

Sermon for Sunday, November 18, 1973 by Andrew A. Jumper, D.D., Pastor  
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"THE SOLUTION TO SPIRITUAL POLLUTION  
Philippians 4:1-9

Text: "Finally, Brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Philippians 4:8

Back in the pioneer days of medicine, the human body was regarded by science almost exclusively as an object, quite apart from the person who might happen to be living in that body at the moment. The body was merely a thing to be treated and to be investigated. And while admittedly great progress was made in many medical areas, particularly in surgery, for a long time the other elements of human personality were ignored.

Beginning about the third quarter of the 19th century, something new was injected into medical science with the advent of men like Freud, Adler and Jung. Under their leadership the psychological dimension of man was discovered and given wide attention. Now in our day, we are beginning to see a third dimension added to our approach to man. In the Menninger Clinic, which is one of the outstanding clinics of mental treatment, we have seen the production recently by one of the doctors there of a very fine book that is just off the press. And what it has to say is that one of the elements which must be taken into consideration in dealing with sick people is the spiritual dimension, particularly the sense of guilt and what we call sin. We are beginning to understand afresh the implications of the fact that man is a spiritual being. We are beginning to understand as we never have before that a man's total health depends upon all the dimensions that comprise human personality.

Now actually, this is nothing new. This has always been the biblical understanding of man. The Bible has always understood that man was one, that he was a whole. Therefore, when the Bible talks about the creation of man, it says that the Lord God formed man of the dust of the earth and he breathed into him the breath of life and then the Bible says man became a whole personality. Thus the ministry of Jesus deals with the whole man. He dealt with the emotional life of men as he cast out demons, he dealt with the physical needs of men as he fed them or healed their bodies. But above all, he dealt with the spiritual needs of men as he taught them about the Kingdom of God.

If we ignore any one of these three areas of man's life we make a serious mistake for man is a whole. When a man's body gets ill, it affects his emotional and spiritual life. When he gets ill mentally, it affects his physical health and his spiritual well-being. But above all, if a man is spiritually ill, it will ultimately fulfill its deadly consequence in the life of man.

So this morning, I would like to talk with you about spiritual pollution. We live in a time when we have seen at the national level evidences of great moral pollution, spiritual pollution, and this is only an outward manifestation of a far deeper, far more serious cancer growing on the moral life of our nation and of our people. It is time that we who are Christians talk about morality. It is time we talk of spirituality. Back in the Old Testament, in the book of Proverbs, the Bible says that as a man thinketh in his heart, so he is. Thus, as Christians, it is tremendously important what we are thinking about in our hearts. It is important what sort of material we are feeding into our spiritual lives. Do you remember how Jesus himself once put it? He said, "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things that defile a man." It is in light of this spiritual principle that our text

for this morning takes on importance. St. Paul writes, "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Yes, says St. Paul, think about these things for as a man thinketh in his heart, so he is.

Have you ever given much thought to what you are planting in your heart? The Bible says that whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. If you sow in your spiritual life, in your inward being, trash, filth and pollution, that is the sort of harvest you are going to reap. What you sow in your heart is the harvest you will reap, for as Jesus put it, "out of the heart proceeds evil."

Let me share with you an illustration that brings it sharply into focus. When I was a pastor in west Texas, people from the surrounding communities would come in to ask for spiritual help and guidance and counseling. Two couples came in from a little community near Lubbock. It seems that they had come into the city to see movies that I suppose would be rated "XX". From that they had gone to reading certain types of books and literature that they found were available. From that they began to look at home movies that are available. From that they had progressed to wife-swapping. By the time they got to me they were in desperate emotional condition. They were in spiritual confusion. Two marriages had been wrecked. The lives of five little children had been terribly affected. They had been pouring trash and filth into their minds, into their hearts, into their lives and they had reaped a bitter harvest.

Let me ask you quite frankly what sort of things are you filling your heart with? What sort of books do you read? What sort of movies do you attend? What sort of television programs do you watch the most? What you sow in your heart, you will reap in your life.

Let me ask you another question. How much are you reading your Bible? How much are you filling your heart with the Word of God? And how about your children? Are you truly seeing to it that spiritual things are being sowed in their lives, in the lives of young people? And how about your marriage? How long has it been since you and your partner sat down together to analyze your marriage to determine what spiritual things you are putting into your marriage? What spiritual things are you feeding into the heart of your relationship? What things of God are you putting into your life together? How long has it been since you talked together about that? Every day through every medium available we are being bombarded by things that try to shape and mold who and what we are. There are manipulators who are attempting to control us and make us buy this or buy that or be this or be that. In an admittedly materialistic world, if you and I are not planting spiritual seed we are headed for trouble as is evidenced in our national life already. Psychologists tell us that when the conscious mind and the unconscious mind are in conflict, the unconscious mind always wins out in the end. In some unguarded moment, it slips out and dominates us. And while we may consciously know what is true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report, that which we have planted in the unconscious mind will finally dominate us and determine who and what we are. If you are pouring trash and filth and pollution into your life, that is going to ultimately control and dominate you. If we truly desire to follow Jesus, we must plant in our hearts the things of the spirit, for as a man thinketh in his heart, so he is.

It is said that when Leonardo da Vinci was painting his masterpiece, "The Last Supper", that he had trouble finding a model for the face of Jesus. At last, however, he found a young man from a fine Christian home with the inner spiritual qualities that shown through his face and he was chosen as the model for Jesus. Time went by as da Vinci worked on his painting. Several years later he came to paint the face of

Judas. He went to the local prison to find the right face to portray the sense of betrayal and viciousness he needed for Judas. By a strange coincidence, the man he chose was the same man who had posed for the face of Jesus. That young man who had had so much spiritual promise, had begun to pollute his inner life, had begun to pollute his soul and as a consequence this began to dominate his life so much so that these characteristics showed in his face. He had reaped the consequence of what he had planted. The sin in his life had so eaten into his character that the evilness in his heart shown through in his face.

But let me be quite honest with you this morning. It is not enough just to plant the right things in your heart. We are still sinners. We are still creatures who tend toward evil. It is imperative and it is important to plant the right things in your heart but there is another thing you must do. You must practice the presence of Jesus. You must develop an awareness of him in your life. Let me illustrate. A moment ago I mentioned da Vinci's painting, "The Last Supper". It is said that when the painting was completed, a friend was called in to view the picture. The friend's attention was focused on the chalice before Christ and he seemed oblivious to all else. da Vinci, with one stroke of a brush, boldly wiped out the cup. His friend turned to him in astonishment and da Vinci said, "No, man, look at the Master's face--look at the face."

Now, that is what I meant when I said we must practice a presence. We must keep our eyes focused on Jesus Christ. He is our motivation, he is our inspiration, he is our strength that permits the things of God that we plant in our hearts to bear fruit.

Let me share something very personal with you. As you know my wife has been ill and the medicine she takes sometimes makes her imagine things that didn't really happen. She shares these things with us. And do you know what she is imagining? She imagines she is somewhere with a couple and she is sharing Jesus with them and she says, "God has really blessed me." All the experiences she is having are things of God because she is a holy person who filled her life with the things of God. And now that is the thing that is coming out in her life.

As a young person, one of my favorite hymns was one entitled, "I Would Be True." It was written many years ago by a young man named Howard Walter as he sat on a hillside in China where he was a missionary. As he sat there that day and thought of home so far away and of those whom he loved, he found it hard to be alone in a strange land and to remain faithful. Yet, with the face of Jesus before the eyes of his soul, he wrote,

"I would be true, for there are those who trust me;  
I would be pure for there are those who care;  
I would be strong for there is much to suffer;  
I would be brave, for there is much to dare."

Yet, in the knowledge that he could not be nor do those things on his own, he wrote,

"I would be giving and forget the gift;  
I would be humble for I know my weakness;  
I would look up, and laugh and love, and lift."

Yes, there it is. "I would look up...." I would look up and see the Master's face. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is." Who and what you are depends on what you are planting in your life and it depends on where the eyes of your soul are lifted. What is in your heart this morning? And are your eyes on Jesus? That's the solution to our spiritual pollution.