

Sermon Series
The Season of Formation
Foundational Text
Romans 8:29 Mirror Translation

“For those He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the exact image of His Son”

February 15, 2026

Sermon Title - - Are you Living on Auto-Pilot?

Sermon Text - - Ephesians 5:14 Mirror Translation

“Awake you who are asleep – arise from the dead – and Christ will shine as light in you.”

Introduction

Have you ever come the end of a day – and realized you were never fully present throughout the day? ... What do I mean? ... You had a conversation with someone at work – yet later you can’t recall what you talked about? ... You ran a few errands – and can’t remember every place you stopped? ... You went shopping – and when you tried to remember everything you bought – you realized you forgot a couple of things? ... Typically – especially when you reach my age – you brush it off as part of getting older ... We forget things ... But what if there is more to it than that?

How many times have you come to church – listened to the message – and by supper time you can’t remember what was preached? ... You can’t recall the songs you sang – or the scriptures that were read ... Over the years I have heard people say in those moments – the preacher didn’t hold my attention ... or the worship leader chose songs that didn’t speak to me.

I have always found that interesting ... When we forget a conversation we had during the week – or forget something at the store – we brush it off ... But when we cannot recall what happened at church – we blame someone else ... Let me help you with what is really happening ... You

are falling into a pitfall that I call – living on auto pilot ... Now before we can break free from this pitfall – is we must first identify what this pitfall of auto-pilot actually is.

What is the Pitfall of Auto Pilot?

Isaiah 29:13 Amplified Classic

“And the Lord said, - - Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, - but have removed their hearts far from Me, - and their fear toward Me – is a commandment of men - - learned by rote.”

Notice the last three words of this verse – “learned by rote” ... What does that word rote actually mean ... It means repetition without awareness ... It means you have done something so many times – you no longer have to think about it ... For example – you can give your spouse a kiss in the morning by rote ... You can say, “I love you,” by rote ... Probably the best example is driving a car ... How many of us have driven to work or church – and cannot remember the complete drive?

This concept of learning by rote – is extremely dangerous – especially when it comes to spiritual matters ... Rote is when you engage in a conversation or an activity – without ever engaging your heart ... You can sing and praise God by rote ... You read and pray by rote ... This is exactly what Isaiah is exposing in this verse ... He stated that people draw close to God in actions and in words – yet their heart was far from Him ... What did he mean? ... You know the language – you know the behavior – yet you are not fully engaged ... On the outside you look spiritual – but inwardly you are not connecting with God – you are functioning on auto-pilot ... Now the question becomes – how does a person get to this place where – the things of the spirit become – rote?

How Does Auto Pilot Develop in a Person's Life?

Jeremiah 2:32 NKJV

“Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? ... Yet My people have forgotten Me days without number.”

Jeremiah is touching on a deep and profound concept that many rarely grasp ... How do you forget someone you claim to love? ... How does something that was once deeply important to you – become routine? ... Jeremiah says – “My people have forgotten Me – days without number.” ... He does not say they denied Him – he says they forgot Him.

So how does this principle of auto pilot develop in our life? ... It happens quietly ... It happens over time ... It is the unguarded result of routine ... For example – you drive the same route so many times – that your body knows every turn – without having to engage with your mind ... Nothing dramatic takes place ... It simply forms through repetition ... Before long – life simply becomes automatic ... That is how auto pilot takes shape in a person’s life ... They simply stop fully paying attention ... What once required complete engagement – no longer does ... You have trained your being to simply function on auto-pilot ... And now it feels normal – comfortable – and you just go on – never questioning this condition ... In fact – we convince ourselves that it is a good thing – we built structure and a good routine.

Unfortunately – this same “structure” finds it’s way into our spiritual life ... You get up at the same time on Sunday for church ... You drive the same route ... You park in the same place ... You sit in the same seat ... So – by the time the service begins – you are already embedded yourself in the routine of functioning on spiritual auto pilot ... We begin to sing and you look at the same screen ... You get up – place your offering in the plate and we take communion together ... By the time I get up to preach – you are in full blown spiritual rote mode ... Physically present but inwardly disengaged ... This isn’t a judgment – but a reminder that living on auto-pilot affects every aspect of life – if gone unchecked.

Now catch this ... This pitfall is not the result of rebellion ... It is the result of conditioning ... Over time you train yourself to function without the need of inward awareness ... You learn to

move through your daily responsibilities efficiently – to solve problems quickly – to manage a schedule without pausing ... The body keeps moving ... The mind keeps calculating ... The day keeps unfolding ... And little by little the inner man is no longer intentionally engaged with your oneness in Christ ... Not because you rejected Him ... But because you stopped being aware of His presence ... And once that conditioning settles in – you begin to live near Him without actually perceiving Him – which leads us to the real danger of functioning on auto pilot.

What Are the Consequences and Dangers of Living on Auto Pilot?

Mark 8:18 NKJV

“Having eyes, - do you not see? ... And having ears, - do you not hear? ... And do you not remember?”

What I find interesting is – Jesus is speaking to His own disciples ... These were men who walked with Him daily ... They saw His miracles – they heard His teaching – they were always physically near Him ... Yet He asks them a very direct question – that revealed something unsettling ... You can be physically present – in an environment filled with truth and spiritual manifestations – yet inwardly – never perceiving what is actually happening around you.

That is the real danger of living on auto pilot ... It is not that Christ is absent ... It is that you are absent – remember when I preached on – The lights are on – but nobody is home? ... See – a person can sit under mystical revelation and never perceive it nor receive it ... They can witness a move of the Spirit – and never understand what just happened ... They have trained themselves to live in state of auto-pilot.

Over time – this pitfall creates a subtle spiritual dullness and blindness ... Not because your eyes no longer see – but because your heart is no longer engaged ... Let me give you a real-life example of what I mean ... I put my coconut milk in the frig – in the same place – all the time ... After I make my coffee – I simply go over to the frig – reach in at the same spot – grab the

carton – then pour it in my coffee – then put it back ... I don't look – I don't think – I simply function on auto-pilot ... Now – if Robin wanted to play with me – she could replace her milk carton – for my coconut milk and I would never know ... I would pour milk in my coffee instead – why? ... Because I have created a habit – a routine – I created a structure – where I do not need to think – look – nor pay attention in any manner ... This is the true danger of living on auto-pilot – living life completely disengaged.

Jesus' question still confronts us today ... Do you actually see? ... Do you actually hear? ... These questions are designed to force us to look on the inside ... Are we living life on auto-pilot? ... Have we built such a structured life – that we simply go throughout our day by rote? ... Has this type of structured lifestyle – also flowed into our spiritual life? ... Do we simply go through the motions – because we have created our own spiritual routine?

TAKE AWAY

Song of Solomon 5:2 NKJV

“I sleep, - but my heart is awake; - it is the voice of my beloved! ... He knocks, saying, - - ‘Open for Me.’”

Did you catch the tension in this verse? ... “I sleep – but my heart is awake.” ... It is possible to move through life physically present – yet spiritually disengaged ... It is possible to live life – yet never perceiving the Spirit moving in your life ... The voice of the Beloved is not absent ... He is always knocking ... The question is not whether He is speaking ... The question is whether you are engaged with His presence.

So – as we enter a new week – how about we take a new approach ... How about we practice being present ... You can do this by asking yourself this simple question - - Am I fully engaged? ... Is my entire being functioning in unity right now?

Now don't get me wrong ... There is nothing wrong with creating structure and routines in your life ... They can help you to stay on track – and make you very effective throughout your day ... The danger arises when you begin to slip into doing your daily routine by rote – disengaged – and functioning on auto-pilot ... The Lord wants to do life with you – each day ... He knocks as a reminder not a condemnation ... When you hear the knock – will you open the door?