

The Battle for Control in the Believer's Life (Part 3)

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[0 : 00] I'm conquering the dilemma of Christian living.

That's the battle for the control of the believer's life! That we're looking at through the book of Esther. And so you can open your Bibles, in particular, I guess, to chapter 4 of Esther. And we'll kind of review a little bit from what we saw last week and pick up where we left off. Again, realize the representations here.

Haman, of course, is the one that represents the nature of sin within the believer. Or within anybody. The sin nature. The one we're born with. The natural man.

And he needs to be put to death. We see that in the story of Esther. He will be put to death. But the thing about that, he needs to be put to death.

[1 : 08] But before he can be brought to the gallows, Mordecai, who represents the Spirit of God, knows that he had to convince Esther, the human spirit of the sinister heart, mind, character of Haman.

Representative of the fact that the Spirit of God, before he can really do a work within our spirit, we've got to see the reality of what the sin nature is.

All right? And so that's kind of what we're taking a look at as we left off last week. So there's where true spiritual conviction comes.

When the Spirit of God begins to convict the heart and mind and life of the believer. It can only have its fullest impact on the soul by having an impact upon the spirit.

All right? Now, that led us to the fact that we recognize the nature of sin within us, but we also looked at the idea that there are two basic consciences that we have within us.

[2 : 19] All right? And that is, first of all, the conscience of convenience and then the conscience of conviction. Those two different consciences, whatever those are, consciences that lie within us, in our bodies, in our life, in our mind, our heart, soul.

Now, remember, the conscience of convenience acts upon the basis of what is consequently right or wrong, as opposed to what is morally right or wrong, located within the soul, and that is what's considered as the animal conscience.

Then the conscience of conviction, then, is the conscience that determines what is morally right, what is morally wrong. What is right? Because it's right.

What is wrong? Because it's wrong. And no other reason. That's just the basic idea of what it is. All right? The conscience of convenience, of course, will be subject to every wind that blows in society during the day.

And we pick it up. It'll subscribe, remember, to the new morality that's out there. Makes what seems, what is really immoral, moral, and no excuses for that.

[3 : 37] Then the conscience of conviction is absolute, just as absolute as God is himself. So the first thing the Spirit of God does when he takes up residence within the believer is to establish, once again, those absolute standards of righteousness.

And that's what he's doing. That's the work of the Spirit of God within the heart of the believer, to reestablish those standards of righteousness within the moral conscience.

And that reflects, then, the very nature and character of God himself. So that's, again, another picture of what we consider Christlikeness. It's allowing the Spirit of God, as we yield to him and submit to him, to do that work of bringing those senses of righteousness to be active within our life. Now, Ephesians 4, verse 24 says, And that you put on the new man, which after God, that is, which is created after the pattern of what God is, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

In other words, that new man that we're to put on is created after what God is in himself. True righteousness, true holiness. All right? We see that in Ephesians 4, 24.

[4 : 57] So it's an ongoing process. Even though those new standards do not at once become manifest within the soul. Now, not everybody's the same.

You realize that. Okay? There are some that, boy, when they get saved, they get radically saved. Amen? I mean, they're just, everything's completely changed.

Every manner of activity in their life is changed automatically. But then on the other hand, there are some that, though they're really saved, all right, it takes a while for some of those things that they did that were sin, they get out of their life.

Okay? Is the idea here. A newly saved person may not be able at first to define this new principle in the life, but they know something's different.

Deep down inside, he or she is aware that something has changed about the way they respond to things. Now, let me ask you, if you want to raise your hand, you can, and I won't call on you.

[6 : 12] All right. Mike, since you raised your hand. I did. You did? Yeah. Yeah. I did. Anybody else want to raise your hand? All right.

How many of you here, when you got saved, you sensed this condition? You know, whatever the time or event was that you came that you gave your life to Christ, that all of a sudden, from that time forward, you began to see something different about yourself in the way you think, the way you act? Is there anybody here that automatically changed everything in the way you behaved? Anybody? I was a good kid. Again, as I said before, I never wanted to disappoint my dad.

Just never wanted to. So I did what I knew was right to do because I was taught what was right to do, although I was still unsaved. All right. So when I got saved, there wasn't a drastic change.

You know, I didn't, wasn't picked up out of the gutter or whatever else from a life of wickedness. So everything just, but there was a continued growth spiritually.

[7 : 30] All right. And so, but there are others, you realize. I've had friends, some of our church member friends in the past that have, that have testified to the fact of what they were before they got saved and how drastically they changed when God saved them.

But it's always a progressive work. We never, ever come to that complete state of the fullness of Christ in this life. It's a continued growing pattern.

And that's the, that's the reason why it's so imperative for us to yield to the spirit of God. So, what used to be right to do and now he finds wrong to do.

So, this is the deepest work of repentance within a man's life or a woman's life that's brought about by the Holy Spirit subsequent to conversion rather than prior or at the time of conversion.

All right? So, again, it's progressive. Of course, there can be no genuine faith in Christ without some form of repentance.

[8 : 48] All right? But realize what the real definition of the word repentance is. All right? It's literally a change. Right? For the most part, a change of mind.

Change of mind about a lot of things. Change of mind about sin. Change of mind about God and our need for him and all of those things. But when it comes to repentance of the activity of the life, of sin per se, all right, that can be a progressive thing.

So, the sorrow over one's sinfulness is progressive. It's a progressive work of the spirit of God. Again, let me ask you something here.

Josiah, I'm going to put you on the spot like I do your dad. All right? Well, maybe I'm going to ask your dad and then you can tell me whether you agree with it or not with his answer.

Okay? Copious? Matthias? What's, what's, as far back as you can remember, what's the first thing that you told Josiah as your son not to do?

[10 : 04] Or not to do again? That's probably better. Lie. Lie? Okay. All right. Did you catch him lying? Josiah.

Now, after you told him that, has he ever done that again? Yes. Did you? Yeah.

I kind of thought that probably was the case, but I didn't want to put you on that big a spot because your dad was ruthless when he said, you don't still lie, do you? All right.

Good job. See? But there again, see, it's like that for us. You know, Spirit of God speaks to our heart, convicts our heart, influences our mind, our spirit about what things we are active in or have in our life that are not in the will of God.

Now, how we respond to that at that moment and consequent time thereafter determines how much further we can go in our growth in the Lord.

[11 : 25] All right? And so, that's why it's imperative for us, not just to feel and sense the conviction of the Spirit of God, but to yield to it and submit to it.

All right? Even though sometimes it's tremendously hard for us to do. Now, when the Holy Spirit begins to reveal to you your human wickedness of the flesh, just like Mordecai revealed Haman's ungodliness to Esther, such conviction may cause some really difficult problems for us, even for some to the point that they question whether or not they've really ever been saved.

So, when that happens and if it happens, in reality, that's a true picture or evidence of the new birth, of being born again by the Spirit of God.

It's like a man with a, the Holy Spirit kind of like a man with a lamp or a lantern walking into a dark room. All right?

And when he walks into the dark room, what does he discover? That room is a mess. It's cluttered. It's full of trash, full of junk, scattered everywhere.

[12 : 51] It's like Josiah's bedroom. Oh, he's not here. Oh, he left. Bless his heart. He got into conviction, didn't he? Yeah. Yeah.

It was like my bedroom when I was a kid, even with a, as a teenager. Yeah. I mean, never put anything up. Everything is just scattered. But the Spirit of God is like that, like a man with a lantern that walks in that dark room and illuminates it with that light and we discover the ungodliness, the wickedness, the repulsiveness of what we find inside.

And that's what the Spirit of God does within our heart and our soul. All right? To reveal to us what he sees and that's in reality what it is.

He shows us what he is seeing. He sees the sin. He sees the ungodliness and he wants us to see that as well. You realize, was it 1 John 1, is it 9?

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That word confess there is not the idea of confessing, yeah, I've got this in my life.

[14 : 10] But in the original, in the Greek, it has the definition of feeling the same way about something that somebody else does. Feeling the same way as somebody else does. And the idea there is that the Spirit of God reveals to us the sin that we've got in our lives to the degree that we begin to feel the same way about that sin that God does.

Amen? Yeah. So, you know what would be good for us to do? Dangerous, but good. I say dangerous because of the way it might make us feel.

To go to the Lord from time to time and say, God, I would really like for you to show me what you see when you look at me in my life.

Now, I'm not talking about our being in Christ. I know he sees the blood of Christ applied if we've been saved. But I'm talking about sin. God, show me what you see of the sin in my life.

Then, work your work in me by your Spirit to make me feel the same way about that sin as you do. Now, you realize what that would do?

[15 : 28] It'd make us feel terrible, but it'd get us on our knees. And say, oh God, I know you've cleansed me from that by the blood of your son, but enable me by your Spirit's work to rid that from my life.

Yeah. In other words, hang Haman. All right? Hang that dude. Now, so that's the picture that we have. And that's what we need to sense about the natural man within us and the work of the Spirit of God within us as well.

So we'll cry out with, we'll cry out with the psalmist in Psalm 51, verses 5 and 6 and 9 through 12. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Hide thy face from my sins and blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

[16 : 39] Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit. All right?

That's what David cried out and that's what we need to cry out as well.

So, Esther had to find out what kind of company she was keeping in the palace. She needed to find out what Haman was like.

Now, when she found that out, it wasn't a pleasant discovery and neither is it for us when we've recognized the sin that we have within our life.

So, it's always that ugly experience when the Holy Spirit first introduces you to your own Haman, rips off the mask of his evil, ugly face.

Again, produces a sense of sinfulness as it did for Peter. In Luke chapter 22 verses 62, this is out of the Amplified, and he went out and wept bitterly, that is, painfully moving grief, with painfully moving grief.

[17 : 45] You recognize that is at the event where he was, where Peter was, outside the avenue of where they were trying Jesus, warming himself by the fire, denying the reality that he had anything to do with Jesus three times.

Think about that. Sitting here, here's this lady just bugging him to death. You're one of them. No, I'm not. I'm not. I don't know him. Just as Jesus had prophesied after he had denied him three times, the cop crew.

Okay? What happened? What happened when Peter heard that crowing from that bird? Remember what he did?

What happened? Boy, can you just sense that? here he is being accused of being one of his apostles, follower of Jesus.

No, I'm not. Then the cop crows and you've got to believe the chill that had to go down his spine and immediately who looked up to see Jesus and Jesus was staring him right in the eye.

[19 : 15] him. Yeah. Yeah. And what kind of look do you think Jesus had when he looked at Peter?

Yeah. Yeah. It wasn't an evil eye. I told you so. No. No. It was one of love and compassion.

what would cause other than the fact that that's his nature, what would cause Jesus to look at Peter that way? Couldn't help it.

Couldn't help it. What else? He knew the end result, what Peter was destined to do, what his faith was as an apostle. Okay.

In between there. Okay. Don't you imagine that Jesus sensed and knew the grief that Peter's heart felt when that happened?

[20 : 26] When that bird sounded out, it just had to crush Peter because he realized what he had done. And he went out and wept, cried.

Jesus knew, that Peter saw himself for what he was and the reality that he had denied his Lord and Savior.

That, I think we could say, is the positive side of Jesus seeing us and knowing our sin. Amen?

Knowing that the work of the Spirit of God is to bring us to a recognition of that, that would elicit repentance, genuine repentance and brokenness over that sin.

And it touches the heart of Jesus for us to have to go through that, but he knows we have to.

Amen? If we're going to live, if we're going to live in the power of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we've got to go through those stages.

All right? We've got to let him see our sin and show, well, he sees our sin. We need to let him show us our sin as he sees it and bring us to that point of confession.

[21 : 44] Now, there's a confrontation with reality here. She's now confronted with the reality of what's going on in the palace and in the entire kingdom here.

So, how is she going to respond to it? That's the question at hand here. Is she going to respond by the conscience of convenience or is she going to respond through the conscience of conviction?

All right? Now, again, remember the difference here. The conscience of convenience is based on what the consequence is going to be. All right?

Remember the example of the little puppy that we used last week. All right? the puppy learned something here.

He gained a conscience, but it was a conscience of convenience. When he ate that steak off the countertop, he got whooped up on. When he kept doing things like that, he kept getting whooped up on.

[22 : 46] Confuse that poor dog. But when he learned to do the tricks, the master tried to teach him. What happened? He got treats.

All right? And so, again, confused, but he didn't care. He found out that there's something he could do that he's rewarded for. And he liked that. That's what the conscience of convenience is.

Things that we do have severe consequences if we're not careful. But on the other hand, there are things we do that bring reward to us.

All right? God, how many of you, as you're driving down the highway and you see a policeman in your rearview mirror coming up on you and you're going to get over in the other lane, you turn your signal on and do what's just right.

How many of you, when you're doing that and you see him, you're thinking, oh, I know what he's going to do. He's going to pull me over and give me one of those fun checks. Yeah. To reward me before being such a courteous and lawful driver.

[23 : 54] Yeah. You're hoping that all the time, huh? Yeah. Think about what a shock that must have been to Esther when she found out what Haman was all about.

Yeah. What kind of character that he was. She never saw that in him. When she found out what his character was and found out what was going on in the kingdom and the authority that he had still had the king's ring on his finger, the authority he had to do all his dastardly deeds here in the king's name, that had to be a tremendous shock to her.

But realize that was shocking to her, but that's not the only alarming thing that happened here to Esther. All right?

Once all this was exposed to her, she had to be confronted about whether or not she is going to obey Mordecai.

Here's Mordecai's alarming request. Esther chapter 4 verse 8. Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given to Shushan to destroy them, to show it unto Esther.

[25 : 25] Okay? He's going to show her the decree. And to declare unto her and to charge her that she should go in unto the king to make supplication unto him and to make request before him.

Now, that's the problem here. There's a real problem in that. The alarm in the request comes from the law of the kingdom.

You remember that. She knew full well that in order to enter into the presence of the king unsummoned, was to pass the sentence of death upon her.

It's not the idea here that if she crossed that threshold and went into the presence of the king, she'd be taken to court, be put on trial to find out whether she's guilty or innocent.

No. It's an automatic sentence of death to go in unto the king unsummoned. All right?

[26 : 35] Now, so the moment that Esther's foot crossed that forbidden line, she sentenced herself to death. Now, the only exception was the unlikely possibility that as she entered in, the king on his throne would hold up the golden scepter to her, and that would give her permission to speak to the king.

Now, highly unlikely that that would happen. So, it's no wonder Mordecai's instructions in that caused some real problems for her.

So, the real question was going to be, now, how is she going to respond to all of that? Not just the idea of what was going on with Haman in all the kingdom, but what was she going to do?

How is she going to respond to Mordecai and what he tells her to do? Now, again, remember, Mordecai is the Holy Spirit. Esther is the human spirit.

So, it's the Holy Spirit influencing the human spirit. How is the human spirit going to respond is the picture here for us.

[27 : 55] All right? So, she sends her reply then to Mordecai in Esther chapter 4 verses 10 and 11. Again, Esther spake unto Hathach and gave him commandment unto Mordecai.

All the king's servants and all the people of the king's provinces do know that whosoever, whether a man or woman, shall come into the king, into the inner court who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live.

But I have not been called to come in unto the king these 30 days. What a marriage, huh? Yeah. I've not been, forget I said that because that's the idea of him sitting on the throne and going in. All right. Now, why should I do this?

that's the law and Mordecai, you know that. Now, where's the key to this in here? Get the picture here again of the spirit of God attempting to influence the human spirit.

[29 : 19] All right. And the human spirit responding with the excuse that there's a law. law. All right. And it's an adamant law. But notice something.

Accept such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter. It's an automatic sentence of death.

But there's still a possibility here. And she knows that. That this husband, that he found her to be such a darling.

You remember that? He was just, when they brought all the women of the kingdom to determine someone to be his queen, after he got rid of Ashtai, that the thing that caused him to fall in love with Esther is the fact that what she was inwardly, not outwardly.

She didn't dress up in the fancy clothes and earrings and all that stuff, heavy makeup. She just went in just the way she was herself.

[30 : 36] And he saw the inward character of her and he fell in love with her. Now, I got to believe that down deep in the recesses of her heart and mind was the reality that he really does love me.

The king, Ahasuerus. And there's a good possibility that he'll hold out that scepter, but maybe not. Not going to count on that, not going to bank on that. Now, think about us as the spirit of God is attempting to woo us, to influence our heart and mind, our spirit, then our heart and mind.

That we resist, and we'll see that later, we resist, we grieve him, we quench him. But what is there down deep inside us?

what is that voice down deep inside us telling us when we go through all of that? You're afraid to answer because you don't know my mind, do you?

[32 : 06] I know he's right. I know the spirit of God is right. he loves me and he'll do good by me.

Yeah, we know that in the recesses of our mind, but sometimes we resist him anyway. You see how foolish that is?

In the Greek, the word foolish would be stupid. that's just how stupid it is to resist and quench the influences of the spirit of God within the life.

All right? And so that's the excuse that she makes. Now, let's move on quickly just a moment here. Realize again as we saw in chapter 2 verse 20, she has not yet revealed to anybody that she's a Jew.

If she did, that would just stir the hatred of Mordecai even more that the queen herself is a Jew.

[33 : 29] Now, but she's going to come to that point. She has to come to that point. She comes to that point right here, right now, that she has to come out to the open and identify herself.

She identifies herself with God's people, Israel, the Jews, identifies herself with God's power, all right?

The power that's been renowned throughout the generations of what he has done through and for the people of Israel, and then his purpose. She has to identify with all of those, and now she's about to do that here.

All right? So, the rational thinking would be, if Haman is as wicked and cunning as Mordecai makes him out to be, then at all costs, I must survive, for I am indispensable to my people.

Now, think about this in the light of the Spirit of God and the human spirit, all right? Here's how the human spirit is responding to the Holy Spirit. All right?

[34 : 42] I must survive at all costs. I'm indispensable to my people. Maybe I can outwit him. Amen? You ever tried to outwit the sin nature? Have you?

Oh, I could do this. You know, hear the preacher preaching about this, surrendering to God, surrendering to the Spirit of God. I've got this covered. Amen? I can withstand whatever he throws at me.

I'm just all right. I can control my own life and my own activity and mind and heart. Yeah. Maybe I can outwit him. Maybe I can beat him in his own game and thwart his ugly plans.

Or maybe there's a better side to his character that needs to be encouraged. Amen? Yeah. Rocky, you were the one that raised your hand earlier, weren't you?

That you were a good guy? That you were saved when you were young age? Oh, it was mine. I'm sorry. Forget it, Rocky.

[35 : 50] Rocky was a bad guy. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's like the same thing I told you about myself earlier. All right. Yeah.

I can be all right. Maybe there's a better side to his character and he just needs to be encouraged. All right. I can live a good, wholesome, upright life.

And there are a lot of people, there's a lot of unsaved people that live a good, upstanding, moral life. But they're still unsaved.

When I was working years ago with hospice, as a hospice chaplain, go to the patients and talk with them and try to lead them to the Lord if they didn't know Jesus. There was one gentleman, never forget, you know, upstanding guy, had a great job, all of those things, but he was dying and he knew it.

He knew he was at death's door. Tried to talk to him about the Lord, he wouldn't have anything to do with it. Tried my best just to let him have me talk with him about it.

[37 : 04] Wouldn't do it. Wouldn't do it. Fine, upstanding man. Dying without Christ. And he did die. As far as I know, he died without Christ.

Yeah. That bothered me. It really did. How can a person that knows he's about to die not even listen? Yeah. Then there's others that are obstinate.

Had another one. Talked to him like that. Got just really straightforward with him. And he gave me some excuses what his thinking was. And I looked him right in the face and I said, tell me this.

What if you're wrong? What if what you believe? What if you're wrong? You know what he said? Yeah.

Whatever will be, will be. All right. Now, so, got to be a better side to his character that needs to be encouraged. Perhaps after all, there's some good in him that Mordecai is overlooked.

[38 : 11] But to die self-centered or self-sentenced, no. There's got to be some more reasonable alternative to this thing than death.

So we see then the Holy Spirit quenched. And we'll kind of hook up there next week. All right, let's pray. And we'll go and look forward to next week.

Amen. Father, again, thank you for your loving kindness to us today. And thank you, Father, for loving us and enabling us now to be back together this evening to look into your word and see the things that you want us to see and understand and know about your work within our heart and our lives.

And, Father, you realize sometimes how difficult it is for us to yield to your Spirit it. But, Lord, you show us the tremendous benefits of our doing that and the work that your Spirit is doing within us to bring us to that point of constantly yielding to him.

So, Father, I pray that you'll enable us more and more to see that and be able to yield to him and enable him to do his work within us so that we may indeed be used of you to the degree and the manner you want to use us as your people.

[39 : 33] Thank you for it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.