

Marks Of A Christian, Part I

Marks Of A Christian

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Bible Text: Daniel 11; Romans 8:28

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Daniel 11. We are going to be looking at the latter part of verse 32 and the beginning of verse 33. This is the Word of the Lord so please read it silently as I read it aloud.

“...but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many.”¹

The word “exploits” there, I don’t know if it is in your Bible, but in my Bible it is italicized which means it is not part of the original manuscript, that it was inserted by the translators to make the idea flow and it is not doing violence to the text. It is helping to understand the text because we are not reading it in the original language and I would say Hebrew, but in Daniel that was written in Chaldee which is very similar to Hebrew.

I don’t know if this particular chapter was or not, but in any event, exploits could be might works would be another way of putting it. People shall do... those who know their God shall be strong and do mighty works.

Matthew Henry says about that, “The right knowledge of God is and will be the strength of the soul and in the strength of that, gracious souls do exploits. Those that know his name will put their trust in him and by that trust will do great things.”

Now concerning this people that knew their God, we are here told, one, they shall instruct many in verse 33. They shall make it their business to show others what they have learned themselves of the differences between truth and falsehood and good and evil. Those that have the knowledge, in verse 33, those that have a knowledge of God themselves should communicate their knowledge to those people about them. And this spiritual love must be extensive. It says they must instruct many.

So it is our responsibility as biblically educated individuals and as God’s elect to instruct others whether they are self professed Christians or not. We have a responsibility to instruct others and it is not just get saved and save others, but there is a lot more to the Christian life than that. It is very important that we share the gospel, but we also instruct other people. I mean, you wouldn’t... the gospel is like first grade. You know, we don’t

¹ Daniel 11:32-33.

spend our life in first grade. We progress hopefully and our job is to instruct others in the faith. Some need, as the Scripture says, some need spiritual milk because they can't handle solid food. And some need more solid food and some can handle, you know, raw, red meat.

So, but it is... you have to judge who you are talking to. And you have to be ready. It is your responsibility as a Christian to be ready to explain the hard things of the Bible. Study the Word. If you don't understand things, compare Scripture with Scripture and study and ask. But it is important to... that we can answer those who ask us for the hope that is within us with meekness in our answer, but to instruct others.

A question for you today is what difference, though, does knowing the Lord God make in your life. I mean, our verse says:

“...but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do [mighty works].”²

What difference does knowing the Lord God make in your life? Have you ever really thought deeply about that question?

I am surprised at the number of Christians who have to admit that, no, they have never really focused on what difference their faith makes in their day to day living. A lot of people go to church on Sunday morning and the rest of the day and the rest of the week they are not thinking about it and even in church they might be thinking about other things.

So what difference does knowing the Lord God make in your life. Here is another question to ponder. Can you think of one thing you said or did yesterday that showed someone that you are a child of God in Christ? Can you think of something you did or something you said yesterday that showed someone else that you really know the Lord and that you are a child of God, that you have something that changes men's hearts, you have a gift and it changes the way they live?

There is a question that has been repeated so often it has become a cliché, but it is very thought provoking still even if you have heard it 100 times before. It should still make you reflect every time you think about it. I am sure you heard it. If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Would there? In what ways has your walk with the Lord changed you. Are you different than you were a year ago, five years ago, 10 years ago? It is called sanctification. If you think it has changed you, your walk with the Lord, why do you think so? How do you know? Can other people see the changes in you over the months and over the years?

Well, we will call these differences marks of a Christian, ok? There are a lot of marks of a Christian. This morning we are going to examine some of these marks. I want to look at five marks of a Christian, but I don't think we are going to be getting all five of them, but that is why we have Palm Sunday handout. We have five fingers. What I want you to

² Daniel 11:32.

do is write each mark of a Christian in one of those fingers so you can remember. This is your take home.

The first mark of a Christian—and please write it down in one of the fingers—and I will be able to see if you are writing, by the way. May you have one? Yes. We have an extra one. All right. I am sorry, Mary. You can write on my hand if you wish. The first mark that I want to talk about is conviction. Please turn to Romans chapter eight beginning in verse 14.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.³

This says that whomever the Lord chooses he convicts them by his Holy Spirit that he is their God. And make no mistake. The Bible clearly teaches the Lord chooses his people. I mean, we just read that earlier in the Scripture memory verse in Revelation 17:14.

“...they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”⁴

We are called, we are chosen and faithful. We don't choose God. He chooses us. Now, you don't have to believe me, but you better believe Jesus Christ, because he said exactly that.

Please look at the gospel of John chapter 13 verse 18.

“I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen.”⁵

Now turn over to chapter 15 of the gospel of John, please. Sixteen. Jesus says:

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.”⁶

And as a chosen child of God, as we read in Romans eight:

“...ye have received the Spirit of adoption.”⁷

³ Romans 8:14-18.

⁴ Revelation 17:14.

⁵ John 13:18.

⁶ John 15:16.

⁷ Romans 8:15.

We are adopted children in God's family.

"...whereby we cry, Abba, Father."⁸

Abba is an Aramaic word, very tender word. It means daddy.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."⁹

In other words, God's people are to know they are God's people. If you are a child of God, your Father will tell you. His Spirit witnesses to our Spirit, is what Scripture says. That is a promise from the Word of God.

So my question is: Do you have this conviction?

Now that is a subjective, if you will, conviction, an inner conviction. There is another conviction. It is an objective outward conviction. And that is that a Christian can be certain. He doesn't deal in probabilities. So many people think, well, faith is, you know, whatever is good for you. If that makes you happy, that is all that counts. No, that is saying that faith is subjective, that there is no objective truth there. It is whatever sounds good to you. You live it that way. That is fine. I will live mine my way. That makes sense to me.

Well, that is denying truth. We can, according to Acts 2:36, quote:

"...know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus... both Lord and Christ."¹⁰

Look at the word assuredly. We can know assuredly it says in Acts 2:36, that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ.

In Luke 1:4 it says the gospel comes to us that we, quote, might know the certainty of our Christian teaching, Luke 1:4.

The gospel comes not only to us in word, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in full assurance, 1 Thessalonians 1:5. I will be handing out these Scripture references to you.

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."¹¹

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Romans 8:16-17.

¹⁰ Acts 2:36.

¹¹ 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

The Greek word here that is translated in 1 Thessalonians 1:5 that is translated assurance is πληροφορία (play-rof-or-ee'-ah). πληροφορία (play-rof-or-ee'-ah) means... it is a deep word and we don't have one word that really captures it in English. It means full assurance, absolute certainty, perfect conviction, not marred by any doubts whatsoever. That is what that power of that word.

The Bible speaks of our full assurance of understanding in Colossians 2:2 and our full assurance of hope in Hebrews 6:11.

In Romans 4:21 Abraham is called the father of the faithful, as you know. And Paul says that Abraham was full, quote, "fully persuaded," of the truth of God's Word. Again, Romans 4:21.

In Hebrews 10:22 it says we are told to draw near to God in full assurance of faith and not to waver. That is a commandment. We are not to waver. Wavering is a sin.

We who are of the Lord may know the certainty of God's Word, Proverbs 22:21.

So it is a grave mistake to think that certainty is just something that you can have in mathematics or formal logic. Full certainty, full confidence, without doubt can and should be had in the Christian faith. We talk about the subjective certainty. I am talking about the objective certainty of Christ and the gospel.

Christianity isn't merely very probably true. It is a certainty according to the Word of God. And if you don't have it, pray for it. Make it part of your daily prayers. Pray for certainty, assurance.

Please look at 1 John chapter five. Actually, I preached on this verse. 1 John chapter five verse 13. Why did John write these things? Well, he says:

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God..."¹²

Ok, so he is writing to believers. Why?

"...that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."¹³

Therefore the Westminster Confession of Faith teaches that believers in chapter 18 quote, "May in this life..." this is on your handout. "Believer may," in one and two, "may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace." The Confession says, "This certainty is not a bare conjectural or probable persuasion grounded on a fallible hope, but it is an infallible assurance of faith."

¹² 1 John 5:13.

¹³ Ibid.

So the ground for the Christian faith is certain. I printed out the Westminster chapter 18 there for you to read. It is too long for us to read the entire thing here, but please read that when you have an opportunity. It is on your handout.

So do you have this conviction? Do you have this conviction that the Christian faith is objectively true, that Jesus Christ did live and that he lived a perfect life and that he died on a cross and that he rose again the third day and he ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father. Objectively true things. Do you have that conviction? If you don't have it or if you waver and you sometimes have it and you sometimes don't, pray for conviction.

The second mark of a Christian, the second finger is love and trust in God. They go together, of course, love and trust in God. A child of God loves God and trusts him more than anything or anyone else. He is first in your heart.

I think Spurgeon put it well. There is a certain sweet savor of stability of assurance about the child of God that others can see. Sons and daughters of the King cling to Romans 8:28 and 29. I often hear 8:28 quoted, but 29 follows and should be part of it. They grab a hold of this promise with all their might and they never let go. Please turn to the famous verses, Romans 8:28 and 29. I am sure most of you have memorized 28.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”¹⁴

There we get the chosen again.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”¹⁵

And then it goes on, of course, a great, I will say Calvinist, but it is biblical. Let other people have title labels.

Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.¹⁶

And I could go on and on with that wonderful, wonderful passage.

¹⁴ Romans 8:28.

¹⁵ Romans 8:29.

¹⁶ Romans 8:30-33.

Christians grab a hold of this promise with all their might and never let go. It is one of the most precious passages in the Bible. If you haven't already memorized it, please do so, particularly 28 and 29. You find it a source of unending blessings.

We say we believe it. We say, "Oh, yeah, everything... God works out everything pretty good to his people."

Have you eve thought about how differently you would live if you really acted like you believed that? Acted like you fully trust God in every situation? When the kids are impossible to handle and everything seems to be flying apart, when your boss makes impossible demands on you and deadlines you can't meet. When you are late for an important engagement and get caught in traffic or your spouse wants you to do something when you have got to do something else, when the car breaks down there is nobody who is going to stop to help or, depending on where you are, you are afraid somebody might stop or when a loved one, maybe your child or husband or wife is injured, you know, where is your Romans 8:28, 8:29 then in your own heart? You know, when one of your parents lies on their death bed or your sister or brother has terrible sicknesses or injuries, when it is one of them lying unconscious in the ICU, when you find your teenager is into drugs or happened to one of my closest friends since college a few years ago, when you go to make sure your teenager is getting ready for school as you have so many other days had a enjoyable time the evening before watching TV with him, 17 year old and kissed you goodnight and next morning you get up and go to help make sure he is ready for bed and doesn't answer the door and you open the door and you find his dead body because he committed suicide during the night.

So those are testing times, aren't they? You know, even in our grief which is entirely natural and entirely appropriate. Don't get the idea that Christians shouldn't grieve or cry. That is ridiculous. We know the Lord Jesus wept. Those are times you discover for yourself whether or not you really believe:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.¹⁷

Or have you only been mouthing those words? All the brave words you have said all your life about how much you trust God are on the line now. It is only those times that you finally find out for yourself if you really believe God's promises in your heart.

You know how much peace we would have in everything that life can throw at us if we truly trust the Lord and act it out and cling with every fiber of our being to that presage passage, those precious truths? Please memorize that, Romans 8:28 and 29. It will be one of the best things you have ever done in your life.

¹⁷ Romans 8:28-29.

So inseparable from this, though, is that if you love and trust God you will show it by fearing what he thinks of you far more than you fear what other people think of you.

If you love and trust God you will fear what he thinks of you a lot more than what other people think of you.

We know Psalm 111 says and Proverbs in two places say:

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.”¹⁸

“...the beginning of knowledge.”¹⁹

We don't have real wisdom without the fear of the Lord. We don't have real knowledge without the fear of the Lord. Oh, we can know facts. You know, that two plus two is four and that kind of thing. But we don't know the real meaning of it without fear of the Lord.

There is a lot more we could say about that, but that is another story.

1 Corinthians 3:

“ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”²⁰

God delights in taking the wise of this world and showing what fools they are.

You saw the movie... Ben Stein's movie *Expelled*, thank you. You see how the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God because it takes all these famous scientists who are the big defenders of evolution and just lets them talk and they talk about... he asks them piercing, penetrating questions and they trip all over themselves. They can't answer the questions.

Thomas Crick, Dr. Crick the Nobel prize winner for his work in DNA said that he believed... he didn't believe in a Creator God, that it was easier for him to believe that earth was seeded by aliens from outer space and that is how human beings got here. One of the most brilliant scientists whoever lived, because he will not believe in God.

And I believe he later backtracked on that, but, still, he said it at one point.

See, we are afraid people won't like us, even strangers as I am getting back to the text. Why do we care more about what strangers think of us than what people we love think? We say things we are later ashamed of to our spouse that we would never say to a stranger. There seems to be an inverse relationship there. The more we love somebody

¹⁸ Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10; 15:33.

¹⁹ Proverbs 1:7.

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 3:19.

we seem the less we restrain our bad impulses in front of them. That is another sermon and, by the way, I would be a good one to give that sermon since I am very well practiced in doing that. There is at least one person in this room who may agree with that.

But be honest. Aren't you particularly afraid of sharing the gospel with people because they will probably think you are a religious fanatic? I mean, certainly that has crossed your mind, right? And we don't want to offend anybody. And don't rationalize and say, "Well, I will talk about Christ after we get to know each other better."

Now, some times, yes, that is fine. But only for the short term. That is often that is a cop out because that some day never comes. You know, there are churches like that, by the way. And I have been involved in one or two of them and a lot of them have a biblical foundation. But they are so much into what is called seeker sensitive, user friendly model of church growth. Let's design the worship service to get the most people and the music that will... and they actually program, where they consciously program the music to lift you up and you bring you down and all manipulative stuff That is all humanist to the core. It is not biblical at all. That they consciously, the leaders of these churches consciously decide—and I have heard them tell me this when I was involved in one of them—not to tell newcomers what they believe about some of the most important doctrines of the Bible, about some of the most important truths they deliberately cover up.

You know, let them... let's get them into the church first and then we will ease into that. That is what I was told.

Well that day, of course, never quite seems to come because there are always visitors. So nobody ever gets around to talking about some of these tougher doctrines perhaps, election or reprobation or what it might be.

If there was ever a formula to destroy a church from the inside, that is it. Don't talk about the truth. Let's just bring people in and we will deal with the truth later.

What you end up with is a church full of biblically ignorant people and then when it is time for... if it is an independent church or modeled on the Presbyterian system, a few other types, but if you get biblically ignorant people who then elect leaders, elders or deacons from among themselves. So you have got a bunch of the blind leading the blind. And you get enough elders then, enough leaders of the church who are elected from this mess of pottage and eventually a church is destroyed. They end up a social gatherings with, at best irrelevant preaching, just little stories and fog comes out of the pulpit, just clouds of fog. I am sure you have probably experienced stuff like that. And often, worse, it is just pure Socialist propaganda coming from the pulpit disguised as a sermon. You know, leaving somebody who is the Lord's elect, you know, going away scratching his head and trying to figure out what if anything he was supposed to get out of that service and vowing never again to return.

And, you know, that person is absolutely right never again to darken that door. It would be a grievous sin and that in a nutshell, of course, is what has happened to almost all the major denominations and their seminaries.

The Lord himself says the gospel is offensive to many people. It is going to be offensive. We can't water it down to get more people in the pews. Specifically he says, Romans 9:33:

“Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”²¹

In 1 Peter two:

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.²²

That means they were... that was the Lord's decision for them to be that way.

Let's look at 1 Corinthians 1:18, please, staying on this same topic.

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”²³

The gospel is foolishness to the unsaved person, to the natural man, the person who doesn't believe it. Why is it foolishness to him? Because it threatens their most cherished possession, their own lordship over their life. See, the gospel threatens your own perceived lordship over your life.

I was talking to someone just the other day. I had lunch with the pastor of the church that meets here before us. I had lunch with him the other day. And he said he had someone actually say... He said, “I have written the gospel to him,” and he said to him, “I asked him what he thought.”

And he said, “It makes sense. That was the best presentation of the gospel I have ever heard.”

He says, “Well, do you believe it? Do you receive Christ?”

And he says, “No.”

²¹ Romans 9:33.

²² 1 Peter 2:7-8.

²³ 1 Corinthians 1:18.

He said, “Well, why not? What is the problem?”

And he said, “I don’t want to give up control over my life.” He said it just straight up. “I don’t want to give up control over my life.”

I would like you to try an experiment. Think about this. Who among your unbelieving friends or relatives do you value the most? Think about that person that you value the most among your unbelieving friends, relatives? This would be the last person in the world you would want to offend or have think that you want to try to jam religion down their throat. Maybe it is your girlfriend or your boyfriend or your mother or your father, your sister, your brother, some friend at work, a good close friend, a long time friend, your boss, whatever. And, kids, I want you to be part of this experiment, too, ok? Think about that friend you have that is not a Christian. Ok? A friend you have that is not a Christian that you really like this person and you would be sick before you would do anything that would make them not like you.

So think of that one person. If you have got a name in mind and I hope you do, will you commit to the Lord now that the very next time you talk to that person you will present the gospel to him?

Now you know who it is. And if you are unsure of that at least will you give him a copy of the Bible or give him at least a copy of the gospel of John to read? And ask them to do that.

If you will promise the Lord to do that, to make that covenant to the Lord right now, then you fear God more than you fear men. At least from that person. It is a good practice for you. And if you are not willing to make that promise, then you fear man more than you fear God and you need to pray about that.

So the second mark, again, of a Christian, I have identified as loving and trusting in the Lord. If you really love and trust the Lord you want to be with him, you want to do what he says, you want to know him better than you know anyone. A child of God is praying. He should be praying. He should be reading his Bible every day, having daily family worship. The first thing a child does when he is born is what? Hopefully cry. As God’s newborn children, we should be crying to him. If you don’t pray much, you don’t have a desire to pray, then, my friend, you are desperately in need of prayer. And you ought to be praying about that.

If the Holy Spirit is really indwelling you, an outward sign of that is your prayer life. You have to pray. You don’t have any choice, because the Spirit is in you and he is praying through you.

Romans 8:27, right before 8:28, obviously. The Spirit itself makes intercession for us. I wish they had translated that as himself, but they didn’t. Romans 8:27.

The less you pray, the more you need to pray. And in that case if you know you are not praying enough, you know, who doesn't think? Who among us thinks, well, I pray enough? One of you primary prayers ought to be asking him for more faith.

James 4:2, I think of this often.

“...ye have not, because ye ask not.”²⁴

Why don't we have the things we want? Because we don't ask for them. We don't ask the Lord for them.

If I ask you to describe your prayer life to me, would you be ashamed of it? If you are a child of the Lord you are going to have an increasing desire to pray to him because that is how you talk directly to the Lord.

Now don't worry that you don't know how to pray. Nobody knows how to pray. Do you know that? Nobody knows how to pray. But I will tell you a secret. Your heavenly Father delights in your efforts to pray to him just as in... and much more so a loving father delights in the first efforts of his infant child to try to speak. But unlike an infant you have divine help to pray through the second person of the trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ by his Holy Spirit who is the third person of the trinity sanctifying your prayers, scrubbing them up, making them holy, acceptable to him.

Go back to Romans eight, please. We have been going backwards through there and we are going to go backwards once again, Romans 8:26 now.

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.”²⁵

Remember a moment ago I said, “Nobody knows how to pray?” It says that, right?

“...for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”²⁶

And then going to Romans 8:34.

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”²⁷

The Lord Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God the Father taking the prayers of his people that ascend to him by his Holy Spirit and sanctifying them, scrubbing them clean of the sinfulness that is attached to them because we are sinful creatures. So we cannot

²⁴ James 4:2.

²⁵ Romans 8:26.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Romans 8:34.

pray a pure prayer. And he scrubs them up and presents them to God the Father. That is what the Bible says. That is what the Lord Jesus is doing, interceding for his people through prayers. So if you are not praying, you are not in communication. You are not in this divine communication through the Holy Spirit by Jesus Christ to God the Father.

Why would you want to not do that?

I will close with Hebrews seven. Let's look at that again. I am sorry, Hebrews chapter seven, not again.

It segues right from Romans eight that we just read. Hebrews chapter seven in verse 24. In the context it is Jesus Christ.

“But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.”²⁸

I said he sanctifies our prayers. That is as our high priest. That is what a priest does, one of the things a priest does.

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”²⁹

Well, we are coming to the end here. I just want to say the other part of walking step by step with the Lord is to know him, so to trust and loving and trusting and knowing. When we pray we talk to him, we praise him, we worship him, we present our thanksgivings to him, our petitions, requests.

Philippians 4:6.

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”³⁰

Philippians 4:6.

Now that is a one way communication, from us to the Lord. The other part of that from the Lord to us, how we know him, which is how we love him and trust him and learn from him and receive all these incalculable blessings from him is through his written Word the Bible. This is coming down... this came... as it says in Scripture itself came down from heaven for us. This is God's infallible, inerrant Word. He is... every word in here is by the ordination of God and it is to be believed.

We pray to God. That is the one way street to God and we receive from him, from his blessings his instruction and how that is how we learn to love him and trust him and know him, because you can't love somebody you don't know through his written word

²⁸ Hebrews 7:24.

²⁹ Hebrews 7:25.

³⁰ Philippians 4:6.

the Bible, not through impressions, not through whatever people do to think that they get messages from God, not through dreams, though the written Word of God and meditation upon it.

I mean, we have leadings of the Spirit. Don't get me wrong. I am not saying that. But we get them out of the foundation is the Word of God.

Let me ask you children a question. What would you think of one of your friends who didn't ever want to be around their parents? And when they were they wouldn't listen to their parents, they would argue with them or most of the time they wouldn't even talk to them. What would you think of that? Oh, when they wanted something they would talk to their parents asking them for whatever it is they want and they would throw a hissy fit if they didn't get it. They slam doors or pouting when they didn't get what they wanted from mommy and daddy.

Now most of the time... but most of the time this friend of yours ignores their parents and sometimes they even make fun of them behind their back. That would be terrible, wouldn't it? It really would. That would not be good person, would it? No. I hope you have never known anybody like that.

But guess what? A lot of people who say that they are God's children act that way to him, to God. They don't pay any attention to what he says. And often they think about other things when they hear something that he says out of the Bible. And they kind of ignore him and sometimes they even make fun of God.

Well, they are as bad... they are actually a lot worse than somebody who does that with their parents, aren't they?

So they are... just as praying is a way we talk to God, the Bible is the way God talks to us. So if you have little or no desire to read God's Word and pray, you are just like that child who won't listen to his parents or won't talk to him. I would be frightened for any child like that and if you are like that to God your Father, you should be frightened for yourself. There is a remedy of that, though. The remedy is that you read God's Word and pray for more faith.

Listen to me. Are you in God's Word every day, getting to know him better and better, listening to what he is telling you, guiding you? If you are not, you need to be and you need to pray it before him more and more. Make it a habit.

You don't forget to eat dinner, do you? You don't forget to go to bed at night. But you forget to read God's Word.

I am speaking to myself, too, just as much as... The preacher ought to be preaching to his own heart as well.

Well, the sermon is over and I have only covered the first two fingers on this Palm Sunday. If the Lord wills it, we will pick up from here in a while. But if you don't remember anything else I have said today, I wish you would remember this. If you only pray, if you only read your Bible, if you only go to church when you feel like it, you feel like it less and less.

Let's pray.