



# **Message Transcript**

## **The Challenge with Carnality**

Jeff Schwarzentraub

Thank you so much for choosing to worship with us this morning. And before we open up God's word and hear directly from him, let's make sure our hearts are fertile soil for us to hear God's word that he has directly for each one of us. So can we just go before him and pray and ask God to do that very thing? Lord, we just want to thank you. We want to thank you that all glory and praise is indeed yours.

We thank you for the gift of Jesus Christ who died for us. And rose, we thank you for not only the living word, but the written word which reveals the living word. And, Lord, we just pray this morning as we look into your word, as we hear it proclaimed, Lord, that you would use your word to change us, that you would encourage us and nudge us where we need, encouraging that you would correct us where we need that, Lord, that you'd admonish us where we need that. Lord, you would accomplish everything that you set forth for your word to do this morning while it's being proclaimed. And, Lord, for what you're going to do, we just honor you, we praise you, we glorify your name.

And so, Lord, right now we just ready ourselves to hear directly from you. Lord, be gracious to me as I bring the word, and be gracious to us as we hear it, and allow your holy spirit to move mightily among us to accomplish your purposes. And so we

praise you in the mighty name of Jesus and all God's people who are ready to hear his word directly to their hearts, agreed. And said, amen. Amen.

I want to encourage you to open your bible this morning up to one corinthians, chapter three, first corinthians, chapter three. And as we dive into this section, I want to bring you a little bit up to speed. We just finished a section in one corinthians chapter two where Paul talked about what he proclaimed when he came to Corinth, and he said, I claim to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. That was my message. I didn't come with eloquence.

I didn't come with superiority of speech. It wasn't about me. It wasn't about my intelligence. It was about Jesus Christ. So that you would experience Jesus through the spirit of God and empowered not only that, he says, but he goes, I give another message among the mature, which is anybody who's trusted in Christ, who is listening to him, meaning there's understanding to the depths and the realms of God.

And as we ended last week, we talked about the fact that we, as believers in Christ, have the mind of Christ. I mean, I said last week, and it still blows me away. No

other religion even dares to make the claim. I mean, there's no other religion in the world that says God will come dwell inside of you, let alone tell you that you can know God's thoughts because he's gonna reveal them to you. Christianity not only makes that claim, it delivers on that claim.

And so Paul was talking about, we can have the understanding of God on any situation that we need because God dwells in us. And this is where chapter three picks up. Because isn't it interesting? I mean, think about this. If God was so good that he loved the world so much, he was willing to send Jesus to die for us, and not only that, but be willing to present us faultless before his father in heaven, and not only that, but have all our sins from our past washed away, and not only that, but to be present with us right now, to have us live out our lives with great hope and joy in our hearts.

I mean, you would think then that everybody who's trusted in Jesus Christ would just walk it out 100% of the time. Have you ever noticed that's not the case? I mean, there's a lot of times when I pick up God's word and I see what I'm going to be preaching on a given week, and I'm like, wow, that's a very lofty goal to talk about. I don't even know how to talk about that. What I'm going to talk to you about today is a word called carnality, or being fleshly.

And when I read through one corinthians, chapter three, I think I've been an expert on this at some time during my christian life. I mean, carnality is this. Carnality is a believer, somebody who's trusted in Christ but doesn't live like a believer. In other words, this could be a person that if you see them in this situation, they act like a Christian, but if you see them over here, they definitely don't act like a Christian. This could be someone who genuinely loves Jesus but still struggles with all the same sins they did before they met Jesus.

This could be a person that genuinely loves Jesus, but doesn't act christianly in their marriage or christianly at work. And so when you see them, you say, I don't even know if they really know Jesus. Now, the Bible tells us that the Lord knows those who are his. Only the Lord knows who's saved. And who's not saved?

Carnal people are people who are genuinely saved people but aren't walking it out. And so what we wanna talk about today is, you know, what's the root of all that? How come it is? How come it is? I've been a Christian for 510 15 years, and I can't seem to get victory over this sin.

How come? I've been a Christian for a while, but it seems like I'm always cycling back to my old mess that I did. What's the root of that? Okay, then I'm gonna talk about what the result of that is like as a result of me not living my christlike life. What does that result in?

And third, is there a cure for it? Is there any possible way I can actually live out what God designed me to have? Because I'm telling you, if you live in carnality, you're going to get sick and tired of walking with Jesus, sick and tired of church, because your whole faith is going to look something like this. I love Jesus. I feel good about Jesus.

I know I'm going to walk this out. Oops, I'm not walking it out anymore. And now I got to ask for forgiveness, and I'll try to walk it out. Oops, I can't walk it out anymore. I got to ask for forgiveness.

That's not the way God designed the christian life. God designed the christian life

so that you could know him, and God could live his life through you. And that's what Paul is going to talk about. And because we're only looking at seven verses, let me read these verses to you, and then let's take a look at all of them and unpack them together. Paul says to the corinthian church, right after getting done, telling them they have the mind of Christ, the understanding of God, he says, and I, brethren, could not speak to you as spiritual men, but as men of flesh, as to infants in Christ, I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not able to receive it.

And indeed, even now you are not yet able. For you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are not you walking like mere men? For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of apollo, are you not mere men? What then, is Apollos?

And what then is Paul? Servants through whom you believed even as the Lord gave opportunity? To each one I planted, apollo watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything but God, who causes the growth. And in this, we're going to see, hey, this carnality deal, what's the root of that?

Why am I living that way? Why, if I want to live for God, am I not living for God? What's the result of that? And what's the cause? Now, this is nothing new, and you don't have to feel bad if you're going through these things.

That's why we come to church, so we can hear what God's word has to say on a topic. Because I got good news for you. If you live this way, you don't have to continue to live this way. Even the apostle Paul, after being converted, struggled with this thing. In Romans 7:15, he says, for what I am doing, I do not understand, for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I'm doing the very thing I hate.

What was he saying? I'm living carnal. I don't even understand why I'm living this way anymore. I don't even understand why. I mean, I just come from church.

I want to give God glory. I want to do it right. How come I can't seem to walk it out? Can I get a witness in here this morning? Has anybody ever felt that way before?



All right, good. Okay. Then we got something to talk about. That's what Paul wants to address, is what carnality is and how we can overcome it. Now, let me just say this about carnality.

When it comes to the root, carnality occurs when I believe Christ died for me. But neglect that I have been crucified with Christ. Carnality occurs when I believe Christ died for me. I believe that. I believe Jesus died for me, but I neglect to believe that I have been crucified with Christ.

I would say it another way. I mean, it means this person is not lost in the spiritual. They're not lost, but they've lost the worth of their king. They've lost the worth of their king. Right?

So when it comes to carnality, this is what it is. And notice what Paul says. I love this. He says, and I, brethren, I mean, isn't it great that when Paul's talking to us, he says, I struggle with this, too. Hey, brothers and sisters, we're on the same page.

I'm not speaking to you, that I'm in authority on this. God is an authority on this, and I wrestle, too. I'm talking to you as brothers and sisters in Christ. We're all in this together. But I could not speak to you as spiritual men.

He just got done saying that there's a spiritual person that can understand all the things of God. But I couldn't talk to you that way. Well, why, Paul? But I talk to you as men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. In other words, they're in Christ.

They're just young, and they're immature in their walk with Christ. They're fleshly. We're gonna talk about that in a minute. Notice what he says. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it.

Indeed, even now, you are not yet able, for you're still fleshly. What was he saying? He was saying, hey, there's certain things I can't tell you because you're not able to get them yet, because you're still living according to your flesh. Now, there's nothing wrong with milk. There's nothing wrong with liquid nourishment.

As a matter of fact, I remember when my oldest child, ten years ago, was born, right? And it was really an incredible moment, because I'm looking at the woman that I chose to be my wife, that I love with my whole heart, who just gave birth to this little girl that I just met, that my heart broke for. And I remember thinking when I saw her, I'm, like, heroic. I'd die for this kid right? Now, she's only been alive for five minutes.

I'd do whatever she needs, right? I mean, I just love both these women. This little baby girl and my wife just love them. And it wasn't shortly after that that my little girl needed nourishment. So how did she get nourishment?

She got it directly from my wife. Right? And there's something that mothers and kids understand that we as men will never understand. But there's a preciousness in that moment when a baby is taking life from her mother and is being sustained by the mom, as the mom pours the nourishment into her, and even as a husband, even as a dad, I remember watching that and just kind of weeping, like, how wild is this? How cool is this that my wife is able to nourish my daughter and sustain her?

It's awesome. And it was awesome for a season. My daughter is ten now. When she comes in the house and she is hungry, she doesn't go looking for mom anymore. You know why?

It'd be weird, right? That's what Paul is saying to the Corinthians. There's nothing wrong with pure, spiritual milk of the word. There's nothing wrong if you're brand new in Christ. And you're a believer in Christ.

There's nothing wrong with saying, I don't even know what a Corinthian is. I don't even know anything other than all I know is I was lost and now I'm found. Maybe it's like in John nine, where the blind guy goes, I don't know what you're talking about. All I know is this. I was once blind.

Now I see. That's all I know. And Jesus did it. There's nothing wrong with that. That's a beautiful thing.

But Paul pastored that church for a year and a half, and now Apollos has been doing it for another five years. And so we're seven years in as a church. They're about the same spot we are now as a church. And Paul's writing back to them, and he's like, I still can't talk to you as adults. I still can't talk to you as spiritual, because you're living in the same place you were seven years ago.

You're not maturing in Christ in any way. That's why I can't pour out my life. I still can't do it. Cause you're living according to the flesh. Now, what does it mean to live according to the flesh?

You need to understand this. From the time we take our first breath, our flesh. The problem with our flesh is that it's sinful, okay? It's sinful. So when a child is conceived and that child comes out, it's got what we call sinful flesh.

The very first thing a baby does when it cries is what? Or when a baby comes out is what it cries. Got it? It cries. What's the baby saying?

Hey, I'm not liking it so much here. It was really nice in utero. I got fed. I got it on my time, I got it the way I want it. But now I don't like it anymore.

And I want you to drop everything you're doing to take care of me right? And by the way, I'm hungry. Oh, by the way, I'm wet. Oh, by the way, that's your problem, and you need to take care of me. And we understand that in a child.

But the problem is our flesh doesn't go away when we age. I mean, left in our sinful state, what do we still think? This world's difficult, and it needs to be about me. And I need you to take care of me, and I'm making it about myself. Flesh is this.

Flesh is my desire to see all my personal agenda met. That's my flesh. And prior to coming to Christ, that's how we all live. Sometimes I'll talk to christians. They'll be like, well, you know, my brother's a non believer.

My sister's a non believer, my cousin's a non believer. They're getting drunk

every night. They're smoking weed. They're promiscuous. I'm like, that's what non believers do.

That's normative. Or they're super prideful and they're very successful, but all they care about is themselves. That's what non believers do, right? That's our flesh. And I'm here to tell you something about your flesh.

Just because you got saved, it don't go anywhere, right? It doesn't go anywhere. There's still that flesh that's going to say, hey, fulfill me. It's about me. Then you have this other thing going on.

There's really this unholy trinity. You got your flesh, then you have this other thing. It's called the world. The world is not just the planet on which we live. It's the appeal and allurement to fulfill all the desires that your flesh wants.

So your flesh says, I want this. And the world says, I'll give it to you. Whatever you want, I'll provide, right? And then you got the third of that unholy trinity. Which is

who?

It's Satan. And what's Satan do? He tempts your flesh to follow the world. And I found he never goes away. Now, I just gotta say this in church, because where I grew up in church, nobody ever would just come right out and say it.

And you always had to kind of wonder, is Satan real? Is it a force? Is he a being? He's real. God created him.

He's under the authority of God. But Satan is real. I find that the more steps of faith I take, the more I know his voice. Paul's telling these people, he goes, I can't even talk to you because you're still all about your flesh. You're still all about you.

You believe Jesus died for you, but you don't believe that you've been crucified with him. Write this verse down. Write this verse down. It's Galatians, chapter two, and verse 20. Paul says these words, I have been crucified with Christ.



In other words, Paul is not just saying Jesus died for me. He says, I've been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. So I'm not doing the living anymore. It's Jesus in me and the life that I live in, the body I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Now, sometime in the summer of 1989, I gave my life to Jesus Christ. I know that I was saved. I know that. I know that. I know that.

I know that. I know that I was saved. But my flesh didn't die in 1989, and nobody told me that I had been crucified with Christ. So all my personal desires, hopes and dreams, and everything I had as an 18 year old kid, they carried right on into my christian faith. And I didn't realize that the enemy, knowing that I was gone for all eternity.

Let me just tell you this. We got to stop for a second. Let's just clarify the gospel real quick. Here's the good news. God loved the world so much, he sent his son Jesus

on a rescue mission.

God loved you so much, he sent his son Jesus on a rescue mission. What you could never do to get to God, God did by coming to you. Okay, so Jesus, he had flesh. What was different about him? He was born of a virgin.

He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. His flesh wasn't sinful until he was put on the cross. And God the Father put all of our sin on him. Then he took our sin and died on a cross three days later, rose from the grave, conquering sin and death. And in exchange for any sin that we would ever put on him for all of our sin, he will exchange it with his righteousness.

And Paul says, at that moment, in 1989, I believe Christ was crucified. What I didn't believe at the time is I had been crucified with Christ. That when I came to Jesus Christ as my Lord, that all my dreams, hopes and ambitions that I had for myself, those are all dead now. I've died to me. Now I'm living for Christ.

And I can tell you, for the next five years, I just had, I didn't know how to do that, so I had 1ft in the world and I had 1ft with Jesus. And if you would have seen me at different times in my college experience, if you would have met me over here, you'd be like, there's no way that guy's any different than me. There's no way he's even Christian. But if you would have met me over here, you would have said, man, this guy loves Jesus. And he's all about Jesus.

And I was just back and forth all the time. All the time. Am I telling the truth? Yes, that's what it was. And I didn't know because my non christian friends and I, we could go out and I could tear it up as good or better than they did, no question about it.

But what they didn't see was that the next morning I was crying over the same things that I did, that they did, that they weren't crying about, and saying, God, how, how do I even stop this? I don't even know what to do. And I was always trying to do it on my own. Let me tell you something about your flesh. Your flesh can't live for Jesus.

I'm just gonna work harder at it. Never gonna drink again, never gonna cuss

again. Hey, I'm never gonna do this. Your flesh can't not do those things. You need someone else to help you.

It's the Holy Spirit. Now the Bible makes clear that when you trusted in Christ, the Holy Spirit came to be resident in you. And here's the truth about the gospel. If you're a Christian, God will never leave you. He'll never forsake you.

He's got you in his hand. You're his for all eternity. Satan knows that. So what does he do? He's the father of lies.

He just lies to you. He just whispers lies into your ear all the time. You're always gonna sin like that. You're never gonna be able to get out of that. God can't help you.

If God really loves you, why are you living like that? If God really cared about you, then why are you sick? If God really cared about you, why is your marriage difficult? If God really cared about you, then how come you don't have the job that they have? And if God cares, you mean tell me I'm telling the truth.

I mean he lies and then what he shows you is. But I can provide all that here in the world. You can go after it. You can still get all this. You can still be fulfilled.

Let me tell you something about the world. It will never ever fulfill your heart. Ever. Even if you have all the money and all the relationships and all the good looks and all the clothes and all the things that you think are going to make you happy, never will it make you happy. Never ever ever.

Satan will tell you that it will. Didn't he do the same thing to Jesus? I mean, when Satan tempted Jesus, he told him after a 40 day fast, I've done that once. You're hungry after 40 days, let me tell you. What does he tell Jesus?

Hey, if you're really the son of God, why don't you make these stones turn to bread? What does Jesus say? Now listen to you. Man does not live by bread alone. But from every word that comes out of the mouth of the father.

My sustenance is in my dad and God. I mean, isn't it interesting what Satan's last temptation to Jesus was there? Hey. Took him to a super high place and said, hey, all the kingdoms of the world can be yours. Can be yours.

Hilarious. Can be yours if you just bow down and worship me. Who are the kingdoms of the world belong to? They belong to Jesus, dad. What was Satan trying to do?

Hey, just worship me. I'll give you the world. Jesus didn't have anything to do with that. Rebukes him again. When did Satan show up?

The next time we see him in the garden. Why? Cause Jesus is weak and he's tired and he's been abandoned. So Satan's coming to tell him, hey, don't go to the cross, man. I'll give you the world.

Jesus is listening to his dad the whole time. The reason that Jesus didn't sin is because he didn't have sinful flesh. The reason Jesus didn't sin is cause he's God in flesh. He, he's the only one who's ever not sinned. None of us are perfect.

Every single one of us has fallen prey to this. It's why even if when you're walking with Christ, it's why even when you can look back on your life and be like thank God I'm not part of that anymore. And thank God, Jesus fills me up and I have been crucified with Christ. I'm dead to that. I'm dead to my old dreams, I'm dead to my old hopes and I'm gonna live for Christ now.

I mean, when you get to that place, there's still those moments in your life, those moments of weakness. Or perhaps something comes out of your mouth, or perhaps you do something or perhaps you say something, or perhaps you're in a relationship or whatever and you're like, how in the world did I act like that? Because you were living carnal in that moment. You were answering to your flesh, hearing the voice of the devil and seeing the world promising something which it would never ever deliver. It happens all the time.

Now here's what the truth is. Satan will whisper a lie in your ear now that you know Christmas and now that you're with him, and once you've trusted the gospel that Jesus Christ is lord and you've confessed him, he knows he's lost you for all eternity. So all he can do now is lie to you. And what he's going to do is he's going to lie to you and try to get you that the world can promise something better than God. And I'm here to tell you through the authority of God's word, it can't.

See, when I was 18 years old, I wish I would have known when I was 18. I'm just going to die to me. I'm going to die to all my dreams of playing college football in the NFL. I'm going to die to all my dreams of being rich. I'm going to die to all my dreams of whatever I want to do.

And I'm just gonna tell Jesus at this moment, hey, you can have my life. You can do whatever you want to do with it, wherever you want to take me, however you want me to live, whatever choice you want me to have, whoever you want me to marry, however many kids you want me to have, whatever house you want me to live in, whatever my income is, that's your business. My business is just being your servant. Now, at 23, I said that to Jesus, and I remember peace flooding me like I'd never had before. But before 23, like, if you would have told me when I was in college, like age



20 or 21, hey, God's calling you to be a pastor, which some people started telling me.

I'm like, then I don't want to get too close to God because I know I don't want to do that. Right? Satan will always lie to you and tell you if you go after God, he's going to rob you of your joy. He's going to take things away that you really enjoy. So you better hold on to your appetites and your things because God's going to rob you of all that.

He's not good. Isn't that what he did all the way back in the garden? God won't let you eat off this tree. That's the best tree. It's the most appetizing.

It's so good. God's holding out on you. He's not a good God. If he was, he wouldn't let you eat. He'd let you eat anything he wants if he was good.

Well, what happened there? Death, sin, judgment, hell, everything, right? He's a liar. The world can't promise you anything if you're a Christian. When you understand what Paul understood, that you've died to yourself, then you're no longer walking in the

flesh, and it's a crucifixion that has to happen day in and day out.

I mean, in Romans, chapter twelve, verses one and two, you know, we see this picture of what worship looks like. Paul urges the Romans. He says, therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. What's a living sacrifice, for heaven's sake? Every sacrifice I've ever heard.

Sacrifice means you die. What's a living death? It means I'm dying to me and I'm allowing the spirit of God to live in it through me. That's what it means. I'm dead to me.

I'm letting the spirit of God live through me. Delight in the Lord. He'll give you the desires of your heart. When you're fleshy, you think that means whatever I want, God's going to give me? When you're dead to yourself and you delight in the Lord and he gives you the desires of your heart, it means I have the holy spirit in me.

He'll show me what my desires are and I'll walk in those and I'll be the most fulfilled I've ever been. Satan lies. He lies, he lies, he lies. That's all he knows how to do. Your life's going nowhere.

You'll never get over this sin. Your family's always going to be sick. The world. I can help you here. Church can't help you.

God can't help you. Oh, you might go to heaven, but you're going to live miserable from now until the time you meet Jesus. Lie, lie, lie, lie, lie, lie, lie. That's all he does. And Paul's telling the corinthians, hey, I can't even really preach to you because you're believing the lie of the enemy.

You're living in your flesh and you're trying to promote the things of the world. And that's why God's not showing up in a powerful way in your church. He goes, I gave you milk. Milk's good. But there's more to this christian faith than what you're just getting with milk.

I want to give you solid food, but you're still fleshy, you're still carnal. I mean, can I just tell you this? I mean, Peter wrote us, you know, in one. Peter, five eight, be sober minded and alert for your enemy. The devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

And sometimes we get this picture of like, ooh, devil's gonna get me, I better be careful. But do you know in one John three eight, it says this, Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the, the devil. I mean, did you hear what I just said? The devil can't get to you because of your authority that you have in Christ. He can tempt you, he can whisper in your ear.

He can't touch you without God's permission. It's Christ's authority that we're under. Jesus made a public display. Colossians said he made a public display by being nailed to the cross. The devil's day is done if you listen to him.

It's not done if you listen to, hey, I do need this. Hey, I do need that. Hey, I am going to live according to the world. And many of us as Christians, I'm just telling you,

majority of baby christians think like this. I've come to Christ and I know I'm going to heaven.

Now that I have Jesus on team Jeff, now I'm not only going to heaven, but now I got God for my back, for all my personal desires, and for all my personal goals. So I'll just roll out everything that I want for my life. And now that I have Jesus, he's obligated to meet all my needs. Can I just tell you with just a lot of experience that that's not how it works, that God doesn't just listen to your prayers and say, oh, yeah, I'll totally do whatever you want to do, Jeff. I'll do it in the way you want to do it and the way you want to do it.

You know what God listens to? He listens to people who have died to themselves and have the Holy Spirit inside of them saying, lord, whatever brings you the most glory, whatever brings you the most honor. However you want to live my life, I'm willing to give up anything that I've dreamed of for your sake. God always answers those prayers. But many of us, while we come to Christ, we're like, I'm not giving up my life.

I mean, look at my career. Look what I built here. Give it up. Give it up. Give up

whatever you think is important if it hinders your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's why we're fleshly, that's why we're carnal. And there were some people in the first century church, just like there are in the 21st century church, that live like that. They live fleshly, they live carnal. Let me tell you, when that's the root cause of something in the church. Let me tell you what the result is carnality results in this.

It results in selfish attitudes and actions. Selfish attitudes and actions that cause division. Well, of course they do. If you're gonna live for you and bring all of you in the church and make it about you, of course there's gonna be division. Notice what Paul says.

He says in the middle of verse three. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly? Are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, I am of Paul and another, I am of apollo, are you not mere men? What's he saying?

What's mere men? Mere men means this. I can't tell the difference between you

and Christians. You're just walking like everybody else walks. You're doing what everybody else does.

You're so fleshly. Well, what's the root of it? Well, he says this. He says, jealousy and strife. Well, what's that, pastor?

Jealousy is the internal attitude in fleshly people. Okay? Envy is this. Envy is kind of the idea of, I'm envious of your car, or I'm envious of your house, or I'm envious of your bank account, or I'm envious of your good looks. I'm just.

I wish I had what you have. That's envy. Jealousy takes it one step further. Jealousy is because of what you have. I'm fearful that I may miss out.

In other words, man, I see how good looking. If you're single, I see how good looking you are. I see how attractive you are, man. You're probably gonna end up taking my girlfriend away from me. I'm jealous of what you have.

Cause it's probably gonna rob me of something that I want. When you live with a poverty mentality that you gotta keep all the balls juggling, and you haven't died to yourself, and you haven't been filled with the spirit, God will always seem like he's a poverty God. And there's only so much to go around. And so jealousy internally will rule the day. Well, if that person leads a small group, and I'm never gonna be able to lead a small group, and then they're gonna have more influence than I am.

And if that person gets that husband and that person gets that, how come they get that blessing and I don't? And how come they've had kids and I don't have kids? And how come their kids are walking with the Lord but my kids aren't walking with the Lord? And how come they get to live in that neighborhood but I don't get to live in that neighborhood, that is the root. That's what the root causes.

It causes jealousy. Let me give you another thing. If you can't celebrate other people's good things in their life, you're fleshly. You didn't hear what I said. If you can't celebrate good things that happen to other people, you're fleshly.



Like, if something good happens to somebody and you can't be like, man, I'm so happy for you. You're fleshly, right? And all you have to do is see God, do something good in your life, and you'll find out who the fleshly people are really quick. You'll find out because some people will be like, man, congratulations. Hey, that's so great.

Hey, so happy for you. So happy for your family. Other people will be behind you. I don't see why they got that. I don't see why they're celebrating that they never celebrated me when I did that.

Fleshly. Right? That's jealousy. Strife? What's strife?

Strife is the actions that occur as a result of jealousy. If you walk around with a poverty mentality that God's got good things for others, but I want to make sure he's got good things for me, and I've got to make sure I hold all this stuff together so I can get some of God's goodness, and I'm responsible for making sure all that happens. Strife is always bound to happen. It happens in the 21st century when people walk into church and they think the church is about them. Can you believe that sometimes even

happens here?

I don't really like Pastor Jeff. I'm just here because the youth program's good. Hey, you know what? I like Pastor Jeff, but, man, I can't stand that worship. I'm just going to come after the worship's done.

Hey, how come they don't do this? Hey, this is my favorite one when somebody's been here at a church for one week. So I'll just talk about it. Hey, at my last church, here's what we did. But you're not telling me what you did at your last church.

What you're telling me is, and in two weeks, if you're not doing that here, I'm out of here. Because church needs to be about me. You know what I'm saying? Not any of you. I'm just talking you about what I've experienced.

Here's another mark of fleshiness, okay? Two words, grumbling and complaining. Do you grumble and complain? This is not a rhetorical question for you to ask yourself.

Ask somebody that knows you well.

Ask your spouse. Do I grumble and complain a lot? Hey, ask your kids. Do I grumble and complain a lot? Hey, ask people that you work with.

Do I grumble and complain a lot? If they say all yes, it's cause you're fleshly. It's because you're living out your own personal desires, and Christ isn't being elevated in your life. The nation of Israel, through the entire Old Testament, most of the time they lived fleshly. What were they doing?

They were grumbling and complaining all the time about everything. Man, we're never going to be provided for out here. Where's water? Oh, here's water. Well, that's not the kind of water I want.

What about food? Here's manna. Well, we don't like that. We want meat. Here's meat.

Okay, well, we got to find something else then, to get mad about, because we're just mad. It's not going our way, right? I mean, that's fleshly, right? And we're people. And if we don't guard that, that's the result of it.

I'll tell you, it's a tragedy for me. I hear two tragedies from time to time. And I've done this ministry thing for about 25 years. I've been a youth pastor in a couple different churches, been a senior pastor, been an evangelist, poured into a lot of different people over time. And one of the more painful things for me as a pastor or as a minister of the gospel is when somebody comes up to me and says, hey, I know that one guy that goes to your church.

This has happened so many times, it makes my head. He's like, but I don't get it, because when we go out and drink, he drinks more than we do. And when we tell bad jokes, he has worse jokes than I do, and his language is as filthy as mine. And, hey, oh, by the way, he doesn't love his wife any better than I love my wife. But, you know, every time we get together, he'll always say that he's going to heaven and I'm not.

It's really tough to listen to him. And I said it'd be tough for me to listen to him, too. Right? Because if you're not walking it out, it's tough to have a witness in what you're doing. And it happens all the time where we're trying in our flesh, to share the gospel.

Let me tell you something about sharing the gospel with people. People are not converted because of you. They're not converted because of your salesmanship, and they're not converted because you're so awesome. People don't see you and be like, I want to be like him. If they do, that's not even good news.

We don't want people to be like you. You don't want people to be like me. We want people to be like Jesus. Well, sharing the gospel in the spirit is this. I'm nothing.

God is everything. Here's what he's done in my life. Here's how he's changed it and is continuing to change me. And I want to tell you about a God that loves you so much that in spite of all your efforts, he loves you as much as he loves anybody. And I care for you, and I love.

That's the gospel, right? I know people that will tell me this, and wrongly so, but they'll say, listen, I love Jesus, but I'm never going back to church again. Why? Because all those people are just hypocrites. All they do is fight with each other.

I mean, the very God that they say that they serve, they're not really serving them. They're just all about themselves. And you know what? Sometimes I feel like they have a case. Even though it's wrong, it's true.

And Paul's writing back to this church in Corinth saying, listen, you don't need to be like that. You don't need to continue to live fleshly. You don't need to continue to be carnal. And by the way, when you live fleshly, let me tell you another result of that emptiness and a lack of joy, emptiness and a lack of. You can't live in the flesh and be filled with God.

It doesn't work. The first five years after becoming a Christian, there were

glimpses of joy in my life. There were glimpses of things God was doing, but it wasn't this ongoing. Like, man, I love Jesus, and I'm so excited about who he is, and I'm so joyous. None of that.

It was, I failed here again, and I don't know how to change, and I'm failing here again, and I don't know how to change. So I'm going to work harder at this. But it never, ever goes anywhere, man. This christian life is so much harder than it was before I became a Christian. So you may be asking, so what's the cure?

Is there a cure to this? I got great news for you. There is. There is victory in Jesus Christ, and you can enjoy the fullness of his spirit walking things out in you. How do you do that?

Paul tells us in the next couple verses. In verse five, he says, what then is Apollos? And what then is Paul? Let me tell you this. The cure for this, the cure for carnality is this.

Carnality ceases to exist where God is glorified and people are simply his servants. Carnality ceases to exist where God is glorified and people are his servants. If that happens in your small group that God is glorified and everybody around is just simply a servant of Jesus, there won't be carnality. If in a church that happens where people are lifting up the name of Jesus and everybody hears just a servant, it'll happen. If it's in your life where Jesus is being glorified and you're nothing more than a slave, it'll happen.

Because what's Paul saying in verse five? What then is Apollos and Paul? Well, we look at it and say, well, he planted the church in Corinth. And Apollos is a great speaker and God used him mightily. Here's what Paul says.

What is then is Apollos and Paul. What's your next word? Say servants. We're nothing more than dispensers of God's grace. There's nothing good in us.

We're servants through whom you believed. For some of you, you came to know Christ through our ministry. For others of you, you came to believe in Christ through our ministry. Right? That's all we are.



Even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. Now notice what he says in verses six and seven. He says, hey, I planted. I did what God wanted me to do. Apollos watered.

He did what God wanted him to do. But God was causing the growth so that neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything but God who causes the growth. What's he saying? We're nobodies. We're servants.

We're just telling you about who Jesus is and making him known in your community. We're nothing. Notice what he says twice. God was causing the growth. He's the one that's grown.

You. And God is the one who causes growth. He's the one that's doing it and will do it in the future. It's all about God. Can I just tell you this?

It's not dependent on a person. Your spiritual growth is never dependent on a person. Well, if I could just get in their small group, man, I know I'd grow. No, it isn't. It's not dependent on a person.

And if I could just go close to Pastor Jeff, then I know I'd grow, but I don't want one of those associate pastors helping me out. No, it wouldn't. It's God who causes the growth. If you want God, you won't care if God uses a mule to tell you the truth about God because you want God, right? I mean, that's the truth.

God wants to get the glory God. And God just uses servants. And when people don't have carnality and they realize, hey, God's everything and I'm nothing, then God can use them in a mighty way. And when a group of people act like that, God certainly does things in a mighty way. So how is God glorified?

I mean, all throughout the psalms we read about, like in psalm 121, I lift my eyes up, for where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. Right. Okay. Yeah, I know that.

Check that, pastor. I know I'm supposed to look up. I know God's supposed to be glorified. That's great. I'm telling you, here's how it's happened to me, and here's how I've seen it happen in everybody's life.

And here's how I see it happen. In biblical accounts, it's when you have an encounter with God where you realize he's great and you're not. When you realize Jesus Christ is glorious and you're not. See, some of us feel like if Jesus Christ, I'm just telling you, if Jesus Christ came back in all of his full glory right now at this very moment and stood here, can I just tell you what would happen? You would be on your face so fast, you wouldn't be able to think about it.

I would be on my face so fast, I wouldn't be able to think about it. The service would stop because God's so glorious and he's so good and he's so mighty and he's so powerful and we're nothing. I think about the story in Isaiah. I mean, the whole book of Isaiah can kind of be summed up in chapter six and 66, I think, where Isaiah, in the year that his king, King Uzziah, died, he saw the Lord on a throne, lofty and exalted with the train of his robe filling the temple. So he sees a picture of the pre incarnate

and exalted Christ in all of his glory.

Now check this out, because this is awesome. It says, seraphim, say, what's that? It's a godly creature. Some sort. Seraphim stood above him.

Here's what they're like, each having six wings. With two, he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. Now, I don't know about you, I'm not a big bird lover, okay? And I was out in San Francisco a few years ago with all those seagulls, and they're all swooping in, and you're trying to duck. I didn't like that.

Now, here's a creature that's one of God's creatures. It's got six wings, and two is covering his face, two with his feet, and two, it's flapping right above you, this gigantic like creature. Think he's gonna be a little scared, man. It's just the creature that's not even God. And this creature spoke, too.

I mean, check it out. And one called to another and said, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory. So now this creature is calling the

other seraphim. And that's all they're screaming is.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty. Heaven and earth is full of his glory. And check this out. And the foundations of the threshold trembled at the voice of him who called out while the temple was filling with smoke. Can you picture that?

I mean, the whole temple is trembling. All these beans floating around, you know, flying around, and God's voice making the temple tremble. And what's he gonna say in light of God's glory? What's he gonna say? This is cool.

I wish I had my iPhone. I could take a picture of this. That's not what he's saying. Woe to me. I'm ruined.

I don't belong here. I don't belong in the presence of God's glory. Woe to me. I'm done. I am totally done.

I need to get out of here as fast as I can, you say? Well, why Isaiah? He says, because I'm a man of what? Unclean lips. And I live among a people of unclean lips.

For my eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts. I've seen the king of the Lord's army. And I don't belong here because. Why? Because my sin is my lips.

And our people that I hang out with, our sin is our lips. This is what we're sinful. Can I just tell you something about this? You get a picture of the glory of God, you know what the first thing you're going to see is? Your own sin and how undeserving you are to be in his presence.

See, a lot of us have this idea that Jesus is our buddy, you know? And Jesus is our friend. There's no doubt about it. He's our friend, but he's not your buddy. I got some buddies.

My buddies don't come over and tell me to make my bed. My buddies don't come over and tell me what to watch on tv. My buddies don't come over and tell me how to invest my money or what house to buy. My buddies don't tell me a bunch of. I mean, they don't tell me, that's my buddy.

You don't talk to me like that. See, Jesus is more than a buddy. Jesus is king, right? So Jesus, whatever he says or whatever he's about to say, I'm just saying, yes, whatever you say. That's just what I'm gonna do.

And when you see the glory of God, the first thing you see is I can't be used by you. And I don't even need to be around you, right? Isaiah says, man, I'm bad lips. People have unclean lips. So check this out.

This isn't a little scary. So verse six says, then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand. Can you picture that? Now, this being that's crying, holy, holy, holy. And the whole place is shaking.

Now he goes and gets a hot coal off the altar and starts flying at you. I mean, that's scary stuff right here, which he had taken from the altar with his tongs. And what does he do? He touched my mouth with it. Hmm.

What was sinful? His mouth. What was sinful in his people? Their mouths. What did he go touch their mouths.

Touched his mouth with it and said, your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven. See, when you get in the glory of God and you see all your sin, what's God want to do? He wants to touch that very area that's unworthy. See, a lot of people say, well, I couldn't come to church because of this sin in my past. A lot of christians that believe that Jesus died for them are like, that was my past over here.

I just want to put that in the suitcase and leave it. No, that's the very area God wants to touch. Well, I was an adulterer while I was a liar. Well, I was a drunk while I was a thief. Well, I was this.



And now that it's done, now I'm living for Christ. No, God wants to touch the areas of sin in your life so he can use the very area of sin in your life to let other people know that this God that you say is so good, actually is. Now you think about a prophet for a minute. What would be very important to a prophet to have what? Perhaps a mouth.

If you're gonna be a prophet of God, I mean, perhaps your lips are pretty important. So what's God touch? He touches the very area of iniquity in his life, the very area that can't be used by him. Cleans it all up and then sends him out. Now, can I tell you something else that happens when you see the glory of the Lord and he's lifted up and you're nothing?

You see your sin. God cleanses your sin. And once your sin is cleansed, you know what happens immediately when your sin is cleansed? You can hear God. Because now you know I'm unworthy to be here, but God has forgiven me, so he's allowing me to be here.

And then Isaiah hears the trinity. He says, then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send and who shall go for us? He hears the Lord and he goes from being, I'm ruined. I don't belong here. To what here am I.

Send me. I'll go. I'll do whatever you want me to do. If you can forgive my most grievous sins, I'll do whatever you want to do for the rest of my life. I'll do whatever you want me to do for the rest of my life.

That's who I am. I'm just a servant. You're glorious. That's why at the end of Isaiah's book, in Isaiah 66, when he talks, it says, thus says the Lord, heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool. That's a pretty powerful image of the Lord.

Where then, is a house you could build for me? God, we're going to build you this great building. Seriously. Heaven is my throne, earth is my footstool. I rest my feet on the earth.

What are you going to build for me? And where is a place that I may rest? I'm

glorious, for my hand made all these things. Thus all these things came into being, declares the Lord. But to this one I will look to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, who what trembles at my word.

Here's who I'll use. I'll use people that see me as glorious and fear me because I'm so awesome. They say, well, that's cool. That was Isaiah. That's one story in the Bible.

Do you know I could stand up here all day and give you story after story after story after story. I mean, what about Peter? Remember him? The one when he's coming in from fishing? Jesus says, he said, we haven't caught anything all night.

Well, Jesus said, well, put the nets down out for another catch. And Peter's like, say what? You don't know anything about fishing. But I'll do it because you said so. So many fish jumped in the net.

What's Peter say? Go away from me, Lord. I'm a sinful man. Peter's the one on the night Jesus was betrayed. Hey, Jesus, I just want to make you a little deal here.

Everybody else may fall away. I heard what you were telling him. But you got me, man. Even if all fall away on account of me, on account of you, I won't. I'll even die for you.

What happens? Jesus tells him, hey, Satan's desire to sift you like wheat. But I prayed for your soul that you'll come about and you'll restore your brothers. And, oh, by the way, tonight before the rooster crows, you'll betray me three times. What did Peter do?

By the third time that Peter's yelling and cursing and calling down curses, saying, I don't know the man. He locks eyes with Jesus. And what did he do? He went out and wept. Cause he's glorious and I'm a nobody.

And then what does Jesus do? Could we argue that Jesus used him still? Could we argue that Jesus took his carnality and restored him and said, I love you, and filled him with his spirit? And Peter was mighty for the Lord? I mean, how many stories do you want to know about?

Do you want to hear about King David? I mean, he was awesome, right? Man after God's own heart. Until he committed adultery with Bathsheba and then killed her husband. That wasn't so much good.

God sends a prophet Nathan to him, right? Says, what are you doing? What's he doing? He repents of his sin. He writes psalm 32 and psalm 51 and asks God to create in him a clean heart, renew a right spirit within him.

Because, God, you're great and I'm nothing. See, that's the message of the gospel. The message of the gospel is not just, Christ died for me, and one day I'll be with him. The message of the gospel is, Christ died for me and I've been crucified with him. And, God, you're great, and I'm nothing.

And, God, I'm going to confess any known sin that I have to you. And I realize in light of your glory, I'm a nobody. But I want to be that nobody. Because I know that nobody for you is greater than any somebody. I could be on my own.

That's what he's saying. And that's what Paul is saying to the people. He goes, I'm nothing. Apollo is nothing. We're just mere men.

God's the one that wants to do the work in your life. He's saying, if you don't want to live carnal, God's the one that will make you that way. I got great news for you, church. Even for those of you that live carnally last night before you came into church. And, like, I shouldn't even be here today.

Because I know what I did last night, and I know what I said last night. Here's what God would say to you. Yeah, but you're mine, and I love you, and I still want to fill you. And I can still use you. And don't believe the lie of the enemy that says you never can be this or you never could do that, or you failed here.

Because here's what God says. The only people I ever have to choose from are broken failures. That's the only people I've ever used. So you're in really good company. So if you glorify me and are filled with my spirit, I'll do more than you could ever dare dream, ask or imagine.

And the reason I wanted to end with this song that we're doing today. Is because I was in a conference in Dallas on Monday and Tuesday. We sang this song. And I was singing it. I'm like, this is such a simple truth about the gospel.

We got to sing this song. And then I heard it at the conference we had here with Daniel Henderson and his group, the leading with conviction conference. And I said to my brother, I'm like, why don't we ever do that song? Why don't we just do the choruses? He's like, because you said you didn't like it.

And I said, well, don't listen to me. I'm like, we're doing that song. And it's a simple truth about the gospel of what Jesus did. And how he was buried and how he

was raised and how he's coming. And we praise the name of the Lord our God.

Not just because someday we're gonna get to heaven. We praise him for that. But praise him right now that he's with you and he's active in you. And he wants to work in you. And if you're living in a carnal way.

You don't have to live that way anymore. You can repent and confess any sins you have and say, God, you're great. I'm not. But if you can use me, I want to be used by you. I'm willing to give up my life right now and die for your name's sake.

So let's make this song our declaration as we close today. Will you stand with me? Lord, we give you all the praise, glory, and honor because you are the worthy God who came, who died, who rose, and who is coming again. And, lord, we just offer our lives right now as this living sacrifice for you. Lord, hear our prayers, be praised by us in Jesus name.



Amen.