

The Perfect Work of God #2

Fred R. Coulter—June 6, 2009

We finished up with Psalm 73, so let's go there and let's pick up a little bit from there and carry on from that particular point. Very interesting, very good Psalm for us and it shows the anguish that we go through living in the world, but not being part of the world. In the case of Asaph, the one who wrote it, and showing how that, in times of trouble and difficulty, we need to stay close to God. He was all upset at the wicked for what they were doing and getting away with, and he said that his steps well nearly slipped because of his attitude toward God concerning that. Let's just review a little bit. Psalm 73:16 (pg 737): "When I thought to understand this, it was too painful for me... [Because here all the things I am suffering and yet look at the world, 'They aren't suffering.')] ...until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end" (vs 16-17).

Always remember the end, because that's how God is going to judge it in the final analysis. So then he understood, he said, "Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down into destruction. How have they been brought into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors, like a dream when one awakens; so, O LORD, when You awake, You shall despise their image... [In other words, when he comes to his senses.] ...for thus my heart was grieved and I was pricked in my reins" (vs 18-21). In other words, *he was brought, by the Spirit of God, to repentance!* Now the *reins* become a very important thing. Let's come down to the last verse, so we will finish this up and then we'll look some more at the *reins*.

Verse 28: "And me, it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the LORD God, that I may declare all Your works." Now we're told to:

- *trust* in God with all our heart
- *believe* God with all our heart
- *love* God with all our heart.

So when we come across the battles of fighting human nature, as we found here in *Psa.73* [transcriber's correction], God is still dealing with us. God does not give up on us. He still continues to deal with us.

Let's continue on and come to Psalm 32:5 (pg 718). Since we're talking about repentance and when you're pricked in the *reins*, that's what God does to strike your conscience that you need to repent. We saw that in Acts 2 where they were cut to the heart; led them to repentance. So likewise, this is exactly what we're talking about in the book of Psalms and we will see this here. Psalm 32:5 "I

acknowledged my sin to You... [Now we're going to see where we confess to God.] ...and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgression to the LORD,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

Since we're still fighting human nature, we still do things that are not right, we still do things that are not good, and that's not because we deliberately set out to do it, that's because of the pull of human nature and our battle against it. That's what Asaph went through in *Psa. 73* in trying to sort out 'how come the wicked prosper and I'm suffering so much?'

Let's continue on in Psalm 32:6: "For this *reason* let every Godly one pray to You in a time when You may be found... [That's also very interesting, because in the book of Jer., Jeremiah was instructed, 'Do not pray for this people, do not lift up your voice to Me for them, for I will not hear you.' So there's a time that you need to come to God, because there's also a time when He won't be there. He'll let you go through it until you come to your senses.] ...surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come hear him."

We can apply that certainly to the book of Revelation, the things in there. You could also apply it to the Flood—right? *No one repented, no one listened*, they all laughed and jeered at Noah. I thought it was very interesting, when you read the account, that Noah and his family, and all the animals, were in the ark for seven days before it started raining. So you can just imagine what went on. Everyone said, 'Oh, look, Noah went in the ark. He says it's going to rain. Well, that was two days ago.' Come back the third day, fourth day, fifth day, sixth day, then the seventh day it started to rain, with rain like they have never, ever understood. The fountains of the deep were broken up and the windows of heaven unloaded their rain and covered the whole earth. Did they come to God? They had plenty of chance to repent—didn't they? Noah got the warning, 100-years before the ark was up and floating on the flood, so they had plenty of time.

So he says, v 7: "You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall encircle me with songs of deliverance. Selah.... [Which means: *think and meditate on this.*] ...*You said*, 'I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you. My eye shall be upon you.... [That's why we need to always follow the Word of God. Verse 9 is the key verse that we need to get to.] ...Be not like the horse, or like the mule, which have no understanding—which

must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.... [So God doesn't want us to be like that, nor like the donkey that needs a two-by-four to get the point.] ...The wicked has many sorrows, but His steadfast love surrounds him who trusts in the LORD. Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart" (vs 7-11).

Now let's look and see what the *reins* are. The word for *reins* in Hebrew actually means *kidneys*, or *the shape of a kidney*. Obviously, our kidneys have nothing to do with our thinking, so it's talking about, I believe, the *two halves of the brain*. Which when you look at a brain, it does look like a kidney, because God is interested in the mind and in the heart and that's how He communicates with us, in many different ways.

So let's come to Psalm 7:9 and let's see what we're told here concerning the reins. "O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous... [That's been the plea of men every since they loved God. Of course, God is going to bring the Kingdom of God and establish it. That will be fulfilled.] ...for the righteous God tries the hearts... [Because as a man thinks in his heart, so he is.] ...and reins." So what are the reins? *The reins is what God uses in connection with everyone that is alive*, we could put it that way; but especially those who are converted. We'll see that a little later here.

This is how He communicates with us as we are led by the Spirit of God, which we covered last time; that we are to be led by the Spirit of God,

- the way we need to walk in the path of God,
- the way we need to think with the Words of God, and so forth.

Now let's see another Psalm here that talks about the *reins*—Psalm 26. Let's look at this Psalm and see how it defines how God tries us, how we think. Remember, we have the Spirit of God within us, so we have direct connection with God the Father and Jesus Christ. And as we saw last time, the Holy Spirit has the two elements of it: the Spirit of Christ and of the Father, and They are dwelling in us.

Psalm 26:1: "Judge me, O LORD... [Now what does Peter say about judgment? *'Judgment begins at the house of God, and if the righteous are saved with difficulty, where shall the ungodly and sinner be?'*] ...for I have walked in my integrity.... [That's actually God's integrity.] ...I have trusted also in the LORD without wavering.... [That's a commitment that we need to have to God continually, all the time.] ...Examine me... [Now we're also told in 1-Cor. 11 that for the Passover: We are to what before the Passover? That's also a

continuous thing—isn't it? *We are to examine ourselves—how? By the Word of God.* So here he's saying:] ...Examine me, O LORD, and prove me... [That's why we have things and difficulties that we go through. God is proving us.] (notice): ...try my reins and my heart" (vs 1-2). Now that's how God knows what we're doing; directly.

Let's see the rest of the Psalm here, since this is a short Psalm, and see the result of it. "For your lovingkindness is before my eyes; and I have walked in Your Truth.... [That's what we need to ***always seek is the Truth, the Truth, the Truth, the Truth—always!*** No hidden agenda, no vanity, no selfishness, ***servng God with the Truth.*** And ***you stand with the Truth;*** you don't give up on the Truth. This makes you strong, not weak.] ...I have not sat with deceitful men, neither will I go in with hypocrites. I have hated the congregation of evildoers..." (vs 3-5). Now we are to hate their actions and we are to hate what they do. Now hopefully, somewhere along the line, they'll repent.

A good comment was made that the *reins*, like for how you ride a horse—a well-trained horse—all you do is just touch the reins the way you want to go, and the horse will automatically do it. Now you have stubborn horses where you really have to work them hard. God doesn't want us to be that way. But also, they know this: that if the rider and the horse are really close, you don't even need the reins. All you need to do is just lean and the horse will go where you want to go. Be careful if you're riding bareback, you don't want to fall off. So God does that with us:

- He *proves* us
- He *tests* us
- He *tries* us

so that we can overcome the evil, we can draw closer to God, we can have more of the mind of Christ, and all of those things.

Verse 6: "I will wash my hands in innocence; so I will go about Your altar, O LORD, That I may cry out with the voice of thanksgiving and tell of all Your wonderful works. LORD, I have loved the dwelling place of Your house, and the place where Your glory dwells. Do not take away my soul with sinners, no my life with bloody men, In whose hands are evil devices, and their right hand is full of bribes. But as for me I will walk in my integrity; redeem me and be gracious unto me. My foot stands in an even place; in the congregations I will bless the LORD" (vs 6-12).

So all of this, then, is for good, that we might serve God in the way that we need to. Now let's look at another Scripture concerning this. Let's come to Psalm 139:1 This is where David is talking about the creation of life, in particularly his life, but that

applies to every life that God is creating through the process of pro-creation. This tells us an awful lot. Let's ask the question: Ever since Adam and Eve all children are produced in the womb, but God is the one Who is doing the creating, because we find in the book of Job that Elihu told Job that God 'created me with His Spirit and God knew me in the womb.' In designing and creating man and woman after the image of God, does not God know every single thing about us? Are we not made in a tremendous way? So that's what David is talking about here.

Psalm 139:1: "O LORD, You have searched me and have known me.... [How? *By the reins.*] ...You know my sitting down and my rising up... [He made you to do it.] ...You understand my thoughts afar off.... [There's no thought that can be withheld from God, anyway, even though you can from human beings.] ...You measure my going about and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways... [So this shows that God is all-powerful; all-knowing. That doesn't mean that He does this all the time, to all human beings everywhere at the same time. But for every individual you can apply this to yourself.] ...For there is not a word on my tongue, but lo, O LORD, You know it altogether. You have enclosed me behind and in front, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Where shall I go from Your Spirit?... [You're never going to get away from God.] ...Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I go up into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in the grave, behold, You are there.... [Because Jesus has the keys of death and the grave.] ...If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the furthest parts of the sea... [Isn't that what a lot of people would like to do today? Find a nice island way out in the middle of the ocean, no one around, no modern conveniences, just live there and get away from it—yes.] ...Even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,' even the night shall be light around me. Yes, the darkness does not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; as is the darkness, so is the light to You, For You have possessed my reins..." (vs 1-13). That's how God is able to know what every human being is doing.

Now that's interesting, "...You have possessed my reins... [But, notice the next sentence] ...**You have knit me together in my mother's womb**.... [That's how all human beings are made.] ...I will praise You, for I am awesomely and wonderfully made... [And the human body, even when it's perfect, is subject to death. The comment was made that if the children in school were taught the correct thing concerning God's way and the creation of human life that would probably stop a lot

of things. It would, but I tell you, this abortion issue that we have in the world and all nations, is really at a point that God is angry and He's going to do something very drastic about it.] ...Your works are marvelous and my soul knows it very well. My substance was not hidden from You when I was made in secret and intricately formed *me* in the lowest part of the earth.... [Now that is just a symbolic way of talking about the womb.] ...Your eyes did see my substance, yet being unformed; and in Your book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them" (vs 13-16). So through this process, God is intricately involved in creating of human life.

And then He sums it up this way, v 17-18: "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!.... [Now stop and think: The thoughts of God in creating man and woman and having this process so that many sons can come to glory and be born into the Kingdom of God. Now that's something! That's why we're made! That's where we're headed!] ...How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You." So that's quite a testimony; but you see, the *reins* begins right when you're conceived. Quite an interesting thing— isn't it?

Now let's see something else. Come here to Psalm 16 and let's see how God uses the *reins*, not only to test us and to try us, but also to teach us. Psalm 16:7 (pg 710): "I will bless the LORD Who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the nights. I have set the LORD always before Me because He is at My right hand, **I shall not be moved**" (vs 7-8). So this shows how God intervenes to teach us and instruct us.

Now, just put this in your notes, we won't turn there, but in Rev. 2:23, we have where it says that Christ 'tries the hearts and the reins.' This is really good for us to understand:

- that God loves us,
- that God cares for us,
- that He has given this way where He can deal with us directly.

The rest of the world doesn't know it; the rest of the world can't see it, but that's how God deals with us. Because He's working in us, He is performing a work, and—as we covered in the first message— **God is creating us in Christ Jesus and we are His workmanship**. So the greater creation is going on right now to create in us the very character of God! But in order to do so, you've got to have everything that God has created physically so that He can have His spiritual work which is a greater work that He is doing.

So let's see this now. Let's come to Psalm 138:6: "Though the LORD is high, yet He has respect to the lowly; but the proud He knows afar off. Though I walk in the midst of trouble... [It doesn't matter the circumstances you may be going through.] ...You will give me life; You shall stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand shall save me.... [Now here's the verse that we want, which is the title for the sermon.] ...**The LORD will perfect His work in me**... [That's the whole purpose of life, what God is doing to create us in the image of Christ, after His very likeness spiritually.] ...The LORD will perfect His work in me; Your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever; do not forsake the work of Your own hands" (vs 6-8). So that's interesting. So ***the work of God today in us is the greatest thing that He is doing.***

Now let's look at some other Scriptures which help us understand how then God works with us and how we come from (as we saw in the first message) being sinful and 'deceitful above all things, wicked and deceitful and desperately wicked,' to developing the righteousness of Christ.

Let's come to Psalm 51. Now this is the Psalm that David wrote when he confessed his sin concerning Bathsheba and the killing her husband, Uriah the Hittite. There's a lot for us to learn in this Psalm. What it does, it shows the kind of repentance and what needs to follow the repentance; and what God does with us when we repent from the heart.

Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.... [Now we know that God does. He's given the promises. He's removed our sins from us as far as the east is from the west. Let's focus in on this verse for a bit here]: ...Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (vs 1-2). Now how is that done? *That's done by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God.*

Now hold your place here and let's come to Ephesians 5. So we have repentance, the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God, which together is called the ***washing of the water by the Word***. So this is how we are cleansed; this is how God uses our reins and our heart and brings us to repentance and understanding, and brings us to the point that our hearts are pricked so we will repent. That's how He leads us to come to Him when we have sinned. Now notice it:

Ephesians 5:26: "So that He might sanctify it... [This is all a part of sanctifying and setting aside the Church.] ...**having cleansed it with the washing of water by the Word**... [Now the water is

likened to the Holy Spirit. John 7:37 says that 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,' that is the one who receives the true living water from God.] (Now this is why He does it): ...That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be holy and without blame" (vs 26-27). That's the whole purpose. That's why there's repentance

And we will see what David pleads for in this Psalm 51, and how it has to do with the whole inner working of our being. Now let's come back to 1-John 1 and let's see how this works, because he confessed his sins to God—didn't he? *Yes, he did.* He said, 'Wash me thoroughly'—*yes.* So here's how it works through prayer. Now here's another promise. Jesus also promised and said that all sins and blasphemies that men have done shall be forgiven them, of course that's obviously upon repentance, except for the sin against the Holy Spirit. That shall not be forgiven, because that's directly rejecting God the Father.

1-John 1:9 (pg 1,137): "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That is by the washing of the water of the Word. Because you see, what needs to take place after we have sinned, is that we need to have it removed from our minds. And we need to have the lust and the things which develop and concede the sin and brought it to fruition, we need to have that washed out of us as well. "...to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Now let's look at another thing back here in 1-John 5:16 concerning forgiveness, concerning praying about sin. "If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that* is not unto death... [Now that's a sin that can be repented of. Sin that cannot be repented of is rejecting God, blaspheming the Holy Spirit; and when that happens, whoever does that, has no conscience at all and what they are doing is crucifying Christ all over again with their contemptuous attitude to God. So if anyone is worried, 'Well, have I committed the unpardonable sin?' If you had committed the unpardonable sin, *you wouldn't worry about it all.*] ...If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that* is not unto death, he shall ask, and He will give him life for those who do not sin unto death. There is a sin unto death; concerning that *sin*, I do not say that he should make any supplication *to God*. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death" (vs 16-17).

Now here's the key in confessing our sins, v 18: "We know that anyone who is begotten by God does not *practice* sin... [You can't live in it. Why? *Because God tests the reins and tests the heart, and He will prick your conscience unto repentance.*]

...for the one who has been begotten by God keeps himself *by the power of God*, and the wicked one does not touch him.... [That doesn't mean he cannot frustrate him; that doesn't mean he cannot cause him problems and trials, but it means that we are rescued by God.] ...We know that we are of God, and *that* the whole world lies in *the power of* the wicked one." And so that helps answer Psa. 73 that we covered earlier.

Now let's come back to Psalm 51 and see what else there is concerning repentance and how we need to be thoroughly washed from our iniquities, cleansed from our sins, and here's how you do it: Psalm 51:3: "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." Now that's how God brings it to your attention. And in the case of David, he thought he was going to get away with it, but it didn't happen. It didn't work out the way that he planned, because Bathsheba's husband Uriah the Hittite pretty well suspected what was going on and he would not go be with his wife when he was called back from the battle, as David kept saying to do. So then he sent him out to be killed in the battle. It's ever before him. Now all that is running through his mind, beginning from the first temptation and the encounter and sending one of the servants over there to get Bathsheba and bring her up to king's quarters. All the planning and conniving, it went over a period of months, because she was already with child by the time the situation was known.

And he thought he could get away with it, so then God sent one of the prophets—Nathan—to tell him, 'You are the one who did this sin.' So notice: "I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You... [This is what we need to understand: *all sin is against God*. Yes, we sin against people, yes he killed Uriah the Hittite—but who was that against? *It was against God*, because God gave the laws. God gave the commandments, 'You shall not murder.'] ...Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be clear when You judge" (vs 3-4). God is always right. Never is He anyplace wrong. Even Job had to learn that. One of the things that's interesting to understand is that Job wanted to take God to court. 'There is no one to argue my case as in court before God.' Well, God let him know.

Now he [David] understood about human nature—v 5: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.... [Now it wasn't through an adulterous affair that he was conceived, so that doesn't mean that. But it just means that the human nature, of and by itself—from birth, from conception—is sin, because it has within it the 'law of sin and death.' Now how do you get rid of that?] ...Behold, **You desire Truth in the inward parts...**" You need:

- the Truth of God
- the Word of God
- the love of God
- Jesus Christ Who is the way, the truth and the life within you
- God the Father with His Spirit, Who has begotten you as His son and daughter to be born in His Kingdom

—so you 'desire Truth in the inward parts.' That's how God overcomes being desperately wicked and deceitful above all things—by 'the washing of the water of the Word' and the cleansing of the mind, and putting the things out of the mind. Now the mind can have things removed from it, but *only God can truly remove the sin*. We can put things in the back of our mind, we can try and get rid of them, but *only forgetfulness comes from God*. Now to have the Truth 'in the inward part,' that has to do with the Word of God, the commandments of God, and the way of God.

(go to track #2)

Let's come here to Hebrews 10:16. Now this shows the work of God and it shows the result of repentance. "This is the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,' says the LORD: 'I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds.'" Now the laws and commandments of God are Truth. What did Jesus say in His final prayer in praying to the Father, concerning us? He prayed to the Father, 'Sanctify them in Your Word, for Your Word is the Truth.'

Now when you go to Psa. 119:142, it says, 'All your commandments are Truth.' It says, 'Your law is the Truth. All Your precepts from the beginning are true.' So this is why the carnal mind does not like it, because it does not like to be exposed for the evil that it is. But when we confess our sins, He's what? *Faithful and righteous to forgive our sins* and then He gives us the strength to overcome sin by doing what? *Writing them into our hearts and into our minds*. Then He goes one step further and this is what we also need to do. "And their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again" (v 17).

Now let's go back to Psalm 103, we're not done here yet. We'll come back to the New Testament, so keep your place there in Psalm 51. But here's the promise that I mentioned and this is how we keep our perspective with God, our perspective in life. Because being a Christian in this evil world is difficult.

Psalm 103:1: "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits... [And what happens when you sin, and

you're angry, or you're not praying, you're not studying, and that's generally when a lot of sin happens, isn't it? *Because you're forgetting God.* So don't forget His benefits, don't forget His love.] ...Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness.... [That's what God is doing. That's the work that God is doing within us. That's His perfect work.] (v 8): ...The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in steadfast love” (vs 1-4, 8). So that's why He pricks our conscience so we can repent. That's why He tries the reins and examines our heart, so that we can come back to God, and so that we can keep in constant contact with Him with His Spirit through the New Covenant.

Verse 9: “He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins... [And what is the wages of sin? *Death.* How does God handle that with us? *By forgiveness, initially through baptism.*] ...nor rewarded us according to our iniquities... [Now here's how God deals with us. We need to understand it and really come to God as David did in Psa. 51:

- asking for God's intervention,
- asking for God's cleansing,
- asking for the Truth to be within him.]

...For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (vs 9-12). See, He said He will remember no more our sins and our lawlessness, our iniquities, back there in Heb. 10.

“As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him, For he knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes, For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children's children, to those who keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them” (vs 13-18).

So all of that ties together in the work that God is doing in us. As I pointed out on a sermon here recently, Jesus said that God wants ‘mercy and not sacrifice.’ That's also something we need to mix into the whole thing here that we are understanding.

Let's come back to Psalm 51:6, let's go over that again. “Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts...

- we receive the Spirit of Truth,
- we have the commandments of God which are Truth,
- we have the laws of God which are Truth,
- we have the Word of God which is Truth,

and that's how we get Truth in the inward parts. Now that's why study and prayer help bring this about.] ...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop... [Now hyssop is kind of like a scrubbing instrument that takes off the caked-on things.] ...Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (vs 6-7).

Now that's how we need to come before God. That's why repentance is the most important thing, along with prayer and study, that we yield ourselves to God so that He works with us; His Spirit works with us. He tries the reins! He tries the heart! He leads us in the way that we need to go! That's why it says back there, as we already read previously, that ‘as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.’

Verse 8: “Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.... [And we saw how He does that, removing them. We confess our sins—He forgives us; He removes them. Notice the end result of this and what God is doing in creating in us, in His perfect work.] ...Create in me a clean heart, O God... [That's what God wants. ***That's the whole goal to our life.*** That comes directly from God. You can't get it by attending church; well, you can have help along the way if the right things are taught, but you can't get it any other way. You can't get it through the world, through psychology or psycho-analysis. You can't get it through just changing your lifestyle. You have to have your heart cleansed from the inside, and then ***He has to create in you*** a clean heart, through ‘the washing of the water of the Word.’] ...and renew a steadfast spirit within me.... [So that I'm not going to be drawn away in my lust and my vanity, and foolishness, and stupidity.] ...Cast me not away from your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me” (vs 8-11).

Now what he did was getting pretty close to really tempting God above measure, so that's why he said that. ‘Take not your Holy Spirit from me.’ Our prayer today needs to be, ‘Fill me with Your Holy Spirit to do as You desire.’ That's what he's saying here in v 12: “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and let *Your* free spirit uphold me.... [You can't buy the Spirit, God gives it freely upon repentance and baptism and turning your life over to God.] ...Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You. Deliver me from the guilt of shedding blood, O God, O God of

my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness” (vs 12-14).

Now let’s come to v 17: “The sacrifices of God... [Rather than being burnt offerings, and all of that] ...are a broken spirit... [not a haughty spirit.] ...a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.” So that comes with the way that God uses in developing and using the reins

- to help us,
- to lead us,
- to guide us,
- to direct us in His way and in His Truth.

Now let’s see what else needs to happen here. Not only will God remove them and forget them; let’s come to Philippians 3 and let’s see the attitude we also need to have. This is what we need to strive for, right here continuously, just like the Apostle Paul. Now the Apostle Paul had a lot of things to forget—didn’t he? He always remembered that he persecuted the Church, because he remembered the lesson. So whatever the difficulty and problem is, you do the same thing. You remember the lesson, but you put the sin from you just like God removes it from you.

So let’s see his attitude and how we are to also do the same thing. Philippians 3:8: “But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... [Because we have been shown the way of salvation, the way of Truth, the way of God, *so we can have faith, hope, and love.*] ...count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things... [That’s why when we’re baptized we’re to count the cost. That’s why we are to love God more than father and mother, and brother and sister, and husband and wife, and children, and lands, and yes, your own life also. Count all things but loss.] ...and count *them* as dung; that I may gain Christ And may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law, but that *righteousness* which *is by the* faith of Christ—the righteousness of God *that* is based on faith” (vs 8-9). That’s why:

- we are to study,
- we are to grow,
- we are to change,
- we are to live in the grace of God,

and all of that.

Verse 10: “That I may know Him... [This is the goal.] ...and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.... [That’s what we are looking for; that’s where we’re headed; that’s how we forget the things that are behind; that’s how we

overcome sin; that’s how God deals with us. But then he gives this caveat, v 12]: ...Not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected... [But it says God will perfect His will, His work.] ...but I am striving... [That’s what every day is: us striving, and changing, and overcoming.] ...so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus” (vs 10-12).

Here’s the perspective, here is what God wants us to do: “Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; but *this* one thing *I do*—forgetting the things that are behind... [**You can never, ever overcome if you live in the past.** You have to forget those things that are behind. **Remember the lesson, but forget the thing.**] ...and reaching forth to the things that are ahead, I press toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. So then let as many as *be* perfect be of this mind.... [and *the perfect work of God.*] ...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you” (vs 13-15). How? **By trying the reins and the heart and pricking your conscience, and leading you to repentance.** So that’s something— isn’t it?

Now let’s come to Philippians 1:2 and we’ll end here: “Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God on every remembrance of you, always making supplication with joy in my every prayer for you all, for your fellowship in the Gospel from *the* first day until now... [Now this is what God is going to do and we will read a couple of Psalms in addition to this.] ...Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ” (vs 2-6). He’s going to finish it; He’s going to accomplish His will. **He is going to perfect His work in each one of us.**

Now let’s look at some other promises that we can cling to, other promises in the book of Psalms, which we’ll add to this. Let’s come to Psalm 92:12 (pg 747): “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.... [Now we have been planted in the house of the Lord, because that’s the Church. And we have entrance into the courts of our God, that’s through the power of the Holy Spirit into the Holy of Holies.] (Now notice v 14): ...They shall still bring forth fruit in old age... [Now that’s a good one to claim as a promise—right? Because a lot of us are reaching the old age, yes indeed!] ...they shall be *full of* energy and sturdy.... [So I claim that promise. He also promises in Psa. 71 that when we are old and gray, God will not forsake us. When we get weak and we can’t do the things that we used to do, God will not forget us. So we can pray for this right here.] ...They shall still bring forth fruit in old age...” (vs 12-14).

And isn't it true that the best wine comes from the oldest vines, and brings forth good fruit in old age? "...they shall be *full of* energy and sturdy... [And may that energy be the power of the Holy Spirit.] ...to show that the LORD is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him" (vs 14-15).

So that's how God is going to perfect His work. He will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. And the resurrection will be the final act for this physical body, because it's going to be changed

- from flesh to spirit
- from mortal to immortal
- from sinful to righteous

—because *God has called us and has loved us and He's cleansing us with the washing of the water of the Word to perfect His work in us.*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 73:16-21, 28
- 2) Psalm 32:5-11
- 3) Psalm 7:9
- 4) Psalm 26:1-12
- 5) Psalm 139:1-18
- 6) Psalm 16:7-8
- 7) Psalm 138:6-8
- 8) Psalm 51:1-2
- 9) Ephesians 5:26-27
- 10) 1-John 1:9
- 11) 1-John 5:16-19
- 12) Psalm 51:3-6
- 13) Hebrews 10:16-17
- 14) Psalm 103:1-4, 8-18
- 15) Psalm 51:6-14, 17
- 16) Philippians 3:8-15
- 17) Philippians 1:2-6
- 18) Psalm 92:12-15

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 2
- Jeremiah
- 1-Corinthians 11
- Revelation 2:23
- John 7:37
- Psalm 119:142
- Psalm 71

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