

# The Mother of All Sins, The GRINCH Within – Selfishness Exposed

*Carnality & the Flesh*

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**Bible Text:** 2 Corinthians 5:15

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2 Corinthians five verse 15.

Speaking of the Lord Jesus giving his life for us, he says, “And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”<sup>1</sup>

The Scripture says that Christ died not only with the purpose that we would have everlasting life, but Jesus died so that we, from this point on, would not live for ourselves.

Today I titled this message, “The Mother of all Sins.” Today I would like to talk to us about selfishness. I subtitled the message, “The Grinch Within,” because all of us, whether we see it or not, are basically selfish. As a matter of fact, I believe that no matter what sin we commit, no matter what act of disobedience, no matter what trespass against the law of God, all of us have rooted within any sin, selfishness at the core.

As a matter of fact, today in one word can you share with me a sin, what we call an act against God, a transgression where we come short of his glory in some area of our life? What sin could you think of today? Just name one.

Estaban.

Stealing. Of course, when we take something that doesn’t belong to us, that is an act of selfishness, isn’t it, where we disregard the property of somebody else and we take it for ourselves. That is selfishness at its core.

Can you think of another one? Dave?

So we can say in one word “Unthankfulness,” right? A spirit of ungratefulness, not realizing it but everything we have has come from God and so when we refuse to give

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:15.

thanks we thereby assume that we have obtained this by ourself and so selfishness is even at the root of unthankfulness like Romans one even mentions.

Roberta.

Lying. Why would we lie? We often lie to cover up the truth because if the truth got out who might get hurt? We might get hurt, right? And so we lie to preserve self. Or at least we think we do.

All right. Anybody else?

Ruthie.

Pride. What is the middle letter in the word “pride?” I. Pride is I trouble, isn’t it? Pride is putting self on display. It is arrogance. It is bragging. It is a spirit of self exaltation, thinking too much of ourselves. At the root of pride is selfishness.

Another sin.

Eric.

Idolatry where we would worship an idol. You know, and why would we worship anything except the true and living God? Why do people throughout history turn to idolatry rather than to the true and living God? I will tell you why. That idol has a lot of features, a lot of characteristics that suit my lifestyle. As a matter of fact, it is very common for people to create gods that would be just like them. If they were lustful they would create gods that were lustful. If they were greedy, they would create gods that had greed within them. People created gods in their own minds to worship because really they want to have... they know within themselves there is a need to worship God. But rather than seeking the true and living God, they will turn to a god that will accommodate their sin, their lifestyle, their selfishness. And so we form gods that we like or that will be not in any way a rebuke to our lifestyle.

And I think idolatry—and we will conclude with this thought today, Eric—is that the selfishness is idolatry. The Bible says covetousness is idolatry. When we desire for self, that is idolatry. And sometimes we worship ourselves and don’t even realize it because we want for ourselves.

Anybody else? Can you think of another one?

Carol.

Lust. Lust is when we have a desire or an appetite for something that doesn’t belong to us and that certainly is easy to see that connection to selfishness.

Gil.

Gossiping. Now why would people talk negatively about somebody else? I think one reason is to exalt themselves. People will belittle others so as to lift up self, so as to exalt myself. So we put others down to make ourself look better or to make ourself look good.

Anybody else think of a sin?

Diana.

To swear, to curse, to use bad language. That is usually anger within us on display. And why are we angry? I think cursing and swearing, what you were talking about is a manifestation of anger.

Now why are we angry? Because we didn't get something that we wanted, whatever it might be. And so it is selfishness.

Chantal.

Revenge. Where like Clint Eastwood said, "I don't get mad. I get even." And people want to get back at somebody else. They want to get even, settle the score. And I think many times we fail to realize that vengeance belongs to God. And so we take matters in our own hands.

"They hurt me. I am going to hurt them."

Why? Not because truth was violated. Not because God's law was violated. But because my pride was hurt or I lost some of my property, therefore I am going to get back at you. Something I have was infringed upon and so we take revenge.

Anybody else? Can you think of another sin?

Pat.

Insensitivity, just not caring, right? In other words, we don't care about other people because we are too concerned with what? Ourselves. So we are not sensitive to their need because all we care about is our need, right?

Anybody else?

Fornication, adultery, any sexual sin is a desire to please self, right? And if the guy says, "Well, if you loved me you would," no it is not love, it is lust. And he just wants to gratify a sensual appetite so as to please himself. It is nothing but carnal lust. Let's be honest.

Anybody else?

Estaban.

Unforgiveness. And why would we refuse to forgive somebody else? Because we want to hold on to something that we can hold against them and hold them captive but also I think it makes us feel good to have that bitter feeling or that anger, you know, against somebody else. And, again, selfishness is at the core of an unforgiving spirit.

Anybody else?

[?]

Yeah. When we blame others. We refuse to accept responsibility. Well, like Adam said, "It is the woman you gave me." And we are all prone to blame others, shift responsibility rather than take the blame. And the reasons is selfishness, isn't it?

Anybody else?

Russ.

Strife. We are going to get it all cost, right? And even if it means climbing over people, I am going to get what I want. And so we strive for selfish advantage.

Anybody else?

Rudella.

Unbelief. Now why do people not want to believe? I will tell you why. The Bible says that people don't come to the light. Jesus says men hate light. They love darkness rather than light. Why? Because their deeds were evil and so that desire for sin keeps people from coming to the truth and keeps people from coming to God because they want to hold on to that sin.

Anybody else?

Oh, I saw a hand over here. Shannon.

Greed. We are not satisfied. We are not content with what God has given us. And so we want what others have, right? We are greedy and we want more than we have because what I have is not enough. I have got to get more. And so greed is selfishness.

It doesn't matter what sin we name. Every sin has its roots in selfish idolatry. Every sin at its core.

And, you know, the world is filled with self centered people. I think of a recent incident and that recent incident actually was yesterday where I went up to my home state of Connecticut and up there I spent the day with relatives and we brought gifts with us and

we had boxes of gifts that we were going to give out, you know. And your nephews, they are only about this big. And they knew we had gifts for them. And I knew. We were waiting for our relatives to arrive. I am at my brother's house and I decide I am going to take a little nap, because I am going to be up late tonight, drive back to New York, get ready for Sunday. And so I said, "Do you think I could get a little nap?"

So I laid down for a nap. I didn't get a bit of sleep. One of my nephews—well, actually both of them—were saying to their mother, "We want to open the present now. We want it now." And they are crying and they are throwing fits and I could not get a wink of rest. And on and on and on it went. And they come in and wake me up.

"Uncle Vinnie, can we open it now?"

I said, "If you give me a half hour rest, yeah."

I didn't get a minute. They are back at it.

You know. "We want it now. We want to open it now."

And do you know something? That is a reflection of really all of us. We want what we want and we want it right away. All of us, if we are honest, we are selfish. I will make it mission. You are looking at a selfish individual. In my old nature I am as selfish as anybody else. I am so thankful for the grace of God where God has opened my eyes to the truth about myself and to the truth about him and that I am to live for him, the Lord.

But, you see, the essential nature of all sin is selfishness in the heart. And I believe that because it is an internal motivation, this selfishness can't be seen. Its fruits can be seen, but it often escapes us. It often eludes us where we don't even see the selfishness in us. We see it in others. It is easy to see how somebody else is selfish, but oh, no, it is not me. I am not selfish. You know?

I believe that often times many even do good for selfish reasons. There are a lot of benevolent people, a lot of people who will give. They will give great sums of money to charity. They will be very respectful and... but if we knew the motivation behind that. They have learned in life that to get places in life you need to be this way. And they have learned to gain from others by putting on a front. And there are many who will act in a certain way so as to get a desired result. But, again, the motive is for self.

I remember talking to a guy one day and he didn't... he was an Agnostic. He didn't know for sure if there was a God and we were talking and I said, "Then what is our purpose upon this earth?"

And he says, "To help others."

And why is that true?

He said to me, “If I saw an old lady that needed help across the street I would help her across the street. You know, I would help her.”

I said, “Now why would you do that? Why would you do that?”

He said, “Because it makes me feel good.”

He was honest. He was honest. He said, “I would do that because it makes me feel good.”

Do you have any other reason?

Nope. That is the reason I would do it, because it makes me feel good.

See, my point is that even in the good acts of many people, there is a motivation that is not proper. We do things out of selfish motives so often.

It is a violation of the greatest commandment in all the Bible. And what is the greatest of all commandments?

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.<sup>2</sup>

Right?

So these are the greatest of all commandments. We are to love God first. We are to love our neighbor second. And I think that selfishness is striking out at the greatest of all commandments. Rather than God being first we want to be first. Rather than living for his will we want to live for our will.

And then he says, “And you are to love your neighbor as yourself. You are to love other people the same way you love yourself.”

You know, there is one commandment that doesn’t come up in the Bible. Do you know what commandment that is? Love yourself. I mean we hear it in our world, but it is not in the Bible. Nowhere in the Bible does God say love yourself. But he says, “Love your neighbor as you do yourself,” because you already love yourself. We don’t need a commandment to love self. That comes naturally. We need a commandment to love others the same way we already love ourselves. That comes supernaturally.

You see, my friends, all of us have a selfish nature. All of us are like that Grinch who stole Christmas and, you know, of all the cartoons that are out there, that is my favorite. I

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 22:37-39.

mean if the Grinch was on today I would want to watch it, not the new thing. I like the old cartoon. I just like that. If the Grinch was on, I would be watching it.

When I was a little kid I remember watching it every single year at Christmas time and it taught me valuable lessons even before I was saved. I saw this Grinch is greedy and this Grinch is upset because people in Whoville have each other and they have these gifts and they have all this stuff and so he decides, "I am going to make their life miserable by going down," pretending he is Santa Claus and stealing all of their presents. And then, of course, on Christmas day he comes to realize that there must be something more to Christmas because they are still happy. And yet I stole all their stuff and they are still singing.

What is it that can make them this way?

And, of course, it doesn't bring it out in the cartoon, but I know that if you have any true joy it is God. It is the Lord who brings that. And his heart grew many times bigger that day as he came to realize that there is more to life than stuff.

But the Grinch, sometimes we are like the Grinch in ourselves, in our hearts. We are selfish and greedy where we put ourselves ahead of God and ahead of others where it is my will be done, not thy will be done. And so whether it is fornication which says I want to have it now rather than after marriage or whether it is abortion. I can't have a child interfere with my pursuits or whether it is divorce. I want my freedom. I want out of this. Or whether it is theft, what is mine is mine and what is yours is mine. No matter what the sin is, selfishness is at the core.

The Bible says, "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's," Philippians 2:21.

And I often in our counseling class that I teach here at the church I show that selfishness is at the core of every other major sin.

For example, somebody mentioned lust. Lust says, "I want it." That stems from selfishness.

Self pity also stems from selfishness. Self pity says, "I deserve it."

And then Strife. I think Russ mentioned strife. Strife stems from self. Strife says, "I am going to get it no matter who I have to walk over."

And then there is pride. Pride says, "I have it."

And so you have I in all cases. Lust which says, "I want it," self pity which says, "I deserve it," strife which says, "I will get it," and pride which says, "I have it." But in all cases you have I at the core of the sin.

You see, my friends, this time of year where there is gift giving and there is people gathering in homes and being with family and many will be upset because, oh, they forget me and I didn't get this and we need to think about this matter of our own selfish nature.

As we think about this, the Lord showed me some points. And before I get into it I want to talk to the parents for a minute. In order for us to be successful parents we need to realize the nature of our children. We need to realize the nature of man that all of us are prone towards sin.

Richard Fugate in this book called *What the Bible Says About Child Training* says, "A child need not be taught how to lie, to be selfish or to do wrong. These things come naturally. Every sweet innocent cuddly baby possesses within his flesh the constant temptation to fulfill the strong desire of sin. And so every one of us are conceived in sin and we come out of the womb basically self centered creatures.

I mean, if you have children you know this truth, especially if you have more than one. You know, if you have one, that child becomes the center of all things, but if you have a few children and you see how they will tend to fight with each other and desire what the other child has that they don't have and I have never had to teach my kids how to lie. I have never had to teach them how to steal. I never had to teach them how to get angry. These things come naturally, you see.

Why? Because my children are sinners just like their dad is a sinner. You see, all of us have this nature. Every child is basically self centered.

As Richard Fugate goes on to write in that book *What the Bible says About Child Training* he writes, "The child wants what he wants when he want it. A child wants to be fed what and when he wishes. He wants to have the total attention of others. He wants to play always and generally have his every desire fulfilled without regard for anyone else. Even when a child conducts himself with acceptable behavior, he may be acting out of self interest to gain attention or future reward. The nature of sin will motivate a child to whatever bad or even good that he thinks will cause benefit to himself. When parents recognize that the natural, normal tendency of their child is to satisfy his own sinful nature, they are ready to become successful parents. But if we don't realize, 'oh, my child is not that way,' you are not ready to be a parent until you see yourself in your children from God's perspective."

Now we live in a day, I think, if there was ever a time in human history where selfishness is really rampant and manifested everywhere, it is today. It is a mark of the last days. As Paul wrote to Timothy, in the last days "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy."<sup>3</sup>

But the key there is lovers of their own selves.

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<sup>3</sup> 2 Timothy 3:2.



2 Peter 3:3 says, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.”<sup>4</sup>

Oh, and by the way, when it comes to parenting, we don’t help our children at all if we don’t have restraints upon them and encourage them to exercise self control. We should restrict the eating to meal times. A lot of kids, you know, they just get what they want when they want it. There is all kinds of, you know, where a child needs to learn to put others ahead of himself. He needs to learn how to wait before he gets things and on and on we can go.

But today let’s not talk bout parenting any longer. Let’s talk about ourselves, ok? Let’s look at ourselves today and I want you to see if selfishness has manifested itself in your heart and in your life.

Let me begin by saying this, that when a person is selfish, selfishness will manifest itself in this way. We want what we want even when it flies in the face of God’s will. When we are selfish we want what we want even if it goes against what God wants.

How many times there has been a Christian that it is clear that what the decision they are making is against God and against his will? And yet they are determined, “I am going to do it anyway.”

Yeah, but divorce is wrong. You shouldn’t divorce your mate.

Yes, I but I want my freedom.

But it is going to hurt the kids.

They don’t take that into consideration. It doesn’t matter if it is the will of God or not. So many people want their will to be done rather than God’s will to be done. The Lord said that when we pray we ought to pray, “Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.”

One of the saddest Scriptures in all the Bible is a Scripture Paul wrote in Philippians 2:21 where he says this. “For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.”<sup>5</sup>

You see, even if we know something is God’s will we should be... I mean as Christians, if we call ourselves Christians we should say, “Lord,” like Jesus, “Not my will, but thy will be done. May thy will be done.”

You see, another manifestation of selfishness is not only we want what we want even when it flies in the face of God’s will, but we want it now, not later. We are not willing to wait. We are not willing to wait for God’s timing.

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<sup>4</sup> 2 Peter 3:3.

<sup>5</sup> Philippians 2:21.

I don't know if you have ever seen the old Wily Wonka movie where the girls says, as she sings a song, "Give it to me now." I mean, that is so often the way we are. We don't want to wait, but the Bible tells us, "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."<sup>6</sup>

We need to have a self control where we wait upon God. But when we are selfish we don't want to wait. I want it now. We want sex now, not wait until marriage. I want the toy now. I am not waiting until Christmas, you know?

And all of us tend to be that way where we are impatient because we are selfish. I have got to get it right away.

The third manifestation of selfishness when we don't get it we pout and throw fits. I find selfish people have no joy and no contentment, not satisfied with God's will and so if something gets in the way of what I want, we throw a fit, just like a little kid who kicks and screams and bangs and it is because he didn't get it his way and therefore he is upset. The people who pout, people who get angry, people that throw fits as it were, it is because they are selfish.

As Philippians 2:3 says, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."<sup>7</sup>

Another manifestation of selfishness is we want more or different than what we have. Selfish people are not content or satisfied with what God gives. They want something more, something different. I need the new spouse because I don't like my spouse. I need the new car because I am sick of this old car. I need the new job, the new toy, the new whatever.

And do you know something? The greedy heart of man is never satisfied. You know this, those of you that have children, that no matter what toy you buy them, they want more. I think of the example yesterday where I had bought some really nice remote control cars for my nephews, but because the batteries required six hours to charge them they wanted it now, "I don't want that stinking car. Let me open another gift."

And if you give the other gift, they are not going to be happy with that either. They are going to want the next gift.

Do you know, my friend, if we had everything there is, there would still be an emptiness in our hearts until God comes to move in, because you can't fill that empty spot in your life except with God. You could try women. You could try stuff. You could try relationships. You could try substances. You could try money and possessions galore, but nothing is going to fill the empty void within your heart except the true and living God.

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<sup>6</sup> Isaiah 40:31.

<sup>7</sup> Philippians 2:3.

And that is why people commit suicide. Some of the wealthiest people are some of the most unhappy people because they are trying to gain for self and it is not satisfying. There is still an emptiness there. So I have got to try this and there is still an empty spot there. And you can try the whole world like Jesus said, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”<sup>8</sup>

You see, nothing is going to satisfy your heart except God. And you can have a relationship with the Lord through Jesus Christ today. Trust him and he will give you everlasting life.

But we are selfish when we want more or different than what we have.

We are also selfish when we want at the expense of others. Selfish people don’t worry about who they hurt.

But, you know, biblical love is just the opposite. The Bible says love, charity, “Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own.”<sup>9</sup>

Love is not selfish. It doesn’t seek for self. But do you know something? A person that is selfish is going to try to get it even if it means stepping on others in the process.

“I am going to climb the corporate ladder even if I have to crush other’s heads as I climb the rungs of this ladder.”

And isn’t that the nature of man, the selfishness that just comes out at the expense of other people?

People also don’t take this into consideration, the long term affects or the long term consequences of their selfishness. But people want what they want regardless of the long term consequences of it. You see, selfish people don’t consider the future. They don’t count the cost. They don’t consider, “Where will this lead me five years from now? Where will I be 10 years from now if I participate in this practice?”

But, no. Our selfish nature says, “I want it now.” And we are blind to the consequences and to the future that this choice is going to make or lead to.

And so, my friends, we need to consider. Is this part of us?

When we are selfish we want what we want and we want everyone to know we have it. Selfish people are always talking about themselves. That is how you can know that you are in the presence of somebody who is selfish because when you talk to them it is me

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 16:26.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:5.

this, me this. This is my past. This is my present. This is what I hope is my future. Me, me me, I, I, I, in the conversation and boy that gets old fast.

Do you want to know why people don't like talking to you, that could be a reason. It is the conversation is all about you.

But do you know something? When we are selfish we just want others to know how good we are. We want others to think about us or maybe we want others to know how bad things are for us. But it is all us that we are about.

And everybody who is selfish is always talking about themselves. Proverbs 26 says, "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?"<sup>10</sup>

Most men will proclaim how good they are, but how hard it is to find somebody that is trustworthy and faithful.

May the Lord deliver us. May the Lord deliver us from this vain self idolatry.

As the Scripture says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."<sup>11</sup>

You know, I believe that selfishness is idolatry and that is the bottom line, folks. It is idolatry. Where I idolize, I elevate self. I want for self rather than for God.

We were made by God. We were made for God. We were made to please God. That is why we are on this earth. We are not here just to acquire for ourselves.

The Scripture says, "The LORD hath made all things for himself,"<sup>12</sup> Proverbs 16:4.

Isaiah 43:21 says, "This people have I formed for myself."<sup>13</sup>

Colossians 1:16 says, "All things were created by him, and for him."<sup>14</sup>

You were created by Jesus and for Jesus that you might know God, the true and living God, that you might live your life to please God and that we might glorify God in whatever we do. But we are on this earth for the Lord. That is why you are here. To bring him pleasure, to bring him glory.

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<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 20:6.

<sup>11</sup> Colossians 3:5.

<sup>12</sup> Proverbs 16:4.

<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 43:21.

<sup>14</sup> Colossians 1:16.

Do you know, my friends, this time of year as we think about gift giving and sharing and so forth, to be an unselfish person I need a change of heart because I will tell you what. Unless we get a change of heart we are going to our grave living for self until the Lord puts his Spirit within our hearts and comes to move in and gives us a desire for God and the things of God and a love for others as we already love ourselves.

I want to end where I began and that is 2 Corinthians five. Would you notice it carefully, 2 Corinthians five? And let's begin our reading with verse 14.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us."<sup>15</sup>

That means that Jesus in his great love for us compels us to live for him.

"...because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."<sup>16</sup>

To be an unselfish Christian we need to have a funeral for our own selfish desires and our own plans and our own interests. In other words, we need to die to our ambition so that we may live for him. Die to self will that we might live for God's will, die to what we want so that we might live for what he wants.

My friend, if we will ever have victory over selfishness, we need to have a funeral. Say, "God, today I want your will. I die to my ambition and my will and what I want. From now on I want to live for what you want."

The Scripture says that the Lord gave his life for us, that henceforth we should not live unto ourselves, but unto him which died for us and rose again. We need to be other centered, live for God and live for others and not for ourselves. We were not saved to live for ourselves. We were saved to live for the Lord.

You know, my friend, if you have never received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior you have no power to do what I am talking about today. I have no power outside of him working in me and through me. Because, as I said before, I am selfish by nature. You are selfish by nature. If we are to have victory over selfishness, God must put his Spirit within us. He must put a new heart within us. And this happens the very moment you believe the good news.

You must believe and acknowledge before God, "God, I am sorry. I am a sinner. I am selfish. I am prideful. I am lustful. I have violated your laws. I have lived for me, not for you and not for others. Lord, I admit I am a sinner."

But then you need to believe the gospel that Christ died on the cross to pay for your sins. He took your punishment upon himself.

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<sup>15</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:14.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

Think about it. When Jesus died on the cross he died for all of our selfish lusts. He died for all of our selfish ambition. He died for everything within us that was against God. He paid the price, suffering for our sin. He rose again the third day. He is alive now and he wants to come and take up residence in that empty spot in your heart.

You know the moment we receive Jesus Christ that is the moment we have victory and we can have power now.

I am not saying every Christian is perfect, because there are times when we don't surrender to the one who lives inside. We don't surrender to the Spirit, but you will have the ability to live for God and others and live for something outside of yourself the moment you receive Jesus Christ because he will give you both the will and the ability to do of his good pleasure.

And maybe today can be the day that you open your heart to the Lord Jesus. That is why he brought you here today. God allowed us to consider today that God gave the greatest Christmas gift we will ever receive and that was the gift of his Son. And if we open our heart and receive him, we will have eternal life today as a free gift.

Would you be willing to open your heart today? Would you be willing to say, "Lord, come into my life, forgive me. Take away that selfishness that I have and come and take up residency in my life"?

Would you bow with me in a moment of prayer?

*Our dear Father in heaven, we acknowledge that we are self centered. We acknowledge, Lord, that we have violated your perfect law. And, Lord, we ask you today to forgive us. Lord, I pray that if there be any people in our church that have never yet trusted Jesus Christ may today be the day that they open wide their heart and invite the Lord into their life. May they call upon you, Lord. May they see that the reason they are grasping for things is because there is an emptiness that nothing satisfies. And, Lord, help them to see that the more they get, the more unhappy they will be, that nothing will perfectly fill the void except you. So, Lord, give grace that many in our midst today who need Jesus Christ will receive the Lord of heaven and earth as their personal Savior, that they will believe the good news that you gave your life for them and rose again. Help them today to call upon your name, Lord Jesus.*

With our heads bowed, how many in this room would say, "Pastor Sawyer, today I need Jesus Christ in my life. Please pray for me"? I won't mention your name, but you say, "Pray for me. I need the Lord."

God bless you, ma'am.

How many other would say, "I need Jesus."

God bless you. I see your hands, several folks. Anybody else? God bless you, sir. Anyone else who would honestly say, “I need Jesus in my life”?

God bless you, young man. I see that hand. Anyone else who is honest and say, “You know, I am a selfish individual and I realize it today?”

God bless you, ma’am and you, sir.

I would like to pray for these for a moment today and then I will lead us in prayer for all who have Christ. But let’s bow our hearts together for these who need the Lord.

*Dear Father in heaven, we pray that you would graciously work by the power of your Spirit upon those in our room that have never yet opened their lives to you, Lord Jesus. Help them right now in the quietness of this moment to call upon your name and to humbly admit to you words like this. “Lord, I know I am a sinner. I admit that I am selfish. I have sinned against your holy commandments. I live for me and not for you. I put myself ahead of others. Even when I do good it is often with selfish motivation. Lord, forgive me for my sin. Lord Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross. Thank you for taking my place and paying for my sins. I believe you did that for me and I believe you rose from the dead. Today I receive you into my life as my personal Lord and Savior. Welcome. Welcome, Lord Jesus, into my heart. I give my life to you and I ask you to take over my life and give me the power to live an unselfish life. Thank you for your grace. Thank you for your free gift of eternal life.”*

Before we conclude our prayer, how many in our room would say honestly, “Pastor, today I called upon Jesus and I asked him to come into my life and I meant it”? Would you raise your hand if that is you? God bless you guys. Praise God. Amen.

How many others today would say with an upraised hand, “That is me, too, today and I meant it. I have given my heart to him and I have asked him to come and live in my heart”? Anybody else?

I would like to pray for the believers now. How many in this room would say, “I do have Jesus in my life. I know him as my Savior, but I have been a selfish individual as a Christian. Nothing satisfies. I am still empty. Though I have acquired things, I know it doesn’t satisfy. But I need to surrender to the Lord and ask him to take out of my heart that selfish spirit and that he would just control my life and that I would find my contentment and my satisfaction in God”? How many would raise their hand and say, “That is me. You know, the Lord showed me I am selfish and I need the Lord to take that out”?

God bless you guys.

Let’s pray for the believers here today, all of us.

*Lord, today we ask you to make us keenly aware of the depth of our selfish nature. Help us from now on to see it even though it is ugly and we don't like to see it. May we be honest. And, Lord, we pray that when we see this selfishness, help us to confess it and forsake it right away, to ask you to forgive us. And, Lord, I pray that you would fill us with your Spirit so that we won't be filled with the flesh and the old nature, but that we will be under the full control of you. Give us a heart that wants what you want. May we live for you, Lord, seek you first and then put others on par with ourselves that we would live for others, that we would not just live for self, but may we love our neighbor as ourself?*

*Thank you, Lord, for meeting with us today and thank you for working at this moment. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*



# **“The Mother of All Sins”**

## **(The “GRINCH” Within)**

(Selected Scriptures)



Introduction: The world is filled with basically self-centered people.  
Everyone is basically self-centered.

### **\*Manifestations of Selfishness:**

#### ***We want what we want . . .***



1. **Even when it flies in the face of God's Will**  
*(Selfish people want their will to be done on earth)*



2. **Now (rather than later)**  
*(Selfish people can't wait for God's timing)*

3. **And if we don't get it, we pout and throw fits**  
*(Selfish people have no joy and contentment – not satisfied with God's will)*



4. **And More or Different than what we have**  
*(Selfish people are not content or satisfied with what God gives)*



5. **At the Expense of Others**  
*(Selfish people don't worry about who they hurt)*

6. **Regardless of long-term consequences (effects/costs)**  
*(Selfish people don't consider the future)*

7. **And we want everyone to know we have it**  
*(Selfish people are always talking about themselves)*

**Conclusion:** Lord deliver me from self-idolatry.

