



The Drifting Tumbleweeds

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A number of years ago, there were following questions raised during the sermon. “Are You Alive?” Have you made a decision for Jesus Christ? Do you want to come alive? Are you special in God’s eyes? Does He hold a special place in His heart just for you? Is Jesus our Saviour willing to walk the pathway of life with us when we surrender our wills to Him? Is Jesus willing to bestow upon His faithful blessing eternal?

We discovered that there are four essentials if you want to be truly alive in Christ and to live a dynamic Christian life:

- 1.) **Prayer** - the breath of the Christian through which the awesome power of God is conveyed. We discovered that we all need to lubricate our own spiritual bearings through ultimate communication with the Father.
- 2.) **Regular, meaningful Bible time** - the food of the Christian. The Word of God is our spiritual food. How many feasts have you enjoyed from the Word? Have you read your Bible through?
- 3.) **Work for God** - Spiritual Exercise! Do you remember this quote? “Too many Christians are no longer fishers of men but keepers of the aquarium.”

4.) **Daily surrender to Christ** - Submit to God and resist the devil. Yield your will to God's will and defy Satan's efforts. Put God first in everything you think, everything you do.

So, in God's Word, we realize these four essentials: **Prayer, Bible Time, Working for God and Daily surrender** - are absolutely essential if we are to be found truly alive in Christ!

If each one of us were asked the question, "Are you alive?" what would be our response? Each one must examine their own hearts and their own personal relationship with their Saviour, Jesus Christ. When we realistically and thoroughly examine ourselves by the Word of God, the Lord will open to our hearts our condition. If we find ourselves lackluster and found wanting then we are in a condition of that of a drifting tumbleweed. Let us honestly and openly consider the cause, the effect and the solution of this drifting demise.

Effort and direction are good things. If you were to take a cruise to Alaska on an elegant Cruise Ship you would see breathtaking scenery, glaciers and whales. You might see great eagles and grizzly bears from the deck. Your cruise ship would have powerful engines to push through the cold deep waters. If those faithful engines failed, you would soon drift to the rocky shore and be wrecked. I will guarantee you that a fantastic trip like that does not happen by drifting along with the wind and waves!

If we drift along like a tumbleweed our end will be much less than we can imagine. When husbands and wives drift apart we call it separation which in this world has led to divorce. When we drift away from Jesus it is called backsliding. The Bible warns us about drifting.

HEBREWS 2: 1 "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

Drifters are either headed DOWN stream or down wind. You are not headed to the fountain springs of life from which all comes to be, but you are headed down to the dead sea!

HOW DOES A CHRISTIAN DRIFT?

Just how does Satan attempt to set the Christian drifting??? There are many ways in which Satan tries to set the Christian drifting. This morning we will deal with 4:

(1.) There's the A DILUTED CHRISTIAN

If you mix enough water into a certain quantity of MILK you have cheapened that milk. It looks and tastes like chalk water. The old tempter is happy if he can dilute our Christian

experience with worldly Ingredients so that we are cheapened and unrecognizable as Christians.

REVELATION 3: 15-16 Luke warm! The sermon, "The Church that Makes God Sick?" which is also available for download defines this condition. **The message dealt with the lukewarm condition.**

Would you love a glass of lukewarm lemonade on a hot humid day? It's cold has been diluted with the warmth of the day. Some of us would rather our drinks either hot or cold. God wants us on fire for Him! If not, the second best condition is for us to be cold. Why? Because at least with the cold condition God can heat us up! But there is little hope for the lukewarm Christian. He is a mixture of the hot and the cold. The Heavenly and the earthly. Diluted!

How do we become diluted??

You can be on fire for Jesus but loaded up with so many **TIME** consuming activities that you become washed out.

You go to Church and then at home get the mail and read secular materials or watch TV, and this negates the good.

You have your morning Bible study and follow it by a heavy dose of impure magazines with their immortal ramifications. Two opposite activities canceling each other out. Diluted!

(2.) There's the DETERIORATED CHRISTIAN

Here, the one journeying to Heaven is not into anything sinful or evil but the QUALITY of his walk with Jesus is slipping

Symptoms:

You used to spend an hour a day meditating and praying and now you find little time for Jesus.

You used to attend prayer meeting but now you let excuses keep you away.

You remember the times when you helped you church - you were active but now you simple attend.

The quality of your Christian life is deteriorating Christian.

Back in the 1970'S Chevrolet introduced a new economic car called the Vega. The multitudes flocked to own the little Chevrolet Vega. How nice they looked! But

something quickly happened. In Newfoundland when it snows, we have these trucks that are packed and stuffed to the gills with the most corrosive Salt in the world. We all know that this is spread in great quantities on our roads just for cars to collect in their body panels. The nice pretty little VEGA soon came down with CANCER of the fender! In just 3 or 4 years most owners noticed that their pretty little Vega's came down with cancer - and it was Terminal. In other words, a Terminal rust bucket.

Your hold on Jesus can slip away so fast. **HEBREWS 4: 14**, “**Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.**”

Remember the old Adventist hymn by F. E. Belden: Hold Fast Til I Come? Maintain you hold on Jesus. Keep up the Quality of your daily Spiritual walk.

Well, If the old deceiver can't DILUTE you or Deteriorate you, he may try to

(3.) - DEVIATE you. The Deviated Christian

11 Timothy 4: 3,4: “**For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.**”

These Christians turn ever so slightly off the path to life. They “ouch” away a little at a time. Blown off course by every wind of doctrine. Imagine such a forecast: “The winds of Doctrine will be coming down out of the North today at 30 to 80 KPH, very gusty, blowing with wind chills that will freeze tender growing Christians if not protected! Christians off course by the blustery winds of doctrine.

Here in my hand I hold a compass that my father gave me. He was a land surveyor and spent many years in Africa and the Canadian North. It was of the utmost importance that he used an accurate compass in these places or he could have easily found himself lost!

Let's say you are new to the province I live, Newfoundland, and you want to travel from St. John's to Manuels strictly by compass - not necessarily by road. But let's say your compass is off by just 1 degree. You will miss Manuels by 10 miles! Imagine if we got in one of the Apollo Spacecrafts to go to the moon. Just 1 degree off and we would miss the moon completely!

Friends, in these last days we are charting a course for heaven! We cannot afford to **DEVIATE** one bit from the Divine guideline, or we will miss the mark!

Do not allow the old tempter to divert you from the path of life. The way to destruction lies very close to the way of life.

PROVERBS 4: 25, “ Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. 26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. 27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.”

There is only one path that leads to life. Imagine seeing it. I read about it in the thrilling book entitled **Early Writings**, P. 14, “I saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the Advent people were traveling to the city, which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which was the midnight cry. This light shone all along the path and gave light for their feet so that they might not stumble. If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe. But soon some grew weary, and said the city was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before, Then Jesus would encourage them by raising His glorious right arm, and from His arm came a light which came a light which waved over the Advent band, and they shouted, “Alleluia!” Others rashly denied the light behind them and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below.”

Satan has many switchmen on the Railroad of life who are ready to sidetrack us from the path of life. Our prayer must be: Jesus Saviour, Pilot Me!

PROVERBS 14: 12, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

Do not let anything **DILUTE** your walk with Jesus.

Do not let anything **DETERIORATE** your love for Jesus.

Do not let anything **DEVIATE** you from Jesus- the path of life.

And finally do not be **DETACHED** from Jesus ----- the source of life.

The Detached Christian.

JOHN 15: 5,6, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

There is a story I read not long ago that serves as an illustration on this matter. There was a man from Indiana affectionately known as Uncle Bob. One of his interests was catching TURTLES. Huge Snapping turtles. He found them in ponds and swamps and brought them home in gunny sacks. They were left loose in his garage which had a dirt floor. When the restaurant in this town needed turtle meat for their famous turtle soup

they would call upon Uncle Bob to fill the order. Uncle Bob would take the turtles outside, cut off their heads, clean the meat and deliver it.

One particular day he had just left for the restaurant with a load of fresh turtle meat. There beside the rusty trash barrel where the trash was burned was all the grisly turtle remains. A young lad, who knew Uncle Bob, happened by and discovered the turtles - what was left of them. He had been warned by Uncle Bob not to play around there. But this was investigation!

It was the large turtle head that finally captured the boy's attention. As he stood there looking at that poor innocent head he wondered just why Uncle Bob had told him not to go near it. Since it was cut off and dead what danger could there be?

The turtle head had its mouth wide open. Flies were buzzing it like jealous starved vultures. The lad got a stick about the size of a good ball point pen and put the stick in that gaping mouth. **SNAP!!!** The stick broke in half and he jumped backwards. That thing was dead but it did not know it!

As Christians we can thrash around and act like we are alive, but if we are cut off from Christ we are dead. Without Jesus we can do nothing except maybe snap out at people. Branches detached from the vine are **D-E-A-D!**

As Christians we must be connected to Jesus. That living connection will be the most precious thing in the world. When we are Detached from Christ we are like a mighty Corvette with great potential but out of gas. It might as well be a plain little metro or VW Beetle.

JOHN 15: 5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." **Remain in Me!** Almost a dozen times in the first 10 verses of this chapter Jesus says the most critical thing for Christians is to Remain in Him. Stay connected to Jesus in a living daily relationship. This is a living union. All else is death.

Another spiritual lesson. A grandfather, who raised chickens on his farm, was walking toward the barn with a clean pail in his hand. Naturally his grandson followed him not having the slightest idea what was about to happen. He walked right into the hen house and snagged a large hen with a hook mounted on the end of a long pole.

Once outside the Grandfather took the chicken by the head and swung it around and around. In a moment the head separated and the chicken hit the ground running. Can you imagine the sight? It bumped into the garage and then the barn. They had to dodge that thing around like a chicken with its head cut off. It was dead but it did not know it!!!

How many Christians today are cut off from Christ - who is the head of the church - and yet they still continue to run around. They are spiritually dead. Stay connected to Jesus! A city cut off from its power has a black out. A Christian cut off from Christ is powerless.

Bible study and prayer strengthen the connection. So does attending Sabbath School and Church.

It is high time to stamp out Tumbleweed religion. Are you a drifting tumbleweed? You know, there is a very real danger, if we are not attentive and careful, and find ourselves rolling along the desert of this world at a very fast pace. There are thousands of people, perhaps millions, maybe even, billions, rolling aimlessly along like rolling stones driven by the changing winds until the day that they come to a fence or a ditch and it is all over. And there they wait, heaped up in a pile ready to be burned up. There is no future to drifting.

If Satan can:

DILUTE us, we will become lukewarm and be spewed out.

DETERIORATE us, we will be rusty scrap on life's trash pile.

DEVIATE us, we will miss the mark and be lost forever.

DETACH us from Christ, we will be dead for eternity. Then we will be **DETAINED** from heaven!

Do you know why we drift away? A TUMBLE WEED drifts and rolls along because it has lost its connection with the source of life. Its roots are not attached. The answer to last day deception decay is to be obedient to the call of Christ! Connect to Christ! How? Strengthen it. Nurture it. Welcome it. Enjoy it. Praise the Lord for it. Rejoice in it. Breathe it. Live it. Come to the well and drink from it! Be obedient to Him - to His Word! It's not too late to come alive - but time is running out! Don't miss the goal of the high calling in Jesus Christ!

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