

Ai and I

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The worst enemy you have is not your neighbor nor your bill collector, he is not your severest critic nor your most aggressive competitor. We can identify him without calling in the FBI to determine who he is. In fact, I trust we can apprehend and condemn him very shortly, thus giving you a victory over him. Your worst enemy is sitting in the seat with you at this moment.

The enemy is yourself, as you have probably suspected. He occupies the same skin that you occupy. He uses the same brain you use in thinking his destructive thoughts. He uses the same hands that you use to perform his own deeds, and may I say to you that this enemy – your flesh – can do you more harm than anyone else; he is the greatest handicap you have in your daily Christian life.

Now there are two factors that make dealing with this enemy extremely difficult:

In the first place, we are reluctant to recognize and identify him. We are loathe to label him as an enemy. The fact of the matter is most of us rather like him.

The second problem, or objection, is that he is on the inside of us. If he would only come out and fight like a man it would be different, but he will not. It is not because he is a coward but because he can fight better from his position within. Actually, the better choice of subject for this study might have been “The Enemy Within.”

Nations, cities, churches, and individuals have been destroyed by the enemy within. Russia fell to the Communists in 1917, not because of the German pressure on the outside but because of the doctrine fomented on the inside.

There comes out of ancient history an authentic narrative, long held in the category of mythology, that the city of Troy held off the Greeks for ten long, weary years. Finally the Greeks sailed away leaving a wooden horse. The Trojans took that wooden horse within their gates, and that was the undoing and destruction of Troy.

As we change our view from scenes of ancient battlegrounds to the fields of spiritual warfare, we immediately find much evidence that churches are wrecked from within, not from forces without.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in writing to the seven churches in Asia Minor, gave them certain warnings, and not one of these churches received warning as to the enemy on the outside. He said:

...Thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam...So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner....But I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. (Revelation 2:14, 15, 20 AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION)

Christ said to these churches in substance, “You have something within that is bringing about your own destruction.”

Disloyalty and unfaithfulness in the church today is hurting God’s cause more than any enemy that is on the outside. The devil can hurt our churches only from the inside, not from the outside.

Then, my friend, an individual can be destroyed from the inside. Alexander the Great was probably the greatest military genius that has moved armies across the pages of history. There has been no one like him. Before the age of thirty-two he had conquered the world, but he died a drunkard. He had conquered the world, but he could not conquer Alexander the Great. There was an enemy within that destroyed him.

The only battle that the children of Israel lost in taking the Promised Land was a battle in which the defeat came, not from without but from within.

The fact of the matter is that when the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, only three conspicuous and outstanding enemies stood in their way. Those three enemies foreshadowed the three enemies that Christianity has today.

Consider Israel and Her Enemies

Jericho, Ai, and the Gibeonites, these three enemies prevented Israel's enjoyment and possession of the Promised Land. The land was theirs. God had told them that it was theirs. God had given them the title deed when He said to Abraham:

And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:8)

And to Joshua God said:

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Moses. (Joshua 1:3 AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION)

God was trying to say to them here, "It is yours, go in, possess, and enjoy that which you take."

What a lesson this is for us today. These people were given a land that was made up of three hundred thousand square miles, and even in their best days they occupied only thirty thousand square miles.

Consider the Christian and His Enemies

We have been told in Ephesians 1:3,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

You and I today have been given all spiritual blessings. They are ours. But how many of them are you enjoying today? How many of them are really yours? You have the title to them, but have you claimed them and are you enjoying them as He intended?

When in Chicago several years ago, I found the following news item which I clipped from a metropolitan paper. The headlines read:

SKID ROW HUNT Comb flop houses for a 4 millionaire

It continued, "The flophouses and saloons of Chicago's skid row were searched today for one, Stanley William McKenna Walker, 50, an Oxford graduate, an heir to half of an eight million dollar English Estate. The Missing Persons Detail hopes that somewhere among the down-and-outers who line the curbs and sleep off wine binges in the hotels, they would find Walker, son of a wealthy British shipbuilder."

Think of a man wearing clothes steeped in filth from sleeping in the gutters of Chicago, a wino, lining up at some mission to get a bowl of something to drink or eat, and he has four million dollars! How tragic!

Then think of the many Christians who are just like that. They are blessed with all spiritual blessings and yet are living as if they were spiritual winos.

None of these spiritual blessings are immediately in our possession to enjoy. God has made them over to us, but if we are to get them, there are battles to be fought and victories to be won. In fact, the Epistle to the Ephesians closes with the clanking of armor and the sound of battle with the call to put on the whole armor of God.

It will be worth our while to stop and look at the methods of Joshua in battle. His taking of the Promised Land places him among the great generals of history. He will stand along with Alexander the Great, with Hannibal, with Caesar, with Napoleon, and with General Stonewall Jackson in their greatness.

Joshua's abilities in strategy and tactics in moving into the Promised Land were tremendous. For example, he had a threefold blockage to break. He had three formidable enemies. Immediately ahead of him stood the city of Jericho. It was right in the center of the land and was all but impregnable as a fortress. Then to the northeast stood the little city of Ai. To the south was a combine, an alliance of Gibeonites. It was necessary to take these three in breaking the blockade. His strategy was first to take Jericho, thus breaking the backbone of the land. He could then move to the north, then to the south, and dispose of each section separately.

The three enemies of Joshua represent the enemies of the Christian today.

- 1– Jericho represents the world.
- 2 – Ai represents the flesh.
- 3 – The Gibeonites represent the devil.

Thus you and I have a threefold enemy robbing us of our possessions: the world, the flesh and the devil.

In this study we shall concentrate on one of these enemies, Ai. Ai represents the flesh. The city of Ai was located up among the hills, thirteen miles north and west of Jericho, which was down on a plain. From the plains of Jericho up to the promontory of Ai one had to ascend 3200 feet and it was over rugged and difficult terrain. Dr. John Garstang, the great biblical historian, wrote:

Its position was a strong one befitting its importance as an advanced post of the dwellers upon the plateau. Perched on the summit of a low hill, overlooking the wilderness of tangled valleys that descend towards the Jordan, it commanded a view on all sides but the west where rises a ridge that obscured the view of Bethel. Steep watercourses enclose the site on all sides but the south...On its northern side the valley is deep, and from the opposite slopes the city must have presented a bold and well-nigh impregnable appearance, crowning a detached hill which rises in a series of rocky terraces...

Now Joshua underestimated the strength of Ai. When he made his first attack with just a small force, he met with a crushing defeat and had to flee; some of the soldiers were killed in battle. To

flee in defeat was a great disgrace for God's soldiers. However, he made a second attempt and was successful in taking Ai.

When you read in the Book of Joshua about this ancient battle over a little city years ago, it probably means nothing to you today. But God has put great spiritual truths here for us, and the Holy Spirit can make this real and living to you as you read it.

Let me set down here that Ai and I have something in common. We have something that is quite similar. There are three "musts" that are revealed in this incident, and they *must* be in your experience and mine if we are going to lay hold of the spiritual blessings and gain a victory over the flesh.

- 1 – There must be a recognition of the enemy and his potential.
- 2 – There must be an examination of the reasons for defeat by the enemy.
- 3 – We must look carefully at the resources provided by God with which to overcome the enemy.

First of all, we must have a recognition of the potential of the enemy. And here we want to look at Joshua 7:2, 3:

And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.

My, what a false estimation! You see, these people were basking in the warm sunlight of the first flush of victory. They were dreaming because they had overcome Jericho. But they forgot something that was very important. They forgot that they did not fight at Jericho. They forgot that the victory was not theirs – the victory was God's. They got possession, but God got the victory. They had forgotten that.

Let us notice what happened at Ai:

So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water. (Joshua 7:4, 5)

Now the General Staff of Joshua was guilty of military stupidity. The top brass of the Pentagon back in Jericho had blundered. It was an awful mistake, but it will be best for you and me not to point the finger of criticism back yonder at Joshua. *Our enemy defeats us in the same ways* today because we fail to recognize or acknowledge him and do not give him credit for the potential he has.

Who is This Enemy?

It is the flesh – the fellow who lives in our body. The flesh is called *sarx* in the New Testament – that is the Greek word for it. The word “flesh” is used approximately 393 times in the Scriptures and is used always in one or two connections.

It is sometimes used to speak of that which is physical. To be very frank, when it speaks of flesh it often means nothing more than the meat on the bones. That is all. And when it is used in that sense, it always carries a note of weakness. For instance, Isaiah said, “All flesh is as grass.” Grass is weak, and the use of the word refers to the meat on the bones. Then the psalmist says this: “He [God] remembered that they were but flesh.” They were just weak human beings, and he is speaking of the flesh.

It is of interest to note that our word “sarcoma” which is an awful thing in the flesh, has its root in this Greek word *sarx*. We also get our word “sarcasm” from this same word. Originally sarcasm meant “to tear the flesh.” Therefore *sarx* in one sense means physical flesh.

However, most of the time, especially in the New Testament, *sarx* is used in a moral and ethical sense. It is used in speaking of this old Adamic nature which we have. This nature which is sometimes called the “carnal man” or the “old man” is labeled correctly when it is called “the flesh.”

You have that “old nature” – I have it, all of us have it. There is not a person who does not have this nature which is known as “the flesh.” It is the old Adamic nature. Are you prepared to look at it now and to identify it, to recognize it, to call it by name as we spotlight it? Not many Christians are willing to do this.

Let me say here that the “flesh” is *evil* by nature.

And at this point we want to turn again to the Scriptures. In Romans 7 Paul says,

For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not...I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (Romans 7:18, 25 AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION)

Has this been your experience – is this flesh of yours inclined to sin? Some wag has said, “Everything I like is either illegal, immoral or fattening.” Do you know why his statement is true? It is because this old nature is just that kind of nature – it is evil. And we all have it.

Goethe, the great philosopher, said: “I have never read of any crime committed but that I, too, might have committed it.”

Samuel Johnson, the brilliant literary light in England during the eighteenth century, made the statement: “Every man knows that of himself which he dares not tell his dearest friend.”

You and I have an old nature. Are you willing to label and recognize it? Do you know that you have it today and that it is contrary to God?

The old nature is in rebellion against God. Take, for instance, your own case. Perhaps you go to church only on special days – Easter, Mother’s Day, Christmas – for you do not like to go to church every Sunday. That is the old nature in rebellion against God.

Let us look at this old nature through the words of Scripture,

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)

God has no notion of salvaging the old nature. He has no program by which it can be remodeled for use by Him. He has no program for it at all! It is condemned, my friend, as we shall see in a moment. Christ condemned it on the cross.

Since God will not use the old nature, it is necessary to have a new nature that comes from God. Turn once again to the Epistle to the Romans:

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:7, 8)

In your old nature you can never please God. Paul said to the Corinthians, “That no flesh should glory before God” (1 Corinthians 1:29, AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION). God does not even like it when the flesh lifts up itself and boasts in itself. God says that no flesh is to glory in His presence at all. It is an atrocious thing.

Do you want to know what the flesh does? Well, the works of the flesh are enumerated in Galatians 5:19-21, and the words are the ugliest to be found anywhere. If you have not looked at your morning paper, you might pick it up and there you will see what the flesh does. The accounts written up in the paper will include the following list from Galatians: “...adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings...” Could there be uglier words? Yet that is what the flesh is capable of doing, and that is what the flesh does today. Remember, you and I were born with it. David said, “In sin did my mother conceive me.”

Our Lord said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” It will always be flesh. Unless a little child is reared in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, he will turn his back on God.

Count de Maistre of France, a wonderful child of God and known in that country as one of its greatest Christians, left us this statement: “I do not know what the heart of a villain might be, I only know the heart of a virtuous man, and that is frightful.”

What about you at this moment? Are you willing to admit that you have that kind of nature? Are you willing to admit that your old nature has the potential to absolutely wreck your Christian life and destroy you? Until you are willing to admit this, you cannot go out to battle, for you will meet with defeat as did Joshua at Ai.

There are two basic reasons for defeat at the hands of the enemy, and it is well to have these in mind. We return to the record in Joshua:

And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan! (Joshua 7:6, 7)

They encountered a shameful, ignoble and humiliating defeat – so much so that it crushed Joshua and he cried out in agony of his soul that he wished they had never crossed over Jordan.

Why were they defeated? Well, here are the reasons, and what a lesson lays in them for us today!

They failed first of all because they were depending upon their own ability and forces. Actually, they were no match for the men of Ai. Ai was much smarter and Ai was much stronger. Certainly the children of Israel could never have overcome Ai in their own strength – never!

Today the flesh can dominate and destroy you – you cannot get the victory over it on your own. How sad it is to hear a man who has been overcome by alcohol say, “Now I am going to get a grip on myself; I will quit drinking, and I will be all right from now on.” How have you made out when you’ve tried to overcome the flesh in your own strength? You know you did not win.

What do we learn as we read the eighth chapter of Joshua? At Jericho we learned about depending on God’s strength. As Paul said,

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Philippians 4:13)

At Ai we learn about our weakness, for the Lord said, “... without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). If there was any man who could have lived with the flesh by overcoming himself, it was the apostle Paul. As a Pharisee he had a discipline back of him that would put us modern-day Christians to shame. What a discipline he had! Paul tried to live the Christian life, but he finally reached the place where he said,

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
(Romans 7:24)

It is a losing struggle, my friend, if we depend upon our own strength.

The second reason the Israelites were defeated at Ai was due to a defection in their own camp – you must note this. Joshua went before the Lord and stayed there all day. He wept bitterly and sobbed and put on sackcloth and ashes. Finally, after bearing with this, the Lord grew weary of it –

And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned.... (Joshua 7:10, 11)

The Lord as much as said, “Cut out this whining and fretting before Me.”

Perhaps you have wearied the Lord in some way. There are many times when prayer is of no avail. You are just wasting your time. How many times have you and I gone to the Lord and said, “O Lord, why have You let this thing happen to me?” And we have remained before Him blubbing like a baby, yet knowing all the time that there was something in our lives with which we were refusing to deal. Here we find that God is saying to us through His words to Joshua, “Get up off your knees and get up on your feet. I do not want to hear you until you deal with that thing in your life.”

Then God said further,

...There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.
(Joshua 7:13)

Today, *the* reason many of us have lost the joy and power in our lives is that we do not deal with the sin there. God is through with you until you do this. Do not misunderstand – you do not lose your salvation. These were still the children of Israel, but they never won another battle until they dealt with the accursed thing. They had to deal with it.

God told them they had to ferret out this thing. One man had sinned, but it made all Israel guilty. God instructed them to find this man who had sinned. They were going to have to cast lots to do it. They had to go through quite a procedure, by the way. Doubtless they had to use the Urim and Thummim to determine who it was.

Years ago there was a young skeptic in Scotland. He visited a little town where there was a shoemaker who had a reputation for knowing the Word of God. The young skeptic said, “I should like to ask this man some questions.” When he was introduced to him, his first question was, “What was the Urim and Thummim?” The shoemaker replied, “Well, to tell the truth, I do not exactly know. But this I know, that it was attached to the breastplate of the High Priest. And I know that it means the lights and perfections and was used to determine the will of God. Just how, it is not given to us, for it is not for us today. But I have brought it up to date, and I have changed one letter in order to do this. I have changed the little letter ‘r’ to ‘s.’ Instead of Urim and Thummim, to me it is ‘use-’im and thumb-’im. That is the way I find God’s will.”

He was right, friend. We don’t need the Urim and Thummim. Nor do we need a fortune-teller or horoscope. The way we will find direction for our lives is to thumb through and use His Word. That is our one source.

So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: and he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: and he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. (Joshua 7:16-18)

When they brought the families, and the family of Zabdi was taken, then they narrowed it down to households, and the household of Achan was taken. When Achan was ferreted out, he acknowledged his sin.

Today many Christians are marching around Jericho, blowing trumpets and talking about how “separated” they are. At the same time they are suffering a glaring defeat at Ai because the flesh is overcoming them.

Let me be specific. Someone says to me, “I am a separated Christian.” My friend, I am glad to hear that. Every Christian ought to be separated and I am glad that you are. But what do you mean by that?

He replies, “Well, in my business I have to go to many parties where they serve cocktails, and I want to say to you that I always turn my glass down. I have never tasted a cocktail.”

I am glad for that testimony today, for liquor will eventually destroy America. But I want to ask you a question – are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Paul says, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). Do you have the Holy Spirit fulfilling in your life all of the wonderful things that God wants done? Are the fruits of the Spirit there? No? Then you are defeated at Ai.

Again, someone says, “I am a separated Christian – I want you to know that I would not be caught dead in a movie.”

Again may I say that I thank you. Many of them are pretty immoral. So I want to congratulate you upon your stand. But just a moment. You may not go to see movies, but what are the “movies” of the flesh? Some of the movies of the flesh are *strife* and *division*. Are you sowing strife and division among the brethren? Then you are overcome by the flesh. You may have a victory yonder at Jericho, but Ai has defeated you. The “flesh” has defeated you.

Sometimes folk come to me and say that they, too, are “separated Christians.” We thank them for this word on their part and ask what it is that they do not do. “Well, Pastor, I want you to know that I do not smoke cigarettes.”

Certainly, I want to congratulate you – incidentally, you may avoid cancer of the throat or lungs by this stand. But I have a question which I must ask you: Which is worse, to have fire on the end of a cigarette or the fire of jealousy and envy on the end of your tongue? I want to say to you that you can keep on blowing trumpets around Jericho, but you are still in line for defeat at Ai.

Joshua now asks Achan for a confession,

And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him.... And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. (Joshua 7:19-21)

Covetousness is one of the sins of the flesh, for one of the works of the flesh is idolatry, and how many are overwhelmed by that today! Anselm said, “I have had men confess to me every known sin except the sin of covetousness.” Israel dealt severely with the sin of Achan. They stoned him and destroyed all that he had – including that Babylonish garment, the silver and the gold – with fire. You and I must deal with the sins of the flesh.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Now we come to the last matter: the resources provided by God to overcome the enemy. First, we want to note what happened:

And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land. (Joshua 8:1)

Joshua had dealt with the sin, and God was now ready to give him the victory.

My friend, you and I cannot control the flesh. Only the Spirit of God can do that. The tragedy is that thousands are trying to control and eradicate it in their own strength. You might as well take a gallon of French perfume out to the barnyard, pour it on a pile of barnyard fertilizer and expect to make it into a sand pile in which your children might play. You cannot control and set in the right path this thing we know as “the flesh.” God says you cannot. It is the Holy Spirit who has this control.

In discussing this issue of the flesh, we must first acknowledge the fact that there is a war to be fought.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (Galatians 5:17)

Then we want to look very carefully at a second fact. And if you miss everything else that is written, do not miss this: Christ died a judgment death required against the sin nature.

- a) Christ did not die only that you might have salvation, but –
- b) He died that this sin nature might be dealt with – this nature which you and I have.

...God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. (Romans 8:3)

This simply means that when Christ came to this earth, He not only died for your sins that you might have salvation, but He died to bring into judgment this old sin nature. Otherwise God could not touch us with a forty-foot pole because we are evil.

The Holy Spirit

The “Holy Spirit” is not His name – *Holy* is His title, for He is holy. In giving Him His title we speak of Him as the Holy Spirit.

We must remember that if the Holy Spirit comes into your life, my friend, it must be because God has satisfactorily, adequately, and completely satisfied Himself that your sin nature has been judged. That is the reason He tells us to reckon on that – count on it – He has judged our sin nature. When He died on the cross almost two thousand years ago, you and I, if we have accepted Christ as Savior, died there. That is what Paul meant when he wrote, “I am crucified with Christ...” (Galatians 2:20)

Then he states it again in Galatians – and we don’t use this verse very often.

And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
(Galatians 5:24)

If you belong to Christ, you have crucified the flesh – not today, but almost two thousand years ago when He went outside Jerusalem and died on the cross. There Christ died because I have a sin nature and you have a sin nature, and the Holy Spirit could not touch us until Christ had paid that penalty. When the penalty was paid and our sin nature was condemned, then the Holy Spirit could and did come into our lives and bring victory out of defeat.

You cannot control this enemy. You have tried it – have you not? You say you are a “separated Christian.” What of your bad temper? You did not mean to tell a lie, but did. You know you are defeated by the “flesh.”

Your victory over the “flesh” is only by the Holy Spirit and not by your own resources!

In leaving this profitable subject, we want to look back over our steps and see the path. Once more we must return to Romans, and for this reading we will turn to chapter 8, verses 3 and 4:

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

God saw that this old nature was condemned. He has no notion of salvaging it, but oh, how He loves poor, lost humanity that has this fallen nature!

Then He sent His Son not only to die for our sin, but also to condemn this old sin nature. Now it is condemned; it is judged:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.... (Galatians 2:20)

This old nature is as bad as He says it is. You and I cannot get rid of it – we cannot control it – but the Holy Spirit has come in to give us a victory.

I want to close this study with an illustration out of the life of Dr. C. I. Scofield. He often told the story of when he was a boy, attending a country school, that the school bully jumped on him. He did the best that he could, which was all too little, for he was a much smaller boy than the bully. Finally, the bully knocked him down, and got on top of him. He was taking a beating that was something terrific. Through the dust of battle he caught a glimpse of his big brother coming down the road and he was pulling off his coat as he was running toward them. Dr. Scofield said, “All I did, when my brother pulled this big chap off me, was to crawl up on a stump and rub my bruises as I watched my brother beat the stuffing out of him.”

My friend, your worst enemy is your old nature. You cannot whip the “bully” who lives within you. He is whipping you, isn’t he? Why do you not turn him over to the One who is capable of handling him? Why not turn him over to the Holy Spirit?