

Have You Turned from a Life of Sin?

By Keith Daniel

If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.¹

Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.²

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?³

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy mane have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.⁴

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.¹

One more verse, which is familiar to many children. I remember my Sunday School teacher again and again trying to preach to us on this verse. *Be sure your sin will find you out.⁵* Do you love the promises of God? That's a promise.

One of the most embarrassing moments of my life was when I was a young preacher. I had so much fire, and so little wisdom. But the little bit of wisdom I had God took because there was fire. You have to have fire, zeal. There I was, wanting to win the world to God. Then this terrible embarrassment happened to me. I remember our district superintendent, who was keeping a watch over us as young evangelists in South Africa, telling us where we were to go now, what we were to do. He said to us "I want you to visit all the Christian friends. The farm areas, and the farm little town and communities, go visit all these. Don't just preach. Go and get to know the Christians. Go learn from them."

Well, we went out, this young fellow and I, the two of us. We went from farm to farm, through the whole day, into the night, one farm after another, in this small farming community. Towns, one house after the other, on big plots of land. I began to learn something as a young preacher in the Faith Mission of South Africa. I learned there are two things you dread. You won't believe what those two things are.

One is dogs. I could spend an hour talking to you about dogs, and what they've done to me. The other is coffee. Now you won't understand that if you don't come from South Africa. We have what we call the Boer. The Boer of the Afrikaan are white. They are a farming people, and don't like the cities, generally. Well, the Boer love coffee. Believe you me, that coffee is something to experience. One cup and you could die. They don't have these little dainty cups you know, like the English of South Africa. The Boers have—I wouldn't say a mug, I'd say a bowl—for coffee. They don't ask you if you want any. It's etiquette. They just brought the coffee out, and we had to drink it. Oh, this black poison! It reeked. I learned to put up to six spoons of sugar in to try and somehow taste it.

After six homes in one morning you felt sick. You had to go home, wherever it was, and try to eat your lunch. Then you had to face six more homes in the afternoon. You know, they actually got sick, the

1 2 Corinthians 5:17

2 1 John 2:3

3 James 2:14

4 Matthew 7:17

5 Numbers 32:23

missionaries who weren't used to it, up in the Transvaal. It's really the Transvaal, the free state, that's the Afrikaaner land in South Africa.

Well, this brother I was with began to twitch. I got a bit worried, and told him "You know, we need to see a doctor."

He said, "Well I hate doctors." He hated medicine. But eventually he said "We'd better get to a doctor." So we went to a doctor.

I sat there with him and I was very worried. We were far away from our district superintendent, from our mother and father in the faith, and here we were. The doctor looked at him, made examinations and tests, and sat there for awhile.

The doctor asked, "Do you perhaps drink a lot of coffee?"

This brother looked at him and said, "All the time, doctor. All day."

The doctor said "You know, you've poisoned your system. You've actually poisoned yourself with coffee. Look at your eyes. The white is all discolored. It's coffee. You have to stop totally."

He says, "Well, Doctor, how do you do that in this country?"

The doctor looked at me and said, "You make sure the people know that this boy doesn't have coffee. All this sitting in a car to the next farm, then sitting for hours, and coffee, and sitting. Before you get to the next farm get out of the car and run. You're young. Get rid of all your energy. You can't have no exercise and then drink coffee like old men." So he told me, "You are in charge."

Even though this fellow was really my captain, I had to be sure that the people didn't give him coffee on any account. He was to drink glasses of water all day. I had to bring it to him. I don't remember how many glasses, it was so many years ago, but he had to drink water. No coffee. And run. We started running around before we got to the next farm.

Anyway, we got to this town with these large plots. We were rather tired, to be honest with you, but we knew we had to finish this town so we went into this particularly large home. As we got halfway to the house, here came this dog, galloping. It was big. We ran. We couldn't get back to the gate, so we ran for the house. The dog was after us. I banged on the door, and this brother was kicking as this dog was trying to eat us up. He screamed as the dog began to get the better of him. In the end I realized we weren't going to win, and I opened the door. It wasn't locked, so I pulled him in, and we banged the door shut. We turned around. There stood the lady of the house wondering what all this commotion was about. She had gotten out of bed with her dressing gown, her head in curlers. The black domestic maid, the maid of the house, stood there with a bread knife. They were frightened as they were there with this knife, looking at us.

I said, "Oh, please forgive me Tanni." Tanni is Afrikaans for auntie. You always call them auntie or uncle if they're older. "Sorry I came in your house. You're dog was hurting us and we were so scared we just had to get in."

They just looked at us.

I said, "We're from Faith Mission, we're from the AEB. We've come to visit you."

The lady tried to speak after awhile. We were wondering why she wouldn't speak, but then we realized she didn't have her teeth in. That was terrible! Now we're all embarrassed. This brother of mine was sweating. He was so fearful we had done damage here to this home, we were going to lose these friends forever to the Faith Mission.

The maid said, "Go sit in the lounge." She took her madame back to the bedroom to get dressed. We were sat there feeling terrible. What a start. Eventually the lady came. We heard the cups rattling in the kitchen.

The brother said, "Whatever you do, don't tell them we don't want coffee."

Here it came, these great big things.

"Just don't tell them. We've done enough damage here. If we say we don't want their coffee now. . . I'll drink it, just this time."

The lady went back to the kitchen, for these rusks that you dip in the coffee. I saw in the middle of the lounge there was a fern. Now it was a beautiful fern, you know. It was in a big wooden stand, and as she went back to the kitchen I just looked at the brother. I grabbed his cup. I grabbed my cup. I ran and poured it in the fern. I put them down and she walked back in. There were two empty cups. I was so proud of myself. The lady sat down, trying very hard to sit dignified and composed, and look at us. We're all embarrassed still, and a bit tense. She started to speak. But as she tried to speak, in the middle of the lounge, from this fern stand, we just heard this terrible noise. Thrrrrrrrrrrrr. The coffee went straight through! It came out, every terrible drop. I agonized. It just carried on. I thought, "When is this going to

end?” She looked at this fern. She couldn’t believe she didn’t know what was going on. After awhile she looked over at us and she looked at our cups. This poor brother, the red just went up his face. In the end she looked at us horrified, as if some strange people were sitting here.

I said, “Tanni, it’s not him, it’s me. We don’t normally do this in a house, you know. But, uh, this brother is sick. The doctor said I mustn’t let him have coffee. And we were so embarrassed at the way we had to get in through your door. I was so scared, and he was scared we were going to offend you. So I just tried not offend you, and I put it in the fern.”

She looked at me for awhile. Eventually she started laughing. But then she screamed. She laughed like I’d never heard a woman laugh before. We didn’t know what to do. She laughed and laughed and laughed. And you know, she loved us. She gave us a big donation. She said, “Please, come back. Whenever you’re here.” I don’t think she normally had missionaries like that.

Anyway, I’m sure that lady thought often about that verse when she thought about us. *Be sure your sin will find you out.*

That verse, I’d like to read, just once, if I had the opportunity today, to all of God’s people, and all the churches across our country. *Be sure your sin will find you out.*

I was once walking in the town of Durban, a number of years ago now. It’s a large and beautiful city, Durban in South Africa. In the center of the town is what were called monuments—all the different kings and queens of the British Empire in the heart of the city, as the people rush through. They have many open air meetings there, trying to win people to Christ. As I was walking through all the bustle, all the hundreds of people just criss-crossing to get to each part of the city, I saw a young man standing there, and he had tracts of salvation. He was dressed clean, and he looked clean. The way he was giving these tracts out made me stop in respect. I looked at him, and thought, “Look at this fellow.” He didn’t want to let anybody pass. It was like there was something of a desperation in him. “Please, read this sir. Please, please take it. Please stop. Take this.” He didn’t want to let anybody pass, giving these tracts out of salvation. I looked at him in respect.

After awhile I saw he looked at me, and he recognized me. He walked up to me, and said “Are you Keith Daniel?”

I said “Yes.”

He said to me, “Mr. Daniel, have you got any time? Are you in a hurry?”

I said, “Well, I’m going somewhere, but what do you need? What do you want?”

He said, “There’s a tramp, a down and out, who’s here in the town gardens, just sitting under the statues. I’ve tried to lead him to Christ. There’s something different about this tramp. He wasn’t always in the gutters. This man comes from somewhere good, and not too long ago. He’s just suddenly lost everything. But I can’t get through to him. Won’t you please come? I know he’ll still be somewhere here. Come and speak to him.”

So I said, “Surely I will. Let’s go.” We went around to one of these big statues. We eventually found him. He stood slowly when he saw us coming to him. He was dressed like a tramp, and he looked like a tramp, a man who gave up, sitting in the gutters now. This young fellow looked at him and said, “This is Mr. Daniel. Keith Daniel. He’s a preacher. I believe that if you just listen to him, you could understand of what I’m trying so hard, so often to tell you. I believe he’s going to help you to find God, to show you the way to God, what God can do for you. Won’t you please listen to him?” So the man beckoned that I could speak.

I began to talk to him about God.

Now I found something. Oftentimes we give just our testimonies. I found to give the Word of God. It’s what God says that matters. So even if it’s to a tramp, leave something of what God says. I began to quote the scriptures to him, of what God holds out to the sinner, of what God promises He can do, no matter how destroyed the life is.

I held out the scriptures to him. As I was quoting scriptures to him, eventually he started quoting them with me. So I quoted another scripture, and word perfect he quoted with me. I looked at him and said “But how is this possible? You know everything that I know. You know everything I’m telling you. You know everything I know.” And I found tears welling up in my eyes to find a man in the gutters who knew so much.

Then tears welled up in his eyes, and he said, “I was a Dutch Reformed Dominee.” A minister, a preacher, in the largest denomination of our country. “I went through a university, a theological seminary. I attained after seven years the highest of all marks of all the theological students. I was the top theological student of the university when I graduated. I was taken straightway to one of the largest Evangelical Dutch

Reformed churches of South Africa, right into the pulpit. There were five other ministers, but I was the one, as young as I was, who was given the pulpit, because I could preach. I preached what you're telling me. I preached the gospel."

I said, "What went wrong? What happened?"

Then the tears really came. "Sin. You see, somehow sin wasn't dealt with, even though I had a testimony. Though I went through university and I attained the highest degree, the highest marks of the entire university in the theological section, sin was still there."

It's possible, you know. It's possible to get into a pulpit, one of the largest Evangelical churches in a nation, because you can so preach, because you've so attained academically, in theology. They have to, they're obliged to put you in the greatest church right at the start. It's possible to stand up preaching the gospel when sin is still in your life, never doubt it.

He said, "It was sin. I had this problem. Sin. Oh I always used to think if my heart condemn me, God's going to deal with it somewhere. Someway it's got to stop. I went back to sin. I sinned. Then one day I stood up. I was preaching, calling for men to come to Christ, and suddenly I looked out and I saw a face. Someone who knew about my sin, looking at me warning to sinners to come to repentance to God. Somehow I got through that sermon, I don't know how I got through, holding myself up in the pulpit, my heart just crushed. I don't know how I did it, but I got up and preached again. This time when I stood up, and I began to preach, I didn't see one face, I saw two faces. The devil won't let you get away with it. I couldn't preach. Here were people looking at me knowing that here I am crying to sinners, and yet I'm a sinner myself. I'm still in my sin. I couldn't preach. I just walked from the pulpit, determined never to go up again, no matter what the cost.

"And it cost. I won't tell you the whole thing of what it cost me, but I lost my family, lost my home, lost everything. One thing led to another, and now I'm in the gutters. But you see what I was doing was wrong. I had no right to stand in the pulpit of God and cry out to others when I was still in sin myself. And I had to make a choice: either stand up in the pulpit and face the condemnation of others who I had been guilty of sending to hell, or get out of the pulpit forever. I made a choice, and look what it's cost me. I'll never go back to the pulpit. It was wrong. I was wrong.

"Young man, I've watched you. I watched you when I saw you standing there with your Bible, with your tracts, with your desperation, calling to people, not wanting to let anyone go by. I watched you. Because of my background, I watched you carefully. Watched you when you spoke to me so zealously. I watched you the other day when you stood there. Two men walked up to you. I saw you talking and laughing. Saw you put your Bible away. Saw you go in that building with the men. I know something of those men's sin, and I watched them. I waited until you came out, and I waited for them. I was going to find out what you did in that building there. Young man, I want to tell you you have no right to come the next day onto the street with your Bible, and your tracts. You have no right! You're wrong! You're wrong in what you're doing, thinking you have the right."

The two of us just looked at him. I looked at this young man, who had turned white. His lips trembling at being found out. Then the greatest shock of all came. He looked at the two of us. This man having given up the pulpit to be honest. And this man who's clinging to God with every breath in his body never to lose the right to be in the pulpit, to look every man on earth in the eyes and say "Come to God", and have the right to say to them.

He said, "So what? Being a Christian doesn't mean you never sin. Being a Christian doesn't mean you can't sin, ever." He turned, and walked away from us a dozen steps, back into the street, with his Bible, and his tracts, and his sin, I believe to this day, all three.

Who you are speaks so loud that the world can't hear what you say. They're looking at your walk, not listening to your talk. They're judging by your actions every day. Don't believe you'll deceive by claiming what you've never known. They'll accept what they see and know you to be. They'll know you by your life alone.

I remember the same town, just a little way away from where I stood in the town gardens of Durban. I was walking along the pavement of the city hall of Durban. Suddenly I saw a face coming along the pavement past me, a face I hadn't seen in many years. The last time I had seen that face was when he stood in a stadium with thousands of people, and was preaching the gospel. He was almost a household name in South Africa, though he was young, because of the way he preached. I sat at his feet as a young Christian again and again listening to him.

Then it was suddenly found out that the man was living in the most depraved sin imaginable. Not only just once, it had been going on everywhere he was preaching. He was living in his depravity while he

preached. The damage done in the country was inestimable. The thousands that stumbled over this life when all this shock swept across the land of this preacher's sin. Here he was.

He just disappeared. No one knew where he was. I remember standing with his young fiancée, broken, because she didn't know where he'd gone. No one knew where he'd gone. No one. He just couldn't face the world. He left, disappeared—gone! No one knew where he'd gone. Here he came, aged, but I recognized his face as he walked along. As he passed me I put my hand out and grabbed a hold of his arm. He looked at me, and before I said a word the tears just swelled in his eyes. He knew I knew who he was.

I said to him, "I need to ask you something. I need to know something. Were you ever real? Were you always in sin while you preached like that? Or were you ever real that you really knew God? Were you ever truly saved?"

He took my hand and walked with me up on the steps of the city hall, and we sat. He talked to me, asked me about myself. Then he said, "Was I ever real? Keith, I was in a meeting. They made an appeal. I came out. I prayed the sinner's prayer. I was counseled. I mean, like you. I prayed the same prayer you probably prayed. They said to me that day 'Now you must testify.' So there was an open air meeting. I went along and listened to all the testimonies given, and I kind of gathered 'Now you tell you've given your life to Christ.' So I started testifying. I stood in front of the loudspeaker there in the streets and testified 'I'm saved.' Something about the way I spoke, they said 'You're going give a testimony in the church.' They took me there, and I stood up and began to speak. Something gripped people. I was given pulpits everywhere, testifying. Suddenly, speaking. Sermons. Small at first, little opportunities. Next thing 'You're going to Varsity, getting theological training. You're a preacher! This is a gift.'

"I was sent to America, to one of the evangelical seminaries of America, paid for by all the Christians back home in South Africa. Came back after awhile, straight into the biggest pulpits, because I could speak. I could preach. People listened. Next thing it wasn't only the pulpits, it was the city halls. Next thing it was the stadiums.

"Did I ever turn from sin? No, for my sin was always there. Was I ever saved? I believe I was. You won't believe it, Keith, obviously, from the mission you serve with. I was sincere. I tried to have quiet time. I believe that I did. Somehow, I believe I am still saved to this day. And do you know, Keith, most ministers in this country will defend me and say I am still saved. You see, I believe once saved, always saved. Don't you believe in that, Keith? I believe somewhere along the line God's going to get me right. Your earnestness worries me, Keith. You seem to worry about my soul. Now I'm going to be honest with you. I'm not ready to give up my sin right now. I'm enjoying it still. But somewhere along the line God's going to get me, because once saved, always saved. He'll get me right before Him. Don't you believe once saved, always saved in the Faith Mission, Keith? Most ministers would stand on my side right across this country and say it there with me. Don't you people believe once saved, always saved?"

I said, "Yes. Once saved, always saved—if you STAY saved! But be not deceived. No unrighteous person shall enter the kingdom of heaven. Naught that defileth shall enter there." And I began to give scripture.

This is one word that's missing in the pulpits today. I want to shout it loud and clear this morning, bring it back in the pulpits. We could have revival with it. Just one word. There's so many seeking Christianity, but we missing one word when they come to give their lives to Christ.

"Repent!"

God now commandeth all men I like that. Not some men, all men. God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.⁶ Repent ye therefore and be ye converted that your sins may be blotted out.⁷ Unless you've repented from them and been converted from them they've never been blotted out.

*Repent ye therefore and be ye converted that your sins may be blotted out. Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins the same shall have mercy.⁸ I don't see anywhere in the whole Bible where believing saves you unless you repent. That's one thing God can't do for you. That's one thing you have to do. Just turn to God. Maybe you're not able to set yourself free, but turning from sin to God to set you free—that's repentance and salvation. Repenting, confessing, believing that He is able to keep you, He is able to set you free. *If the son shall set you free, ye shall be free indeed.⁹* We need to tell sinners to repent so the Son of God can set them free.*

6 Acts 17:30

7 Acts 3:19

8 Proverbs 28:13

9 John 8:36

Do you come to God in utter sincerity, repenting from your sins? “I’m finished, God, I’m not coming with my sin.” I mean, what drunk would believe you if he comes with a bottle and kneels down, and you allow him to pray for God to save his soul and get up and walk out with a bottle still in his hand? What sin would you like to come to God with, knowing you’re going to walk out the door with it? Knowing you’re not going to give up? What?! You wouldn’t accept the drunk standing there with alcohol? You would say “Get rid of it before you pray! Throw that away. You can’t come to Christ with it.”

You are harder on the drunk than you are on yourself. If you come to God in true repentance it’s coming to God for forgiveness, but forgiveness for that which I’m turning from, and looking to Him to set me free from. When you come to God for forgiveness, you come to God in repentance, confessing and turning from your sins, trusting Him to save you by setting you free. Repentance is vital.

The one way to survive from the moment you’re saved, the only way, is to abide in Him. *Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.*¹⁰ There’s the quiet time, there’s the devotion, there’s the soaking yourself in the Word of God, that keeps you from sin. There’s the discipline of the quiet time, and applying yourself to the Word of God. It’s no good to dedicate your life to God to win souls, unless you are saved yourself. Unless you are living in victory. *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life.*¹¹ You can’t hold forth the Word of life as a soul winner if you aren’t blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke. No one can rebuke you. You don’t go to a sinner and tell him to come to Christ, and he rebukes you because you’re still in sin. You’re blameless, without rebuke: God says. Then you have the right to hold out the Word of God and all the things we’ve been seeking God for.

We’ve been committing ourselves to God concerning soul-winning, concerning the one thing that’s desperately needed to survive and not make shipwreck—the quiet time. Devoting yourself to soaking yourself in the Word of God as the greatest priority in your life, so faith comes, and victory. The sanctifying power of the Word of God. *Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.*¹² All these things I’ve been holding out to you, they keep you. God honors, even in soul-winning, what you dedicate your life for. But if you haven’t repented be sure your sin will find you out. I guarantee you, even if you go to varsity, to theological seminaries, get the greatest pulpits in the country, your sin will find you out.

I want you to deal with one thing, from the depth of your soul crying out for one thing. “Give me the right, Lord, the right to be a soul winner by dealing with my sin.” He will, when you ask Him, name it, turn from it, and when you determine to be kept from it.

Especially the quiet time. You’re as safe as your quiet time. No safer. As real as your quiet time. To all of us who name the name of Jesus—who have the right to name the name of Jesus, oh be careful with your walk in this time. Be careful you don’t lose the right to name the name of Jesus. You do the things we’ve been preaching of. You who have been seeking God. You who have been committing to God that God keeps you faithfully, and you will never lose the right to name Jesus. If you neglect these things, oh how swift we are guaranteed you are going to lose the right to ever name Him again.

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10 1 John 3:6

11 Philippians 2:15, 16

12 John 17:17