

Examine Yourself

2 Corinthians 13:5

Many of us are in the habit of going to our physician, our internist, on an annual basis. We do so for the purpose of having a physical examination. We want to know how's our health, because if there are problems, we want to try to get out ahead of the curve and stop a problem before it persists or becomes a protracted problem.

Well, you know, by the same token, wouldn't it stand to reason that we would want to evaluate our spiritual health to make sure that our lives are lived in harmony with this book? I mean, think about it like this. This is the book that's going to judge us one day. And so if this is the book that's going to be opened on that final day, wouldn't it stand to reason that I'd want to make sure that my life is in harmony with the teaching of God?

Jesus said, he that rejected me and receiveth not my word has that which judges him. The word that I've spoken, he said, the same shall judge him in the last day. John 12:48, Paul would say in Romans chapter two and verse two. We know that the judgment of God is according to truth. Now somebody might ask the question, what is truth?

Well, the Lord Jesus answered that in John 17:17 Jesus said, sanctify them in truth. Your word is truth. So we're talking about the gospel, the faith once for all delivered. Now in Second Corinthians chapter 13, Paul in writing to the church in Corinth, this is his second letter. And you remember he said in verse five of chapter 13, examine yourselves whether you're in the faith.

Prove yourselves. Test yourselves. So let me ask this question. When's the last time you evaluated your life in light of the teaching of the Bible? When Paul said to examine, when he said, examine yourselves, it might be that what Paul is saying is you need to look at your life in light of what the Bible says concerning becoming a child of God.

Are you in the faith? That is, are you in the faith that has been once for all delivered, as you talked about in verse three? Well, what would you need to do to be in the faith? Well, that's a great question. You remember in Acts chapter two, we have a record of Peter preaching the gospel. Now, all the all the apostles preached on that day.

But we have a record of Peter's sermon, and Peter set forth the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He pointed out that Jesus was that Jesus ascended to heaven, took a seat at the right hand of the father, sitting upon a spiritual throne today the throne of David. And so in verse 36 he said, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that this same Jesus, whom you crucified, God's made both Lord and Christ.

Now in verse 37, the Bible says that when they heard this, they were pricked or cut to the heart. That is, they were convicted of sin. They wanted to know, what shall we do? Well, Peter on that occasion told them exactly what to do to remedy their sin sick situation. What was that? Or be the gospel? Peter said, you need to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

Now let's just pause there for a moment or two. If I'm going to be a child of God, then it would only stand to reason that I would want to do what they did in the first century, when the church began. Pentecost day. City of Jerusalem. Well, what did they do? Well, number one, they believed that Jesus was the Son of God.

Jesus said, except you believe that I am, you'll die in your sins. John chapter eight at verse 24 And Jesus said, if you die in your sins, where I am there, you cannot come, then we're called upon to repent. The Bible says in acts chapter 17, God commands all men everywhere to repent. So we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We repent of our sins, and then we willingly confess with our mouth what we believe in our heart. What is that? That Jesus is the Son of God, like the eunuch did in acts eight verse 37. And then the Bible says, we're to be baptized or immersed in water. It is a burial in water. Somebody might ask today.

Why would I want to be baptized? I thought that I was saved when I put my faith and trust in Jesus. Well, sift through the book of acts. In every case of conversion, the people did the exact same thing. Well, what did they do? They believed in Jesus as the Son of God. They repented of sin. They confessed his name, and they were baptized into Christ.

Acts two, verse 38. In verse 41, the Bible says that those who gladly received his word were baptized. Verse 47, the Bible says, the Lord added to the church daily those who are being saved. So when you're baptized into Christ, based upon what Jesus said, you enjoy salvation. Mark 1616 you enjoy the remission, the forgiveness of sins. Acts two, verse 38.

You enjoy having your sins washed away. Acts 2216 and you're added to the body of Christ, which is the house of the saved. Ephesians five verse 23. So number one, I would ask this question are you in the faith? Are you a New Testament Christian? But then secondly, it might be that what Paul is saying, examine yourselves as to whether or not your life is being lived faithfully before God.

Now when we look at the scriptures, we understand the importance of living a steadfast in moveable life in Christ Jesus. In James chapter one, James said, blessed is the man that endures temptation, for when he has been tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him. So if I live a faithful, obedient life before the father, then the promise is heaven.

Paul would say in Titus chapter one at verse two that we Christians, we live in hope of life eternal, which God who cannot lie, promised before time began. So as we think about this theme, examine yourselves. Let's just pause for a moment or two and take inventory of our spiritual life and find out where we stand in the eyes of God.

Now, what we want to do, number one, is to understand that self-examination must be done regularly. And really, that's what Paul is saying in this verse. He's saying that there needs to be a that there needs to be a consistent, ongoing self-examination. Now, look, it's a whole lot easier to look at the lives of other people, to analyze their words, their deeds, how they act, how they interact.

I mean, we draw conclusions quite quickly, but it's altogether different when rather than looking at the lives of others, we turn the microscope on ourselves and we ask, okay. How is my life in light of the Word of God? So we want to do that regularly. I mentioned a moment ago. Many of us are in the habit of going to the doctor annually.

We do so to ensure good health, that we can make sure that our health is where it needs to be. If there's a problem, then we want to address it immediately. Well, by the same token, if we will regularly examine this book in light of our lives, then if there are flaws, if they're problems, if there are things amiss in our life, we can correct them immediately.

So, number one, examine yourselves regularly. We need to examine ourselves regularly every day. Look at our lives in light of the Word of God. But then there's a second thing we want to do. So honestly, you remember in Luke chapter eight, in verse 15, Jesus had presented the parable of the sower. In Luke eight, Jesus said that the seed of the kingdom, that's the Word of God.

Now in that context, he talks about that seed falling on various types of hearts. Four hearts only one productive. In Luke 8:15, Jesus talked about the honest and good heart. Many years ago, I remember a great preacher in our brotherhood by the name of Franklin Camp. Brother Camp said that if you don't have an honest heart, you don't have a good heart.

I think he was right. I've got to honestly evaluate my life in light of this book. Now, it's not going to do us any good to examine ourselves if we're not honest with where we are, spiritually speaking. Now, we might try to cut corners. We might try to overlook problems in our spiritual lives. That's not going to help anything.

You remember in James chapter one, James talks about looking into that perfect law of liberty. He's talking about looking into the mirror of God's Word. And he said that those who are doers of the word, not just hearers, but doers of the word, they're the ones that are blessed. And he talked about how somebody might look into the mirror and forget about what he or she looked like after leaving.

Well, imagine if you can. We look in the mirror and we just have a casual glance and never really examine or scrutinize how we look. I'll bet you that before you leave home every day, one of the things you do is you look in the mirror and you want to make sure that how you look is appropriate. Well, you know, one of the things that I've learned about a mirror is a mirror doesn't lie.

It's going to show how you look, whether you like it or not. And you have to be honest about that. This is how I look. I'm young, I'm old, I'm wrinkled. Not whatever. Well, by the same token, when it comes to the word of God, I've got to be honest. When I open this book and I've got to look at my life honestly, candidly, regularly, consistently, and make sure that my life is where it ought to be.

And look, if it's not, I want to make corrections. I want to get things right before I stand out on the plains of eternity before Almighty God. Now there's another thought here. Number one, we examine ourselves regularly. Number two, we must we must examine ourselves. Not just regularly, but honestly. But then, thirdly, I need to examine myself. You need to examine yourself.

Scripturally, that is. This is a standard. The standard is not the world. I'm not the standard. No, the standard is the word of God. Now, Paul said in Second Timothy chapter three, all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped unto every good work.

Paul here said that the Word of God is profitable or beneficial to our lives. The Word of God is doctrinal in nature. The Bible says that the Word of God is inspired. It is profitable for doctrine, reproof. That is, I can correct whatever deficiencies are in my life. It is profitable for instruction. Now, again, we're talking about opening this book.

I'm not using a Creed book. I'm not using something that has been penned by man. No, I'm simply opening this book and looking at what the scriptures have to say. In Romans chapter eight, Paul makes a very interesting statement that I think is pertinent to our study. Paul

said the spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we're the children of God.

Well, in the first century, you have to understand you had inspired men preaching and inspired message. And so based upon the testimony of those inspired men, people could hear the gospel. They could learn what to do to be saved. And through those men, they could learn how to continue steadfastly in the doctrine of Christ. Now, today, God's Word resides not in man, but in the word that is in the gospel, in the truth.

So I have to open this book and look at my life in light of its teaching. In acts chapter 17 at verse 11, the Bible commends the noble Bereans because they receive the Word of God with all readiness of heart. They searched the scriptures daily to see whether those things were so. They might hear somebody preaching and teaching.

They could take the teaching that they had heard, and they could compare that to the teaching of the Bible. Well, that's what we want to do today. So again today, this inspired book is the Bible. It is a product of the Holy Spirit. We talk about God. He is the origin. He's the architect of the redemptive plan. Jesus was the agent by which that plan was consummated.

He was, we might say, the sacrificial cause of salvation. The Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, was the revealing cause of God's redemptive plan or of salvation. So that's what we're talking about now. We're taking God's word, his inspired, inherent word. We're opening the contents, and then we're measuring our lives in light of its teaching.

So when Paul said, the spirit himself, the spirit himself, and again, we're talking, as I said a moment ago, we're talking about the word of God. What Paul was saying in the long ago was that I can open this book up and I can read the contents of of this book, and I can compare my life to its teaching.

Now, I've emphasized that strongly because I think it's an important point. Paul said the spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we're the children of God. So how does that work? Well, number one, I could ask, have I put my faith in trust in Jesus as a Son of God? If the answer is yes, I can check that off.

I could also ask the question, have I repented of my sins? If I've done that, I can check that off. If I've confessed the name of Christ, I can check that off. If I have been baptized into Christ for the remission of my sins, I can check that off. And then I can ask the question, am I living a faithful life in Christ?

Well, if I am, I can check that off, can I? But again, this is the standard. You remember what David said on the long ago. David wrote many, many years ago. Let the words of my heart, the meditate, or rather let the words of my mouth, the meditation of my heart, be acceptable to you. Oh God, I want to make sure that my speech and my life are conducive to New Testament Christianity, that I am living in such a way that my life is pleasing before the father.

And so again, this is a standard. Now I want to think for a moment or two as we try to maybe circle back and think about this from a practical or applicable way. I said we are to examine ourselves regularly, honestly, scripturally, but also we are to examine ourselves carefully or thoroughly. That is, I want to make sure that I look at every facet of my life.

I want to go through every phase of my life so that I might ensure that, spiritually speaking, I'm where I need to be. Now, I want to call your attention to a passage. I want

you to turn with me in your Bible to Psalm 139. I want you to see something in light of the teaching of God. In Psalm 139, David and Blanc ago was talking about the great character of God.

And so in Psalm 139, you remember David first accentuates the omniscience of God, the fact that God is all knowing, he knows everything. So listen to him. Oh Lord, you've searched me and known me, and the word searched here cares what the idea to pierce to bore you think about boring a hole in something. And so the idea is that there is.

There is this deep analysis of one's life. And so he said, you, O Lord, have searched me and known me. He said, you know, my sitting down, my rising up, you understand my thought from afar. You comprehend my path and my lying down. Now listen to him, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there's not a word on my tongue.

But, Lord, Lord, you know it all together. God not only knows my thoughts, but he knows. He knows why I think certain things. He knows the words of my mouth, the words of my tongue. He said, but behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You've hedged me behind, and before laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.

It's high. I cannot attain it. So he's stressing the omniscience of God. Secondly, he talks about the omnipresence of God, and the idea here is that there's nowhere we can go to escape the presence of God. Listen to him. Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence if I send him to heaven?

He said, you're there. If I make my bed in hell, he said, or shield. He said, behold, you're there. If I take the wings of the morning, dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea. He said, even there your hand shall lead me. Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall fall on me, even the night shall be light about me.

Indeed the darkness shall not hide from you, but the night shines as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to you. So God is everywhere, nowhere we can go to escape his presence. Thirdly, his omnipotence. God is the creator. He's the one that formed the human family. Note verse 14 David said, I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Marvelous are your works, and that my soul knows very well my frame was not hidden from you when I was made in secret, skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. He said, your eyes saw my substance being yet unformed. And in your book they were all written the days fashioned for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Now look at verse 17. How precious also are your thoughts to me. Oh, God, how great is the some of them? If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand. When I awake, he said, I'm still with you. David stood in utter amazement at Almighty God. He could behold his omniscience, his omnipresence, his omnipotence.

But now drop down with me, and I want you to look at verses 23 and 24. In verse 23, David said, search me, O God, and know my heart. Have you ever asked God to search you? Look. God knows you better than than you know yourself. He knows you like the back of your hand. He knows everything about you from pillar to post.

Inside, outside, top to bottom, whatever. God is intimately acquainted with you. And so here, David, he makes a plea to God. God, I want you to search my heart. I want you to know my heart. But then note also he said, try me and know my anxieties. Does God know my anxieties, my worries, my cares and life? Sure he does.

Again, we're talking about an omniscient God. He knows everything, and this omniscient God

can look at my life. He can analyze my heart from top to bottom and based upon what God sees, he can draw conclusions. Now look at verse 24 and listen now to what David said. He said, I want you to search me. I want you to try me, Lord.

I want you to know my heart. I want you to know my anxieties and see if there is any wicked way in me. Man. That's powerful. Here is David, a man after God's own heart. Did David have indiscretions in his life? You know he did. David had his problems. I mean, go back and look at, for example, his union with Bathsheba.

David made a lot of mistakes in his life. But one of the things that really stood out about this great man was his heart. And so David would say to God, God, I want you to search me. I want you to try me. I want you to know my heart. I want you to know my anxieties, and I want you to see if there is any wicked way in me.

Would you be willing to ask God to do that? Let's think about it like this. Suppose the Lord Jesus were on earth today. Would you? Would you be willing to invite him into your home unannounced? Would you allow him to go through your home and just look at how you live on a daily basis? If you open the refrigerator.

What do you find alcohol in your refrigerator? Would he find various types of chemical substances, or what we might call drugs and drug paraphernalia? Would he find pornography? What would the Lord find if he were to step inside where you live? Now, listen, he's not going to step inside, physically speaking into your home. But I can tell you this.

The Lord has already stepped into your heart. And he knows everything about you. He knows you intimately. If you look at revelation chapter two and three, we have the Lord's analysis of the seven churches of Asia. And one of the key statements that you'll find in his analysis is this great phrase, I know your works. God knows you.

He knows you inside and out. So when we talk about analyzing our lives in light of this book, where do we stand? I mentioned a moment ago. Psalm 19. Turn with me to Psalm 19 and listen again to the words of David in the long ago. Now David is talking about the power of God in creation. And you remember he said in Psalm 19 verse one, the heavens declare the glory of God.

The firmament shows his handiwork. But drop down, drop down, if you would. And look at verse seven, beginning David said, the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether more to be desired, he said, are they than gold? Yes, than much fine gold, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Now please pay attention. Verse 11. Moreover, by them your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.

David is saying here there are lots of benefits to knowing this great book that we call the Bible. One of the benefits is that if my life is not in harmony with the will of God, if I'm amiss somewhere that I can look at this book and there are there are warning lights going off and I'm being warned, I need to step back and I need to maybe recalculate where I am.

And if I need to make some changes, then by all means, I need to do that now. Listen to the continuation, he said. And in keeping them, there is great reward. And I know that there are a lot of folks today that want to minimize the importance of obedience to God. But Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments.

In Matthew seven, the sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that do it, the will of my father which is in heaven. Revelation chapter 22. In verse 14, John said, blessed are they. Or rather, he said. Blessed are they that do his commandments. But they may have right to the tree of life, and enter through the gates into the city.

Now that being said, let's go back and look, if you would. Psalm 19, verse 14, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. When it's all said and done, I want to make sure that my life is in complete harmony with God's will.

And I think that's why Paul said, examine yourselves whether you're in the faith. Prove yourself. Test yourselves. In other words, you look at your life and you analyze it in light of this book, and you do so regularly. You do so honestly. You do so scripturally, and yes, you do so thoroughly, carefully. You examine your words, your thoughts.

Think about the motives behind what you see and what you do. You analyze your deeds and hopefully and prayerfully your life is in complete harmony with the will of God. If you haven't obeyed the gospel, I encourage you to do that today. Don't wait. Paul said, today is. Today is the day of salvation. Second chapter six at verse two.

So you need to obey the gospel. If for whatever reason you're a child of God, you've gone back into the world, you have, as Peter said, forsaking the right way, going astray. Then here's my encouragement to you come home. Be like the prodigal of old. The Bible says he came to himself. Won't you come to yourself? Come to your senses.

Get things right before you step out into eternity. To stand before God. When it's all said and done. Here's what we want to hear. Well done, good and faithful servant. Thank you for your kind attention today. May God bless you richly in this life.

No, I was terrible.