

James 3:13-18
Wisdom from Hell vs. Wisdom from Heaven, Part 4
May 21, 2006
Tom Pennington, Pastor
Countryside Bible Church

As human beings, we have amazing ability to ignore the obvious. That's reflected in a number of illustrations that you've probably heard. The one that comes immediately to mind is the room with an elephant in the middle and a group of people meandering about enjoying one another visiting and talking about a variety of things but no one mentioning or appearing to even notice that there is an elephant in the middle of the room. Well, I'm here to tell you this morning that there is an elephant in the middle of our culture, but all too often we refuse to acknowledge it or to talk about it or to bring it to light.

We live in a culture that is drunk with sexual idolatry. And this idol of the nation confronts us in a variety of ways and it comes to us through a variety of channels. There are any number of issues that we could use to address it this morning. The one that comes first to mind is, and one of the most common, is through television. I read some statistics this week that are frankly alarming. A. C. Neilson tells us that the average American watches more than four hours of television each day. That's twenty-eight hours a week or two months non-stop TV watching per year. Two months, twenty-four hours a day is what essentially the average American watches in television in a year's time. In a sixty-five-year life that means the average person will have spent nine years glued to the tube.

Unfortunately, not only is that amusement, you know the word amusement means without musing that is without thinking, it's entertainment it's not thinking at all. But it's more harmful than that because cable and satellite television have begun to stream into our homes programs that would never have been allowed on the air waves even twenty years ago. According to a foundation study done in November of 2005, the number of television sexual scenes has almost doubled since 1998. Seventy percent of all shows have some sexual content averaging five sexual scenes per hour. That means the average TV watcher watching four hours a day sees twenty sexual scenes a day, a hundred and forty a week or seven thousand in a year's time. It went on to record that the top twenty most popular shows among teens, seventy percent of those shows include sexual content, and almost half of them include explicit sexual behavior.

So certainly, one of the ways the idol of sexual idolatry is worshiped in our society is through television, but perhaps the greatest enemy to moral purity for most Christians and the major, perhaps we could even say the predominant contributor to the moral and sexual slide of our times, is what can be a very helpful tool and is to many of us but can also have a terribly dark side and that's the internet. By the end of 2004 there were four hundred and twenty million pages of pornography on the internet. And this is a problem that cuts across every aspect of society. Men for example, around sixty-five percent of men today are looking at pornography on the internet more than once a week. And this one shocked me frankly; it's becoming a much more prevalent problem among women. *Today's Christian Woman* magazine, in a recent pole, asked its readers about whether they use pornography. Thirty-four percent of the women responded that they had intentionally sought out pornography on the internet. According to the Neilson net ratings nearly one in three visitors to adult websites is female. Neilson estimated that 9.4 million women in the United States accessed pornography online in a one-month period a year ago. But not just men and women the problem goes to young people as well. In fact, this is alarming; the largest group of viewers of internet pornography are young people between the ages of 12 and 17.

There is an elephant standing in the middle of our culture, and we go on our merry way. You add to all those statistics a growing general acceptance across all strata of society, an acceptance of sexual sins and perversions as normal, things are joked about now on news radio, I heard the other day, that would not have been brought up as a topic of conversation twenty years ago. It's not that it didn't exist, I'm not longing for the good old days in that sense. It certainly existed, mankind has always been sinful, but it wasn't brought out into the light of day and joked about in settings like that. We have a society that is pursuing sexual sin and sexual idolatry with reckless abandon. It certainly makes fighting for our purity as Christians a difficult thing.

And yet I'm here to tell you this morning that however bad our culture is and it certainly is, reflected even the statistics that I just shared with you, it is not as bad as the Greek and Roman culture in Asia Minor in the first century. You see we don't have pagan temples in all of our communities where our co-workers and our friends and our family members go to consort with temple prostitutes supposedly as a good and wholesome expression of worship to that god. But those were exactly the circumstances along with all of the other debauchery that were part of the world into which those Jewish believers who at one time had sat under James' ministry in Jerusalem, in the Jerusalem church. That is the situation to which they had been scattered through persecution and found themselves in the middle of that kind of sin. Scattered into Asia Minor and James their former pastor now writes them a letter to deal with all of the issues that

they're facing. That's the context, the cultural context of the words that we examine this morning as we come to a section where we learn about purity, the kind of purity that true wisdom produces in our lives.

For those of you who are visiting with us this morning I invite you to turn, as our congregation knows, to James 3. We've been studying a paragraph, the end of James 3 for several weeks now, and we'll finish it up next Sunday, Lord willing. Let me read it to you again, James 3:13.

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

In this paragraph, James, as we've discovered over the last several weeks, James explains that in our world there are two kinds of wisdom. There is wisdom from God revealed in His Word. And then there is everything else that purports to be wisdom that finds itself in disagreement with God and that is not true wisdom it's not biblical wisdom it is in fact a false kind of wisdom. It is wisdom from hell itself.

Last week we looked at verses 14 - 16, or the last time we looked at this passage together. We looked at verses 14 - 16 and we saw several things there in James' analysis of hell's wisdom. That is the wisdom that originates not from God but from His enemies. In verse 14 we discovered the chief characteristics of hell's wisdom. You see whatever form human wisdom may take you can always recognize it by this; it always has two dominant characteristics in the human heart, bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. James says ransack your heart. If you think you are spiritually wise, or to use Paul's language, if you think you're spiritually mature, then see if you find a consistent pattern of bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. And we looked at those in length a couple weeks ago.

And if you find that those are consistently a part of who you are, then it doesn't matter how much you know, it doesn't matter how spiritual other people think you are. You in fact are not spiritually wise, you are not spiritually mature. It's a charade. And you have bought into the

counterfeit. Even if it has a religious look to it, even if other people think you are religious, you've bought into the counterfeit wisdom, the wisdom from hell itself.

He also shows us in verses 14 - 16, we looked at it together, not only the chief characteristics of hell's wisdom, but also of hell's wisdom rather, but also the origin or source of it. Verse 15, it is earthly, it is natural, that is unspiritual, and it is even demonic. That is all wisdom all that purports to be wisdom that is in opposition to what God reveals in His Word and our world is full of it, it is full of that false kind of wisdom. It is in fact from hell itself. It is spawned by demons. By those opposed to God. And verse 16, it has deadly results. Disorder, that refers to disputes, rebellion against authority, and every evil thing. You see jealousy and selfish ambition give energy to and express themselves in disputes and arguments and rebellion against God's authority, and the authority He's placed in our lives, and they express themselves in every imaginable kind of sin. That's hell's wisdom.

Today, we begin our look at heaven's wisdom, the wisdom from heaven. In verses 17 and 18 James' provides us here with the corresponding analysis of heaven's wisdom. We received an analysis of hell's wisdom. Now let's look at heaven's wisdom. And he essentially deals with the same issues that he dealt with related to the wisdom opposed to God. He begins in verse 17 with the source of heaven's wisdom. In verse 15 he describes hell's wisdom as that wisdom which is not coming down from above, so he begins verse 17 with a transition, "but the wisdom from above." He says now I'm going to tell you about what true Godly wisdom looks like and where it comes from. He says I want you to know that this wisdom comes down from above. By telling us that he wants us to know that this wisdom that he's going to talk about now has its source in God, and it comes to us as a gift of God's grace.

You remember 1:5, we're told that in the midst of trials; if any of us lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all generously. God gives wisdom. In verse 17 of James 1, "every good thing given and every perfect thing is from above". What do you mean James? It's coming down from the Father of lights. He says I want you to know the wisdom that I'm about to talk about it comes from God, it has its source in God, and He gives it as a gift of grace. I'm reminded of Solomon, you know, in 1 Kings 4:29, we're told God gave Solomon wisdom. Proverbs 2:6, "... the LORD gives wisdom from His mouth come knowledge and understanding." True wisdom is a gracious gift from God. And this gracious gift of wisdom, listen carefully always accompanies it always comes along with genuine saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Turn to Matthew 7 and listen to Christ Himself explain this. Matthew 7 as He concludes the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus ends with an illustration and in verse 24 of Matthew 7, you'll remember these words often taken out of their context, often distorted but you've heard them. "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them," [that is the one who truly believes in Me who truly becomes My disciple, who obeys Me] [He] may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock." [Jesus says you want to be wise? Here's where it starts. It starts by doing what I've told you to do, by becoming My disciple.]

Paul puts it this way in 1 Corinthians 1:24, "... To those who are ... called ..." [that is to those whom God has drawn out to Himself, those in whom God has produced repentance and faith, to those who are called, Paul says,] "Christ [is] ... the wisdom of God." That's how we receive this gift of wisdom. It comes along with our genuine faith in Christ. So, having identified the source, God Himself, James now moves on to describe it.

In verse 17 notice the chief characteristic of heaven's wisdom. You remember the chief characteristics of hell's wisdom: bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. But notice verse 17 identifies one chief characteristic of heaven's wisdom. "The wisdom that is truly from above," he says, "is first pure." Now isn't it interesting that this too is a kind of self-test. He's saying you think you're wise, verse 13, you think you're understanding then take this test. See if you consistently find bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart. If you find those then you're not spiritually wise, you're not spiritually mature, you've bought into some sort of counterfeit.

Here's another test. Ransack your heart, and see if there's purity there. Isn't it interesting that this is a self-test because only you know if these things reign really in your heart. You could put on a show. You could fool us all, but you've got to ask yourself what's going on in your heart. John Blanchard, a commentator on the book of James writes,

What James chooses as the fundamental criterion of wisdom is not an outward expression, but an inner experience. He examines our hearts before he looks at our hands. He is primarily concerned with what we are and only then with what we do.

Now when you look at the structure of verse 17, it's obvious that James really wants to punctuate, he intends to drive home this word "pure". He wants it to stand out. Look at the words on each side of it, in English as in Greek. First, "first pure". The word "first" does not mean chronologically first. The word literally means "chief, foremost, of first importance". And

then notice “then” which comes after the word pure. “Then” this word means “thereafter”, afterwards. You see James is going to list seven more qualities after this one. But he wants us to know that this word pure is the clearest test and the primary test to see if we’re truly genuinely spiritual people. If we’re genuinely biblically wise. James is obviously talking here about identifying the person who is wise, verse 13, he introduces that. So, when he says that wisdom is pure what he is saying is this, if you want to know whether or not you’re really wise then look in your heart for purity. Because if you’re really wise, you will find it characterized, your heart that is, by purity.

Now what does it mean to be pure? What exactly is this virtue? The Greek word that’s translated “pure” comes from the same root as the New Testament word for “holy”. Back in the Septuagint this word pure was used primarily to describe something that was free from ceremonial defilement. In other words, it was used of purity in the sense of being free from some defect that would keep you from coming into the presence of God or of something being used in the service of God. But that’s not its primary sense in the New Testament. When you come to the New Testament this word pure has two primary senses. And I think both of them are implied in what James is teaching us here. Both senses of this word pure are found in one text, and I want you to turn there, and over the next few minutes keep your finger there.

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 11. Second Corinthians 11:1, Paul is in the process of defending his apostleship, and he says you know bear with me while I do this. And here’s why he says I’m defending my apostleship not for my own namesake,

... [but] I am jealous for you with a Godly jealousy; for I [and here he uses an interesting picture. He sees himself as the one presenting the bride. He says I] have betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I may present you *as* a [and here’s our word,] pure virgin.

Now obviously Paul goes on in verse 3 to describe the fact that he’s talking about philosophies here, he’s talking about ideologies which would draw them away from the simplicity of their devotion to Christ. But what I want you to see is how he uses this word pure. He uses it in the context of moral and sexual purity. Here is a virgin coming to her wedding and I want to present her, you the Corinthian church, I want to present you as a pure virgin. That is morally and sexually free from sin. That’s the first sense in which this word pure is used. It is moral or sexual purity.

Richard Trench, in his book on synonyms of the New Testament, defines it this way. He says, “It is predominantly employed to express freedom from fleshly impurities which defile both body and spirit.” In other words, “pure or purity” is the exact polar opposite of, and you’ll recognize this Greek word “pornea”. It’s a word which includes all forms of sexual sin, any deviation from God’s sexual standard. Purity is the exact opposite of that. It has no taint of anything like that in it, no pollution whatsoever. This is of course characteristic of God Himself, this highest level of separation from sin of any kind. In Habakkuk 1:13 the prophet says to God, “*Your* eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You can not look on wickedness *with favor*.”

Listen, God has not one time laughed about things that are evil. God has not one time countenanced anything in His eternal mind that spots or stains His holy character. John in 1 John 1:5 says, “God is Light and in Him is no darkness no none at all.” There is nothing but blazing light in the presence of God, not one slight shadow of a stain on His character.

In 1 John 3:3 we read that God is pure, He uses this word. God is pure. He’s untainted by anything. When we come to faith in Christ, the Bible tells us that we are made new, that we become partakers in the divine life, 1 Peter 1. So, it shouldn’t surprise us, listen carefully, that since moral purity is present in God that it becomes, once we come to take of His life, it becomes characteristic even of new Christians. You remember the Beatitudes that Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount with; the Beatitudes sort of map the journey of the spiritual progress of the soul from sin to Christ. And it begins, of course, with blessed are the who? the poor in spirit. It begins with spiritual bankruptcy, blessed are those who come to the end of themselves. That’s where salvation begins. And then it moves on to those who mourn because of their sin, those who are made meek and humble because they realize they have nothing to plead before God and eventually come to Matthew 5:8 where it says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” This quality of purity is accomplished by a thorough cleansing from the guilt and stain of sin on the soul at the moment of salvation.

First Corinthians 6:11, a passage we’ll come back to in a few moments, Paul talks about the fact that we were all of these terrible things, all of this litany of sins he lists and he says, “but you were washed”. That’s what happens at salvation; we’re washed. In John 13:10 Jesus describes it as having a bath. He says to the disciples you’re all clean because you’ve had a bath, your souls have been bathed, and now all you need to do is to have your feet washed as you pick up the dirt of the world. This cleansing from the guilt and stain of sin on our souls is made possible by the death of Jesus Christ as the substitute of the believing sinner. In Titus 2, Titus 2:14 we read: “Jesus gave Himself for us to purify for Himself a people for His own possession.” Why did

Jesus die? Well, part of the picture of why He died was to purify us, to cleanse us. In fact, over a couple of pages in Hebrews 1, the writer of Hebrews in 1:3 says, he describes the work of Christ this way. "... When he had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...."

This is the work of Christ. Christ and His sacrifice cleanses the believer from the stain and filth of his sin and then the Holy Spirit of God begins to build true active purity into the life. That's one of the things James means when he says, "this wisdom is first pure." He means that it's free from moral and sexual defilement.

But there's a second sense, and back in 2 Corinthians 11 we find it there as well, verse 3, "But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity" [And here it is, it's a different form of our word.] "and purity of devotion to Christ."

What does this mean? What is this kind of purity? Well this is purity in a slightly narrower sense. It has the idea of a whole-hearted dedication to Christ. That's why the translators have supplied the word "devotion". That's the idea, a pure devotion to Jesus Christ, whole-hearted commitment. This is part of what it means to be pure.

But you know, in the end, those two senses moral and sexual purity and whole-hearted devotion to Christ are really opposite sides of the same coin; because if you are whole heartedly devoted to Jesus Christ you are going to avoid sexual sin. We're commanded everywhere to put off sexual sin to be morally pure. In Acts 15:20 as the Jerusalem council issues its edict it says to tell the Gentiles to abstain from "pornea", from all forms of sexual sin. Romans 13:13, "Let us behave properly as in the day, not in ... sexual promiscuity...." There's the acting out of the sexual sin, or "in sensuality" which has more to do with the mindset, the attitude.

First Corinthians 6:13, "the body is not for "pornea", but for the Lord." In 2 Corinthians 7:1 Paul writes that "having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 1 Thessalonians 4:3, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from "pornea" all forms of sexual sins."

So, this is clearly God's command for us, and yet in and of ourselves we do not have the capacity to obey these commands. In the words of the proverb, Proverbs 20:9, "Who can say, "I have cleansed my heart. I am pure from my sin?"

Or I'm reminded of Augustine's famous statement that so angered Pelagius in the fifth century in his confessions Augustine writes, "Give me the grace O Lord to do as You command, and command me to do what you will. O Holy God when Your commands are obeyed, when I obey Your commands, it is from You that we receive the power to obey them."

You see God must make us pure. But as we've learned in so many other areas, don't wait for God to zap you pure. God uses means. He does this, He accomplishes purity in our lives, through the use of means. So, what means does God use? You want to have a pure heart? You want to have a heart that's free from sexual sin? You want to have a heart that's free from wavering and devotion to Christ? A pure heart? Let me give you what the Scripture's teach. I went this week through and looked at those passages that talk about this and sort of put together a little list, pure practical ways to have a pure heart.

Number one; go to Christ for salvation. This is where it begins. In 1 Corinthians 6:9, Paul writes to the Corinthians about this very issue of their salvation, and he says,

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [And that word stands for the passive partner in a homosexual relationship.] nor homosexuals, [the active partner,] "nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you, but you were washed.... [You were set apart, you were declared righteous in the name of the Lord Jesus. Purity begins at the cross. It begins when you give up your rebellion against God and you come to Him crying out to be cleansed.]

There's a second step: it's run from it. Run from it. First Corinthians 6:18, "Flee pornea." Get away from it. Listen, do whatever you have to. Are you tempted by the internet? Then get rid of the internet. Are you tempted by television and things you watch on television? Get rid of the television. Is there a book store you drive past that tempts you? Then drive forty miles a different way to work. Jesus says you're to pluck out your eye your right eye if it offends you. He doesn't mean literally pluck out your eye. You know what Jesus is saying? Get radical in dealing with your sin. Don't think it's harmless for a minute, it'll destroy you. Flee. Run away.

Number three; think about, dwell on what is pure. Think about what is pure. Philippians 4:8, "If there's anything pure, dwell on these things." Listen, you know let's just be straightforward here. You cannot watch four hours of television a day in which you are exposed to twenty illicit

sexual relationships and expect to stay mentally and physically pure. You can't focus your mind on explicit materials and stay pure. Think about what is pure. Cut off whatever's feeding your temptation. Just cut it off, get rid of it. Do something else. But think about what's pure.

Number four on my little list here: Learn from others how to be pure. Learn from others. There's an interesting verse in Titus 2:5. There the older women are told to teach the younger women how to be pure. You see we can learn as well. Listen if you're an older person, if you're an older man or woman, and you have learned how to deal with sexual temptation and how to defeat it how to overcome it consistently in your life, then find a young person and teach them how. And if you're a young person, and you're struggling, or if you're someone who is struggling with this issue, find somebody that can help you. Lean on a Christian brother or sister. Explain to them what you're struggling with. Listen, sin, particularly sexual sin loves to keep a person alone. You'll find that nothing will be more helpful than finding someone who can pray with you, challenge you, to hold you accountable, who can teach you how to endure.

Number five: start thinking about eternity. First John 3:3, "... [He] who has this hope" [That is the hope of Christ's return] "... purifies himself as He is pure."

Listen, as sure as you will go to work tomorrow or school, or wherever it is you will go tomorrow, as sure as that happens, there is a day coming, and it may be very soon when you will stand before your Creator. Start thinking about that; start thinking about the reality that Christ will return as He's promised, and He will change you into His image, and ask Him to start that process now.

Next: and this seems so simple, but it's what the Scripture teaches, obey the truth. Obey what you know. First Peter 1:22, you purified your souls, how, by your obedience to the truth. How much time have you spent this week in the Word of God? How much time have you spent thinking about it, thinking about how to put it into practice? Spent as much time as you've read the newspaper or watched sports or read journals or whatever it is you do with your free time? Obey the truth.

Next: become active in the process of sanctification. Romans 13:13 says, "put on Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust." What does it mean to put on Christ? That's Paul's shorthand for the whole process of sanctification. He's saying listen; get active in the process of sanctification. Get up off the pew, and start acting and living like a Christian. If you have any question about this, if you weren't here over the last few months as I went through

the process of sanctification on Sunday nights, I urge you go on line and listen, get the CD's, learn how that process plays out in your life, how you can make progress. But get involved.

And finally: find your joy in God. I read this morning Psalm 16:11 of that Psalm is a great verse, listen to it again. "In Your presence God is fullness of joy and at Your right hand there are pleasures forever."

The only way you can overcome, and the only way I can overcome anything that draws us out away from God is to let God be our joy and satisfaction instead. I'm reminded of Augustine, the great church father. He was absolutely bound by sexual sin before his conversion. He describes his life before Christ as "a hissing cauldron of lust." He writes in his confessions,

"during all those years of rebellion where was my free will? What was the hidden secret place from which it was summoned in a moment so that I might bend my neck to Your easy yoke? How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose. Yes, it was a wonderful thing, I once feared to lose them, but it was such a sweet thing to be rid of them. How? You drove them from me, You who are the true, the sovereign joy. You drove them from me and took their place, You who are sweeter than all pleasure."

Listen, the only way to overcome whatever the idol of your heart is is to find your greater joy in God rather than in that idol. Anything else is a shell and pea game. This is the only real way to deal with the idols of the heart. This word "purity" ultimately brings us back to the cross of Jesus Christ. Because only the pure will see God. Hebrews 12:14, "pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord." And yet what is the reality of our condition, Isaiah 64:6, you've memorized it probably as a child, "all of us have become as an unclean thing and all our righteous deeds are as menstrual coverings." You understand it's not our sins that Isaiah is comparing to a menstrual covering, those are far worse. He says think for a moment about the most righteous thing you have ever done in your life. Think about that for a moment. What is the most righteous thing you think you have ever done? God says in My sight that act is as disgusting as the covering used during menstruation.

You see, you and I are like Pigpen in the Snoopy cartoon. We walk around, and everywhere we go we carry our own cloud of filth and mud and dust and dirt, and it's disgusting to God. What we desperately need is to be washed, to be cleansed, and here's the good news; God is eager to do just that. I read to you earlier 1 Corinthians 6 where he says, Paul goes through that list of

sins, and he says, “such were some of you; but you were washed.” God will do that if you’re willing to let go of your rebellion. If you’re willing to turn from your sin and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, God will do what no human could ever do. He will wash you and the Scripture uses the image, “white as snow”. No matter how dark-dyed your heart may be, there’s hope for you at the cross.

Believers, let me ask you, you’ve already repented of your sins, you’ve already embraced Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; have you soiled your purity? Is your soul still as pure as it was when you were originally cleansed by God? It can be again. Who better to teach us that than David, the man after God’s own heart, who in Psalm 51 finds himself in the terrible position of having this deep, dark stain on his soul, and he cries out to God in Psalm 51:7, “Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

... blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God.

God, I don’t need a band-aid. I need to be remade. Remember this is David as a Christian crying out to God for cleansing and forgiveness. This isn’t just a wishful prayer for David that may or may not happen. This is a promise from God. First John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” [That’s where we normally stop, you know what the rest of the verse says?] “and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

When we think about remembering the Lord’s death through the Lord’s Table, this cleansing is absolutely imperative because Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 11, don’t even think about coming to take of these elements while you are still embracing sin.

Take a moment to prepare your heart and confess your sin to the Lord, ask God to cleanse your heart as the men come.