example. Let's say we have a 40 year old man, a 40 year old man who is living in sin. I mean, he is a drunk. He is a this, he is a that. I mean, he is the derelict of a community. He goes to church one day and he gets saved. Do you know what people go around time saying? He was gloriously saved.

Let me tell you what. Last week at VBS we had six kids that were gloriously saved. It doesn't matter if you are six or 46, sin is sin, folks. And, listen. It says the Spirit of disobedience, the spirit of disobedience that causes a man to go to a bottle is the same spirit of disobedience that when you tell your six year old to clean the room they say, "No." It is the same spirit. It is just that when we are 46 years of age we have learned how to deal with it a little more sophisticatedly than a lot of other areas.

It says here that "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience..."⁶ Listen. You cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit until you have the Holy Spirit. And that does not take place unless somebody is converted.

⁵ Ephesians 2:1-2.

⁶ Ephesians 2:2.

Listen. It says you used to walk according to the course of this world. You used to walk according to the prince of the power of the air.

When a person is, quote, gloriously saved, whether they are six or 96, what happens according to Scripture is this, that the Holy Spirit of God comes and lives inside of them and from that point forward they are the temple of God.

Now 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 20. You cannot be filled with the Spirit until you are converted by the Spirit of God. No preacher can convert you. No church can convert you. No baptistry can convert you. No amount of tithing can convert you. No amount of serving can convert you. Only the Holy Spirit of God can convert an individual. It is not religion. It is a relationship. There must be a conversion.

But today we are talking about being filled. What does it mean to be filled? Because once I am saved, once I have entered into that relationship, why am I not filled?

It leads me to the second C, conviction.

Turn over to Ephesians chapter four verse 30, a simple little verse. And, by the way, most of the verses we will go to today you are familiar with. You just may not know where they are.

Ephesians chapter four verse 30 says this. “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”⁷

Now one of the things that the book of Ephesians does for us is it gives us different words for being saved or being converted by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it uses the phrase an earnest or a down payment. In other words what God began in you he will continue until the of Jesus Christ as the book of Philippians says. But here notice it says that when the Holy Spirit entered your life you were sealed. You are what we call as Baptists, secure. It is called the security of the believer.

And understand something. People ask me. Can a person lose their salvation?

The answer is no, if they are saved. You cannot lose salvation if you are saved. The question is: Is a person saved?

It says here they are sealed unto the day of redemption. In other words, there is no opening. There is no cutting into. They are sealed.

But notice what it says, “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God.”⁸

⁷ Ephesians 4:30.

⁸ Ephesians 5:18.

If you read chapter four of the book of Ephesians it deals with this struggle of choosing the world or choosing God.

And let me say that when you choose the world, when you decide to live according to the ways of this world, according to Ephesians 4:30 you literally grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

Now, folks, we live in a world today that we don't grieve a whole lot. We get upset about things. We get frustrated about things, but to literally grieve... if you have actually grieved over somebody or a death or a situation, you literally... all your emotions come to a head and you don't function really well. Those who grieve typically weep uncontrollably. They typically cannot control their body. They may fall down into the floor.

You know what grieving is. Grieving isn't sobbing tears. Grieving is gut wrenching agony over a situation.

It says, "Grieve not the holy Spirit."⁹

The second C is conviction. A person who is filled with the Holy Spirit is convicted over their sins. They are not just sorry they got caught. They are not just upset that they are living with consequences. They are literally grieved with the fact that they would do what they did, say what they say or thought what they did in light of an almighty God who is willing to purchase their soul on Calvary.

Let me tell you what Ephesians 4:30 says when it says grieve not the Holy Spirit. Christian, when you decide to sin, when you decide to rebel, when you decide to do something that God does not ordain, the Holy Spirit then is inside of you. Now watch with me. It literally goes... like I can't believe we are going here. I can't believe we are doing this. I can't believe you just said that.

That is what it is saying here. It says, "Grieve not the holy Spirit."¹⁰

For the sake of time need not turn, but in John chapter 16 Jesus makes us a promise. He says it is actually expedient, it is actually better for you that if I leave you, for if I don't leave the Comforter, the Holy Spirit cannot come and be a part of your life.

And then the gospel of John it tells us three things the Holy Spirit will do in our life as far as conviction is concerned. It says it will convict us of sin. It will convict us of righteousness and it will convict us of judgment.

Listen to me, believer. If you can go out into the world and do things and be a part of the world and not be convicted over it you are either A) not converted or B) you are not filled with the Holy Spirit.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

And I want to say something because I deal with this problem all the time. A non filled Christian and a lost person often times look the same on the outside. The difference is when God gets a hold of them, where do they go next?

Let me ask you a question. Does your sin convict you? I don't mean you feel sorry about it. I don't mean saying, "I don't believe I did that." I mean, do you stay up at night going, "God, why would I do this to you?"

Conviction of sin, conviction of righteousness. It is that third one, the conviction of judgments. You know, a lot of times Christians get in this mentality, "Well, I am saved. I don't have to go to hell."

That is right, but even a saved believer one day has to go to judgment. 1 Corinthians chapter three says that we will all as believers one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We will have to give an account of that which we have done in the flesh, whether it be good or whether it be bad.

Listen up, Christian. I have got some news for you. No matter what you have done in the dark that nobody in this room or anybody else has seen, you will still look Jesus Christ eye in the eye one day. You will. And you will give an account of what you did. If that doesn't grieve you then you are not filled with the Holy Spirit. You need some serious repentance in your life.

Ephesians 5:18 says, "Be filled with the holy Spirit."¹¹ You cannot be filled unless you are convicted of the sin in your life.

Does it bother you the things you do? Do you struggle with the fact that you are tempted? Does it keep you up at night saying, "How could I do that to my Savior?" not, "I can't believe I got caught"?

There is a big, big difference. There is a conviction. Oh, but there is a third C and we are ramping it up here. The third C is confrontation.

Now, folks, I am going to tread lightly and I am going to ask you to do me a favor this morning and that is pay very close attention to what I am about to say. The mark of a Spirit filled Christian, number one they are converted, number two they are convicted of their sin and number three they are willing to be confrontational.

Still in chapter four of the book of Ephesians verse 26 and 27. It says:

Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.¹²

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ephesians 4:26-27.

It states there that it is possible to be upset, to be angry, to be frustrated and yet at the same time not to be in sin. We live in a very judgmentless world today that states if your voice is raised or you are upset obviously you are in sin.

No, no, no, no, no. Two times in the ministry of Jesus in John chapter two and at the end of his ministry, at the beginning and at the end, he saw things taking place that need not take place. In their church, in their temple there were people that were literally selling salvation. They were saying that salvation was not by the grace of God, but it was by paying enough money. It was by showing up to church enough times. It was by doing this and by doing that. Jesus showed up. It says that he overturned the tables. He threw the money out the door and he let the doves go.

Folks, that is called being angry. That is called being mad. That is called being upset. It is what the Bible calls a righteous indignation. It says, “Be angry, and sin not.”¹³

Listen to me. There was a book written a couple of years ago called *The Death of Outrage*. Folks, we have forgotten to be outraged about sin. We have gotten so immune to the sin of this world we have forgotten to confront sin.

Listen, we have got to begin to be confrontational. And what I mean by confrontational means this, calling sin what it is.

Look in verse 27. “Neither give place to the devil.”¹⁴

Two fronts on that. Number one it means don’t get caught up in sin yourself. But, number two, if we continue to let sin go, if we continue to let it slide the devil gets an inch, then he gets a foot, then he gets a yard. And pretty soon he has got the whole entire football field.

Listen to me, folks. In the Christian community today he has the football field. He is having his way doing what he desires to do. We have given place to him because we have not been confrontational over sin.

Folks, the Bible gives us a process here in Matthew chapter 18. It is very clear. It says if there is a brother who has sinned against you, a sister who has sinned against you or someone you know who is living in sin. It says go to them one on one and talk with them. If they will not repent, if they will not hear you take two or three witnesses with you.

Now, let me tell you how we have misunderstood that. A lot of us think that means, “All right, I am going to get my best buddy and we are going to whoop up on this guy.”

That is not what that means. That means take another person or two who have been victims of the same sin that you have. And the whole purpose is for restoration. The whole purpose is to see them repent and be yielded to the Holy Spirit.

¹³ Ephesians 4:26

¹⁴ Ephesians 4:27.

It says and if they don't listen to that, take them before the Church.

We don't see a whole lot of that nowadays, do we? We haven't been confrontational. I think it is on a lot of reasons. One, we have just become judgmentalless. But on the other hand we have been doing the same thing to everybody else. So how dare I call you on the carpet that I am standing on myself?

But there is one passage of Scripture that I want you to turn to, the book of Galatians, a little bit to the left, chapter six.

As you are turning to Galatians chapter six let me give you a little bit of warning. If some of you hear what I am saying about confrontation and something is welling up in you thinking, oh yes, I can't wait to do that in somebody's life, you have missed the boat, because when God calls you to call somebody on the carpet about their sin it grieves you. You lose sleep. You go, "How... I don't want to do this."

Listen. If you are excited about confronting somebody about their sin then God hasn't told you to confront them. Trust me, because the last thing that a God called confronter wants to do is actually do the business.

Think of the story of Nathan and David. You all know the story, right? David is the king. He has an adulterous affair with Bathsheba. He kills her husband. The child is lost. There is a dozen lies. And do you notice that none of his top level executives said anything to him? None of his chancellors, none of his hierarchy came to him and said, "David, you are an adulterer. You are a murderer. You are a liar."

It reminds me of the children's story, *The Emperor Has no Clothes*. Are you all familiar with that one? It is a story about an emperor who loves beautiful tailored clothes and he goes to these parades all throughout town. One day a couple of swindlers come to town and they convince him that they have got the most beautiful material in all the world and that it will help him as an emperor, that they are going to sew him a set of clothes and that those who are ignorant or those who are unlearned will not be able to see the clothing. This way he will not only look beautiful, but he will know how to decide who is wise, who is smart and who should be at the upper level of his administration.

So as they begin to sew the clothes he sends his right hand man. He says, "Go check out the clothes." He shows up and these swindlers don't have any fabric at all, but this guy is afraid to admit that he can't see it. He thinks he will get fired. He thinks he will no longer be a ruler in the kingdom. So he comes back to the emperor and he says, "Emperor, they are beautiful."

He sends another guy, the same story, a third guy, the same story. Finally, he decides to have this huge parade. He is going to show off these new clothes. They come and they get him dressed and he can't see them either. But he is not about to admit it because if he

admits it, then he will believe that he is unfit to be the emperor because his right hand man saw them and these other did even though it was a pack of lies.

So he begins to go through town. He is parading himself through town and listen to what the townspeople do. “Whoo, King, you are looking good. Emperor, man, those are great looking clothes.”

If you have seen the little story book that is drawn out for kids you know he is naked as a jaybird walking through that street. In fact, there is people behind him pretending to lift the veil on his garment because they don’t want to be seen as ignorant or unwise.

Until finally the children’s story goes a little child in the back steps forward and says, “The emperor has no clothes on.”

King David had a bunch of people who bought the lie and lived a lie except a guy by the name of Nathan. Nathan was a prophet. Nathan was a man of God who came to David one day and said, “David, you are the man. You have sinned.”

And let me tell you something I believe and I believe with all my heart. Folks, you know, we talk about revival all the time. We need a good old fashioned pew revival. Do you know what a good old fashioned pew revival is? The person that is sitting on the same pew as you, you turn and say, “You are the man.”

How many times do we hear about sin and we just... we don’t deal with it? We sweep it under the carpet.

“Oh, I didn’t hear that.”

Listen to me. We need more Nathans.

Let me show you how to do it. Look at Galatians chapter six. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”¹⁵

Let me tell you what Galatians 6:1 says is if you know someone who is struggling in sin, they are living a lifestyle they shouldn’t be living. They are living and doing things that you know are not congruent with the message of Jesus Christ. It says, “Go to them who are spiritual in the spirit of meekness.”

If you have anywhere in your heart the desire to slap them, hit them or go, “Aha, revenge,” don’t go to him because it says, “Consider yourself, lest you also be tempted.”

For years and years and years as I have studied this verse I misunderstood it. I thought it meant I will just use a graphic example, that if we have an individual or there is an individual who is struggling with the sin of alcoholism, with drunkenness, that I should

¹⁵ Galatians 6:1.

be really prayed up because If I go and talk to him about it, I don't want to become a drunk as well.

Or if there is a person involved in some certain sexual sin that I want to be careful because I don't want to fall into the same trap that they are falling into.

But as I am beginning to study I realize that is not what it means. It says, "Lest also thou be tempted."¹⁶

Do you know what I think it means in the context of Galatians six is this. If you are going to go and confront someone, you are going to go deal with somebody's sin, be careful because pride is quick to swell up. Arrogance is quick to swell up. Revenge is quick to swell up because there is that thought, aha, I get to nail him where it hurts.

You know, as a parent when you discipline a child how many times have you said this, "It hurts me more than it hurts you," as the parent? When a person is being called of God to confront sin it hurts the confronter more than the guilty. Why? Because the last thing that a person ought to want to do or desire to do is to call somebody on the carpet about their sin. But listen to me, folks, we have got to start doing it.

Just like you parent your children and you don't allow them in certain behaviors. Listen, we need to start confronting within our own church, within our Christian community, people in other churches. I am not saying go and look for it and point it out. But when God presents it before you, deal with it instead of going, "Well, I will just pretend I didn't hear that. We will just skip that on."

Folks, listen. We have become sick as a body of Christ because there is so much sin in us but nobody is doing anything about it.

Let me tell you what happens. This is the life of Jeff Meyers. I get phone calls every week from people telling me things you all are doing. You didn't think I did, did you? Oh, yeah. I get them all the time.

But from this point forward I am taking a stand. When you call me about something that somebody else is involved in that is sin, here is what you are going to hear from me. "Then you deal with it."

I don't know it. I never saw it. I never experienced it. Listen. It said that those of you who are spiritual go to that person lest thou be tempted also.

You say, "Well, who am I to deal with it?"

Well, maybe you need to have a personal revival.

Folks, I am all about helping people who are struggling. I am all about dealing with sin.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Trust me. As a pastor I deal with this on a daily basis. But listen to me. When you see it, when you experience it, when you are struggling with it, deal with it. Deal with it.

By the way, that is how you show them you love them. It is not about pegging them at the football game and going, “Aha, sinner.” It is about finding them, putting your arm around them and saying, “Brother, can we go have a talk? Sister, can we go have some coffee? We need to talk about some things.”

Listen. It says in the spirit of meekness. It says a spirit filled Christian is converted, they are convicted about their sin and willing to confront. Being angry and sinning not.

But here is the fourth and the final, Ephesians chapter six. Those of you who have studied the book of Ephesians, chapter six is known as the spiritual warfare chapter. It says we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers and rulers of darkness and it talks about putting on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit. It talks fighting this spiritual warfare, but listen to verse 19 of Ephesians chapter six. It says:

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.¹⁷

In two verses at the end of the book of Ephesians three times the apostle Paul says, “Pray for me that I will speak with boldness the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Here is the final peg that proves that we have become a spiritless or a filled less Christian community. It is because the commission, the calling out, the speaking on behalf of Jesus Christ, what we know as evangelism and witnessing has gone by the wayside. There must be a conversion. There must be a conviction. There must be a willingness to confront if it presents itself and there must be a commission. There must be a going out and a speaking boldly the message of Jesus Christ.

I am going to ask you two very difficult questions this morning. These aren't going to be fun. And, by the way, before I ask them let me give you a little bit of warning. I have asked these two questions to our deacon body as well. So I am not picking on you all first. I picked on them first.

Are you all ready for them? It is not very fun.

Question number one. When is the last time you invited somebody to church? Think about it. Now I don't mean you are at the ball game on Saturday night and you tell them you are going to church on Sunday. I don't mean saying, “Oh, you ought to come by and see us sometime.” I don't mean that. I mean actually saying, “Hey, you need a place to worship. You want to come to our Sunday school class. Why don't I pick you up?” Or

¹⁷ Ephesians 6:19-20.

you call and remind them that morning. I mean actually aggressively inviting them to church. That is the easy question.

Let me give you the tough one. This is going to hurt, you all, get ready. Some of you all teased last week. You got your toes stomped on. I am fixing to take your legs, twist them off your pelvis and throw them out the back door. Here you go.

When is the last time that you have not just invited somebody to church, but you have seen them come, get saved or get plugged in?

I guarantee for some of you that has been years.

Why? Because at the end of every service we see a lack of people down here at the front. I am not talking about weeping at the altar. I am talking about people coming and joining the church, people coming and being saved, people coming and rededicating themselves.

I want you to think about that long and hard. When is the last time you spent and invested your life in somebody to where they actually got integrated into a Christian community, whether that be through salvation or just being a part of a local church because they are already saved.

Where is the commission? Where is the boldness?

I want to conclude this morning with a story that is not going to be any fun for any of us because I believe we have lost the focus. I don't believe that we are convicted. I don't believe we are confrontational in the right manner. And I really don't believe that we have the commission.

There is an advantage and yet a disadvantage to not being a northeast Mississippi native. The disadvantage is we don't have any family here so to speak. We don't have a network of friends. I didn't go to high school here. I don't have... I can't go to the store and see 100 people that I grew up with and with that comes some type of an disadvantage. But there is also an advantage. One of the advantages of not originally being from this part of the world is that because I am not from this part of the world I am pretty friendly to everybody because I need some friends. And because of that I end up meeting people who are new to our community.

It doesn't take long before they realize what I do for a living and pretty soon we get into a conversation about some different things.

There was an individual a couple of months ago. He was new to town. I began spending some time with him, talked on the phone several times. Even went to lunch and such and he kept telling me. He said, "You know, one of these days I am going to show up at church there."

I kept inviting him. I kept hounding him. I kept pestering him. Nothing happened.

A couple of weeks ago, Tracy and the boys and I were out in Texas on vacation. We were out there and I wasn't here but he decided to show up. He just showed up completely... he didn't tell me he was coming or nothing. The only reason I found out that he was here is because Brenda Williams told me that he was.

Now, folks, and visitors, hopefully this is not your experience. I want you to hear me real clearly. When I spoke to him about his experience at East Booneville Baptist Church listen to what he said.

He said, "It was pretty good except nobody said hi to me."

That's my friend who came completely unannounced. I didn't put him on the platform. And do you know what his analysis of us was? Nobody said hi to him.

Let me be honest with you. You ought to be ashamed. You ought to be embarrassed. But at the same time it ought to light up a fire underneath you that says never again. Never again will somebody darken the doors of this church that we don't say hi to. Never again will somebody who is new to our community we not go and reach out and say, "What can we help you with?" Never again shall somebody come and we just let them walk right on by.

You say, "Well, how does that happen?"

I am going to tell you why, because when you are not convicted and you are not confrontational, you are so wrapped up in yourself that you can't see the others around you. You are so wrapped up in your agenda and what you want to do you forget there is a world out there.

By the way, folks, let me tell you something. This is my right. Those of you over here, there is a group of people over there that you don't see very often. Hey, left side, I feel like Billy Sunday. There is a group of people over there you might want to say hi to. I am serious about this. Whether it is a visitor who comes in unannounced or people within the whole church, how many times do you come and you never speak a word of kindness. You never speak a word of hope.

Listen to me, folks. If you don't say hi to each other in the house you are not going to invite anybody outside of the house. Folks, we have got a problem. We are not convicted. We are not confrontational and we are not on commission for Jesus Christ which means we have got a problem.

The question is: Are you going to deal with this?

In just a moment we are going to have a time of invitation. It is going to be a little bit different. As brother Ed mentioned brother Ricky is out of town. He is going to come and after I pray in a moment we are going to stand and we are going to sing. But it is not a

song that you and I are going to sing. Brother Ed is going to sing over us and I want you to focus on the words as he sings in just a moment, as it talks about clearing the stage. What it talks about is removing all the distractions, removing all the stuff that is in life so that we can focus on God and God alone.

Listen to me, folks. We need to be convicted. We need to be confrontational and we need to be on commission and we are not, we are not and we are not.

Folks, may you change your heart today, may you change your focus. May you change your direction. Because listen to me. There is coming a day where you will face Jesus Christ eye to eye and you will give an account of the sin you did not repent of. You will give an account of the sin that you just let go by and you will give an account of the lost and dying world that you did nothing to nothing to. The day of reckoning is coming, but today you can change the direction.

Let us pray.