

"I NEED TO CLEAN OUT
MY CLOSET"



"ROMANS 12:2a"

Rev. Dr. Perry Simmons, Jr., B.A., M.A., D. Min.
224 West Kinney Street, Newark, New Jersey

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INTRODUCTION

AFTER CAREFUL OBSERVATION, I HAVE DISCOVERED THAT SATAN IS A DIRTY FIGHTER.

WHEN HE DECIDES TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK UPON ONE OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD, THERE IS NOTHING THAT HE WON'T DO AND THERE IS NO WHERE HE WON'T GO TO DESTROY, TO DISCOURAGE, TO DISRUPT WHAT WE HOLD MOST DEAR TO US, WHICH IS OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST.

I DON'T HAVE A RELIGION. I'M NOT BOUND BY RELIGIOUS DOGMA OR TRADITIONS. I AM NOT TIED TO, AND BOUND UP, BY RELIGIOUS FERVOR.

NO, I HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST. HE IS IN ME AND I AM IN HIM AND THAT RELATIONSHIP IS MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSION.

- 1. I LOVE MY WIFE – BUT I LOVE JESUS MORE.**
- 2. I LOVE MY CHURCH – BUT I LOVE JESUS MORE.**
- 3. I TRY TO LOVE EVERYONE – BUT I LOVE JESUS MORE.**

NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST.

THAT'S WHY SOME PEOPLE CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOU – THEY DON'T KNOW THAT THERE IS A PRIORITY, OFTEN TIMES UNSEEN, AT WORK BENEATH THE SKIN.

THAT'S WHY THEY CAN'T SHAKE YOU FROM CHURCH, RUN YOU AWAY FROM WORSHIP, SCARE YOU FROM PRAISING GOD.

THEY CAN'T ROLL THEIR EYES ENOUGH TO STOP YOU FROM RAISING YOUR HANDS.

THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT IT'S NOT ABOUT BUILDINGS OR CHURCH TITLES OR HISTORICAL NARRATIVES.

MY RELATIONSHIP IS NOT EVEN BASED UPON WHAT HE GAVE ME YESTERDAY OR WHAT HE'S DONE FOR ME IN THE PAST.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, IF GOD DOESN'T DO ONE MORE THING FOR ME, I WOULD STILL LOVE HIM, I WOULD STILL PRAISE HIM ALL OF THE DAYS OF MY LIFE!

- 1. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I PLAN TO PRAISE HIM UNTIL I CAN'T SPEAK ANY MORE.**
- 2. I PLAN TO LIFT UP MY HANDS UNTIL I CAN'T LIFT THEM ANY MORE.**
- 3. I PLAN TO DANCE BEFORE THE LORD UNTIL MY LEGS AND FEET WON'T MOVE ANY MORE.**
- 4. I PLAN TO WORSHIP AND PRAISE GOD WITH EVERYTHING I HAVE;**

SO THE QUESTION THIS MORNING IS THIS: IS THERE SUCH A THING THAT EXISTS THAT CAN DISTURB THE CHEMICAL BALANCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP THAT I HAVE WITH GOD?

IN OTHER WORDS, SINCE YOU CAN'T STOP ME FROM PRAISING AND WORSHIPPING HIM, IS THERE SOMEONE OUT THERE THAT HAS THAT KIND OF POWER OVER ME AND MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

I'VE COME TO SUGGEST THAT SATAN AND HIS DEMONS ARE OUT THERE, AND IN SOME CASES IN HERE, WORKING ON A PLAN TO INTERFERE WITH YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST.

THEY WANT TO RETARD THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU AND CHRIST.

IF YOU ARE GOING TO PREPARE FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS GOING TO BE AN AWESOME YEAR THIS YEAR, YOU HAVE TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR ASSAULTS FROM SATAN.

- 1. IT'S NOT THE STUFF ON THE OUTSIDE THAT MESSES YOU UP;**
- 2. IT'S NOT THE CLOTHING THAT MESSES YOU UP;**
- 3. IT'S NOT THE KIND OF BIBLE YOU USE THAT MESSES YOU UP;**
- 4. BUT IT'S THE STUFF THAT IS DOWN IN YOUR SPIRITUAL CLOSET.**

ALLOW ME TO RE-NAME IT FOR A MINUTE:

- 1. THE CLOSET OF YOUR MIND THAT NEEDS RE-ARRANGING, NEEDS ORGANIZING, NEEDS CLEANING UP, NEEDS VACUUMING, NEEDS DUSTING. THE MIND IS WHAT SATAN IS REALLY AFTER.**
- 2. IF SATAN CAN GET INTO YOUR HEAD AND GET INTO YOUR MIND, HE'LL HAVE YOU IN A SPIRITUAL PARALYSIS ALL YEAR LONG.**
- 3. HE'LL HAVE YOU LIVING BENEATH YOUR SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGE.**
- 4. HE'LL HAVE YOU CONFUSED ALL YEAR LONG.**

IF HE CAN JUST GET INTO YOUR SPIRITUAL CLOSET, THE MIND, AFTER ALL THAT GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU, AND AFTER ALL OF THE PROGRESS THAT YOU HAVE MADE SPIRITUALLY, HE WILL STAIN, STIFLE AND STINK UP YOUR PROGRESS.

I. MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, IT'S TIME TO CLEAN UP YOUR CLOSET. (PLACE STICKER ON FOREHEAD – "MIND")

A. THIS IS GOING TO BE A DIFFICULT STEP FOR SOME OF US, BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT TO CLEAN UP THE CLOSET.

1. WE'RE TOO BUSY SHOPPING FOR CLOTHES AND HATS AND OUTFITS;
2. WE'RE TOO BUSY TRYING ON COLOGNES;
3. WE'RE TOO BUSY PUTTING ON MAKE UP;
4. WE'RE TOO BUSY MAKING SURE THAT THE OUTSIDE IS CLEAN;
5. BUT THE MIND, THE CLOSET, NEEDS SOME ATTENTION TODAY!

ILLUSTRATION

WHEN WE WERE KIDS AND WE HAD COMPANY COME OVER, THE FIRST PLACE WE THREW THINGS THAT WE DIDN'T WANT NOBODY ELSE TO SEE, WAS THE CLOSET.

SOMETIMES IT WOULD STAY THERE FOR MONTHS AT A TIME UNTIL WE REMEMBERED THE JUNK IN THE CLOSET!

TRANSITION TO THE TEXT

I WANT US TO GO WITH THE APOSTLE PAUL, WHO IS WRITING TO THE CHRISTIANS AT ROME AND LET'S SEE WHAT HE RECOMMENDS CONCERNING THE MIND.

PAUL IS WRITING SPIRITUAL ADVICE TO SPIRITUAL PEOPLE.

PREVIOUSLY IN THIS CHAPTER, PAUL SAYS THAT YOU NEED TO PRESENT YOUR BODY A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.

PAUL THEN MOVES ON TO THE AREA OF THE MIND AND SAYS, IF YOU WANT TO HAVE A CLEAN CLOSET, YOU HAVE SOME THINGS TO DO:

B. PAUL OPENS BY SAYING, “BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD.

C. PAUL SAYS THAT IF YOU WANT TO DIRTY UP YOUR CLOSET, LET CONFORMITY TO THIS WORLD BE FOUND IN YOUR MIND.

1. THIS IS GOING TO HURT: THERE SHOULD BE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN YOUR WALK BEFORE YOU CAME TO CHRIST AND YOUR WALK NOW.

2. THIS WORD, “SOOS-KHAY-MAT-ID-ZO” MEANS LITERALLY TO TAKE A PATTERN FROM THE WORLD, AND USE IT ON YOU.

3. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU’RE SO WORLDLY THAT PEOPLE CAN’T EVEN TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU AND THE WORLD.

D. MAY I SUGGEST THAT WHAT WORKS IN THE WORLD, DOES NOT WORK IN THE CHURCH;

1. MOREOVER, WHAT WORKS IN THE WORLD, SHOULD NOT BE WHAT YOU SEEK AFTER.

2. DON’T GET EXCITED ABOUT THE WORLD’S STANDARDS AND WHAT MAKES THEM HAPPY.

3. I'M NOT READY TO LAY DOWN TO THEIR STANDARDS,
4. I'M NOT READY TO LAY DOWN WITH SOME STYLES OF CLOTHING,
5. I'M NOT READY TO GET MY EYEBROWS PIERCED AND MY NOSE PIERCED AND LIPS PIERCED AND TONGUE PIERCED AND MY CHEST PIERCED AND MY LOWER EXTREMITIES PIERCED.
6. I'M NOT READY TO GET HIGH IN THE MORNING, AND STAY HIGH IN THE AFTERNOON AND STAY HIGH GOING TO BED.
7. I'M NOT READY TO BE MAD IN THE MORNING, GRUMPY IN THE AFTERNOON, ANGRY AND AGGRESSIVE AT NIGHT.

ILLUSTRATION

BACK IN THE DAY, SOME OF YA'LL HAD NO PROBLEM WITH GOING TO PARTIES, DRINKING, CHASING, GETTING HIGH, ROLLING JOINTS; AND TO TELL THE TRUTH, SOME OF YA'LL HAD FUN OUT THERE.

BUT NOW THAT YOU'VE MET JESUS AS MY LORD AND PERSONAL SAVIOR, THAT PATTERN NO LONGER FITS ON YOU. IT DOESN'T GET YOU EXCITED ANYMORE.

HERE'S WHAT GIVES OUR FRIENDS TROUBLE WITH YOU: THEY CAN CARRY YOU TO A PARTY AND YOU WON'T GET OFF INTO THE PARTY LIKE THEY ARE BECAUSE THEY CAN'T MOVE YOU WITH MUSIC, DANCE, DRINKS AND WEED.

II. THIS IS NOT A SUGGESTION TEXT, THIS IS A COMMAND TEXT, GOD WANTS YOU AND I TO BE DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD!

A. HE HAS HELPED US IN THIS PROCESS – WE HAVE BEEN CHANGED (PUT LABEL ON FOREHEAD).

1. I'M SO GLAD THAT I'M CHANGED AND THAT I'M NOT WHAT I USED TO BE.
2. I HAVE BEEN UNDERGOING A PROCESS SINCE I CAME TO JESUS AND THE BENEFIT IS THAT I'M NOT LONGER INTERESTED IN CONFORMITY!
3. SINCE I CAME TO JESUS, MY MIND HAS BEEN CHANGED!

B. LOOK AT THE WAY PAUL PUTS IT, I HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED.

1. METAMORPHOO IS THE WORD USED HERE AND IT'S REALLY A BLENDED TERM:
2. META WHICH DENOTE A CHANGE OR PLACE OR CONDITION;
3. MORPHOO WHICH DENTOTES TO CHANGE ONE'S FORM;
4. IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN I MET JESUS, HE CHANGED ME INSIDE AND OUT.
5. I MAY HAVE THE SAME HAIR, THE SAME EYES, THE SAME LOOK, THE SAME FACIAL FEATURES – BUT IN THE SPIRIT, I AM COMPLETELY CHANGED!
6. THE OLD FOLK IN THE CHURCH PUT IT LIKE THIS:
 - I LOOKED AT MY HANDS AND THEY LOOKED NEW;

- I LOOKED AT MY FEET AND THEY DID TOO.
- I DON'T WALK LIKE I USED TO WALK;
- I DON'T TALK LIKE I USED TO TALK;
- I DON'T HANG OUT WHERE I USED TO HANG OUT;
- I DON'T SMOKE WHAT I USED TO SMOKE –
- I HAVE BEEN CHANGED!!!

C. EVEN WHEN PAUL SHOWED UP AFTER HIS CONVERSION, THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS WERE AFRAID OF HIM.

1. NOT BECAUSE HE DIDN'T TALK WELL ABOUT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST;
2. IT WASN'T HIS SPIRITUALITY THAT THEY HAD AN ISSUE WITH
3. THE PROBLEM WAS, HE LOOKED THE SAME!
4. AND WHEN PEOPLE LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND THEY LOOK THE SAME, THEY EXPECT THE OLD BEHAVIOR OUT OF YOU! BECAUSE THEY REMEMBER THE OLD YOU.

ILLUSTRATION

THERE WAS A PREACHER WHO WENT BACK TO THE TOWN WHERE HE GREW UP. WHILE HE WAS THERE, HE RAN INTO THE LENNARD, THE SCHOOL BULLY.

WHEN HE WAS GROWING UP, LENNARD WOULD BEAT UP THREE OR FOUR PEOPLE AT A TIME.

HE WAS 6'4, 225 POUNDS, ALL MUSCLE, AND THERE WERE A COUPLE OF TIMES THAT LENNARD EVEN BULLIED HIM AROUND.

WHEN HE CAME BACK TO THE TOWN WHERE HE GREW UP AND SAW LENNARD, HE WAS ON A STICK, HE HAD DRANKED HIMSELF INTO A BAD SHAPE, HIS VISION WAS BAD, HIS KIDNEYS WERE BAD, HE WAS BENT OVER, BUT WHEN HE LOOKED AT LENNARD'S FACE, HE REMEMBER THE OLD LENNARD.

NOW, IT'S BEEN 35 YEARS SINCE HE HIT HIM – BUT THE FIRST THING HE DID WAS TO TRY TO AVOID HIM, BECAUSE HE REMEMBER THE OLD LENNARD.

D. MY CHANGE IS NOT A ONE TIME EFFORT, MY CHANGE IS PROGRESSIVE.

- 1. I HAVE BEEN CHANGED, I AM CHANGED, AND I WILL BE CHANGED.**
- 2. IF I WANT MY CHANGE TO BE REAL AND AUTHENTIC, I HAVE TO CHANGE IN MY MIND – MY MIND MUST BE RENEWED!**
- 3. THIS GREEK WORD DEFINITION SUGGESTS THAT I HAVE TO BE RENEWED QUALITATIVELY.**

4. THEREFORE, A RENEWING OR A RENOVATION WHICH MAKES A PERSON DIFFERENT THAN IN THE PAST.
5. I'M NOT DIFFERENT BECAUSE OF WHAT I LOOK LIKE NOW, I'M DIFFERENT BECAUSE GOD HAS GOTTEN CONTROL OF MY MIND AND HE'S GOT IT AND RENEWING IT ALL OF THE TIME!
6. THE GREAT THING ABOUT BEING CHANGED IS THAT OTHER FOLK CAN SEE THE CHANGE IN ME.

III. THE LORD CAN SEE THE CHANGE IN ME. BUT I NEED TO CELEBRATE THE CHANGE THAT GOD HAS MADE IN ME. STICKER: CELEBRATE

A. PAUL SAYS THAT MY CHANGE COMES WHEN I RENEW MY MIND.

1. THE WORD "RENEW" IN GREEK PAINTS A PICTURE OF RE-CONNECTION.
2. WHEN A POWER PLUG AND THE POWER SOURCE ARE SEPARATED, NOTHING IS ACCOMPLISHED, BUT WHEN THE POWER LUG MEETS THE POWER SOURCE THAT IS RENEWAL.
3. WHEN A CAR AND CAR KEY ARE SEPARATED, YOU CAN'T TRAVEL ANYWHERE. BUT WHEN THE CAR MEETS THE CAR KEY, THAT IS RENEWAL.
4. WHEN A SET OF DRUMS ARE SEPARATED FROM A MUSICIAN, NO MUSIC CAN BE PRODUCED. BUT WHEN THE DRUMS MEET A MUSICIAN, THAT IS RENEWAL.

5. WHEN A RECIPE IS SEPARATED FROM A COOK, NO FOOD CAN BE PRODUCED. BUT WHEN THE RECIPE MEETS THE COOK, THAT IS RENEWAL.

6. THE REASON I CELEBRATE IS BECAUSE WHEN A SOUL IS SEPARATED FROM KING JESUS, NOTHING CAN BE DONE FOR THE KINGDOM. BUT WHEN THE SOUL MEETS JESUS, THAT IS RENEWAL.

B. PAUL EMPHASIZES THAT RENEWAL IS THE KEY TO CLEANING UP YOUR CLOSET.

1. WHEN YOUR LIFE LINES UP WITH HIS WILL – THAT IS RENEWAL.

2. WHEN YOUR LIFE LINES UP WITH HIS PURPOSE FOR YOU – THAT IS RENEWAL.

3. WHEN YOU FALL IN LINE SPIRITUALLY WITH WHAT GOD HAS FOR YOU – THAT IS RENEWAL.

4. RENEWAL IS NOT PROCESS – OVER AND OVER AND OVER – HE’S RENEWING OUR LIVES!

CONCLUSION

I’M CELEBRATING BECAUSE FOR THE PAST 55 YEARS, I’VE BEEN EXPERIENCING RENEWAL!

1. EVERY DAY IS A DAY OF THANKSGIVING.

2. EVERY DAY IS ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO READ HIS WORD.

3. EVERY DAY IS ANOTHER CHANCE TO WALK LIKE HE WANTS ME TO WALK.
4. EVERY DAY IS ONE MORE DAY TO PRAISE HIM.
5. EVERY DAY IS ANOTHER DAY TO CELEBRATE HIS GOODNESS AND MERCY.
6. EVERY DAY IS ANOTHER DAY TO SAY THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU'VE DONE.
7. EVERY DAY IS ANOTHER DAY TO GIVE HIM THE GLORY!

IS THERE ANYBODY HERE THAT WILL HELP ME CELEBRATE?

1. I'M CELEBRATING FROM WHERE I CAME FROM.
2. I'M CELEBRATING THAT I WAS NOT A VICTIM BUT I HAVE THE VICTORY.
3. I'M CELEBRATING THAT THE DEVIL DIDN'T KILL ME WHEN HE HAD THE CHANCE.
4. I'M CELEBRATING THAT MY CAR WRECK DIDN'T KILL ME.
5. I'M CELEBRATING THAT MY DIVORCE DIDN'T DESTROY ME.
6. I'M CELEBRATING THAT MY PROBLEMS DIDN'T DROWN ME.
7. I'M CELEBRATING THAT MY TROUBLES DIDN'T CHOKE ME.
8. I'M CELEBRATING THAT ONE FRIDAY AT CALVARY, JESUS DIED.

9. I'M CELEBRATING THAT THEY PUT HIM IN A BORROWED TOMB.
 10. I'M CELEBRATING THAT EARLY SUNDAY MORNING, HE GOT UP WITH ALL POWER...
- CELEBRATE WITH ME ...