

This is going to be one of the most unusual messages you have ever heard. I have until this very instant doubted the wisdom of bringing it, and yet I have the very deep feeling that I know why you've never heard one like this, and why others haven't done it, and perhaps what needs to be done.

First of all, it takes a touch of, or a lot of, lack of wisdom to bring a message like this. You cannot possibly be in your right mind and do this. It's probably because it's so unedifying, but the fact that none of us ever do it leaves a gaping hole in the minds and thoughts of most Christians, a place...something they don't know, and probably the only person qualified to tell them, and he doesn't even want to discuss the matter, is the Christian worker. Maybe an old Christian worker. So, I am going to enlighten you today, as you have rarely, if ever, been enlightened. And if this message has a title, it's very simply: *So, you don't think there's anything wrong with your soul.* You don't need help. You think that all you need is to know the Lord better and learn how to pray and be spiritual, and that's the only need you have. Or between that and the cross. You really don't believe that you need professional or some sort of Christian counselling help.

Or, to put it another way: So, you want the deeper Christian life. And to put it another way, or, maybe I should say, while I do this, I want you to remember this all happened inside the experience of church life. I'm going to simply tell you what it's like to live with other Christians. I want you to get it. Maybe you are normal. Maybe you're the only person in the world who's normal. I assure you that if you are normal, you are the only person in the world who is normal. What I'm going to do is: I'm going to tell you what 100 people are like. Any 100 people. You can take a segment from any society: everyone between the ages of 18, say, through 70, a typical group on the population scale. Here are 100 people. Here are 100 Christians. Now, this is not a peculiar, strange 100 people. This is 100 normal people. Go pick 100 people off any street in any part of the USA, and this is what you've got, and you are one of these people. You really, really are. I want you to meet your other 99 friends, and I'd like for you to know what they're really like.

You will never find this out living in suburbia. In the United States, down some street, you have three friends, and all you know is you have three friends who are really weird. You have three friends with a lot of problems, but you know that you just happened...you're unlucky, you just happened to have had three friends who are very unlucky. But you know that the other people in the street, or maybe the other ones on the street, are very, very normal, but the couples that you run around with must live under some sort of a curse. Well, that's true all the way down the street. All 94 of them are under a curse. This is life as it really is. This is the soul in his damage. These are ordinary, normal people. Now, if you were to take those 100 people, slice them out of any segment of society—New York, Texas, California, Maine, South Dakota, Idaho, Iowa—

take it anywhere you want to, and let's put these people together. Let's see what it's like for them to live together. And just before I start, I want to say to you: it's the fool—forgive the strong language—but it's the fool who stands up and preaches in the pulpit and says, “I've got the secret, and if you will do this, this, and this, you will be victorious.” He is only showing how little he knows about the damage in the Christian life.

When you get a group of people together, a group of Christians, you will find that there is no single secret. There is no one secret that will help, save, and serve as a placebo and a cure-all for all people. We are too complex. We are too divergent. We are too different. I don't care if it's positional truth, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I don't care if it's the Pentecostal experience, the Easter experience, the July 4th experience, the Christmas experience, the Thanksgiving experience, or whatever it is. It cannot be as great as the need of man.

Alright, here we are: 100 of us. We are all living together now, and this is what you can expect. Remember, you don't need help. You are in really good shape. Those 100 people who are living together...now remember this: they were all like this before they arrived. They didn't acquire this by living together. Okay? The disease was not contracted in the community. There will be in that group between one to three wife beaters. There will be one husband beater. There will be one exhibitionist. There will be one Peeping Tom. There will be a minimum of five homosexuals. There will be between three and five lesbians, some finding themselves in, or cast into, the male role, and some in the female role. There will be one, two, or three transvestites. There will be half a dozen alcoholics. There will be at least half a dozen drug addicts. Now, some will have just recently recovered, and some will not have recovered. But there will be about a dozen of some type of addicted people.

There will be between two to five people who have in their past been raped, both men and women. There will be at least one rapist among them. There will probably be two to three man-haters. There will be two to four people who were molested sometime in their youth or childhood. There will be five latent homosexuals. There will be three to five latent lesbians, and among those, you can expect one or two sisters in Christ who are leading other single sisters in—not spiritually, although it may appear spiritually, and it may even be spiritually—who are themselves latent homeless lesbians playing the male dominant role. You will have one compulsive confessor, and you may not know what that means, so I will tell you what a compulsive confessor is. This is a person who walks up to you and says, “Yesterday I held a grudge against you, brother, and I'm really sorry. Sister, yesterday I lusted towards you. I'm really sorry. I confess that. Sister, yesterday I was daydreaming, and I daydreamed that I beat you to death with an axe. I'm really

sorry.” You cannot stop that person from doing this and consider this an act of spirituality. That's what a compulsive confessor is if you've never met one.

You'll have two to three people who are addicted to, or are at least constantly going through, or having fits of, screaming rages, and that could break out at any time. You'll have two or three people who, just by their very appearance and looking at them, are constantly having an inner, surging, unspoken, unexpressed rage. You'll have at least two compulsive dictators who, when you are in their presence, will constantly be telling you what to do. There will be one person there suffering from anorexia— that's the fear of eating food.

Now, how do you like that for beginners? Alright, you think those people are different, don't you? Yes. You think those people are bad off? I haven't even gotten started. You think those people are bad off? Wait till you hear what you're about to hear. These people... why, it's from them we get our leaders. These are the normal people. I just gave you a list of our elders and deacons. These are ordinary people. Wait till you get to the abnormal. These are the people who are, alright, there's the trifling husbands, the trifling wife. There are those who are suffering from constant depression because of being overweight, underweight, or who knows what else. The constantly depressed person who is on the very verge of being a clinical depressive. There's the compulsive talker. You meet him and her, and she talks all the time, and they never, never stop, and one of the interesting things about it is that everything they say is coherent. Everything they say makes perfect sense, but they never stop, and if you're ever going to talk to them, you're going to have to get to them while they're taking a breath.

And in the midst of this, there's a nocturnal person who lives at night, and no one knows this person is living alone. At three, four, and five o'clock at night, he rises from bed and goes out and lives a totally different life, perhaps a life of adultery or immorality, of theft, or you know not what, but he lives in the night. There's the nymphet, and if you don't know what a nymphet is, I don't know what else to call it except someone who is constantly having an affair with one person right after another compulsively. There are those who are simply morally or sexually weak.

There's that person who is utterly unknown because he is totally and always silent, and you cannot know who he is. There's the person who is super sensitive. It doesn't matter what happens on any given day; he or she will get their feelings hurt, and they'll make sure somebody knows about it. There's the disappearer: the person who, suddenly, one day, married, perhaps with children, disappears. There is no knowledge of what happened to them, nor why. It is totally unexpected. They can be gone anywhere from three days to three years or longer. There are the hyperactive, who constantly just cannot be stopped. He is moving wherever he is and doing whatever he is doing. And unfortunately, at the

same time, there's the family...oh, look, this list could go on for weeks...who have a hyperactive child and who are suffering the problems of that. There's the person who is driven by guilt. It makes no difference what you say to him, or what message he hears; he cannot, and he will not shake his guilt. You can give him all the Bible verses and tell him all the wonderful things about the Lord, but he will still feel guilty.

Then there is the weird nut who, in the midst of all of this, is the person who thinks—I don't know why he thinks this, and I can't believe that anyone would get this impression—but he gets the impression or feeling that he is the only person in the group who is being tempted by sin. That he is the only person who is weak toward temptation and sin, and when he finds out another brother has lusted or another sister has lusted, he is horrified that anyone else on earth would ever do this or be this. He thought he was the only one, and he had kept it a secret all these years. And you wonder where this guy came from.

And there's the officer, right in the midst of all this that is going on, and there's the self-righteous nut who thinks he has never sinned in his life and that he is perfect, and he is looking down his nose at all of us, alright? So, he's the blamer. He's a person who gets up in the morning, throughout the day, and until he goes to bed at night, he blames everything that happens to him on someone else. He simply is not involved in anything. And by the way, that is a very large picture of what is done by almost all of us. We become blamers. "It's your fault. You did it. I didn't do that. No, that was your fault." It's one of the worst things that can happen in a marriage...the blamer.

Well, then there's the Christian who is driving absolutely everyone mad. Let's take the illustration of perhaps a group of sisters living together, with one of them driving everyone mad with her conduct. But you cannot approach that girl to correct her. She absolutely rejects and refuses all corrections. There's only one thing in the world you can do: you can either live with her, or you can excommunicate her, and you have no grounds for excommunicating her, do you? I can't think of any. I have tried. And so, this person continues just wreaking destruction in the lives of every person that they live with, and there is nothing you can do about it. Then, if they finally come to the place where they can only live alone, they blame everybody in the church for this lack of appreciation.

There's the fellow who never works, but he just got a job. And in the midst of all of this, there is that dear saint who walks up to you and says, "Gene, you're not doing enough. You're not taking care of the needs of God's people. You ought to spend more time with the Lord's people. You ought to help these folks more. Can't you see all these problems around here? Why don't you help these people?" And then just about the time that person walks off from you, someone else walks up who says, "Oh, you're just too busy. Why don't you stop long enough to smell the flowers? What you need to do is just walk up and

down the street and greet people, stop to the guy who's painting the house and talk to him, and pet the dog,” and so forth.

The girl who comes to your group, and you know good and well, the only reason she's there is to look for a husband. She is even willing to go so far as to get a boy in trouble—that's the term we always use in the South: she got him in trouble—in order to put him in a situation where he has to marry her. There's the woman in the church who, at this present time, wants to divorce her husband, in this group of 100 people, who wants to divorce her husband because he has never given her “romantic love.” Somewhere, she got the impression in reading some romantic novel that this is what marriage was, and nobody talking to her on the face of the earth can convince her that that is not what a marriage ought to be, that she should be showered with romantic love. Her husband didn't give it, and on that basis, she is about to divorce him.

Then there's the suicidally inclined, those who think about and talk about suicide because of, who knows, many, many reasons, and you can expect one suicide in these hundred people about every four years. You can also expect about one murder every decade, and you can expect about five attempted murders every decade, or on average, one every two years. And in the midst of all this is this wondrous thing called a single brother who is living day to day, and he doesn't know any of this is going on. I would even go so far as to say, even though living in community, half of the people don't know any of this is going on. Maybe four or five know it's going on.

Okay. There are the guilt-laden, those who are absolutely just covered with guilt. I've already said that one, haven't I? There is the person who is the oppressive perfectionist, whose life is a living neurosis in an effort to do one thing perfectly, whereas everything else in their life is falling apart. They are obsessed with perfection, and I mean it is almost clinical. There's the person who is obsessed with failure. They feel that everything he or she has ever done has been and is a failure. There is the rebel. He has come among us. He is living with us, but he is waiting to find something he does not like so that he may rebel against it. And not only that, but he also...if a rebellion starts, it doesn't matter what it's about or how trivial...he'll be sitting in the front row, willing and ready to be part of that rebellion. He needs to rebel. He needs to test authority. He needs to cause problems. He sees any kind of leadership whatsoever as either some sort of threat or some sort of evil, and he lives with you, something like a thorn in the flesh, and he will not go away.

There's the person who is bitter; when you meet them, all you feel and sense is bitterness and cynicism. They have been hurt, and they cannot get well. Something has hurt them. There is again the nut who lives among you, who, in the midst of all this, believes that he is the norm, that he is the normal person with the normal type, the normal personality,

and that's all right if that's where he would leave it, but he believes everyone should be like him. If he is emotional, he thinks everybody should be emotional. If he is cool, he thinks everybody should be cool, and everybody else is strange except him. And then, praise the Lord, there is someone else living in the midst of all this, and that is the person who sees this carnage, sees this wreckage, and who knows and is convinced that this group of people is living under a curse. I want you to know, I am about ready to join them in that belief. How could 100 people have so many problems? But that person believes that they are cursed, that God is not with them, and the problems are proof of it, and sometimes that person will leave, and sometimes that person, man or woman, whoever he is, will stay and tell everybody, "This is just not right, this can't be, we're living under a curse, you're living under...something's wrong, we need to all repent, this oughtn't to be."

It becomes a shocking thing to begin to discover the enormous problems other people have, because my list can't get long enough to describe what's really going on. I can only impress you with this fact: those people are not under a curse. What I am telling you is normality. It is the norm. What's that thing they say they use when they talk about it in a test? It's the median. This is the ordinary. This is the average.

There is, or will be, or has been the person who is there to split the church. He will split it. He is a compulsive splitter. Then there's somebody else whom I can't stand. He drives me crazy. I wish you would leave. I don't want you here anymore. I cannot handle you. I dislike you. I don't want to see you coming. I wish you would stay out of my life. You are: the peacemaker. You want to take me by the hand and take me down the street and make sure that I reconcile with every human being who has at any time ever had a problem with me. You want peace, and you want to make sure that I spend most of my life going around reconciling myself with other people. You feel that I'm not being scriptural because I'm not making peace with all those people who don't like me. "That man down there said something about you; go see him, talk to him. Y'all are brothers, and you better have peace with one another." Oh my. May I say a word to you? I know you got the right verse; you got the wrong planet. You're asking me to go through the greatest drainage of energy a human can go through, and to do it constantly, in order to have peace, and it can't be done. Do you not understand what an enemy is? An enemy is someone who doesn't want peace. He either wants you dead or defeated or destroyed or done in, but he doesn't want peace. He wants you to believe as he does. I can't live long enough. I don't have enough strength in my body to come to peace with everybody that I should be reconciled with. Now that sounds shocking, doesn't it? Does that sound shocking? That sounds so unscriptural. There's nothing new about it. It can't be done. I wish that person would go out and become some sort of a large, slow target, a leader, and let them spend their whole lives bringing peace and reconciliation in their life.

Then, just as this person walks off, and just as you are weighed down in all the chaos that's going on, and there are a hundred brushfires around you and a hundred more being reported, somebody walks up to your door and says, "Oh, I really believe that we've got to reconcile with all the other groups of Christians in this city, that we should all live as one, and the Baptists and the Pentecostals and the Catholics and the Mormons and the Jews and the Muslims—or I don't know what you may feel—but that we should all be together." And this brother starts a crusade of one, and his first victim is you. He wants you to go meet with all the other ministers in the city and try to have one church in that town where we're all meeting together.

Then there's the Christian who hears voices. There's the Christian who walks into the room and literally believes, "That person is talking to me. Oh, that's what he wants to tell me. Oh, that's what he wants to tell me. That girl is in love with me," or if it's a girl, "That boy is in love with me." This is the person who takes Scotch tape and goes around, plugging up all the electrical outlets, because electricity is leaking out. This is the person who believes that everybody in America has had radiation from atomic fallout, and therefore everybody in America has developed mental telepathy, and she or he can sit in the room and listen to and hear what everybody else is saying and thinking. This person comes to you and begins telling you these things and does it with a straight face, and you get to the point where you actually begin to believe them. This person is clinically psychotic. You will also have, from time to time, once or twice a year, a person who becomes paranoid or schizoid or depressive or suicidal or homicidal or something like that. It happens. It's normal.

There is among you also, in the midst of all this, the obsessed soul winner, and very proud of it. Beside him, or on the other side of him, or maybe in contention with him, is the obsessed prayer, the intercessor, who is also very proud of it, and of course, both of these want all of us to be like them. Then there's the advice giver, who every time you see him or meet him, or he or she, they have some advice to give you about how you ought to be doing all this stuff, and when they leave you and go to someone else, they're going to give that person advice too.

Then there's the insecure. This is the brother or sister who really comes and becomes part of this hundred, or he is part of this hundred, because—let's put it this way—whoever he meets, he wants reassurance. He, at that moment, wants that person to reassure him that that person likes him, and he especially wants this of people in leadership capacities. He is the one: when you have spent hours on your feet, you have just finished preaching a three-hour message, he will come up afterwards, and he will stand there, and he won't talk to you until he feels approval. And if he doesn't feel it, if he doesn't get enough to satisfy him, he will follow you outside. He will follow you down the stairs. He will follow you to the car, and if you let him, he will get in the car and follow you to your

house, waiting until that moment when he has that one second when he feels that you have given him enough assurance, reassurance. Then he can go home and go to bed, and he will wake up the next morning, as empty as he was the day before. I want to say to that brother: there is not, brother, there is not that much reassurance on this planet nor in this universe. Your hole, your bottomless pit of needing to be reassured that we like you, is bigger than all of the reassurance that we can create in this universe. The solution is not to be constantly reassured. The solution is to get help. And you, brother, would wear down a granite mountain. Somebody say, "Amen!" "That's right." Thank you, brother.

There's not only the wife-beater; there's the verbal wife-beater or the psychological wife-beater—the man who so browbeats and oppresses his wife that it's the same. It's the same as wife-beating. There is...I don't know how to describe this so you can understand it, but it's about aggressive manipulation. The passive...the passive... takes a person who is very passive, who uses manipulation that is very passive, and uses it aggressively as a passive person. Okay. That man or a woman will drive his mate mad. He is so aggressive and constantly manipulative, yet at the same time quiet and withdrawn. That person can drive another Christian stark raving mad. And in the midst of all this, there is the question asker. "Why did you do that? Why are we doing this? Why are we here? Why did he say that? Why? Why?" But why...why? This person follows you around, wanting an eternal answer, eternally wanting answers to everything that's going on and things that are not going on. It was Mark Twain who said, "When I was, when I was 13 years old, I knew everything on earth there was to know, and I knew everything about everything there was, and I even knew everything about everything that wasn't." And that reminds me of the question and answer...they can ask you questions about everything on earth, and everything there is everywhere to ask, and they can even ask questions about things that don't even exist.

And right in the midst of all this is the thief. The thief. Things are constantly disappearing, and things are constantly being stolen, and if you happen to be in this house or meeting with me and you're sitting and watching all of this on television, I would recommend that in a moment you get up and slip out and go back to your room and hide your purse or your billfold. I realize that you're living with ten of the dearest, sweetest Christians, fifteen of the finest, most wholesome, put-together, lovely believers, and one of them is a kleptomaniac. You are going to have a hundred bucks stolen from you as surely as you're sitting here watching me, and if I were you, I'd stick my money inside my shirt, button my shirt, and put my coat on backwards. Because, in the midst of us, there is at least one, probably two, and maybe even three thieves at all times. You want the deeper Christian life, and you don't believe your soul is damaged, and you don't need any help from someone who has been trained in the business of helping people with their soul problems. That's probably pretty good proof that you need a lot of help.

Alright, and there's also the guy who...this fellow...he never gets picked on. He's the laid-back brother. He's taking everything so easily. Nothing fazes him. All that's fine. His wife comes up and starts screaming at him. "Oh, my wife just had a bad day and night. It's all right. She'll be okay tomorrow." This man...this is his attitude in life. The way he listens, the way he hears, the way he works; everything. He's laid-back. But his wife takes about a half a pound of tranquillizers a day because she is trying to live in this world, in the world of reality, and she's dealing with a man who's just taking it all so easy. I'm not even going to tell you that he's lazy. I'm just telling you he's laid-back, and he's driving his family stark raving bonkers, and he almost never gets caught at this.

I talked to you about a minute ago about blaming people. There are also people who manipulate; people who manipulate, and there must be at least a thousand ways to manipulate another person. Manipulation is achieved by being hot, being cold, being withdrawn, being aggressive, hinting, blaming, producing guilt, and agreeing. All I can tell you is this: that every person listening to the sound of my voice is a genuine first-class manipulator. You have your way, and each of us does it a little differently, but you manipulate, especially your spouse, and, you know, we always look down on or feel sorry for the poor little sister who has this big, overbearing husband. Just be careful. It may be that that man's going stark raving mad back at home.

I remember one case of this very strong-willed woman and this very easygoing brother, and we just really felt sorry for him. I sat down one day to talk to her and listen to her, and that man had more ways of manipulating that girl; in his laid-back, easygoing way, he controlled her completely. He was totally the controller...but he didn't need counselling. He was all right. His wife needed counselling...and he never got counselling. Manipulating, controlling, and blaming are three words that she should know fit us all. It's the mark of the fallen human race. We can even manipulate by submission.

And in the midst of all of this is that sweet little sister who says, "Why can't everybody just love one another?" I don't know, sister. You know, you live day to day, and you get frazzled and frazzled and frazzled. You have been patient, and you know you have, and you know there's not an angel in heaven who can charge you. And you have walked right in the midst of all this, and you have borne your cross. And one day, in an unguarded moment, when you just had your guard down, and you just didn't know you were going to do it, one day, finally, after years and years of working, walking perfectly in the carrying of these burdens, you bite at somebody.

And there is that sister: "Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, oh my God..." The lazy married brother who will not work. The lazy single brother who will not work, and his roommates are supporting him. There is the wolf that lives among us, who, during all this time, is gaining to himself followers, and he will take them off one

day. There is the judger, who stands in the midst of all this and says, “Look at all this failure. If I were in charge, if you folks would all listen to me, it'd work out just beautifully.” There is the couple that is married, but they have never had sex. They are both virgins, and they have been married for three months, six months, one year, two years, four years, five years, ten years, and sometimes it is the wife who has refused, or sometimes it is the husband. They are still living together, and yet in the sight of God and in the sight of the state, they are not married, and this will come up in every 100 people.

And then there's the one-problem person. They only have one problem, and every time you meet them, they want to discuss it—just one problem. They have this problem now and forever, world without end. And in the midst of all of this, there is the brother who says, “We don't need anybody who will help us psychologically. All we need to do is preach the Word. And what's wrong with you, sister, is that you just don't read your Bible enough. What's wrong with you is that you need to pray. Sister, you've got sin in your life. Confess your...sin. Oh brother, what you need to do is to pray and to fast, and you need to get in your Bible and study your Bible. And psychology is of the devil.” I don't doubt that some of it probably is, but what you know better is this: “We just need the preaching of the Word of God, and this will take care of all this.” And you know what my answer to that is? You know what we need? We need you to leave.

We have also within this 100 people someone who is obsessed with the second coming, someone who is obsessed with speaking in tongues, someone who is obsessed with signs and wonders, someone who is obsessed with demons, someone who is obsessed with sunsets, someone who still believes that all you have to do is know the deeper Christian life to be transformed and to live in your spirit, and you don't need either the cross nor help. There's a Christian who is very angry with God. Perhaps there's a Christian who is very angry with the leader because he's been angry with his dad, and he's taking his hostilities out on the leader, or maybe he's taking out his hostilities on God. There is the woman who believes that sex is a sin and that her husband is perverted because he wants it, who may also believe that nudity is not something that should be even in the privacy of the bedroom, and that no matter what her husband does or says, the man is a pervert. That person lives among the 100 people, and that person is married right now, and that person is not seeking help. She's trying to get her husband to get help.

And there are, in the midst of all of these people, one or two perfectly normal human beings, and they're driving the other 98 mad. And the thing—listen—all these people came together for the deeper Christian life, and in the midst of all this, it just blows my mind that there are people who are saying, “I just don't need any help.”

Then, amid all this, there are the children caught up in the problems that all this creates. Problems within their home, and then the problems that come through community living.

You say, well, then we shouldn't live in common, or we shouldn't live in community, or we shouldn't even...we Christians should get saved and never see one another again. Well, it's fine. Let them have their problems with the kids who live in the neighborhood. It's all going to come home one way or the other.

There is the sloppy brother who insists that everybody should dress sloppily, and there is the neat Christian who demands that we all dress neatly. There is the brother who believes that we should all get up in the morning and make our beds, and there is the brother who is trying to get up every morning and make his bed, and he's having a nervous breakdown conforming to such things. Then there is the brother who will grab his sheets, pull them back, throw his mattress on the floor, and glare at the brother who thinks we should all make our bed and say, "There!" See!

I told you about the brother who joined us and who didn't believe in money. And honest to goodness, there comes a moment, no matter how balanced you are, how well you know about the needs and problems of people, you will become convinced that there is something wrong with this group of people, and it's just not so, because that group of people is any place in America. Now you wonder why the church is having a hard time. Why are we having a hard time having church life? And we're trying to address these problems by throwing a Bible at them and telling them to get up, read, and pray for 10 minutes every morning. By the way, there's a solution to all this. It's really simple. There's a solution to all of this. Men who aren't very wise, Christians called to be workers, begin to see this in their 20s and 30s, and when they reach 40, they have a revelation. There is a way to solve all of these problems. It's very simple. It's called authoritarianism. You can brush every one of these out of existence in a matter of minutes. All you need is authoritarianism, and that's why we have authoritarianism, because they believe that only the Bible, reading the Bible, and praying and loving Jesus is all you need, and when that doesn't work, then they say, well, then the only other thing you need is submission. And therefore, we'll have authoritarianism, and some do not stop at authoritarianism, but they move to totalitarianism.

And there is total conformity. Everybody has to think like, act like, feel like. Most of them, and it always is, are built in the image of the leader who unwittingly believes that he is the norm and, in some way, lives out a messianic role among them. Yes, you can cure all of this with legalism. Just pass laws against...you shall not divorce. You will not have a nervous breakdown. You cannot scream, nor can you cry. It's against the rules. Legalism—you start there, you move to authoritarianism, and from authoritarianism to totalitarianism. These things solve the problems of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and don't think they don't. That's where most monastic movements started, and that's where most convent movements started. They started with a strong-willed human being who got fed up with all these problems and just called for total conformity. And of

course, you know, that's what Jesus really wants out of all of us, is he just wants us all to wear military uniforms and obey somebody. If we do not yield to authoritarianism, and if we live, giving brothers and sisters the right to be uniquely themselves, and we can't give it to them because God gave it to them, gave it to them in their mother's womb, then we, if we are not going to take away from people their God-given dispositions, then we had better start addressing the problem of the soul and the healing of that soul. Say amen. Amen.

So, you want the deeper Christian life. Then you are going to have to have a little help. I just...I fall back and laugh at that little group that just got started and has the answer. I want to say again, you go take your "the answer", and you go get your people, and you go live together in common. Come back in 10 years and tell me all about your "the answer". Let me see how your "the answer" covers these problems. It can't be done. There is no "the answer" because God won't allow there to be "the answer". It will reduce to being a method: a method you can literally put in a capsule and dispense. It can't be done. Men have been trying to do it for 2000 years. The needs and differences of God's people have always been greater than all the spiritual truths combined. Every one of us has a different need, and every one of us needs a different answer.

In the church of Jesus Christ, it better be elastic enough to fit it all and demand nothing from anyone. We've got this real bad habit. I've got the gospel. This is the way. Here is the secret. And when someone doesn't get healed by it, we blame, not the message or the method, but say he didn't have enough faith, or he didn't do this, or he didn't do that. Brothers and sisters, that's not fair. You ought to be honest with yourself and come back to your message and your method and say, "Didn't work, did it?"

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ has to be a many-splendored thing because God's people are a many-splendored and damaged thing. I know I have hardly scratched the surface. These are the things that God's people throughout the ages have written about when they talked about the enormous wickedness of the heart, how evil we are. These are the terms being used, and how weak we are toward God and toward sin. These are the things we don't ever want to tell people about when we say the fallen, depraved nature of folks. These are the things we're talking about when some single brother goes out, and he prays to the Lord and says, "Lord, give me the cross" ...which he should do...and he begins saying, "Oh, I see how wretched I am. I really see how wretched I am. Oh, I'm just a wretched person." You will see how wretched you are, beginning at about 40, and it will grow from there. We begin seeing the first glimmers of it in our early 30s, and the most incredible thing is that we always forget it. We start blaming it on circumstances. Somebody else did it. Something's wrong. Someone else is causing this. We don't really realize that it's the Lord finally showing us what we're really like. And I want to say here, the church—I think it's the responsibility of the church to carry on an ongoing

preventative maintenance. I'm convinced brothers and sisters ought not to marry until they have been exposed to the true marriage of problems, have been shown how to set up lines of communication, and have been taught how to communicate. And that they've been taught to seek help when they've got a problem.

I can take that as one small illustration: that in the church of Jesus Christ, there's going to have to be constant, ongoing preventive maintenance. That's theorizing, because we haven't even gotten started. We haven't even addressed this problem. We're going to sweep it under the rug...read your Bible and pray. And then about that time comes the next nut. I'm sorry. I shouldn't be calling these people nuts, but at that moment, that's how I feel. Because I think, boy, you're really naive, my friend. And that's the brother who's sitting in the back of the room, and he raises his hand and says, "Oh, brother, these things aren't going to happen. If we trust the Lord, won't the Lord take care of us? Why are we worried about these things? If we trust the Lord, won't the Lord just take care of us? The Lord's not going to let these things happen to us." I don't know what to do with him. I don't know what I want to say. I want to sit down and cry. That's why I'm worried, though. The brother who just believes that God is going to take care of them. The Lord's not going to let us have heresy. The Lord's not going to let anybody come in here and spook this group. The brothers and sisters will not argue or fight with one another. The Lord's not going to let that happen.

The Lord let the children of Israel live in slavery for 400 years, in Egypt, without once appearing to them, speaking to them, or even getting around them for 400 years, and you think he is going to stand there, and nursemaid you through the minefield of daily life, and never let anything bad happen to any of us that will just trust him? Then just pick up your New Testament and read it. He just doesn't work that way. Is what I've said realistic? Ask a policeman. Ask a policeman. Ask a social worker. Ask a counselor, whether he be Christian or pagan. Just ask him. Sometimes I think even counsellors think they're just getting the problem people in society, and all the rest are normal. Ask me.

The soul is damaged beyond all belief. Your soul, and I'm going to repeat this. I know what you're thinking. Boy, oh boy, oh boy. Don't let me get around that man, and don't let me get around that group. I don't want to be part of those 100 people. I don't blame you. I think the smartest thing you could do right now is get under your bed and don't ever come out. You make three friends, you're in trouble. Make three permanent friends, and you're in trouble. Make a hundred friends, and you've got... You might as well be a juggler trying to juggle about a thousand different...whatever they juggle. It can hardly be done. But I want you to know...I know—I know you're thinking, this just can't be. Good. You go find the hundred people who are not like this, and one of two things is happening: either you're not really trying to help those people, or you have a seeing-eye dog, and you simply cannot... you're blind and cannot see. It's not my 100 people. It's not his 100

people. It's not their 100 people. It's any 100 people who have all of this going on and more, and let me assure you that I left the worst things out. I didn't even mention them or breathe them.

I read something recently that I would like to pass on to you in an effort to, one more time, try to get your attention: how needy we are, how needy we are, and we ought to be getting help with our needs. It's two stories. It had to do with a military leader in World War II. His name was Eichmann. You may have never heard of him. He was responsible for the death of the Lord's number of the Jewish people, and not just Jewish, but Europeans who were gassed and burned in the great disaster of World War II. After the war, he fled to Argentina, and he was captured there by a Jewish underground and taken to Israel to be tried. He was a slaughterer of hundreds of thousands of human lives; at least he instigated it, he ordered it, he oversaw it, and he supervised it. And a man who went to that trial to bear witness against him said that when he walked into the room—or this is what happened to him—he walked into the room and he saw Eichmann, he passed out. And when he was revived, the journalist and the media later interviewed him and asked, "What happened?" Was it the stark reality of facing this monster? Was it the memory of all the people you'd seen for today? Was it your personal memory of having met him and what he did?

He said, "No, not at all. When I saw him, I fainted because he looked just like me and everybody else." That is the greater indictment. A commentator who was reviewing what Eichmann did, and we're talking about the torture, the maiming, the murder, the incineration of countless thousands of people, and when the newsman reviewed these events, he said, "What of Eichmann? Was he demon-possessed?" And by the way, that's what a lot of people finally begin to get to thinking about Christians when they begin to see their problems and their naivety. Anyway, he said, "Was he demon-possessed? Was he mad? Was he evil? Or even worse, even more frightening, was he normal?" Well, I don't even dare answer which one of those is true, but I am telling you that what I read to you today is the normal expression of the soul. This is you, and this is me, and we come for redemption and full salvation. Paul said that we might be sanctified; that is, made holy, "holified", in both spirit, soul, and body.

Brothers and sisters, we need to give a little bit more time and consideration to the transformation of our souls, and we need a willing heart to get a little help. If we don't, we're going to play games with the deeper Christian life, our walk with Christ, and the things of the spirit. Within our commitment to Christ, there just is the willingness to be changed and transformed in the soul. The openness...and the willingness.