

The Problem of Right Thinking

By: Earl Radmacher

Earl Radmacher:

[Inaudible] Our Father. We're thankful again for every opportunity that we can bow before you acknowledge your greatness in our lives. You truly are Sovereign Lord and also our Father. And we're so grateful that one who is our Father is in control. We pray that as we apply our minds to the subject of this hour, that you will give us guidance and that we shall learn as we seek to apply the things that we discuss.

Lord, may you receive glory in all that we do and say we ask that in Jesus name, Amen. Okay.

We've gone through the premise of right thinking to the process of right thinking, and now to the problem of right thinking. If our thoughts are the raw material of our actions, and if the process of right thinking starts by thinking right about what God is like, then the next question that I have to deal with is, how does one think right? How do you think God's thoughts?

For I find myself not always thinking the right things about God, and I recognize that there is a battle going on for my mind. In a previous session, I referred to Two Corinthians ten. I'd like you to turn there now and look at it in a little more depth. Two Corinthians, chapter ten, relating to the warfare or the battle that is going on for our minds. I'll begin reading with verse one where Paul is engaging with the Corinthians concerning their real failure to think right, and he gets a little strong with them here.

In fact, there is no place in the Scripture where Paul is more pointed than he is right here. He really goes after the Corinthians and he says, "Now I, Paul, myself and pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent and bold toward you." That was their accusation, by the way, of Paul. In other words, to put it in our lingo, they would say, "Paul, you got a big mouth when you're not here. But buddy, when you get right here, you really quiet down.

You're just as meek as a lamb." And this was the kind of scuttlebutt that was going around in their circles about Paul. And so he says too, "but I beg you that when I am present, I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh." And that was the Corinthian analysis of Paul. They said they walked in the spirit, they were the real spiritual Giants, and Paul walked in the flesh.

How could anybody in their right mind have ever said that? Well, sometimes we misconstrue the people who are closest to us. And Paul was very close to them. You remember, he had begotten them. They were his spiritual children.

And then they were lured away by false Apostles, false teachers. And Paul refers to those in very large quantities. Back in One Corinthians, chapter four. So here he is getting right to the heart of it and says, you're accusing me of walking in the flesh and you are spiritual. Verse three.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments

and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled." Now, in the midst of Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians and their particular problem with regard to their attitude toward him, et cetera. In the midst of all of that, he highlights a principle which leaps over any cultural or geographical or social boundary right down to where we are. The same principle they use to answer them is the principle that we can use in our own lives.

And that really is captured there in verses four and five. Now, he puts it in a scenario that would fit the first century. The scenario that you have there does not fit us because we do not do warfare that way. So you have to go back and look at first century warfare to understand what he's talking about. He talks about the pulling down of the strongholds and the weapons that are mighty for pulling those down.

Remember, in ancient times, groups of people would live very close to each other in a city on top of a hill. Very often if you go to the Middle East today, you will very often see a fortress on top of a hill and surrounded by a wall, maybe a double wall, that which they call a case mate wall, maybe 10, 20, 30ft between the walls and filled with rubble in between. You could run wagons on the top or chariots or whatever on the top of it. And then there would be one entrance to that city into that wall. And sometimes the wall would be surrounded with a moat, and there would be a bridge that would go over that moat, a drawbridge and a gate, et cetera.

And when that city was at peace, the bridge would be down, the gate would be up, and the people at the towers or the strongholds would be quite at ease. But when the people up on the towers detected that the enemy was approaching, then immediately the bridge would go up, the gate would go down, the soldiers would take their place at the high towers and prepare for war. And when the invaders came, they could not get in through the gate, obviously the only entrance to the city. And so they would have long ladders that they would throw up against the wall, even if they had to go across the moat against the wall. And then they would seek to scale that wall by going up that ladder and get the guards that were at the high towers, wipe them out, then go down, release the drawbridge, raise the gate, and the army could come in.

And while the people that were defending, they had their defenses too. And on top of the wall, they would have, for example, large cauldrons of boiling oil. And when the invading army would seek to scale the wall by means of these ladders, they would pour this hot oil down on them, and that kind of inhibited their progress up the wall. And sometimes that was effective, if that was not effective, and they got up there anyway and they got the bridge down so that the horsemen could come in. Then just above that gate was a room with munitions in it, and they were generally bits of iron and glass that would, under pressure, be blasted down on the invading horsemen, and that would knock them out and pile them up at the gate there so they could not get through.

Well, these were some of the pieces of weaponry that they had. They were rather awesome. And if you go back and read warfare in that day, you'll find that it indeed was pretty, mighty, pretty scary. And Paul uses that as a backdrop now to talk about the spiritual warfare so that by the time

you get down to verse five, he is substituting things like arguments and imaginations for the high towers. Watch that again.

In verse four, we have weapons that are mighty in God for the pulling down of the strongholds, casting down arguments, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. So in place of the tower on top of the wall is the imagination is the reasoning. He uses their physical warfare, then, as a portrait of the spiritual warfare. And the devil seeks, the enemy seeks to tear down what in the middle of the verse. Notice that our weapons are mighty for casting down the arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

So the strategic point of the battle is the point of the knowledge of what God is like. One of the beautiful things of this week is the way messages have tied together. And again, Dr. Boyce last evening was talking about the fall, Genesis, chapter three, and the approach of Satan to Eve. And I had referred to that earlier in the week.

How the devil, when he finally captured Eve's mind, it was along the lines of a depreciation of what God is like. He first attacked the goodness of God and said, God is not good. Or he didn't really say that. Blatantly he questioned, Is God really good? If God is withholding something from you, is he really good?

Would not a good God give you all that you desire? And the more Eve thought about that, the more she agreed with that line of thinking. Until the devil then became bolder and he went from getting her to doubt the goodness of God to denying the truthfulness of God. God doesn't tell the

truth. And once she accepted that line, then of course, she was willing to commit the sin and shared the same line of thinking with Adam and he fell with her.

Now, the devil has never changed his procedure. His procedure is always to tear down my idea of what God is like. And every time I ask that question, why as it relates to the actions of God in my life, that is a subtle attempt to get me to question the integrity of God. And what I need to do then is by my thinking and by my behavior reinforce what God is really like in my mind. This is, by the way, why in the scripture, when God refers to what he will do, he says, The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob says unto you, Why does he repeat that?

That's not just poetry. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, in other words, the God who said such and such to Abraham and did it. And the God who said such and such to Isaac and did it. And the God who said such and such to Jacob and did it. That same God says unto you, when you get to the New Testament, he doesn't repeat it that way.

He uses another phrase, one Corinthians 10:13. There has no testing taken you but such as this common a man, but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tested above that you're able. He could have said, but the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, says unto you, he will not allow you to be tested above that you're able. They're really synonymous terms. God is faithful or the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob says, one is an experiential demonstration.

The other is simply a statement of God's attribute. One is a demonstration of it, the other is a statement of it. So the devil will do everything he can to tear down my idea of what God is like. Therefore, I've got to captivate thoughts. We talked about that earlier.

Bringing every thought into submission, having a grid built into my heart that will effectively screen out those things that are unworthy of God. And that's the phrase he uses here, bringing every thought into captivity. How do I capture thoughts? Well, if I have not built a grid into my heart to capture thoughts, then my heart will become more like a cesspool. It takes in everything and my actions become a demonstration of the composite of what has been deposited in my heart.

My deepest seed of reflection. If I have been thinking a lot of unworthy thoughts about what God is like, then you can be sure that my life will be just as inconsistent. It's an inviolable principle. I cannot think any more correctly. Pardon me, I cannot act any more correctly than my deepest thoughts about what God is like.

So he says, Bring every thought into captivity. Don't let one run loose, because the one that you let run loose, maybe the one that festers, maybe the one that grows and becomes an act, which act will be unworthy in your life. So bring every thought into captivity. Peter puts that in a little different way. He says, Gird up the loins of your mind.

Rather than bring every thought into captivity, Gird up the loins of your mind and the picture, there it's very picturesque. The loins here, of course, we understand that. And the Jew who would

want to get ready to run in that day, have these long garments on and he would reach down underneath and he would grab the back of his robe and pull it up like this so that when he would run, he would not trip himself. And that was called girding up your loins so you wouldn't trip yourself. Today, we don't have that cultural pattern.

We wear other things. Some people wear other things on their loins to gird them up. And I remember my mother, she used to wear a corset that had these long laces in the back. And I can remember my dad putting his foot in her back and pulling these long laces tight. And then that shoved everything in the right place.

I mean, just spread my mother out the way she was supposed to be spread out, apparently. So that was Girding up. Now he takes that picture and he applies it to our brain and he says, Put a girdle on your brain in other words. Cinch it up.

Don't allow sloppy thinking. Therefore, if you allow sloppy thinking, you may find that that is the precursor to actions that you would not want to have happen in your life, but you won't stop them if you let them go through that procedure. So I need to stop the action in the thought, bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And I find in my life that has to be a regular, daily, moment by moment kind of thing. I would like to have believed that sometime along your life you'd get to the place where that isn't a problem anymore.

And there, of course, are people who develop doctrines where they kid themselves into thinking it isn't the problem. And I'm sorry about if some of you are in that class of those who believe in

entire sanctification or eradicationism or perfectionism or so forth. I just do not find that in the scripture at all. I don't find that I ever get to the point where I have no problem with my old sin nature. Now, I want to interject another portrait of what we are like right there, because there is a popular book out right now that gives the impression, at least to people, of the absence of a sin nature.

And I think that that can start all over again, this problem of sinless perfection and eradicationism and all kinds of ideas that really are deceitful ideas. I think it's good for me to know not only my God, it's good for me to know me and understand what my potential is, not just for evil, but for good. And sometimes we have so emphasized, I agree, our potential for evil that that's become the focal point. And we've forgotten about our potential for good as believers in Jesus Christ.

So let me put a little series of circles on here, on the overhead so that you can see in a visual form that which I want to state in word form. As I came into this world, I came into it as a person who was referred to as being dead, spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians chapter 2. And I was a slave of Satan. The scripture speaks of me as being in bondage.

I was a slave. So as I was born, I was born with an old sin nature through which the god of this age, Satan, appealed to me through the world system, the Cosmos, a well ordered system to get me to do his will. And I did that regularly. Every act that I performed before coming to Christ was only sin continually. Romans, chapter three, Jeremiah, chapter 17. Many passages that state that.

Now when I was born again and had a radical change called regeneration, new creation at the very core of my being, I had a new possibility then. And not only was there still this old possibility of the presence of the god of this age, Satan, working through the world system by means of an old sin nature in me. But there was a new possibility, and that is that my body became a temple, a temple of the Spirit of God. In fact, even more than that, John 14:16 teaches us that God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, all have taken up their presence, their residence in my life, although the Spirit is referred to most pre eminently as the one indwelling me. So God the Holy Spirit now works through the medium of the word, or truth, by means of a new divine nature which Scripture says I possess as a believer to get me to do his will.

So God the Holy Spirit works through the Word by means of my new divine nature to get me to do his will. And when I do that, the result is always obedience unto righteousness, righteous acts. The Spirit of God will never inspire an unrighteous act. Therefore, when I do that which is sin, immediately I know what energy source I am obeying. I am at that point obeying Satan rather than God.

For there are only two energy sources. There is that one which energizes disobedience and that one which energizes obedience. And every moment in my life I am doing either one or the other. Now, I won't be able to analyze that down to the last act, but it is true, and it isn't necessarily my responsibility to analyze it down to the last act. Paul says just the opposite in one Corinthians, chapter four, when he says, concerning their judgments of him, the Corinthians are misjudging him.

And he says, "but with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself, for I know nothing against myself. Yet am I not justified by this? But he who judges me is the Lord. Therefore, judge nothing before the time until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.

And then each one's praise will come from God." In other words, when I stand at the judgment seat of Christ, two Corinthians 5:10. When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ, I will receive inerrant evaluation of every act of my life. You say that's going to take a long time. Remember, God is not hassled by time.

When we leave this arena, we leave time, and God will have plenty of time to do that evaluation at the judgment seat. So every moment of my life I am using energy, and I am using either energy from the God of this world, Satan, or energy from God, who is the true God. Satan energizes motivates that which is evil. God energizes motivates that which is righteous. There is no middle ground.

Now, let me distress that, because some people, if you challenge them about their actions and you should say that such and such was of the devil, they will get terribly upset and say, you shouldn't say that. And if you respond by saying, well, if it wasn't of the devil, was it of God? Well, no, I wouldn't want to attribute that to God. Well, if it wasn't of the devil and wasn't of God, then who was it of? And what is a typical response?

They'll say, the flesh. Now, who is the flesh? The flesh is not a who, it's an it. In other words, there's not a third personage here someplace. This is the flesh right down here.

That's the ethical name for the old sin nature in the scripture sometimes referred to as the sin principle, the flesh, the old nature, etc. But the fact is, there is in me a capacity for evil, which capacity was not diminished when I received at my new birth another capacity for good.

This capacity for evil is just as available as it ever was. The difference is, now I have an option.

I am not enslaved to that. The tyranny has been broken. That's the whole point of Romans chapter six. Three times over, it States it, I have been freed from sin.

Actually, the word is justified from sin. I've been freed from sin. The tyranny has been broken. The devil has no right to rule in my life. And therefore, if I will submit myself to God, the product will always be obedience unto righteousness.

I submit myself to the devil. The product will always be disobedience or sin unto death. So at any moment in my life I am either experiencing life or death.

At any moment in my life, I am either obeying or disobeying.

And I will not know the tally on that until I stand before Christ. But at least I can know what the battle ground is, what the parameters are. So this is me as I am today. Now, one day I'm going to be that way. When I stand before Jesus Christ, there will no longer be the problem of Satan and the world and the old sin nature.

When I stand before Christ, I will have been delivered not only from the penalty of sin and the power of sin, but I will have been delivered from the presence of sin altogether. And Satan, I will have been freed from any access that he has to me. But in the intervening time, there are two that are making a bid for my life and they're doing it through my thoughts and my actions will be in direct accord with my deepest thoughts. Now that to me is a picture of the battlefield, so to speak. Now for that battlefield, Paul says we have weapons, not those physical awesome weapons in the old battle scene that he portrays there, but they are weapons nevertheless that are mighty.

Don't depreciate them. They are weapons that are mighty to the pulling down of the stronghold and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Now what would be think it through, what would be the greatest weapon against Satan's attack on the knowledge of God? What would be the greatest weapon against his attack on the knowledge of God?

Okay, he said the glory of God, the Word of God, which tells us about the God of the Word. So the greatest attack on the false idea of God is what? The true idea of God. So I don't have to wonder all around looking for some kind of gimmick to fight the devil. What I need to do is just

counteract the lie with the truth. So when he presents an idea of God that is unworthy, what I need to have built into my system is the truth about what God is like.

Thus, when processed theology says God is good but not powerful, I must counteract that with what God says about Himself. He names himself Almighty God. That should be enough.

Voiceover 1:

Please turn the tape to side two for the continuation of this session.

Earl Radmacher:

Thus, when processed theology says God is good but not powerful, I must counteract that with what God says about Himself. He names Himself Almighty God. That should be enough. But I can go through the scripture then and see that God is in absolute control. God is sovereign.

God is powerful. I need to constantly counteract the one with the other. And it's not enough to have that in a doctrinal statement back there. Say, I learned that a long time ago. No, I've got to constantly be running that through my thought system because there is a cleansing that takes place in the process.

It is not enough to know that that's true. It is important to be running it through my system to experience the truth of it. Now, I want to give you one example of that from John Chapter 15,

which is to me just one of the most exciting passages in the scripture about what God is like and especially God the Father. If we were to discuss God the Spirit and what he is doing in your life, I'm confident that many of you would quickly come back with all kinds of things that the Spirit of God is doing in your life. And if we were to talk about what the Son of God is doing in your life, there may even be a little that you would be able to share there, though we usually don't have as much to share about what the Son of God is doing in my life as what we have to share about what the Spirit of God is doing in our life.

But if there's one left out member of the Trinity, it's God the Father. If I were God the Father, I would feel rather left out. In contemporary evangelical theology, we have a huge amount about the Spirit, a little about the Son, and almost nothing about the Father.

So let me try to fill in a place concerning the Father by turning to John chapter 15. Actually, in John 13 through 16, you have a tremendous amount about Father's, Son, and Holy Spirit. And if you look at the chapter, you'll find that Jesus, speaking to his disciples, first presents what he will be to them. And Jesus, really as the visible member of the Trinity, is the pattern for a dynamic Christian life. And then you move from the pattern of a dynamic Christian life in John 13 to the placement officer of the Trinity, namely the Father, the placement for dynamic Christian living.

And then you move to the Spirit in John 15 and 16 primarily on the power and presence of the Spirit of God for a dynamic Christian life. So you move from Son to Father to Spirit in this upper room discourse. Now, the one that deals with Father is most often, I think, misconstrued and distorted, and we don't really see what he's talking about. So let me pick up pieces of chapter 13

and 14 and then concentrate on 15, the first few verses for a few minutes in John 13, as Jesus has his disciples gathered in the upper room to give them his last discourse before he makes his supreme offer of his life, he not only in the 13th chapter gives them a lecture, but he gives them an example, a pattern. And Jesus was a master of what I would call show and tell.

He not only tells, but he shows what is to be done. So you have this section on washing feet. And Jesus takes the place of a servant and washes their feet. And after he finishes that, then he says, do you know what I have done to you?

I've given you an example, verse 15, that you should do as I have done to you. That is, take the servant's role, serve one another most assuredly. I say to you, A servant is not greater than his master, nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, happy are you? If you do them, I do not speak concerning all of you, etc.

So let me not go on to verse 18. But if you know these things, verse 17, happy are you if you do them. So he has set the pattern and said, if you want to be blessed, then do what I have done, love one another and do it by acts of love. It's a rather interesting thing, by the way, that Christ, who so epitomized love, did not say, I love you in the New Testament. We do a lot of talking about, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you. In the scripture you find more of the demonstration of it. Love was more of an act than a word. Love was something that was shown, more than spoken. And when it was shown, you were sure of their love.

So when you get down to the end of chapter 13, Jesus says, verse 33, little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek me. And as I said to the Jews where I am going, you cannot come. So now I say to you, a new commandment I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you. How did he love them?

By taking the place of the servant and washing their feet. Very practical thing that needed to be done. It was not something very lofty, something very lowly. Anybody could do it. Anybody who was willing to be a servant without feeling that they were getting locked in. And so Jesus says, A new commandment I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

And then he gives us tremendous clue. By this, all will know that you are my disciples. If you have love one to another, how will the world know that you belong to me? They will know that you belong to me by the way you treat each other.

If you really love one another in action, not just in word, then the world will know that you belong to me. That was a tremendous clue to Evangelism, and Peter missed it. Poor Peter, suffering from getting his foot in his mouth, does it again. Simon Peter says to him, "Lord, where are you going? I just got through telling him where he was going. He couldn't come. But I've got a tremendous thing I want to say to you." Well, Peter missed the thing he had to say to him and asked them again, "Where are you going?" He says, "Where I'm going, you cannot follow me now, but you shall follow me afterwards." And Peter said, "Lord, why can't I follow you right now?"

It sounds just like my kids a long time ago. "Daddy, where are you going?" "Well, where I'm going, you can't come. But I tell you what I want you to do while I'm gone." "Well, why can't we go?"

"Well, you wouldn't be able to hack it." "Well, yes I can. Yes, I can."

So Peter says, "yes, I can. Lord, why can't I follow you now? I'll lay down my life for your sake." And Jesus answered him, "Will you really lay down your life for my sake?" And here the Lord had to say something that was really hard to say.

And he exercised tremendous restraint, I believe, because he really could have blasted Peter right out of the court. But he says it as mildly as he can say it. He says, "Most assuredly, I say to you, The rooster shall not crow till you have denied me three times." Now here is Peter really professing his greatness. "Lord, I want to tell you your mighty fortune to have me as your sidekick, because I am going to really take care of you." And the Lord says, "really, Peter?"

Gee, I'm glad to know that. Let me tell you the real story, Peter, before the cock crows, you're going to deny three times. Do you even know me?"

It really gets me to think that when Christ brought me into the family, he knew everything I'd ever do.

And that didn't cause him to hesitate and say, "I don't know if I really want him or not."

Now he knew precisely what Peter was going to do, and he didn't say too much about it. He said enough just to shut Peter up. And can you imagine how lowly Peter must have felt? How humiliated he must have felt in front of all of his brethren? He was kind of a spokesman for the group and in front of everybody else.

He says, "Lord, man, I'll go with you to prison, to death." In other passages, this passage is expanded more than it is right here, Luke 22, for example.

And in front of all of his closest associates, Jesus has to tell him what he's really going to do. He's going to deny Christ.

And I rather expect that Peter at that point fell down to the bottom of the pits. And he would like to have dug a hole and just gotten out of there.

And what is the next thing that Jesus says. Does he say words of warning and threat when you do that? No, the very next words. And remember, there are no chapter divisions here. When they were talking, he said, "Let not your heart be troubled."

"Don't be loose from your moorings, Peter. You believe in God, believe also in me." And he goes on to tell him about what's ahead, "in my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I'll

come again, receive you unto myself where I am. There you may be also." And in the 14th chapter, he mentions the Father 23 times. The Father is mentioned more in chapter 14 than in any place in the word of God. So Jesus has presented himself as the pattern.

And then he says to Peter, Peter, I want you to know that my heavenly Father is going to be actively at work in your life.

So if you're feeling really out of it, remember, my Father hasn't given up on you. And though you are going to deny me, believe in God, believe also in me. That's chapter 14. Then at the end of chapter 14, it says, they arise and they go out. The last verse of chapter 14, "arise, let us go from here."

So I take it, at that point they left the upper room and they made their way down through the narrow streets of Old Jerusalem, around the perimeter of that wall and past the Kidron Valley where the vineyards were over, toward the garden of Gethsemane. And as they were going over, Jesus, the master teacher that he was, used the grapevine to give instruction to his disciples of what kind of care they were going to receive from the Father. And this is beautiful. Look at it. "I am the true vine, and my father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. And every branch that bears fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit."

When I was in Armenian theology, this passage used to just whip the daylights out of me. I'd keep looking at it and say, how much fruit do you have to bear before you get kicked out?

And it's really been a tragedy. I think that people have used this passage to whip people rather than to strengthen people. Think back to the context psychologically. Peter was already wiped out. Would Jesus now come along and say, "in Furthermore, Peter, I'm going to tell you the truth.

I'm going to smash you out." That would have really been helpful. And yet that's the way this passage is used often. Why? Because people read a theology into it rather than looking at the context and seeing what the situation was and looking at the horticultural background of grapevines in Israel.

Very simple thing. You don't have to be a theologian at all. All you have to do is understand grapevines in Israel.

And they're not like grapevines in Fresno. So if you think you know grapes here, you don't know grapes in Israel. And one day we were driving down by Hebron, and I was looking out the window at the vineyard, and all of a sudden I saw something that caused me to yell, "Stop the bus!" Dr. Alexander jumped up and said, what's wrong?

What's wrong? I said, "Stop the bus." They jerked the bus over to the side of the road. He came running back. He said, "what's wrong?"

I pointed out the window and I said, "Ralph, look, John 15 two. John 15 two!" And he said, "John 15 two?" I said, "yeah, look at it, Ralph. One is up and the other is down."

Now, what was I looking at? Well, they were just coming to that time of the lifting of the vines. And in Hebrew, those stocks that are like this have a little tap root that's about like that. And when they finish with the production from the previous year and they take the post out, that vine, just flops over on the ground and it looks like it's just a worthless stick. And when they get ready for the next year of productivity, they come along and they take that vine away from the ground.

They lift it into position for productivity. And they do that gradually because after being on the ground for those months, if they came and jerked it up, they would ruin the little channels of staff that go right from the root up through the stock. And so even today, you can go on the West Bank and you can see Arabs in their same way as 2000 years ago coming along with a rock about like this, lifting up one end of the stock and putting that rock under there and doing that to every one of those stocks. And then they will come along a few days later and they'll shove that rock back a little further. Then they'll come along later and shove it back a little further and a little further until they have it upright.

And then they will put a stick alongside of it. Then they will put a wire across the top of those sticks and they're ready for productivity. And that's what Jesus says, God the Father will do.

"Every branch in me not bearing fruit." Is it possible to be in Jesus not bearing fruit? Well, he just got through saying it, "every branch in me not bearing fruit."

You have life before you have fruit. Fruit doesn't come like that. Fruit is the product of a process of a living plant.

And so Jesus says to discourage disciples that he's going to leave every branch in me not bearing fruit. My Father takes away from the ground. If you look in Kittel's very long word book, you will find that the very first meaning given for the word. Here, "airo" means to lift up from the ground. You see, start with the passage culturally, not theologically, and work to your theology.

You can't understand this passage unless you understand viticulture in Hebrew.

What's the second thing the Father does? Not only does he lift the branch from the ground to get it away from the place of contamination, enough in the light of the sun. But notice the next phrase and every branch that bears fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit. And once again, we get all messed up on that word prunes. It really is a growth of the previous word airo to "kathairo", airo is to lift kathairo is the word from which we get our word catharsis. What is a catharsis? Well, if you pardon the illustration, a catharsis of the bowels is an enema. Now, if you'll transfer that from your bowels to your mind, you'll understand what he's talking about. Every branch in me bearing fruit.

Ok, the process has begun. What is the problem? Once you get the process of fruit bearing going, the problem then is contamination of the fruit. And so God applies his divine DDT as a cathartic agent to take care of the diseases on the fruit. Now, compare that with the next verse.

You are already clean, and you have in the word clean the same root as you have in the word prunes in verse two. You are already clean, or you have already had a catharsis through what? Through the word which I've just spoken to you.

So the word that Jesus Christ just gave to his disciples, he is saying, if you will believe that it will serve as a catharsis for you, it will cleanse you of unworthy thoughts about me, and, consequently, it will cleanse you of unworthy actions toward me.

Now, in the next session, I'll finish that off because I'm sure some of you are wondering, well, what about that 6th verse? Isn't that a problem? Well, we'll deal with that. And I don't want to throw it in here at the last minute and have you miss it. But what I want you to see is that all the weaponry we need to fight the battle successfully is available to us right in the word of God. In God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Right thinking about the members of the Trinity will reconstruct my life.

Now you are clean, he says through the word which I have spoken unto you, if you will believe it. So you'll notice in verse four, then he moves into this series of statements about abiding, abide, abide, abide, abide, abide. Really? All he's saying is, believe it, believe it, believe it, believe it. Accept it as a settled fact without wincing, and you will see what my father will do in your life.

We'll pick up a part of that problem when we come back to it in the last hour tomorrow. Let's pray.

Our Father thank you for making such full and complete provisions for a life of fulfillment in Jesus Christ help us to be able to absorb what you have put in the pages of Scripture for us to use

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today. And I pray that your words, Lord, may cleanse us even as they cleanse the disciples. As Jesus talked to them, I prayed in Christ's name, Amen.