

[Slide 01: Sermon Series intro slide]

Good morning, New City. We're in a series called life change from the heart. If this is your first sermon, I really recommend going online to the church website to see the last sermon. This will help you understand the full context of what we're talking about today.

Have any of you ever noticed that throughout the gospels, Jesus seems to seek out the companionship of what society calls "the sinners". These seem to be the people He invites to be his friends. And it doesn't stop with the sinners, He even surrounds Himself with those traitors, those betrayers who have chosen to serve the occupying Roman army by collecting taxes for them. These seem to be the people He looks for.

It's kind of weird; we don't really hear much about Jesus seeking out those people who devote themselves to His Law. Though counterintuitive, these seem to be the people receiving the heaviest of his chastisement. I think at the heart of His chastisement is really a concern for something called spiritual blindness. I think the essence of Spiritual blindness as well as its opposite are best conveyed in **Luke 7:36-50**.

[Slide 02: Luke 7:36-38 (NIV)]

³⁶ When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. ³⁸ As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, *kissed them and poured perfume on them.*

[Slide 03: Luke 7:39-42 (NIV)]

³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

⁴⁰ Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."
"Tell me, teacher," he said.

⁴¹ “Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.⁴² Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. *Now which of them will love him more?*”

[Slide 04: Luke 7:43-45 (NIV)]

⁴³ Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.”

“You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.

⁴⁴ Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, *has not stopped kissing my feet.*”

[Slide 05: Luke 7:46-50 (NIV)]

⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

⁴⁹ The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Which of the two people in debt do you think represents the sinful woman?

The one who owed more, right? Her debt is obvious! She knows she must have been forgiven for a lot. Her sins are obvious.

In the parable, the one whose forgiven debt is greater, experiences grace in a deeper sense than the one who was forgiven a little. Likewise, the sinful woman knows she’s been forgiven of a great debt, and because of this, her experience of Grace is also deeper. How powerful is this experience? How does it move her? Her great love shows it:

she wet [His] feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.⁴⁵ ..., from the time [He] entered, [she doesn’t stop] kissing [His] feet.⁴⁶ ... she pour[s] perfume on [His] feet.

Now that’s a pretty deep experience of Grace. That’s the kind of experience I want.

So then, who does the one who owed little represent? Simon the Pharisee, right? He hasn't sinned like her. As far as he knows he only needs to be forgiven of a little. His debt must be less than the sinful woman's, right?

Consequently, what is his experience of Grace like?

What does it move him to do?

Though he does invite Jesus into his home, he's not even moved enough to greet Him with a kiss on the cheek. Even though he knows Jesus feet are probably tired and sandy from walking around in those Birkenstocks all day long, he doesn't even offer Him anything to clean or refresh them.

Do you think that Jesus is trying to suggest that "do gooders" like Simon, even though they invite Jesus into their homes, should expect an experience of Grace that is uninspiring? Are they being punished just because they only sin a little? Because they're good?

Not a chance!

This can't be the case! Remember, the Apostle Paul says we are all under the power of sin. No one is good! And Jesus says, "we are all slaves to sin!"

We're all more messed up than we can ever know.

In telling Simon this parable, I think that Jesus might be giving Simon a gentle warning against spiritual blindness.

So what should Simon do about his Spiritual blindness? And what about those of you who, like Simon, can't really relate to those sinner-type people—to the alcoholics, the adulterers, the addicts? What about those of you who don't struggle with indulging the desires of the flesh? Are you doomed to spiritual blindness?

What can you possibly do,

so that you too

can experience Grace like the sinful woman? You can clean the inside of the cup, right?

Last week I said that this is exactly what Jesus told the Pharisees and teachers of the Law to do, **as he was lashing out at them for their spiritual blindness, for their hypocrisy.**

[Slide 06: Clean the inside of the cup]

²⁵ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.”—Matthew 23:25-26 (NIV)

In last week’s sermon I described this cup cleaning process as one consisting of four elements. After briefly going through these, I gave a little demo to help express what the cup cleaning process is really about—How it is a practical application for devoting more and more of your heart to God

1. I learn what the dirtying elements look like from a teacher so I can examine the inside of the cup and take inventory of everything I find.
 - Remember, the inside of the cup represents your heart
 - The outside of the cup represents behavior
 - anything inside the cup represents something you love,
 - and the dirtying elements represent the various forms of self-indulgence
2. I share it with my teacher so he can sharpen my examination **and** I share it with God, because He’s the only one who can cleanse the cup
 - **(remove play dough here)**
3. To show God that I’m serious about devoting the inside of my cup to Him, I stop filling it with even more play dough.
4. And then, I humbly ask Him to fill the cup with His Grace.

So the more space that is created in the cup,

the more room there is to be filled by God's Grace.

The more I find the better.

I want to experience forgiveness by the Money Lender

for as much debt as possible. **I want to experience Grace like the sinful woman.**

[Slide 07: Galatians 5:16, 22-23]

I want to experience the byproduct of the Spirit, in a way that is transforming, in a way which frees me from the enslavement of gratifying the desires of the flesh.

That's a spiritual experience.

I think that to declare Jesus as Lord without cleaning the inside of the cup, is exactly what spiritual blindness is. It is to go on believing that my debt is small and that I don't need to look any further than the obvious sins of which I am not guilty, because that's not my thing. It is to approach the topic of Lordship by focusing on the outside of the cup, the part that others can see. I think approaching lordship in this way is the very foundation from which spiritual hypocrisy, arrogance, and self-righteousness are enacted.

So what does it really mean to examine one's heart for idolatry—the sin beneath the sin? To me that sounds really abstract and really churchy.

Well last week I gave you the answer

that Bill W. and Dr. Bob

learned from the Oxford Group **and wrote as the fourth step,**

but today I want you to find the answer in scripture the way I did. That is,

after I was led through the Twelve Steps,

I pored through the Bible

to reverse engineer “a spiritual experience” (i.e. recovery)

from the 12 step framework

back into its Biblical origins

As it relates to this step, and the cup cleaning process, **there was one passage that really jumped out at me.**

Matthew 7:15-17 reads:

[Slide 08: Matthew 7:15-17]

¹⁵ “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.—

Matthew 7:15-19 (NIV)

The context of this passage refers to recognizing a person according to the fruit that fills their heart, which inevitably is visible on the outside—because if you clean the inside of the cup, the outside also will be clean.

What struck me about this passage, though,

was the truth about a **good tree** only being able to produce **good fruit**, and a **bad tree** only being able to produce **bad fruit**.

What do you guys think the good fruit is?

[Slide 09: Question 1]

1. If the good fruit were a metaphor for the byproduct of something, what might it represent?

It represents the fruit of the Spirit, right?

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control—Galatians 5:22 (NIV ’84)

Question number 2

[Slide 10: Question 2]

2. If the Good Tree were a metaphor for something which produces good fruit, what might it represent?

Worshipping Christ—The True Vine

[Slide 11: Answer to 2nd Question]

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.... John 15:5

Question 3

[Slide 12: Question 3]

3. If the good fruit represents the Spirit's fruit, then the bad fruit must represent the **Blank** of the Spirit's fruit?

It represents the opposite of the Spirit's fruit, right.

[Slide 13: Answer to 3rd Question]

These are things like hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissension, and indignation

4. If the good tree represents our worship of Christ, the True Vine, then what might the bad tree represent?

Survey Says...

[Slide 14: Answer to 4th Question]

Self-worship or self-indulgence

Hey wait a minute, isn't that what we want to learn how to find?

So there are two observations to note from this passage

[Slide 15: Observation 1]

1. When I am adoring Christ (when I am in the Vine or in the Spirit), the bad fruit cannot be present in those moments, just the fruit of His Spirit
"A good tree cannot bear bad fruit"

The second observation

[Slide 16: Observation 2]

2. When I am adoring myself (i.e. when I am given to self-indulgence) only the bad fruit can be present in those moments, the good fruit cannot
"Likewise ...a bad tree bears bad fruit. ...a bad tree cannot bear good fruit."

This is actually great news.

[Slide 17: Finding self-indulgence through its fruit]

Because I want to examine my heart for the idols of self-indulgence, but I don't know what the heck they look like.

However, I do know what bad fruit looks like. I can easily spot that in my life.

So if I want to take inventory of all the times self-indulgence was present in my life, I can do so by creating an inventory of all the times in my life that I experienced the bad fruit.

I can use this as a sneaky back door entry because each time the bad fruit was present; I know that it spawned from self-indulgence.

Within the 12 step framework, this is exactly what the fourth step is about. It's an inventory of resentment, with an emphasis on the various manifestations of self-indulgence which underlie them.

Now, generically speaking, I think it's okay to refer to the bad fruit as "resentment".

Consider some common dictionary definitions of the word:

[Slide 18: Bad fruit ← → Resentment]

1. **resentment:** Indignation or ill will felt as a result of a real or imagined grievance

The American Heritage dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition copyright 2000 by Houghton Mifflin company. Updated in 2003. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company

2. **resentment:** a feeling of indignant displeasure or persistent ill will at something regarded as a wrong, insult, or injury

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary

3. **resentment:** The state of holding something in the mind as a subject of contemplation, or of being inclined to reflect upon something; a state of consciousness; conviction; feeling; impression.

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913)

In the book we read in our recovery ministry... Meets from 5:30 to 6:30 on Fridays at the church office... I use a generic definition to define resentment based on the three definitions I just read

[Slide 19: Generic Definition of Resentment]

Resentment: any feeling of discomfort which lingers in the mind as the subject of contemplation.

So this self-examination, is an examination of all the times in your life in which you experienced some form of discomfort

which lingered in the mind as the subject of contemplation.

Now, if you're a normal human being, this means you're going to be doing a lot of writing. when my sponsor first hit me with the reality of this step, his suggestion to me was to write for an hour a day, every day, until I could think of nothing more to write about.

Of the people I've sponsored, the longest took a year-and-a-half and the shortest was about six months. I averaged an hour a day for about seven months.

So having heard how much work that is, you might have forgotten the beautiful story of the sinner woman, about spiritual blindness, and about the cup cleaning process—which sounded kind of cool about five minutes ago. You're probably thinking, **“did I say I wanted to devote all of my heart? Heh heh. Tell me a little bit more about that Zap recovery stuff.”**

All kidding aside, you've probably got some questions about the very idea of this relationship between resentment and self-indulgence. Am I really suggesting that anytime you've ever experienced emotional discomfort which lingered in the mind as the subject of contemplation, that this was the result of some form of self-indulgence?

A lot of people get upset by this suggestion.

But what if I were to swap out the word self-indulgence with the word self-focus? Would that make it easier to envision?

To use this word would suggest that if you were capable of completely removing all focus from yourself, you would be able to avoid altogether, the experience of this thing called resentment. It would imply that if somebody wronged you, no matter how severe, if you were able to think nothing of yourself and instead remain focused entirely on loving them, you wouldn't experience resentment. It implies that you wouldn't be able to

do so, because you would be too pre-occupied by your genuine concern for them. Ladies and gentlemen, that's who we proclaim Jesus to be. He was so selfless that He took upon Himself the consequences of our sinfulness, in spite of the hatred and rejection that were cast upon Him. I think it's important to acknowledge that we're not realistically capable of that.

Okay, but what about when
the thing that lingers in your mind
is the result of a time
when you were absolutely the victim
of something seriously wrong?

This isn't a matter of justifying whatever the other person did. And it's definitely not suggesting that there is something wrong with being scarred or experiencing pain. Instead it's about being able to pull out the hooks that keep that painful experience anchored into your heart. It's about being able to release it to God, so you don't have to hang on to it. That's what it's about.

Okay, what about righteous anger?
'Cause when I get resentful about something
and I can't let it go,
it's almost always because it's about something evil,
something God would want me to hold in mind.

Certainly I don't have to write about that.

Well, for that one, I'm going to have to question whether anyone really knows what **real** righteousness is, apart from God Himself. I think He's the only one who gets to play the righteous anger card. I think that we only meet the requirements of righteousness in an adopted sense, in the sense that we are adopted into His family because of what Christ did on our behalf.

Okay, well what if it's something I've already dealt with? What if I no longer hold it in my mind as a subject of contemplation? Do I have to write about that too?

Remember, the big picture point of the self examination

is to find all the self-indulgence you can, so that you can make as much room as possible in the cup to fill with God's Grace.

If you're going to do that,

you can't limit your search

to the stuff that's in the immediate sphere of your recollection.

You have to go deep.

The deeper you go, the more you get to surrender to **God in exchange for** the experience of His Grace.

As you can imagine, there are a lot of questions that come up as you learn about the inventory. The types of questions I just briefly addressed are some of the more common ones. But there are usually a lot more. That is why it is really important, if possible, to be led through this by someone who has herself been led through it—to be sponsored.

Unfortunately, there's no way I can address all of the questions that you might have about this here on the stage.

However, if anyone out there would like to talk about this, please feel free to call or email me. My info is always in the bulletin. And you know you can almost always find me on Fridays in the church office before and after our recovery meetings. And of course, it would be an absolute blessing if you would consider hanging out with us for entire go of the book.

So, regarding the inventory writing technique, there are a number of different ways of going about this. All that matters about the specific technique is that it provides you with a thorough means for identifying self-indulgence.

When I sponsor individuals I like to try to help them frame the totality of what they will be writing before they actually get **started, because this is a daunting task.**

The idea is to create a burn-down list which can be used as a gauge to measure progress relative to an estimated end.

To create this list

1. You are to first make a list of every single person, place, or thing that you could even remotely associate with an **event** in which there was resentment.
2. Next, for each entry on that list, you are to ask the question, “Have there been any events, associated with this entry, for which resentment actually resulted?”
 - a. If the answer is no, you cross it off the list
 - b. If the answer is yes, you list each event. You only need to list an event once. That is, if the same event is associated with multiple people, you only need to list it once.
3. Once you have exhausted your list of people and associated events, you’re ready to get started with the writing technique, beginning with the first person appearing on your list. Focusing on that person on your list, you’ll be applying the writing technique to each event that you listed.
 - a. For each event you will ask the question, “of all the instances that comprise the mental replay of this event, which ones also resulted in resentment?” You will be listing out every single one according to a particular writing format
 - i. On the night of that fight you got into (that’s the event), what were the things that were said leading up to the fight? Certainly some of those created some type of resentment. Otherwise, the fight would have never happened. You’re going to list every single one you can recall
 - ii. What about any dirty looks? Did anybody give you that look, you know the one that implied they were thinking something about

you? You're going to write down each and every one of those looks you got.

- iii. What else happened as a result of the fight? Was anything damaged? Were there legal troubles? Ruined relationships? You need to list every comprising detail which resulted in resentment.
 - iv. What if you can't remember anything 'cause this happened 20 years ago? Pray about it. If God doesn't bring it back, you don't write about it. But be honest. This is really between you and God.
- b. After finishing writing about an event, you cross it off the list and move on to the next event in the exact same way.
 - c. After you cross off all of the events associated with a particular person, you cross that person off of the list and move on to the next.
4. You repeat this process for each person and their associated events until every name and event has been crossed off of the list.
 5. If while writing about an event, you realize you forgot to include one (this will likely happen a lot), you simply add it to the list wherever it belongs.

[Did that sound complicated to you?](#)

[We haven't even started talking about the writing technique...](#)

After my sponsor finished dropping the bomb

about the extensiveness of this task,

he moved on to begin teaching me about this writing technique. Now, really learning this technique requires practice, review, and correction, over and over and over, with a teacher. My sponsor and I did this dance for about three or four weeks. Once he felt I had the hang of it, he said to go write about all the embarrassment, anger, frustration, anxiety, fear, paranoia, regret, and all the other types of deep discomfort that I had ever experienced, which lingered in my mind. Sounds crazy, right?

Well, unfortunately, I didn't have the luxury of taking any more chances. This was the deal, either spend an hour a day writing about myself—to begin experiencing the

transforming depths of the Spirit; or get back on the happy road to suicide. It wasn't really that tough of a decision.

Now about this writing format... From up here on this stage, all I can give you is the basics. Ten minutes just isn't enough time.

Nonetheless

To begin with let's start the conversation by revisiting this idea of an event—an event that you associate with resentment. I've found that it is helpful to regard a single event as a weed. Now, when we think of a weed—not the kind you smoke, we're going to assume that a weed consists of three parts

- a. Leaves
- b. The stems and trunk, and
- c. Roots

Each of these parts represents something.

[Slide 20: Leaves of the weed]

The leaves of the weed represent all of those little details that in and of themselves

resulted in resentment. One leaf represents the dirty look that John gave you on the night of the fight. Another leaf represents that thing that your brother said. Another represents that moment when Alex threw his drink in your face. And on and on... until you've listed all of the resentful incidents comprising the fight—or whatever the event is

Does this make sense?

When you consider all of the leaves collectively, they come together to form the weed in the exact same way that of individual incidents collectively form the event.

[Slide 21: Stems of the weed]

So what connects all of the leaves together? We'll say that what holds these leaves together, so that they collectively form a weed, are the stems and maybe a trunk.

Regarding our event of resentment, let's say that the stems and trunk represent fears and/or concerns.

Up to this point, we haven't actually said anything about fear. But this is a critical part of the inventory. For each event that we list and breakdown, we have to find the fears associated with each of the comprising incidents. I'd like to suggest that without these fears or concerns, the incidents would never have amounted to anything worth remembering.

As an example

Imagine that you're walking down the street minding your own business and somebody says to you, at random, "you messed up."

Let's assume these words were said to you by a complete stranger; and you couldn't care any less about what this stranger or anybody around you thinks. Would these words affect you in any way? Probably not. There's no concern. There's no fear.

Now, what if these words were said by your mother? Who only ever criticizes you? Who never says a good thing about you? And when she said them, you were just trying to do something nice for her? What types of concerns might there be? What types of fears might there be?

Fears that are in the form of assumption? Assumptions about what she's implying or what she thinks about you?

Does this interaction cast doubts about if she even loves you? Is she implying that I'm stupid, that I can never do anything right? Is she totally disregarding the fact that I'm doing this to show her love? Does she not care about me? Does she only care about herself?

Now, maybe you didn't consciously think these things, but you felt them in the form of resentment. The task is to explore them. To ask, why did this comment sting? Does it imply something deeper? What does it imply she thinks of you? These are the types of questions you ask yourself as you inventory each incident.

So if the wind were to blow at what appeared to be a weed, but the leaves of the weed were not connected to anything, they would simply be carried away by the wind.

Likewise, if there are no fears or concerns about the implications behind something that is said, the words would simply fade away without effect.

So this brings us to the roots of the weed, this is what we're really after.

[Slide 22: Generic Definition of Resentment]

The roots represent the various forms of self-indulgence or self-focus. If it were humanly possible for you to be completely selfless, the words said by your mother could have no effect. They would be nothing more than words carried off by the wind.

Because without self-focus, you could never even consider what they imply about you.

Without roots, a weed withers and dies.

Out of curiosity, what do you think the terrain represents? The heart, right? Those weeds are anchored in the heart and we want to be able to show them to the Gardener so He can rid us of them. So that where weeds once were, now grows the vine bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

This weed analogy is actually very significant. It represents all of the things you need to consider for every event of resentment that you write about. You need to list all of the contributing incidents of resentment—symbolized by the leaves.

For each incident, you need to consider the underlying fears connecting the leaves to the roots—the stems and trunk.

And for everything listed—leaves and stems alike,

you have to list the particular forms of self-indulgence which are the real reason that the resentment came into existence and which anchor it into your heart—the roots

And finally, the writing technique...

[Slide 23: Generic Definition of Resentment]

1. For each event that you write about, you are to simply list each incident with their associated fears, one right after the other. In doing so, you'll be using a sheet of paper that is divided into three columns.

2. When listing an incident on this paper, it will be sorted across the three columns. Within the first column, simply enter the name of the person or institution at which you are resentful. Your name will likely appear in this column quite often.
3. Within the second column, enter the incident that was enacted by the person in column I. When writing it out, write it as though it were completing the following sentence:

I'm resentful at _____ for _____.

- a. Where the second column entry is what would follow the word “for”.
 - b. This means the first word of the entry should end in “ing”.
 - c. It should be a verb.
 - d. I'm resentful at Kevin for hitting-, thinking-, looking-, saying-, telling-, etc.
 - e. These lines should be succinct. If the entry gets too wordy, it probably means it should be broken down into more than one entry.
4. Within the third column, you are to list the forms of self-indulgence that are at the root of that particular entry.
 - a. In my case, I was to choose from a list of 14—pride, self-pity, self-centeredness, dishonesty, lust, sloth, arrogance, selfishness, greed, envy, jealousy, impatience, gluttony, and intolerance

Now there are rules for when to apply each one. I'm not going to go over these rules because an entire sermon could be written about this. Instead, I'll walk you through the four basics which apply to every single entry: pride, self-pity, self-centeredness, dishonesty

Self-centeredness: well, we already said that without this one, there would be no resentment. My favorite flavor of self-centeredness is the kind that results in fears or assumptions about what others are thinking because you did something embarrassing. There you are in class and you accidentally blasted a fart. Oh my gosh! I'm soooo embarrassed. I list every person that I really think heard it and thought something. I list what they thought of me **and how my reputation is forever** ruined.

This type of resentment is extremely self-centered. I think I'm sooooooo important that people are actually going to spend their own time thinking about me for more than a millisecond. Realistically, farts are just funny. If birds farted instead of chirped, we'd probably all spend a lot of time laughing. But I'm so important that my reputation is ruined. As if I matter that much.

Pride: I like to define pride as the worship of one's own image. I'm not talking about the physical image of myself, I'm talking about the image that I want you to perceive. This form of idolatry causes me to do and say things specifically so that you can perceive me a certain way. In this sense, manipulation becomes the chisel that I use to form my image. Now if you do anything that does not honor my image the way I believe it should be perceived, resentment forms. So when I farted, my pride was injured.

Dishonesty: Sometimes this one is really easy to associate, such as when you're lying, cheating or stealing. But what about my favorite one—Dishonesty in the form of hypocrisy? Somebody does something that annoys you or gets you angry, yet you're guilty of doing the same thing, or something that is close enough, all the time. And there you are getting annoyed at them.

Self-pity: This one is usually of the form “poor me”, or “I don’t deserve this”.

Something unique about this flavor of self-indulgence is that it can be particularly deceptive. It can take something like healthy grieving and turn it into something really dangerous

where the person becomes so **self-absorbed in the feeling**, that they start justifying really unhealthy behavior such as cutting, suicide, self-inflicted pain. Not until they are able to break the focus from themselves are they able to snap out of it. A great weapon against this is serving others.

As you can imagine, you really learn a lot about the real you when you go through a process like this. If you were spiritually blind you finally start see, but you know you’re only seeing a little.

So as a closing thought, what do you think this has to do with addiction and things like relapse? This is a sermon series for them isn’t it? Well, as it turns out it has a lot to do with relapse. Think about it. The result of self-indulgence is resentment. And whenever I am experiencing resentment I have a desire to escape. If I’m an addict, this escape can be deadly. Cleaning the inside of the cup is about **taking the battle** to the very source—the heart?

Well, I recognize that this was a really full sermon. If you are interested in going a little deeper with this, please reach out to me. I’d be happy give you a copy of the sermon transcript or simply talk. I love this stuff. C’mon indulge me.