

I CHRONICLES

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Chronicles chapter 17 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As you remember from our previous studies, David is king over all of Israel and he is defeating the enemy as God blesses him mightily. In fact, in I Chronicles 14:17 we are told, “**Then the fame of David went out into all lands, and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations.**”

And for David, he built himself a beautiful home that was built out of expensive and valuable cedar wood. He also built a tent for the Ark of the Covenant to rest in. He brought it back home after it was at Kirjath Jearim and then it was relocated you might say at the house of Obed-Edom for three months while David tried to figure out why God was so angry and killed Uzza for touching the Ark. And David looked at what the Scriptures said and he saw his error and brought the Ark of God to Jerusalem as God had instructed them to do. Also, keep in mind that the tabernacle itself, which was that portable worship structure that Moses built in the wilderness and followed the children of Israel during their forty years of wandering, was located in Gibeon, which was about 5 miles northwest of Jerusalem. And keep in mind this was not the same tent and all since that was built some 500 years prior to the time of David.

That is where we will pick up our study this evening in I Chronicles chapter 17 as David is in his beautiful home and the Ark of the Covenant is resting in a tent. Let's begin reading in verse 1 of I Chronicles chapter 17 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

I CHRONICLES 17**VERSES 1-2**

1. You have to love the heart of David. Here he sits in this beautiful cedar home and as he is resting, maybe looking out his window he sees this tent where the Ark of God was located and it troubled him. How can he live in this beautiful home while the Ark is in a tent? Thus, he tells this to Nathan, and Nathan tells David to do all that was in his heart! What a beautiful thing to do, this couldn't be wrong, or could it? Could a man of God jump to the wrong conclusion? Well, we don't have to guess here because in the next few verses we are told of how God viewed what David wanted to do with the Prophet Nathan's approval.

VERSES 3-6

1. Yes, even prophets can get things wrong and Nathan did here. It was not a wrong thing, but it was neither the right timing nor the right person to build the Temple and thus, God tells Nathan, "Son, you have to go and tell David that he cannot build Me a house." Now that is not an easy thing to do, to go and admit your mistake but Nathan would do just that and he would let David know that he could not build the Lord a home. Now, you may be wondering why God would not allow David to do this and instead He will allow David's son to build Him a home, the temple?

The reason is given to us in a few chapters ahead, in I Chronicles 28:3-6 where we are told, **“But God said to me, ‘You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.’ However the Lord God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah to be the ruler. And of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make me king over all Israel. And of all my sons (for the Lord has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. Now He said to me, ‘It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father.’”**

David’s hands were the hands of a warrior and God would not allow him to build Him a house. But, as we have just read and as we will see here in I Chronicles chapter 17, God will allow Solomon, David’s son to build Him a house to dwell in, the Temple!

2. There are a couple of lessons we can learn from this. First of all we should seek the Lord’s will in matters and not rely on what seems so obvious to us because that may not be what the Lord wants us to do. You see, it may be the right thing to do but it may not be the will of God in that situation, and that is why we are to bring everything to God in prayer and make sure what He wants us to do. It is as G. Campbell Morgan wrote, “It is of the utmost importance that we should ever test our desires, even the highest and holiest of them, by His will. Work, excellent in itself, should never be undertaken, save at the express command of God. The passing of time will always vindicate the wisdom of the Divine will.” How true that is!

Secondly, David did not pout, mope around, sulk over the fact that he could not build a house for God and I like what he did do. In I Chronicles 29:1-9 we are told, **“Furthermore King David said to all the assembly: ‘My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced; and the work is great, because the temple is not for man but for the Lord God. Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might: gold for things to be made of gold, silver for things of silver, bronze for things of bronze, iron for things of iron, wood for things of wood, onyx stones, stones to be set, glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and marble slabs in abundance. Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver: three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses; the gold for things of gold and the silver for things of silver, and for all kinds of work to be done by the hands of craftsmen. Who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the Lord?’ Then the leaders of the fathers’ houses, leaders of the tribes of Israel, the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the officers over the king’s work, offered willingly. They gave for the work of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. And whoever had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the Lord, into the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the Lord; and King David also rejoiced greatly.”**

Just because David couldn't build the house for God it did not stop him from gathering the materials for the house of God to be built by his son Solomon! That truly is a servant of God, a true servant of God will do anything he can for God. It is as F. B. Meyer wrote, "If you cannot have what you hoped, do not sit down in despair and allow the energies of your life to run to waste; but arise, and gird yourself to help others to achieve. If you may not build, you may gather materials for him that shall. If you may not go down the mine, you can hold the ropes." Again, I think that is another important lesson for us to learn. We are not to only seek out God's will in a given situation but we are to not sit around and sulk over what we can't do, but do something!

3. One last point here and then we will move on. When it says in verse 5, "**For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought up Israel, even to this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another**" please understand that it has been some 500 years, as I have said, that Moses first built the tabernacle and thus, this is referring to the replacement of some of the skins and curtains and things because they would wear out. I think that is what this is speaking of here.

VERSES 7-10

1. It must have been hard for David to hear those words that he could not build a house for God but you have to love our God here. You see, He starts out by showing David that he was a no body and God took him and made him ruler over His people. Not only that but God was going to establish the place where He will be worshiped and Israel will be secure. And all that was leading up to the promise, which the Lord basically said to David, “No David, you can’t build me a house but I will build you one!” Can you imagine! God was telling David that He was going to build him a dynasty, which was the near-term fulfillment as David and his descendants would sit on the throne for more than four centuries. But I also believe that there is a long-term fulfillment and you can read of this in more detail in II Samuel 7:12-17 and in the next few verses here in I Chronicles 17, but it is speaking of Jesus Christ who will sit on the throne of David and will rule and reign for eternity! It is the promise of the coming Messiah! In fact, in Acts chapter 2 Peter comments on this fact that David realized that from his lineage, from his descendants, the Messiah would come and sit on the throne of David!

VERSES 11-15

1. Now here’s the thing, and we talked about it in the previous verses. The near fulfillment was David’s descendants, from Solomon on but that dynasty was not eternal. Thus, the long-term fulfillment is speaking of Jesus, the greater fulfillment of this promise. Let me share with you a few verses to show you what I mean and how this was fulfilled.

In Jeremiah 23:5-6 we are told, **“Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.’”** Obviously this is speaking of the Messiah, of Jesus who was a branch from David, a descendant of David!

Then, in Isaiah 9:6-7 we are told, **“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”** Notice that the Messiah, Jesus will sit upon the throne of David forever!

Now did this happen, did it come to pass. Listen to what we are told in Luke 1:31-33, **“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”**

Right now the Lord rules and reigns in our hearts but one day He will sit upon the throne of David and there will be no end to His Kingdom. And think about this for a minute. In John chapter 1 we are told, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”** The word **“dwelt”** speaks of a tabernacle or tent, which is interesting. You see, God became flesh in the Incarnation and dwelt among us, He took on a tent for a body you might say. God, who dwelt in a tent in the wilderness now tabernacled among His people and now He resides in, not a building, but believers!

VERSES 16-18

1. As Nathan tells all this to David, what was his response? Was it, “Is that all I get?” No, David did not say that! How about, “Look at how great I am. God has given this all to me because I am so wonderful!” No, David did not say that either. What he did say was that he was blown away at all that God had given to him and he did not deserve it! That truly is grace on God’s part and humility on David’s part and that is the way it should be! God does not bless us because we are so good, but He blesses us out of his rich grace, we don’t deserve it, but He freely gives it to us!

2. What about you and me? Do we groan and complain because we don't have this or we don't have that? Do we get mad because things are not going the way we want them to go, the way we think they should go? We should not be doing any grumbling, complaining, groaning because look at all that God has given to us! Now some of you may be wondering what He has given to us but think about it. You have been adopted into the family of God; you are the Bride of Christ and if that is all that God has done for you, what more do you need. Your sins have been forgiven in full, rejoice, be like David who said that he did not deserve it because we do not deserve any of this that God has given to us! May we praise Him and thank Him instead of moan and groan! Spurgeon nails it when he wrote, "There are some professors who would do a great thing if they might, but if they are not permitted to act a shining part they are in the sulks and angry with their God. David when his proposal was set aside found it in his heart not to murmur, but to pray."

VERSES 19-22

1. David gets down to the heart of the matter, there is no God like our God, none at all and God has chosen the nation of Israel to be His special people. Now God chose them not because they were worthy, but because He chose them. He chose them to be vessels for Him to work through, and not because they were worthy. He chose them to make them a special people. Listen to what God has to say in Deuteronomy 7:6, and 9:6. He says, **“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. . . . Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.”** You see, at Mount Sinai, God had become the God of Israel; and Israel, in turn, had become the people of God. It is God’s grace that is upon the children of Israel, the Jewish people and folk’s, it is God’s grace that is upon our lives also!

VERSES 23-27

1. How could David pray so boldly that his house, his kingdom will be established forever? Because it was based on what God had told David and David is just praying that God's will, the thing that God promised him would come to pass! You see, David did not put his faith in faith but in the Word of God and thus, we must do the same. We have many promises that God has given to us in the Bible, the question is, "Do we believe them?" If you do, when you pray you will pray with the boldness of David and if not, then your prayers will be weak! F. B. Meyer put it like this, "There is hardly any position more utterly beautiful, strong, or safe than to put the finger upon some promise of the Divine Word, and claim it. . . . It is far better to claim a few things specifically than a score vaguely." May we not forget that!

Listen to what D. L. Moody wrote in regards to prayer. And keep in mind we have an opposite view of prayer today many times and hopefully this will correct that. He wrote, "Prayer does not mean that I am to bring God down to my thoughts and my purposes and bend His government according to my foolish, silly and sometimes sinful notions. Prayer means that I am to be raised up into feeling, into union and design with Him; that I am to enter into His counsel and carry out His purpose fully." Exactly!

Now you may be wondering what some of those promises might be, well, let me give you a few.

- We may appropriate His promise of forgiveness: **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** I John 1:9.
- We may appropriate His promise for peace: **“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”** John 14:27.
- We may appropriate His promise for guidance: **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.”** Psalm 32:8.
- We may appropriate His promise for spiritual growth: **“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”** Philippians 1:6.
- We may appropriate his promise for help: **“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”** Hebrews 4:16.

God has given to us some very precious promises and these are just a few. Why don't we believe them? God has promised this goodness to us just as He did to David and if we truly know who God is, then we should be able to trust Him! Spurgeon put it like this as he wrote, “The great sin of not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is often spoken of very lightly and in a very trifling spirit, as though it were scarcely any sin at all; yet, according to my text, and, indeed, according to the whole tenor of the Scriptures, unbelief is the giving of God the lie, and what can be worse?” Something to think about!

I CHRONICLES 18

VERSE 1

1. The Philistines were the perennial enemy of the Jewish people, a thorn in their side you might say. And when David became king they were taking territory from Israel but now that all has changed. David is taking back territory from them and, in a sense, is taking the wind out of their sail!

VERSE 2

1. Here we see that David is continuing to defeat the enemies of Israel and this time it was the Moabites. The sad thing about this was they were family. The Moabites, along with the Ammonites were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew. Remember the story of Lot fleeing the city of Sodom before God's judgment came upon that city, and Lot and his wife and two daughters fled the city. Lot's wife could not leave that all behind her and looked back, longing to be there and she turned into a pillar of salt.

Lot's two daughters thought they were the only ones left and thus got their father drunk and had sex with him. It is out of this incestuous relationship that these two nations were born. In Genesis 19:37-38 we read, "**The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day.**" And remember that David's great grandmother was a Moabite, Ruth. David also went after the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, the son of Isaac and the brother of Jacob.

VERSES 3-4

1. Zobah was a Syrian kingdom and as they were defeated we are told that David hamstrung all their horses. Now that may seem cruel that David hamstrung all those horses, crippling them, but you see, in that condition they could not be used in war and thus, he just gave them back to the enemy after he defeated them. Why didn't he just keep them all for himself, instead of just taking enough for the chariots he took? That is easy for in Deuteronomy 17:17 God said that the kings of Israel were not to multiply horses unto themselves. Why did God tell them that? The reason is simple; God wanted them to put their trust in Him and not their weapons of war. You see, the strength of any nation is not its military, but its commitment to the Lord.

VERSES 5-8

1. Was David taking chances in all these battles? Was David pushing things a little too far, going after too many enemies? Absolutely not for the Lord had told him what to do and nothing was going to stop David until it was time to go home and be with the Lord or he turned from the Lord. You see, with that kind of perspective nothing will stop a person from serving the Lord because even in death, as Paul reminds us, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, (II Corinthians 5:8).

2. Now here's the thing. David was told that he could not build a house for God and he could have pouted like I have said. He could have complained. But David did not do that, he went to battle to take the land of the enemies so there would be peace for his sons' kingdom and he took the spoils from these victories, not for himself, but to help his son to build the temple with these spoils!

Maybe you heard the story of the little boy who was given this brand new toy sailboat. He was so excited that he took that sailboat to a little nearby lake. He placed the sailboat in the lake and as he held the string so the boat would not get away a huge wind came blowing by and it snapped the string and tipped the boat over and it sank! As the boy stood there and watched his boat sink he cried out, "Wow! What a great day to fly a kite!" That was the heart of David, not complaining of what he couldn't do or what might have been lost to him, he does what he can with great joy and determination. What a great lesson for us. It is as G. Campbell Morgan wrote regarding what David was doing, "To be willing to do the work of preparation, when not permitted to undertake the principle service, is proof of real devotion." May we not lose sight of that!

VERSES 9-13

1. Here we see that Tou, who was the king of Hamath, being overjoyed that David has defeated Hadadezer, king of Zobah, for they were at war with them. And now Tou sends tribute to David for doing this and David dedicates all these things to the Lord. Not only do we see the king of Hamath send gifts to David but also we see these other nations that were subdued by David's victories; Edom, Moab, Ammon, the Philistines and Amalek all do the same and David dedicates all these things to the Lord! And the key to this and to the victories in our own lives is found in verse 13 where we are told, "**the LORD preserved David wherever he went.**" That is the key folk's, it is not by our might, it is not by our strength, but it is by the Lord. May we never forget that or we will see the consequences of our failure to do so, we will be defeated!

VERSES 14-17

1. Again we see that David's power was firmly established in the land by the Lord. And please understand that David did not do this all on his own but he had faithful men who assisted him in this work. We see Joab who was over his army and yes, he was a loose cannon you might say but he was also a great warrior and leader. There was Jehoshaphat who was the recorder. Zadok and Abimelech were the priests, why two? Maybe because there were two priestly centers, the one in Gibeon where the tabernacle was and the tent where the Ark of the Covenant was in Jerusalem. There was Shavsha who was the scribe. And there were the Cherethites and the Pelethites, who were like David's secret service men.

And, according to Baldwin, these Cherethites and Pelethites were hired soldiers from Crete and he makes these remarks about them and why David did this, “By employing foreign guards to ensure the safety of the king, David would minimize the possibility of becoming the victim of inter-tribal rivalries; these men from Crete could give whole-hearted allegiance to him.” You see, God has established David firmly as the king of Israel and God has expanded the kingdom tremendously!

I CHRONICLES 19

VERSES 1-2

1. David and Nahash were friends and when he died David sends some ambassadors to his son Hanun, who was now the king of Ammon. Now I want you to notice that David was not some Tyrannical leader but he showed kindness towards a pagan king, like Nahash and now his son Hanun. That was David. And that should be our heart also, that we are to treat people who use us and abuse us with the love of Christ for they will know we are Christians by our love and not our hate!

VERSES 3-5

1. As David sends some ambassadors to console and bring the sympathy of the king of Israel to the son of Nahash in his loss, Hanun gets some very bad advice from his men. He is told that David's men are not coming to show respect to him, but to spy out the kingdom so they may destroy it. It seems that the friendship that David had with Nahash did not extend to his son as he listens to this false advice from his men. And we see what Hanun does to these ambassadors that were sent by David, he humiliates David's men, cuts off half of their beards and their garments, exposing their buttocks.

Now this may seem strange, a different kind of way to humiliate these men. But a beard was a symbol of masculinity and by doing this he was humiliating them. We are told, "With the value universally set upon the beard by the Hebrews and other Oriental nations, as being man's greatest ornament, the cutting off of one-half of it was the greatest insult that could have been offered to the ambassadors, and through them to David their king." (Keil and Delitzsch in their commentary on 2 Samuel 10).

Also, Clarke tells us, "The beard is held in high respect in the East: the possessor considers it his greatest ornament; often swears by it; and, in matters of great importance, pledges it. Nothing can be more secure than a pledge of this kind; its owner will redeem it at the hazard of his life." (Clarke on 2 Samuel 10).

And to cut their garments so their buttocks showed was once again humiliating to these men. Well, maybe not so much today where some wear their pants so low that they don't cover much of anything! But I still think it is humiliating!

2. These men were embarrassed by what happened and they did not even want to return to Jerusalem, and they only send word back to David of what had taken place. And David goes to meet them, tells them to remain in Jericho until they are ready to return and get back to work. I like that about David. He did not use these men as political pawns for his purposes like so many do today but allowed them to wait until they were ready to return to Jerusalem!

3. How in the world does this relate to us today as Christians? Think about it like this. As our king sends us out don't think that people will welcome you with open arms. Don't think that people won't be suspicious of you, wondering what your true motives are. And sometimes things heat up. Who is going to stand up for you? Who is going to fight for you? Just as King David fought for his men, so our King, Jesus Christ will fight for us. And many times He sends us to Jericho, that oasis in the desert, for a time of refreshing, a time of rest. And as we are refreshed in Him and rest in Him, He tells us to go and return to the work that He has set before us. That is our God, always concerned for us, carrying for us, wanting what is best for us and encouraging us to go forward in the work!

VERSES 6-13

1. Please understand that David did not reject the Ammonites, that was not the problem. It was that they made themselves repulsive to David and thus, they rightly recognized that David was not happy. They also knew that David and his men were too strong for them and so to protect themselves from the armies of Israel, they hire Syrian mercenaries to help protect them.

As David finds out what is happening he sends Joab to lead Israel against them and as Joab prepares for battle, he notices that the Syrian and Ammonite army has surrounded them. So he puts his brother Abishai in charge of half of the army, and they will attack the Ammonites, while Joab and his men deal with the Syrians. And Joab reminds his brother, whoever is in need of help; the other will come to his side in this battle to defeat the enemy. I like that and may we learn that lesson, that we are willing to come to the aide of those in need, our brothers and sisters so the victory may be obtained!

What I want you to notice here is that Joab makes no provisions for failure and G. Campbell Morgan picks up on this as he wrote, “It is interesting to observe that in his arrangements he made no allowance for the possibility of ultimate defeat in his conflict with Ammon . . . it does not seem to have occurred to him that the combination might have been too much for both of them.” And please understand that his confidence was in the Lord and not his strength, that is where the victory was. How do I know that? Listen to what he told his men before engaging in this battle. Joab told them in verse 13,

- **Be of good courage, and let us be strong:** That is important for us to understand in our walk with the Lord. Paul reminds us of this very thing in Ephesians 6:10, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”**
- **Let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God:** Joab wanted them to see that this battle was bigger than themselves. There was a lot to lose here. If they lost this battle they would lose people and cities and what a reminder that is for us. We need to be strong in the Lord because they enemy wants to take our families, our communities, don’t let him!
- **And may the Lord do what is good in His sight:** There is the balance. We work hard as Joab did preparing for battle and then understand that ultimately the victory comes from the Lord, it is in God’s hands!

It is as Meyer wrote as he summed this up, “To believe that God will do all, and therefore to do nothing, is as bad as to believe that God leaves us to our unaided endeavours.” May we understand that, may we take those steps of faith and get the victories that God has for us!

VERSES 14-19

1. As Joab goes into battle, the Syrians flee and when the Ammonites saw the Syrians fleeing, they also flee for their lives. And God gave them the victory. But Joab does not finish the job as the Ammonites flee to Rabbah and remain there while Joab returns to Jerusalem. It is not until David, their king goes with them that they defeat them. And that is a good lesson for us. We will never get the victory that God intends if we go without Him! For David, God was warning him not to leave the battle to Joab, he was the king, don't stay at home and rest, but as we will see, he did not heed the warning and sin was at his door knocking to get in!

2. Now here's the thing. As you read what David is able to do it seems that whatever enemy came upon David they were defeated. Nothing could stop David. Satan could not do anything from without, but that does not stop him. If he can't bring David down from without, then he will try to defeat him from within. David was a mighty warrior, and no enemy stood a chance against him. No enemy from without, be it the Philistines, the Ammonites, or whoever, was too big for David to defeat. The only real enemy that David had was himself. His flesh was the thing that would bring him down to defeat. And that is a lesson I pray we all learn and apply to our life so the things that have happened to David, will not happen to us. If we don't take the flesh seriously, it will be the thing that brings us down, just as it brought David down.

Paul said in Galatians 5:24-25, "**And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**" Folk's when it comes to sin G. Campbell Morgan reminds us, "Constant watchfulness is the only guarantee of safety. Not even true desire and great blessing are sufficient if the heart be not personally watchful." David is going to learn the hard way, and a life that seemed unstoppable, is now going to see all kinds of trouble because he did not guard his heart!

3. Let me close with this. We are told,

John Mason Brown was a drama critic and speaker well known for his witty and informative lectures on theatrical topics. One of his first important appearances as a lecturer was at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Brown was pleased, but also rather nervous, and his nerves were not helped when he noticed by the light of the slide projector that someone was copying his every gesture. After a time he broke off his lecture and announced with great dignity that if anyone was not enjoying the talk, he was free to leave. Nobody did, and the mimicking continued. It was another 10 minutes before Brown realized that the mimic was his own shadow!

Was Brown's shadow real? Of course. Does a shadow have the power to control a person's actions? Of course not. It can only mimic us. But in Brown's case, his shadow did take control momentarily. Why? Because he allowed himself to be so distracted - "addicted," if you will - by it that he completely forgot what he was supposed to be about. That's a pretty good description of the sin nature we carry within us as redeemed people. It can cause havoc, even though it has been made powerless by our identification with Christ.

- Today in the Word, May 17, 1992

Paul tells us in Colossians 3:5, **“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”** What does he mean when he says we are to **“put to death”** these sins? Paul is calling for us to mortify the flesh nature, to crucify it and to do it now! You see, if you were raised in Christ, if you seek those things which are from above, if you set your mind on things above, on God, then these works of the flesh will not be manifested in your life! Paul speaks of sexual sins or fornication, uncleanness or moral filth, passion or uncontrollable lusts, and evil desire or illicit cravings. Then Paul speaks of covetousness or greed and this is truly where the other sins that Paul spoke of spring forth. It is a selfish desire and thus, it is idolatry. Think about it. If you covet a relationship with another woman and you are married, where does it lead? It leads to fornication if you let it grow and don't cut it off! Thus, if you are content in the Lord you will not covet and give room for these other sins to grow by! You crucify the flesh and walk in the Spirit or you will let sin bring havoc in your life! Another important lesson for us to learn and apply to our lives as we close this evening!