

WRONG DESIRES

(from the Breath of Life Series by C. D. Brooks)

transcribed and edited by Derek Morris

We are born with a problem, and that problem is wrong desires. The apostle Paul talks about this in Ephesians 2:2-3. “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” When Adam and Eve sinned against God, their spiritual natures died. The image of God was defaced in them and well-nigh obliterated, and man, who was created to walk and talk with God, became fit company for demons. Man, who was created with perfect desires and noble aspirations, became perverted, filled with wrong desires and vain imaginings.

When Adam fell, the race fell. Sin has been passed on to us as an heritage. The Bible says in Romans 5:12, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed on to all men, for all have sinned.” Man’s nature became polluted, his heart affected, his desires disordered. We are a mess, and until we are born again, wrong desires are king. Until we surrender fully to Christ and die to our old nature, we are a mess.

We are repelled by righteousness. If I had a questionable film showing tonight or some kind of shady entertainment here tonight you couldn’t find a seat in this place. But tell somebody how to live and not die and they think they’re doing you a favor just to show up! We are a mess.

Man does not enjoy the things of God in his natural state; he enjoys the pleasure of sin. He enjoys that which is not good for him. Listen to what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:14: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Over in Romans 8:7 the Bible says, “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” It means they are diametrically opposed. Man despises righteousness, despises virtue, and things of God seems foolish to him. Until we give our lives to Christ, until we are born again, the things that we like are the things that will ruin us. And that’s a sad commentary on unregenerate human nature: that which attracts us and fascinates us and tantalizes us is usually that which will destroy us. It might be pretty, but it’s deadly.

I have a friend over in Weatherly, Pennsylvania who has a collection of rattlesnakes. Now, I’ve never had a great love for snakes, but I decided to go over and look at them, and as I stared at them, eyeball to eyeball in their cage they didn’t look that dangerous. In fact, I heard that if you take the snake’s venom and look at it under a microscope it has all the color of a rainbow, and the beauty of a sunset. Pretty, but deadly.

The Devil knows that raw sin, unadorned and ungarnished is ugly and revolting. It will turn folks off. So he dresses it up to look pretty. The most dazzling lights are in the hell holes. They don’t decorate Safeway or Acme like they do a nightclub. The Devil wants to make it appeal to your carnal nature. He wants to stir up your wrong desires. He wants to suck you into it, and he’ll destroy your character and cast you down to hell.

We live in a society where these wrong desires have been exploited to the full. Pleasure has become god, and that’s exactly what Paul said would happen. We read together from 2 Timothy 3:4 that in the last days men would be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. That’s why you can pack these x-rated movie houses and find people glued to their T.V. sets from night to night filling their minds with trash, but it’s so hard to get people to come and hear the Word of the Lord.

Unless a person is willing to surrender his life to Christ, you’d better watch out if you oppose those carnal desires. Folks will fight and argue and debate against the clear Word of God when it exposes their wrong desires. They’ll turn against a sermon or a preacher or a church or

even God Himself, if God should step between them and their carnal desires.

There are folks who have been coming here from night to night, maybe even someone sitting here today who would surrender to Christ but wrong desires are holding you back. Wrong desires hold sway in your life. But I want to tell you this morning, in a sufficient crisis, desires fail. In a sufficient crisis those things which seem so important to you now will fade into insignificance.

When the Lord Jesus comes in all His glory and the clouds roll back as a scroll, no one is going to be puffing on a cigarette and saying, “Well, I know I’m going to be lost but it was worth it because I could smoke my cigarettes.” Oh, no. Desires will fail. He will cast those cigarettes down that held him back from making a full surrender to Christ. He will cast them down in disgust and run in terror, crying for the rocks to fall on him. That man who has chosen an adulterous relationship, and allowed lust to hold him back from a full surrender to Christ and his pure will, he’s not going to be saying on that day, “I know I’m going to be lost, but I wonder if I have time for one more lustful act, or one more glance at a filthy porno magazine.” Desires will fail.

Let me illustrate from everyday life how in a sufficient crisis desire fails. Several months ago I received word that my father was very ill. His heart was beating irregularly and for the first time in my life I came face to face with the realization that my father might die. It was early morning that I first talked to him on the phone. I prayed. I called heart specialists in his home town. I sat in a chair deep in thought. Suddenly I realized that it was late in the day. I hadn’t eaten all day. I wasn’t even hungry. I didn’t feel like going out and having fun. I didn’t even feel like spending time with my family. Desires failed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls, there are things that seem so precious now, that you think you can’t give them up. There are things that you’re so hooked on, you just don’t see how you can change. There are things that you desire so much it seems too much of a sacrifice to

let it go, and some of that which you're holding on to is killing you day by day. But you love it so much with your wrong desires that you say to yourself, "How can I let this go?" Well, I want to tell you, you'll do it now, or later you will despise that which kept you from the arms of a loving Savior. You'll lose your appetite for it. You will curse the idol that kept you back from a full surrender to God, whether that idol is money or alcohol or habit or friend, or whatever. And when the clouds roll back like a scroll you will wish to God that you had not cherished that idol before God. Desire will fail. There are things that people love now more than God. One day you'll hate it. And the problem is many are going to hate it too late.

There are many instances in the Bible where people put wrong desire before God and ended up hating that which they thought they loved. Desire failed. It happened to Adam and Eve. The Devil came to Eve and offered her a deal she thought she couldn't turn down. She ate of it all excited and then she went to Adam and he ate. Then the glory of God departed from them and they were naked. Eve sewed some fig leaves into skirts to cover her and her husband. But it takes more than fig leaves to cover our nakedness. Then they trembled, hiding behind the bushes, waiting for God.

Young people, keep this in mind. You may do what you want. You may listen to the Devil if you please, but always and inevitably you've got to face God. And when God came and spoke to Adam and Eve they were hiding. "Well, why are you hiding?"

"We're naked!"

"What happened to you?"

"We desired it."

The Bible says that she desired it. And that same day, with bloody animal skins flapping against her thighs she followed her husband down the avenue of shame and out of the Garden of Eden. The animals growled their contempt, animals that had been their friends. The flowers begin to droop. They are driven out of the garden, Adam and Eve are blinded by their tears. Oh,

if only they could live it over again! She would not have desired that fruit.

There are many such stories in the Bible and in our own lives. I think of Judas. Judas liked money, and the Devil goes after you according to what you like. So he offered Judas a deal that he thought he couldn't turn down. Thirty pieces of silver just to kiss the Lord. And in the Middle East, that's a common custom. Even if you go over there today, you'll get kissed--by men! It is a common greeting in the Middle East. So here the Devil rationalizes--watch it when he starts rationalizing--he can make sin seem right and righteousness seem wrong. He can make those things that will destroy you look like the greatest treasures of all. And so the Devil said to Judas, *I'll give you 30 pieces of silver. All you've got to do is kiss Him. You don't have to hit Him. You don't have to put the thorns on His head. I've got folks who'll do that. You don't have to drive the nails. Just kiss Him. Easy.*

Judas began to think about the robe he could buy and the sandals he could wear that would make James and Peter and John green with envy. He desired it, because he'd been stealing from the treasury all along. He began to justify his wrong desire. After all, he had seen Jesus, one time when they had come to take Him, disappear, and he rationalized, *I can kiss Him, make the money, when they try to take Him, He'll disappear. He's not hurt, I'm rich!*

So driven by his wrong desires, he walked into the Garden of Gethsemane and planted a kiss on the face of the Lord and turned Him over to the enemy. And then he tightened his grip on his money and started out of the Garden. But suddenly his attention was arrested by the loud stinging smack, and he turned around just in time to see a Roman fist across the face of Jesus and blood trickling out of the corner. He stopped to consider this. He saw Jesus suffer abuse after abuse. And Judas probably thought, *What's wrong with Him? Why doesn't He disappear?* What he didn't realize was what Christ tried to tell him at the last supper: *My hour has come.* No more disappearing now. *For this cause came I into the world.* And Judas kept looking until he saw the hands that had created the sun the moon and the stars, he saw the hands that had done nothing

but deeds of kindness and mercy, hands that had brought sight to blind eyes and help to broken hearts; he saw those hands bound together, and Christ led off like a common criminal.

And all of a sudden that money seemed too hot to handle. He didn't know what to do with it. Ladies and Gentlemen, he hadn't spent a dime, but desire failed. He had been willing to put it before God. He thought that it was more important than eternal life, but he doesn't want it now. So he runs back to the Temple and tries to get the priests to take it back, hoping to exonerate the guilt from his mind. But when they wouldn't take it, he cast it on the floor and ran out. I told you before, the day is going to come when you'll hate that wrong desire, that wrong habit that kept you away from Christ. Judas cast his money on the floor. He didn't want it now. Desire failed, and with all hope gone he ran out and hanged himself. The record is that it would have been better if he had never been born. But what I want you to see is he got his money but he threw it away. Desire failed.

Some time ago a colleague of mine was flying to Columbus, Ohio in a snowstorm. Average good flight. Everybody enjoying himself. The stewardess came out and called for a fourth person in a card game, and somebody jumped up and ran. They were playing cards and they were serving cocktails, and it seemed that everybody was drinking. Businessmen had their attaché cases open--they don't enjoy anything: money...money...figuring...figuring. And right in front of him was a marine corporal, and he had a playboy magazine, one of those salacious picture magazines with a lot of nudes in it, and he wanted to feast his lustful eyes on it, so he leaned back and held it up like this and my preacher friend had to look straight up in the air!

As the plane came in to land at Columbus, Ohio you could see the lights. They broke down through the clouds. You could see the runway, and it seemed perfectly normal until they were almost to the ground when suddenly the nose of that jet pulled up again and the pilot gunned his engines and back into the clouds they went. A little bell rang and the stewardesses went forward. When they came back they were as white as a sheet.

Then the pilot got on the intercom and said, “Ladies and Gentlemen, we’ve got problems. Our landing gear won’t come down. We’re going to fly around and see if we can get it straightened out.” For one hour and twenty-eight minutes the plane flew in circles around Columbus in the clouds, diving and pulling up, and twisting and turning. After one hour and twenty-eight minutes the little bell rang again, and the stewardesses went forward. When they came out their complexion hadn’t changed. The pilot spoke on the intercom and said, “Ladies and Gentlemen, we can’t fix it, and we can’t stay up here all night. We’ve got to crash land this plane, and frankly we’ve never done it before. When we go down, even if the main gear is in place, if this nose wheel collapses this plane can flip.”

He said, “Now, we’re going to show you how to do the best you can.” And the stewardesses demonstrated how to tighten the belt and how to adjust the seats. They went down the aisle with a big plastic bag and collected all the high heeled shoes. And all of a sudden the card game ended. Folks had been downing booze for the whole flight, but nobody asked for a drink. Desire failed. The businessmen put up their attaché cases. The contracts didn’t matter now. Desire failed. That marine corporal took his magazine and rolled it up and he kept on twisting it, and twisting it, and finally he pulled open the seat pocket and rammed it in. No more pictures now. Time to think about dying.

The pilot said, “Some of you may die; some can live if you follow instructions and do not panic.”

My preacher friend bowed his head and prayed. *Lord, if this is the way You will it, I just want to be right with You. And if there’s anything I can’t think of, forgive it. I want You to take care of my wife and children.* And when he opened his eyes, he caught a glimpse of his reflection in the window, and it surprised him. The peace, the quiet confidence in God...I pray that I’ll be that way if my time should come. How about you?

That plane started down. Everybody grabbed his head and bent over. Ladies were bare-

footed. Snow piled everywhere. He looked out the window. Ambulances and fire trucks lined the runway and took off to keep up with the plane. And there was a good solid *thump*--that was the back wheels. Now it's only the nose wheel. Like a car when you brake, it tends to nose down and the pilot had said, if that nose wheel doesn't hold, the plane would flip. And it seemed like he never would brake those engines. Finally the emergency crews told him to try it. He slammed on brakes, and everybody was groaning. Then suddenly they were stopped, and they killed the engines and surrounded the plane.

People don't want the Word of God, but one day they're going to wish they'd listened. Don't want to study the word. Want to hear tradition. Want to hear smooth things. Want to hear that they can hold on to their wrong desires. Men put money and pleasure and habits ahead of God. But a crisis is soon to come upon us, and every desire will fail. Gold and silver will be thrown in the streets. The wrong desire you love now you're going to hate then. You're going to curse it then. Any desire that kept you away from a full surrender to Christ, you'll hate it then.

I want to talk to the worst sinner in this church. Do you hear me sinner? Hell is not prepared for you. It's prepared for the Devil and his angels. Now, if you go it's because you choose to, because the Lord has made a way for the worst sinner. Come to Jesus as you are. Surrender your life fully to Him. Be born again and let Jesus take away those wrong desires. Let Jesus through the power of the indwelling Spirit give you victory over besetting sins.

But if you turn away, if you cling to your sins, and your darkness and wrong desires, there's going to be a second resurrection: a resurrection of the damned. We talked about it last night. When the wicked of all ages come and attempt to surround the city of God, the Bible says, fire came down from heaven and devoured them. This is hell fire coming down from God out of heaven.

On the other hand, the Bible says that God is going to create a new heaven and a new earth for the redeemed. We're going to have a mansion in the heavenly city. Let's say Amen! A

life without sin or suffering or sickness or death. If that sounds wonderful to you, would you say Amen? Now, I want to appeal to your good sense. Does it really seem worth it to give up the joys of eternal life for a job, or for money or for cigarettes, or for liquor, or for drugs? I want you to think about it.

It's decision time. It's time for full surrender. It's time to let Christ take those wrong desires and make something new out of you. If you want to let some things go now, and have your life converted so you don't even miss them, if you want to stand at the foot of the cross this morning and fully surrender your life to Jesus, I want you to stand up right now and let us talk to the Lord.