***Man is a Tripartite Being

Colossians 1:21-23

COL-164***

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Our subject is "Reconciliation of the Colossians," segment number nine in Colossians 1:21-23.

. . . It is important in the Christian life to understand that Satan and his demon helpers are always on the prowl to lead Christians into temptation, and into acts of evil. That is what is behind the apostle Paul's statement here in our passage in Colossians 1:21 that we have been studying: "And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds." That passage and that principle and that concept are taken up by the apostle Paul (that same idea) in Ephesians, and expanded upon considerably. We'll get to that in a moment. What is behind that statement is the apostle’s attempt to alert these Christians to the fact that what they once were, in their unsaved days, they can still be in their saved days. They can still have a sin nature that's operating with all the grossness that it operated on before they were saved: "Although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind (engaged in evil deeds)." The implication is, as he goes on there, that that can happen again. The Bible repeatedly warns us that this can happen.

For example, 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be of sober spirit. Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world." Satan is our adversary. We have to be of a sober, gravitas (dignified) spirit, so that we would be on the alert because the devil is just looking for someone that he can devour.

Well, I needn't explain to you how sad it is to see a Christian, especially one who has had great opportunity of instruction and orientation, to suddenly come to a point in life where they play the game of the sin nature, and Satan devours them. Suddenly, someone with great promise; great potential; and, great service opportunity is zilch. And you say, "How could this happen? We all depended on this person. This person was so invaluable to our ministry. We kept looking to this person to fill a certain need, and they always did it. And now, they're gone – inside the devil. He has devoured them.

Ephesians 6:11-12: "Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Against whom is he scheming? The Christian.

Verse 12: "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." Our battle is not against human beings. These human beings are the front people for demonic forces, which are described here in verse 12, who operate in the first heaven – the atmosphere that surrounds us. Satan is called the god of the air.

Verse 16: In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you'll be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one." And there's your clue. How can a great Christian go down and become a dog and a pig of the Christian life?

"In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith." Faith is useless. The object of faith gives it meaning, and there the faith is – faith in the Word of God, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, the flaming missiles that Satan shot at him were extinguished by doctrinal principles – His faith in the Word of God. It would have been a pity if Jesus didn't know the principle with which to answer Satan's temptation.

In John 17:15, we have Jesus, in his high priestly prayer, saying to the Father, "I do not ask You to take them (the believers) out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." There again, the Lord is praying for us because the devil is out to get you. And you can go ahead and be cutesy-pooh when something evil and gross is done – for you to say, "The devil made me do it. Well, that's probably true. But it's not a matter of pride, and it's not a matter of humor. It's not funny. It's a great tragedy, and it happens in Christian circles all the time, mostly because the Christians aren't anywhere near competent to be able to stand up against him. They are so lacking in expository instruction.

Revelation 12:10: "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 to come, for the accuser of our brethren (Satan) has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. We learned from Job that Satan has access into heaven. He can speak to God. He can criticize. And day and night, this passage tells us that he calls God's attention (and the whole royal court's attention) to every one of our sinful actions as members of His royal family. He scoffs at us. He ridicules us. He laughs in the face of God. And he has access to heaven. But come the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation period, there's a great battle in outer space between Michael (leading the angels of God) and Satan (and his demon angels). And Satan is defeated. At that point, he is taken by the scruff of his neck by Michael, and he's booted out of heaven, never to be able to return.

That's where the Scripture says: "All mankind now be on guard." The devil is hopping mad. He knows that his time is really short. Once he's been denied further access to heaven, he knows that he has three-and-a-half years left, and that's it. It's over. Therefore, his rage is at a high intensity level.

In the meantime, right now, our evil does not go unnoticed. As Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, my teacher at Dallas Seminary, used to say, "Secret sin is open scandal in heaven."

Then there is 2 Corinthians 2:11: "In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes." The context tells us how we should live so that the devil cannot take advantage of us, because we're not ignorant of his schemes.

Now, for many Christians, the devil is not going to have a frontal attack. He's not going to outright encourage; entice; and, tempt you to some gross sin that you are revolted by, that you would look at twice. He's a schemer, and he analyzes you, and he knows what you love. He knows what you'll wake up to tomorrow morning, and what the first thing is that you'll go about your business and be occupied with. That's where he's going to get you. He knows where the focus of your life is. And this schemer will get to you if you are not a Christian who is alerted to this, and knows how to resist the devil, so that he will flee from you.

Then there is 2 Timothy 2:24-26 which also teaches us this constant prowling of the devil to bring us down: "And the Lord's bond servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach patience when wronged." This is very important for those of you who are serious about doing your Father's business. You talk to people about salvation. You talk to people about doctrinal principles. And you get all the ignorant, blinded response that just wants to make you blow your top. You can't do that: "The Lord's bond servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to all (even the stupid), able to teach patience when you are wronged," because when they cannot answer Scripture that you have brought to them, then they're going to go after you. They will attack you personally. That's when you have to be patient when you are wronged.

Verse 25: "With gentleness, correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth. These people are wrong. Most of the religious world is wrong. Most of Christendom is totally ignorant of what the Bible has to say, because they're never anyplace where anybody can explain it to them. Therefore, it is outrageous. But you must hope that your patience will enable God to get through to them, so that they may grasp the truth. Why?

Verse 26: "And that they may come to their senses, and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." When you're wrong in doctrine, you're a slave of the devil. That's the point. When you're wrong in doctrine, and when you're wrong in the decision-making of your life, relative to what is the will of God, you are immediately trapped by a snare of the devil, and you are captive to him, and you are no longer doing the will of God. You are doing the will of Satan. This is serious business, very serious business. And unless you're aware of the fact that you have an enemy that's prowling around you, unseen, but as powerful as anybody, just short of God is in the universe, and is vicious, and is hateful, and is desirous of bringing you down, then you will not be on your guard. And you'll be a sitting duck for the devil.

One more: James 4:7: "Submit, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." There's the formula. Submit therefore to God. You may say: "Well, wait a minute. How can I submit to God? What does He want me to do?" That's where His instruction comes in. That's why you have to have doctrinal instruction: so that you can submit to God, and then you will be able to resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Certainly, this is well-demonstrated by Jesus in that wilderness temptation. The only way He could resist the devil, in His humanity, was with the Word of God. And then it says, indeed: "The devil left him."

Now, we pointed out to you last week that these attacks of Satan are directed specifically at the facets of the Christian's soul. The Christian's soul has three facets to it. It's very important that you understand how the immaterial part of man is constructed and that construction includes a mentality; it includes volition; and, it includes emotions.

**The Body**

A Christian's make-up includes a body.

**The Soul**

Then, in that body, it has an immaterial part. That immaterial part is of two natures. God breathed into Adam the breaths of lives (plural): soul life; and, human spirit life. The soul is made up of a mind; of a will; and, of emotions. The mentality of the soul (the mind of the soul) is the control center of the person. The mind takes in information, and it makes decisions accordingly. The mind is, furthermore, designed by God to direct what the soul and the emotions do. It is the mind that learns things. It is the mind that then takes that knowledge, and either receives it, in spiritual things, or rejects it. If you receive it, it goes down to your human spirit for storage and usage. From there, it goes up to direct your actions. So, your mind learns things, and your mind decides things. That's what we mean by the perceptive and directive sides of the mind.

Furthermore, your mind is what tells your emotions what to do. It is your mind that tells your emotions what to do in spiritual things, and in temporal things. And it is your mind that tells your volition what to do. This can be the Spirit of God directing, or it can be the sin nature directing. The sin nature here will teach your directive mind what to do, and your directive mind will put you negative on your volition. It will put you negative in your emotions, in spiritual things, and in temporal things.

The whole point is that what you think is what you are. It is the mind that is the control center of everything you do. And if this mind is filled with God's point of view, then you are going to respond. Your doctrine is going to be stored there. You're going to be aware of what the devil is able to do to you. And you will be constantly being told, in the decision-making factors of your life, what to do. Your mind will know what to do, and you will not waste your life. And your emotions will be under control. If your mind does not control your emotions, you will be a yo-yo, and you will go amuck.

The charismatics are centered on emotions running amuck. That's the only reason they go to church – to have a big, exciting experience. And if the mind is not controlling your volition, you'll do all those crazy, evil, sinful things, such that then you will look back and say, "Why did I do that?" You did it because you didn't think the Bible was important. So, you didn't get instructed. And when you got instructed, you held mental reservations, so that they could not get put down in your human spirit.

There's our "epignosis" (full knowledge). The "gnosis" (knowledge) is nonsense. This is information. It doesn't do you a bit of good. Here's where most people go to church. Their whole lives are up here in information. Their brains are full of knowledge of the Bible. But they're always holding back. But once you say, "Yes, Lord," that becomes stored here. And now you have something to work with.

So, the mentality of the soul has to be the control center of everything that is done. And Satan seeks to place the mind under the control of human viewpoint values and principles which come out of this sin nature area. A human viewpoint mentality is the one that's going to be manipulated by Satan to perform acts of evil in order to ruin a believer's life, and to neutralize the Christian in his service. And it doesn't take much to close your mouth for the Lord.

**The Will**

The volition part is a person's capacity to make choices, and to make decisions in his life. This is based upon the guidance of the values and principles that are up in the mind. The volition is positive or negative toward the will of God, as expressed in Scripture. Choices from the human viewpoint mentality do not provide experiences which lead to divine viewpoint. Some people think that, by their volitional experiences, they can learn truth. No, you can't. All truth, spiritually, has to come from the Bible.

**The Emotions**

Then there are the emotions. These are the feelings of the soul. They determine your responses toward the issues of your life. The emotions have to be under control of the mentality of the soul. The emotions are not to dominate your soul. The emotions cannot think. Therefore, they are not a guide to truth. And when you find yourself in a touchy-feely operation, which is what is so prominent today in Christian circles (the emotional approach), I want you to understand where they're dealing with you. That preacher is getting up there. He's making the smiley face, and he's making the mouthful-of-teeth smile. He's making all the cute emotions. He's playing your emotional content. And this is how he's manipulating. And there is no truth from the emotions. And what will happen is that you'll be the devil's patsy.

**The Codeword "Jesus"**

I've observed something that just struck me recently, on the way that the touchy-feely gang works. There is a codeword that uniformly is used to play the emotions, to get people to move in the direction that is opposite from the direction of God. Sometimes it is used sincerely. And that word is "Jesus" or "Christ."

**Mormonism**

In Mormonism, the word "Jesus" is used with great tenderness and great emotion. One time, on a tour at Salt Lake City at the temple, the lady who is was the guide was showing us that huge statue of Christ that they have in the rotunda. And she was saying, "We are the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Christ's name is in our church name. And that's because He is at the center of what we do. And we are probably, therefore, more Christian than any other denomination in the country." Now, these are people who are all planning someday to become gods themselves. These are people who are teaching that God the Father was a human being Who evolved into a God, because He proved Himself worthy. And they love the words "Jesus" and "Christ." Who do you think gave him that idea? The devil. What a clever scheme! They take the very name of Christ, and make that the point of deviation.

**Islam**

In Islam, the name of Jesus is spoken with great tenderness (with a lot of touchy-feely emotions). He's a notch below Muhammad, but He is in the line of Abraham. Therefore, Christ is very important to the Muslims. And they use His name. This is the same thing and the same scheme from the devil.

**Buddhism**

Go to Buddhism, and Jesus Christ is one of the reincarnations of Buddha. And the name "Christ" is very important to them. They have great emotion for Christ. He is one of the reincarnations of Buddha.

**Hinduism**

In Hinduism, Jesus Christ is right up there with the best of them. He is a man (an avatar) who is so holy that He became a God. "Jesus."

**Churches in Christianity**

Well, let's get down to the churches that respect the Bible. And you will notice that in all those religious groups, there's no doctrinal instruction. The substitution is Jesus, and an emotional response. Let's get down to the churches that do respect the Bible, and maybe even have a true doctrine of salvation.

I have noticed that these preachers love to talk about Jesus and about Christ. And they have little quips – little, pithy sayings: "You'll never know how much Jesus means to you until you need Him." I get perspired when I hear that, don't you? Is that going to take you the next time you're up against a crisis of life? No. And there is one vast denomination I know of where they love to speak about Jesus. Why? Because they don't teach doctrine. And when you don't teach doctrine, then you go for the emotions. When you teach doctrine, you're dealing with the control center that God has established in the mentality of the soul. That's why you have to understand how the soul is made. Otherwise, sooner or later, the devil is going to pull a scheme, and you're going to be willing to sit under instruction that is playing to your emotions. And if you're not careful (you'll be a little better prepared), you'll suddenly not realize that they're using the name of Jesus to con you. That's the cover word for the preacher's failure in expository preaching. Then they have you, because your volition cannot be controlled because your emotions are in charge.

So, God has made a wonderful part of us in the soul, and it is designed to work in a very specific way. The mentality is in charge. It must be filled with God's point of view. Then it will be fed from the human spirit, with the Word of God stored there, so that the mind can make the directions to tell the emotions how it should feel about something, and to tell the emotions how they should react.

Now, I gave you three major financial opportunities and needs this morning. Be sure you do not forget them. They're extremely critical. But your response to them is going to be what's up in your mind? I didn't appeal to your emotions, and I didn't challenge you to perform some kind of an act of your will, but to understand, and to think, what is involved here, and where you may fit into that, because the devil will bestir your emotions, and he will always drive you away from true doctrine and from Christ.

Now, God made man in His Own image, which is reflected in the human soul. When it says, "Let Us make man in Our image,” this is what God was talking about: "We (Members of the Godhead) are persons. We're not a Star Wars force. We are personalities. Therefore, we have a mind; we have volition; and, we have emotions. Let's make man just like that. He won't have the omnipotent level, but he's going to be just like we are. He will reflect us as deity in His soul. He will be able to think. He will be able to make decisions. He will be able to have feelings and emotions.

**Man is a Tripartite Being**

Then the Scriptures also say that God had made man in His Own likeness. What this means is that He made us in the likeness of the Trinity. Man is a tripartite being. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, we have this pointed out to us. Paul says, "Now, may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete without blame at the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." The Word of God is alive and powerful, and it says that it can divide the soul and the spirit.

Now, it is sometimes true, that in the Bible, the words "soul" and "spirit" are used interchangeably. But you also see, just by those two Scriptures, that they are also separated as distinctive parts of man's being.

So, we are a trinity as the Godhead is a Trinity. We are made of a spirit, and a soul, and a body. And don't reverse them. Keep them in the order of Scripture.

**Our Human Spirit – Contact with God**

Now, what God did was to breathe into the body of man, the body which He had created – He breathed into him the breaths (plural in the Hebrew) of life; that is, He breathed into him spirit life and soul life. With the human spirit, man has God-consciousness, and He is capable of knowing and communicating with him. If you did not have a human spirit, you'd have no contact with God. Therefore, when you're born into the human race, and you're born spiritually dead, what contact you have with God? Nothing. Zero. That's why you had to be born a second time spiritually, so that you can have a point of contact with God. That's why the unsaved, when he tries to talk about religious matters, is a bust. He gets it all wrong. He has no contact with God. He has no capability of understanding things from God.

**Our Human Soul – Contact with other People**

Then, with the human soul, man has contact with people. He has consciousness of others about him. And he's capable of making contact with other personalities, like himself.

**Our Human Body – Contact with the Material World**

Then, with the human body through the five senses, we have contact with the material world. That is the way we are made: our human spirit (our God-consciousness) is our point of dealing with God; our soul is our point of contact with people, and of dealing with other people (other personalities); and, our body, through the senses is our contact with the material world.

Now, what Satan does is specifically to direct his attacks at the soul, in order to destroy your spiritual walk and in order to destroy your body. He seeks to destroy your spiritual walk. He destroys your body. And remember that Satan, when God will allow, is capable of putting you to death. And Satan uses evil (like disease) to put people to death. He is in the death-dealing business. He has always been a blood murderer.

So, Satan's attack upon these elements of your soul is where you must be on guard: your mind; your emotions; and, your will. He's going to hit you at those points. And he will direct you primarily through your mind. When he gets your mind, he has your emotions, and he has your will. You'll be as stupid as a backwoods hound dog once he's got your mind focused into his thinking.

The Christian's defense against Satan and his demons, in the angelic warfare, is breathing into his soul Bible doctrine – that orientation to the mind of God; and, exhaling it, then, toward God and man. You have to keep breathing. Anybody who quits breathing this morning is in bad trouble. Yet we don't think there's any problem for us to quit breathing in doctrine, in the church services; and, exhaling it all week long in the dealing of our daily lives. That is the nature of the spiritual life.

Now this same concept we have Colossians 1:21 is expanded in Ephesians 4. So, those of you who come here with great dignity this morning, with your Bible in hand, please turn to Ephesians 4:17-18. . . . This is how you degenerate from being able to be in a place of great blessing. And I'm talking about physical good health. I'm talking about material prosperity. I'm talking about fulfillment of life; purpose; and, significance for living. The tragedy is enormous. In this passage Paul expands on what he is saying there in Colossians, and he gives us greater detail.

Ephesians 4:17: "This I say, therefore, and affirm together with the Lord:" "This I say, therefore" means that he's going to give an explanation in view of the need for Christians to grow into spiritual maturity. In Ephesians 4:14, he said: "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about, with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness, and deceitful scheming." Now, of course, the person who does that through human beings is Satan. And the whole context there, previous to that, is that God has given a local church with a pastor-teacher to give you instruction in the Word of God. He has given evangelists to lead you to salvation, and He has giving a pastor-teacher to help you to get a mind which is focused upon the things of God, so that you are not going to be an immature kid in the Christian life all of your life. And you're not going to be tossed back and forth, like something caught up in the waves on the beach, carried about with every wind of doctrine. You won't know whether somebody telling you something that right or wrong, or whether it's completely the mind of Satan, or whether it is real true.

So, some of the Ephesians were immature because they were hindered in their soul-breathing. And they were hindered in their soul-breathing because their spiritual nostrils were not kept clear with the intake of the nasal spray of doctrine. Consequently, they weren't able to inhale the Word and to exhale it in their lives.

"Therefore, I affirm this, and I do together with the Lord." That's an expression that means that I'm going to give you a solemn statement now of a divine principle that pertains to a vital issue of the Christian life: "That you" introduces the purpose here: "This I say, therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer, just as the gentiles also walk:" that you do not live anymore as the unbelievers (that's the gentiles). The unsaved gentiles can only think human viewpoint. They can only be guided by the sin nature. They have a mentality which is completely devoid of divine viewpoint. That's the way you used to be before you were saved.

**Empty Minds**

Why do you want to still live like that? Most Christians do. Most Christians live exactly like that. They live as if (what Paul in Corinthians calls): they were natural men. – unsaved people, because their minds are devoid of God's point of view. And what they have in their minds, then, as unbelievers, is specifically futility. Futility is the Greek word "mataiotes." "Mataiotes" means emptiness. Do you know, someone who's an airhead? That's what he's saying here. These are Christians who are doctrinal airheads. They have a mentality that is void – emptiness. It is describing the first step toward what he will eventually call "callouses upon the soul" – a hardness of the child of God toward his Heavenly Father, so that you cannot respond in your thinking to your Father. You're antagonistic to Him. You, as a believer, cannot have a tenderness toward the things that God loves, and that He wants you to have an appreciation for. You can't appreciate the things of God because your emotions are hard (jaded). And you cannot exercise your will because you're so self-centered, and so controlled by the things of this world. You cannot move your will to be compatible with the will of God. It's a wonder that God doesn't remove a whole lot of believers to heaven – zilch, because they are no earthly good under this condition.

Yet, His tender gentleness gives him another chance, and another chance, to get away from the hardness, and get rid of the callouses. Is your life falling down around your ears? The first thing to do is suspect calluses on the soul. And it starts with having an emptiness in the mentality.

The Christian creates the same state of mental divine viewpoint emptiness that the unbeliever has when he denies himself regular instruction in the Word of God.

Now, if this is true, you should really have a real problem with staying home from a church service. I mean, there's got to be a really good reason, because where the Word is really being explained, this "mataiotes" condition is being enormously countered. That in itself is going to protect you. It's going to protect your children. And it's going to protect all those you love, if they share that kind of mentality of the soul from all of the schemes of the devil.

The effect of this emptiness condition is to create a spiritual vacuum in the mind. What we're saying is that the perceptive side of the mind has no divine viewpoint information. So, if my perceptive side has no information, what do I have? I have sin nature information. So, what can guide my directive side? The sin nature – one or the other? This vacuum condition, when it exists in the mind (this emptiness of the mind) – as you know, nature abhors a vacuum. You cannot have a vacuum, and not have it filled unless it's sealed. Once a vacuum is open, it will suck into itself and stabilize itself. That's what makes high and low pressure areas that cause wind on the surface of the earth. When you have a low pressure, you've created a vacuum situation. Immediately, a high pressure area goes charging in to stabilize it, and to level it out. Your mind will not stay empty. That's the point. And that should send a chill up your back. Your mind will not stay empty. Go ahead and stay at home, but your mind is not going to stay empty. All during the week, you're going to get bombarded with the filth on television, and with the evil suggestions of society around you, and with the examples of violation of God's moral code. And it's all flowing into your mind. A vacuum will suck in false doctrine; human viewpoint values; religion; and, guilt complexes. You won't know how to handle your sins. And it'll bring in liberalism, with all of its destructive effects. Everything that Satan can throw at you will go into that mind, which is a vacuum spiritually.

When this happens, it will start building callouses on the facets of your soul so that you will become insensitive in those areas to your Heavenly Father. The soul then will enter a condition where you're frustrated. You're just trying to find happiness here and happiness there. You get up in the morning, and you walk through: what am I doing this for? What purpose? What is the significance? Who'd miss me if I weren't alive? And it has a terribly depressing effect.

Then there's a restlessness: trying this; trying that; and, trying to find some significance. Or you become a hustler. You're a temperament to get out and hustle. And you get up in the morning, and you're off hustling, doing this; and, hustling, doing that. On Sunday afternoon, you look at all the ads there at the local grocery stores. On Monday morning, you charge up to get those 20 cents a pound bananas, and all that. You're hustling to find significance in life. And there's dissatisfaction. You just don't like the way things are, or the way people are. There's great unhappiness, and emotional domination is prominent. You're a yo-yo up and down. And, under this condition, spiritually, with all this drawn into this emptiness of the mind, you can make the most serious, devastating move of your spiritual life. You can leave your right church and your right pastor-teacher. I guarantee you that that is the plan of Satan. Satan's plan is always to jerk the Christian who's in his right church with his right pastor-teacher out of it. Once he does that, he's got you. You'll float for the rest of your life out there in religion, and you'll have a big smile on your face. You'll be in an organization where everybody's grinning at each other like a bunch of baboons, and you're all sitting in music where you're clapping and whooping it up. In fact, you'll be in a real sophisticated church. They won't even have songbooks.

They'll have a screen that comes down, and the words will be up there. All those of you poor guys who can't read without your glasses won't be able to sing, because they didn't tell you to bring your glasses. I've been thinking about bringing a screen down like that, with the words on it that Mr. Hold is leading, because that's how the big-time church is doing. I went to one of these stores where they sell these magnifying spectacles, and I tried on several of them to see how they work and to see if I could use them. That is because if we're going to put a screen down, we have to supply people with the glasses, just to see it, right? We can't just put a screen down and not let them sing. We'll need to give them the spectacles so that they can they can do that. And that's important now. I wouldn't have any trouble because I could even wear my scuba-diving mask, because I have a scuba mask that's ground for my senses. So, when I'm under the water, I see everybody. I wink at the fish, and they wink back, because I can see.

**Futility**

What are we doing this for? We're doing this because we have hardness on our souls to our God. And we let ourselves sit in an operation like, where the name "Jesus" is used as a cover word for lack of doctrinal instruction. And we don't know what we're doing to our children. We've lost our way so completely that we're out in the wilderness, and we're thinking we're having a great time. That's the most devastating thing, because what the devil will do then is that he'll make you so prosperous, the money will be coming out of your ears. Once you abandon your right church and your right pastor-teacher, you'll get money out of your ears. You'll be so prosperous. And the only way you'll know the difference is when you have a mind that is filled with the Word of God, and not empty. And "futility" is an appropriate word by which to describe that.

So, what happens? The next thing is being darkened in their understanding. Now, I'm going to put these in an orderly fashion. The apostle here puts these in an instructional order, but he doesn't put them in the logical order. And I put those in the logical order such that the first thing that happens is this, and it leads to this thing, and it leads to this thing. . . .

The callous is going to grow, layer- by-layer, the way a callus does grow. The first thing is emptiness of divine viewpoint in the mind. And we're looking at the description of the spiritual callous here in Ephesians 4:7-19. So, what's the next thing that happens? The next thing that happens is being darkened in their understanding. The Greek word there is "skoto." And what this means is "a blackout." This Greek word means a total blackout of the mind to anything that God has to say or to think. And it's from the stuff which has been brought into that mind that is devoid of God's point of view. It brings Satan's world system's point of view. Consequently, you have a blackout of the mind. It is like being in a dark room, where you can't see your hand in front of your face.

This Greek word (this verb "skoto") is in the perfect tense in the Greek. It means that it happened in the past. When did this happen? At the point that you did not get instructed in doctrine. You stayed home. Or it was at the point when you came, and then you sat there, and you had mental reservations about what you were taught, so that you were negative to the Word. And the result is that, at that point, darkness starts settling upon your mind, because your mind has been left empty of truth that you should have taken in. And the result is that that darkness continues after that. The perfect tense means that it starts, and then keeps on going.

Passive means that negative volition to the Word of God follows automatically. When you have negative volition to the Word of God, what follows automatically is the building of callouses upon the facets of your soul. This is a participle – a statement of principle. The Christian in this state then loses all of his grace orientation. He loses his sight of the will of God for him. His life is in a state of disorientation. They are darkened in their what? Understanding. What is blacked out is their understanding? This means the part of their soul that thinks things through – the perception of the soul. The soul is blacked out by this negative volition vacuum. What they use to think through the decisions is all botched up, and they go in the wrong direction.

People who are bored by expository preaching have blackened mentalities. You can count on it. The people who just can't wait to get out of the church service (they're so bored) – they have a mind that is totally black to the will of God. So, the emptiness of divine viewpoint has sucked in the world's and Satan's point of view, so that their understanding is darkened on issues of morality: "What should I do? What should I not do, in terms of morality? This is why Christians can do such horrible things.

The effects of the blackout of the soul’s mentality, in fact, does destroy your love. Christians cannot love God. You cannot love Him with your whole being, as Matthew 22:36-37 calls upon us to do. You cannot love God with this kind of a blacked-out mentality. And if you cannot love God, you certainly aren't going to love your friends. And you certainly aren't going to love your husband or wife. You are a disaster area when it comes to the emotions. Matthew 22:36-37: "'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' And He said to him, 'You shall love ("agape" – mental attitude goodwill) the Lord your God with all your heart; with all your soul; and, with all your mind.'" How can you love Him with your mind when it's blacked out? You can't.

So, the Christian, when he cannot love the bright person of the opposite sex, picks the wrong person in marriage. This kind of a Christian, with a blacked-out top mentality cannot maintain a stable affection for friends. This is a Christian who rotates his friends, and he leaves a pile of discarded behind him – people that they're close to; then bingo – they're out. And when the mind of the soul is calloused so that it cannot love by God's love, then unhappiness results. This is the kid who gets married prematurely. This is the kid who plays a dangerous game of going steady while he's a teenager in high school with some other boy or girl. This is the kid who goes gets into premarital relationships because his mind is blacked out to morality. The understanding is darkened. He doesn't know what's up; what's right; and, what's proper or not.

Then, the problem begins tightening. The noose gets tighter, because now, in his blackened condition, comes an exclusion and estrangement that should chill the heart of every rational thinking Christian.

Please join us tonight as we pick it up at that chilling point, because now we touch upon our relationship to God Himself.

Our Father, we thank You for what we have learned this morning: how we are made; how we are constructed, relative to You; and, how we must function in Satan's world. We pray, Father, for ability to make this very simple and very clear. And we thank You that the progression here is one step after another that the apostle Paul has laid out for us. So, when we get through it, we will see why there is a hardness upon our soul toward You, and that this is what the devil is trying to do to us every day of our life – to make us hard in our souls toward our precious Father in heaven.

We pray, Father, for Your blessings and joy upon our positive volition to what we have learned, and that we will act accordingly. We pray that You will bring us together tonight, and help us to take the step all the way up the line now, and see what it is that tomorrow morning will be the devil's game. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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