

*Greetings / Introductions!*

*Remembrances of how the Lord used Godly men in my life!*

- *Pastor Gray – talking on a Wednesday night*
- *Bro. Moore – taking me with him to go preach in a nursing home (first time)*
  - *Preaching – jumping closer to Heaven!*
  - *Sleepy time tea talking about preaching*

*Challenge:* *These messages are not for someone else – they are for YOU*

- *It's very easy to think of the future as someday far away*
- *The moments of the now build the future of tomorrow*
- *Listen on purpose and respond in PARTICULAR (not tacit assent)*

*Points:* *Necessary Reminder, Not Robbery, No Reputation, Never Rebellion, Natural Recourse*

## **I. NECESSARY REMINDER**

### **A. Much was once made of self-control**

1. Not any more
  - a. People lose their minds at the slightest provocation now
  - b. Watch people scream at the top of their lungs should anyone DARE hold a differing political opinion
2. And I have no problem with the concept in terms of self-government
  - a. I do think we keep strict control of ourselves.
  - b. John Adams stated: “We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”
  - c. 1 Corinthians 9:27 – “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
  - d. That's a fearful thing.
3. Self-control divorced from the power of God does not exist
  - a. Unless God creates a new creature, self-control is a lie
  - b. The world's idea of self-control is merely a form of self-indulgence
  - c. It is a strange self-aggrandizement
  - d. It is a certain self-obsessed aestheticism

### **B. God continues to show me that I need control – Self-government!**

1. But you're a pastor!
2. Being a pastor comes in fourth place!

- a. After being a Father (desperately seeking God's leading)
    - b. After being a Husband (desperately seeking God's leading)
    - c. After being a Child of God! (Desperately seeking....)
  - 3. And there's the problem, at least with me.
    - a. Maybe you thought I was still talking about "self" control
    - b. But I need "Savior" control
    - c. I am often in God's way.
    - d. Hate to get all spiritual here at a church meeting of all places...
    - e. But I need to be found in the form of a servant
- C. Emptied of Self
- 1. You've probably heard of or seen the little book "The Calvary Road"
    - a. "As long as self is in control, God can do little with us;"
    - b. "Being broken is both God's work and ours. He brings His pressure to bear, but we have to make the choice."
    - c. Brokenness in daily experience is simply the response of humility to the conviction of God."
  - 2. The truth is...I'm a finite vessel
    - a. There's only so much room inside me
    - b. Every part I fill with myself is a part I prevent God from filling
    - c. And if I am completely filled up with only myself
    - d. Then I must naturally be devoid of the filling of God
  - 3. Philippians 2:5-11
    - a. He is our example
    - b. Let this mind be in you!

## II. NOT ROBBERY

- A. Being in the form of God (vs. 6)
- 1. I love the way the words work in the King James Bible
    - a. Notice vs. 7 "made" and vs. 6 "being"
    - b. He ALREADY existed as God
    - c. That was His state of being
    - d. John 8:58 – "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."
    - e. John 1:1 – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
    - f. Colossians 1:17 – "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
  - 2. Not only that, it was NOT ROBBERY to be equal with God
    - a. It was NORMAL. It was Proper. It was ACCEPTABLE.
    - b. Realize it WAS robbery for Satan to call himself equal with God.
  - 3. Think now about the 10 commandments
    - a. No Gods before Him. Make no idols. No graven images.
    - b. Why? It's ROBBERY!

## B. What is Robbery?

1. Gaining value forcibly at another's loss.
2. "In law, the forcible and felonious taking from the person of another any money or goods, putting him in fear, that is, by violence or by menaces of death or personal injury. robbery differs from theft, as it is a violent felonious taking from the person or presence of another; whereas theft is a felonious taking of goods privately from the person, dwelling, etc. of another. These words should not be confounded."  
Webster 1828
3. John 10:7 – "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. (8) All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them."

## C. Isn't it interesting to talk about sheep and robbers in the same passage?

1. I am a pastor but it is not "my" church
2. It is His. He paid for it. He receives glory in it.
3. I may be in jeopardy of "robbing" God by trying to make myself equal with Him where His sheep are concerned.

## III. NO REPUTATION

### A. He made Himself of no Reputation (vs. 7)

1. When His brethren told Jesus Christ to go up to the feast of Tabernacles in John 7, they wanted Him to make a name for Himself
  - a. They didn't even believe in Him
  - b. But boy they would certainly ride His coattails if they could
  - c. INSTEAD, Jesus went up SECRETLY to the feast
    - i. Of course, He went (He always obeyed the Law)
    - ii. Ironic that the Jews wanted to kill Him for being a law breaker sought Him at the feast because they knew He would always obey the Law!
2. The ONLY time Jesus put Himself in the public eye
  - a. His entry to Jerusalem on the foal of an ass (to fulfill scripture)
  - b. He came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father!
3. Martial Arts
  - a. Once upon a time I was in good shape
  - b. Glen was my teacher – He never used the name "master"
  - c. He said we are on this journey together
    - i. He said, it's like we are in a pitch-black cave
    - ii. I just happen to be a little ahead of you with a flashlight
    - iii. "That's a terrible metaphor for ministry!"
    - iv. Agreed – point being though:
      - "I" can't Save anyone
      - "I" can't fix anyone's life
      - But I can't point people to the only one who can!

B. Lifted up

1. John 12:32 – “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”
  - a. I’ve studied deep into the Greek on that verse
  - b. And I cannot find my name included anywhere
2. I fear myself
  - a. I must not be a distraction from the Lord
  - b. Or I will be a detraction from His Glory

**IV. NOT REBELLION**

A. He humbled Himself (vs. 8)

1. He always did the things that pleased the Father
  - a. He told us that in John 8:29
  - b. Wouldn’t it wonderful to be able to truthfully say that?
  - c. What would THAT mean to my ministry?
2. So often we take these two things separately
  - a. Let me encourage us to view them together as a whole
  - b. He ALWAYS did the things that pleased the Father (1)
  - c. He HUMBLed Himself (2)
  - d. So... we can conclude that Jesus, our example, demonstrated that a humble shepherd pleases the Father
3. These are the things where God has smote my heart
4. As I read Calvary Road again

B. I need brokenness to self

1. One of the rules we used in the HOPE addictions recovery program
2. Do not “glorify” the sins of the past
3. We say we can take you to the spot where the Lord saved us
  - a. And that’s good!
  - b. I know the where and the when and the how and the why
4. But I ALSO know exactly WHO
  - a. I know who I was when the Lord reached down from Heaven
  - b. And SAVED my wretched hopeless soul

C. Jesus paid it all!

1. ALL to Him I owe
2. Sin had left a crimson stain
3. HE washed it white as stone

**V. NO RECOURSE**

A. I often Need Reminding that HE thought it NOT Robbery

1. That He made Himself of No Reputation
2. That He suffered death with No Rebellion
3. And that leaves me with No Recourse

- B. I want to honor and glorify my Savior!
  - 1. I want Him to use me for His ministry
  - 2. I want Him to hear my prayers!
  - 3. Then I must get out of His way, and take on the form of a Servant
  - 4. Like He did.
- C. Isaiah 66:1-2 – “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? (2) For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.”