

CNL Season 2009

9.2 – 7 Steps to Discipleship pt 2

Transcription

We need to return to the garden, folks. And drawing neigh to God is a return to the garden. And then your life isn't always in a panic going, "Whoa, Lord, are you here today?" And you're not running through the trees, looking for the Lord. But a lot of us have forgotten where to walk with the Lord. And that's why tough times are so tough, because, we don't know where to find Him. Drawing neigh to God is something that is a survival tool for the disciple that is critical. Draw neigh to God. Point 4. Cleanse your hands. It says, sinners, cleanse your hands. Now, this was fascinating to me as I studied this, because it says, "Cleanse your hands." And the next point says, Purify my heart. Which you can fill 4 and 5 in there at the same time. Now why does he say cleanse your hands and then purify your heart. What's going on here? Why not just purify your heart because sin is a sin issue. I'll tell you why. Because one is a physical action, and the other is a spiritual action within. Now they are both spiritual, but one emphasizes the cleansing of the hands is a physical motion, the purifying of the heart is an inner motion. In other words, God is saying, you can't have Christianity without your action. Cleansing your hands, means to be washing yourself of the world, but you've got to actively do it. Young girl, if you're going to this guy's apartment and every time you go there you fall into the same sin, God says, be active. Don't just talk about your faith, quit going to the apartment. And buddy, if you keep hanging around those guys that they always happen to have an extra line of coke, or they've always got an extra toke that you can smoke, I mean to tell you something. If every time you hang around them you keep falling into it, you know what you need to do? Quit hanging around them!! In other words, act upon your faith. And we as Christians keep wanting to have an "experience with God." But we don't really want to have an experience with God. It is a living faith. That means you walk it, you talk it, you breathe it, you eat it, you think it, you move it, and your hands need to be washed of this world. Now, I want to tell you, I'm convinced that the construction that is here, comes with Psalm 26 think, talks about washing my hands in innocency. There are three things that a priest used to do to wash his hands. These are the three things, now listen. Actually he did six things, but there are three things that I picked out

that are really being emphasized here. First of all, I don't know if you've ever heard of the brazen altar, but it was a great big old brass fireplace, basically, like a camping grill, and they would take the bull, or whatever, and toss it up on this big grill and they would tie it to the four posts, which had horns on them, brass horns. And the priest would do this, and they would burn this thing to ashes, and this was the sacrifice that you would see in the bible. He had to wash his hands first, before the sacrifice, and then before he could walk around this brazen altar, he had to wash his hands again. And that meant that the sin, which had to slaughter this animal, and the sin which was on this animal, which was imputed as righteousness, that this sin was not the priests any more. He washed his hands of the whole affair. The second reason a priest washed his hands is before he prayed he'd wash his hands. I don't know if you know that, but a priest would wash his hands before he prayed. Which I think comes from I Timothy 2:8, talks about raising holy hands unto the Lord, the word holy means sanctified, which means set apart, or separate from the world, and so the priest would wash his hands before he would pray as a way of saying, "God, I want to remove myself from this world before I spend my time with you." Confession of sin. Now the third thing is something I'm going to have a blast telling you about. I'm only going to have about two minutes to tell you, but in researching a book, I came across a Hebraic tradition that is fascinating, from the priestly system, and this is what it is. And I think it's prophetic, I'm positive. I don't know any theologians if they've written it down, but it was an act of prophecy that a gentile did, in the New Testament, that told about who Christ was before anybody really knew who he was. But, there was a place where the high priest, if somebody was murdered in Israel, and they couldn't find the guilty party, justice had to be done. In other words, to the Jew, when a murder is committed, if we don't find somebody to pay for this sin, by hanging him or stoning him for what they've done, we still have this murder that's outstanding. So they would take a red heifer, and they would decapitate this red heifer, so there was no possibility of life in it. They would now lay the corpse of this red heifer down, this bull, and they would wash their hands over it, letting the water drip on it, and they would shake their hands over this red heifer, and stand back and say, "We have nothing to do with the sin of this murder. It's laid upon this red heifer. But we're innocent of it." Now, what's interesting about the heifer, if you study prophecy, is it symbolizes

Christ. Because a red heifer would be burned to the point of just ashes. They would then take those ashes and mix them with water. They would go up at the end of this bridge which went over the Kidron Valley, and up on the Mount of Olives, and they would sprinkle this water toward Jerusalem, and they would symbolize the forgiveness of the people's sins. Now listen to this, this is so cool. So the heifer symbolized Christ, and the ashes spread with the water, which symbolizes the Holy Spirit, showed the forgiveness of Israel's sins, and the murder of the innocent bullock.

Now listen to this, the murder of the innocent bullock. Do you remember a Gentile, hours before Christ was crucified, that brought a bowl out? And he put his hands in it, and he said, "I have nothing to do with the murder of this man." His name was Pontius Pilate. And studying history, it's very clear that this was not a Roman tradition. And the words that Pontius Pilate used, now this is cool. The words that Pontius Pilate used as he washed his hands in ablution that day, were the words of the high priest when he washed his hands over the bullock. The bullock which was to take the sins of the people away, and the priest would say, "You're murdering the innocent animal. We have nothing to do with it. But this innocent animal is paying for the sins of Israel." And how ironic, as he washed his hands in reference to Christ, and shook his hands, he was without knowing it, saying, "You're murdering this innocent one, who is going to take the sins of Israel away." Isn't that incredible. A Gentile prophetically uttered words which stated that Jesus was the bullock, the one who was going to take away the sins of His people. That's what hand washing symbolizes, it's a sanctification, the setting apart. It's an awesome thing, it's an awesome thing. A wonderful study.

You've got to be active in your faith. Let me just tell you, William Gladstone, let me just tell you this story very quickly. I don't know if you know who William Gladstone is, brilliant author, many years ago. Anyway, he writes about one day he came across this little girl. She's about nine years old and she lived in the area near him. And she was a little prayer warrior, she just loved to pray. She loved to pray, she believed God would do everything she prayed for. So every time he saw her he's day, "How are things going?" "Oh, I'm praying about this and that." Well one day, he saw her and she seemed a little concerned. He goes, "What's wrong?" And she goes, "Well, I'm really praying really hard right now for my brother, and for this trap he's building." He goes, "What kind of trap is it?" She goes, "It's a trap to catch birds, and I don't want this trap to work. My prayer is God don't let this trap work, because if he catches those

birds, they'll be in captivity, and I love birds, and I don't want to see these birds in this captivity." And he goes, "Well, you just keep on praying then." So she was praying every day that that trap wouldn't catch birds, that that trap wouldn't catch birds. Well about two weeks later, he came by and he was near the house, and he was talking and ministering to some people there, and there was the little girl, and she was just beaming. She was just grinning from ear to ear. He says, "Hey, honey, how are you doing?" She says, "I am doing absolutely great! !" He says, "What's going on?" She goes, "I know that the Lord has answered my prayers that that trap can't catch birds." He says, "Well how's that?" She goes, "Well, cause I just kicked my brother's trap to pieces. That's what you call prayer plus action. (audience laughs)

God is saying, "You know, you want to deal with this traps in your life? Well what are you really doing to deal with it?" Are you just saying, "God, help me stop?" Or are you saying, "I'm going to act upon the knowledge that I should stop." Now do you all follow? And God is, that's why he's saying wash the hands as well as the heart. Number 5, Purify my heart. And it actually says in the verse, of double mindedness. That's being double- minded. In other words, have you turned to the Lord but you kind of keep your foot still in the door of sin? In other words, like, you're not living there but you don't want to totally close the door, because something really good might come along. (audience laughs) Come on, you know what I'm talking about. Don't stare at me like, "What's he talking about? Must be those sinners that understand this." You know what I'm talking about, you kind of keep your foot in sin. And you know, as you're going along with the Lord, double mindedness, you kind of drawn into that for a while, and you enjoy it, but then you kind of go back to the Lord, but then you just keep your foot there just in case something good comes along, and then you kind of go in there, and then you come back out. And you're kind of living this casual life with your foot in the door. And what happens when you've just got one foot, you think, "I'm walking with the Lord." You're really not walking with the Lord. You're kind of hobbling with the Lord, aren't you? Cause your foot's got to stay in the door in case you want to go back and visit. Now come on, anybody here ever done it, just gone and come back and visit? And what happens is when you walk like that, you're going to kind of be walking like this {gesture}. (audience laughs) You're

not really going to go anywhere, cause your foot's still in the door! (audience claps) Amen? God is saying, "Get your foot out of the door." When you commit, commit entirely. Go all the way with the Lord. Don't keep your foot in the door, because that's a trap. Reminds me of a story about a fellow who was a farmer. He lived on this farm for 35 years. He was bored with this farm. Every time he went into town he complained about his farm. It was a pretty good farm but he just complained about it 24 hours a day. He wanted "something more." Have you ever done that in your Christian walk? You're kind of keeping the foot there, cause, "You know, Lord, you've got to understand there might just be something more. I mean, I just need a little more." So what he did is he called a Realtor and he says, "I'm going to sell my farm. I'm looking for something more than this farm." So the Realtor says, "Okay." He comes out and takes a photograph of it, and he says, "Fill out this piece of paper, and fill out all the attributes of this farm so that when we sell it, we can identify more about it." So this is what he typed, he says, "Okay, it's ideal location, modern equipment, healthy stock." So he's helping to sell this thing. "Acres of fertile ground, beautiful rolling hills, etc." And he gives it to the Realtor, and says, "Okay, put that in your listing." Well, the next day, the Realtor, before he sticks it in the multiple listing book, that this one had photographs and everything else, he faxes the ad back to the farmer just to confirm that it's all correct. The farmer sits down and he reads that listing. Rolling hills, etc. etc., and he suddenly picks up the phone and he yells into the phone at the Realtor, "Hold everything, hold the presses, I've changed my mind. I'm not going to sell. I've been looking for a place like that all my life!" And what we do with the Lord is we're always looking for a little something more. But if you just stand back long enough and look at the grace of God in your life. Look at the Son of God who came and gave His life for you. Look at the hope that He gave you. Look at the new life He gave you. Look at the forgiveness He gave you. Look at the power that He gave you. Look at the vision that He gave you. This is the someplace more. This is the best that there is. (audience claps) What Christ has done is the best. You can take your foot out now. I'll guarantee you, there will never be anything better than what God gives to you. Nothing's better than a relationship with Him. Take the foot out of the door. Purify my heart. Number 6, Be afflicted, and mourn. Be afflicted and mourn. It's kind of weird, you know, James, you're going along here and you're giving us encouragement and suddenly you go, "Be afflicted, and mourn." What kind of talk is this, be afflicted and mourn? I'll tell you what it

is. James is saying, "You know what, we kind of get casual about our sin. We shouldn't be. We shouldn't be casual." If you would today, be driving a car, I know a young man this happened to when he was about to go to college, he was going on a scholarship, and he drove over a little three year old girl, as he was making deliveries one day, and he killed this three year old child. It devastated him. And he kept re-running it, it's like the parent who's child drowns in the lake, they turn away from the child as they're swimming for one second, and they turn back, and they can't find the child. They dive in frantically and finally when they find the body, the child has died, and the mother runs over in her mind, "If only I had... If only I had... If only I had kept my eyes on her. If only I had put her in more shallow water. If only I... ." And you run through that. Can't you imagine, for 20 years that moment never leaves. And the mourning never stops. Can you imagine, if you hit that three year old child, would you not still be mourning at times. Would it not just sweep over you. "If only I'd been going slower. If only I'd been looking." Are you all with me? Mourning. And you know what he's saying here? He's says, "If you want to live a life of power where you're not sucked into sin, it's got to stop being so casual." It's time to mourn about sin. It is time to mourn over the sin. Let me just tell you folks, he's saying go to the foot of the cross and look up at the cross. And look at the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the only innocent one, who's writhing on this cross, and understand, it's not the Jews who killed Jesus, and it's not the Romans who killed Jesus. You killed Jesus. I killed Jesus with our sins. And today James is saying, "Look at Him. Go to the foot of the cross. Deal with it. Wake up. Go and look at Him as He writhes on the cross. And every sin you commit, flashes through time and hits Him and He writhes again, every sin, because He has to pay for them. One at a time, billions upon billions. And the eternity of it's punishment. Every single sin of every time you sin. Stand at the foot of the cross. Learn to mourn as you look up as the innocent one suffers. Don't be so casual. Every single sin, and it hits Him on the cross. Two thousand years ago, He paid for the sin you did yesterday. He sensed it, He saw it, He knew it, He felt it. That's not an exaggeration, the word of God is clear. And James says, not because Jesus was his half-brother, James says, "Mourn your sin." Be afflicted for a moment, relate to the cost of it. Yeah, when Jesus died on the cross we celebrate it, don't we? Party time, we're forgiven. But the cross wasn't party time for Jesus. It was the most horrific suffering and penalty for eternal sin that has

ever occurred. And James says, wouldn't you mourn a three year old child you hit? Wouldn't it eat upon you that the innocent suffered? Well the innocent suffers every day that you sin. The innocent has suffered. Mourn. Show that you care. If you love Him, you'll mourn Him. Because you drove the nails into His wrists and His feet with your sin. It's a very sobering verse. Last point, Number 7, and then we close. I think a lot of this has to do, not only with the foot in the door, but it reminds me of a pastor who once said a man had come forward in his service. And the man was so overwrought with guilt from sin in his life that the man just began to weep, and he got a little mixed up with what he was saying. He says, "Pastor, pastor, I'm heartbroken because my sin is full of life." He goes, "I mean my life is full of sin." But the pastor said the first words that came out that man's mouth really best said what was wrong with the church. Our sin is full of life. Have you been feeding your sin lately? If you're feeding it, if you don't starve it. It will be full of life. Number 7. The last directive he gives for success in the Christian walk is Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord. And the good news is, He will lift you up. Isn't that great? Praise the Lord for this last verse. It wasn't just mourn and be afflicted and he walked away from the passage. That would be like "whoa.. that could be a bummer." But that's simply to go to a greater purpose. If you mourn and are afflicted, then you can be humble enough to say, "Lord, I don't deserve this grace. I'm not going to blame others for my sin. I'm going to deal with it with you." And that moment in time when you release it, he says, "When you're humble, He'll lift you up." God wants to lift you up. He want you to have joy in life. He wants you to have victory. He wants you to have blessing. But those windows of blessings, they shut as long as you're prideful. And the word of God is very clear, James 4:4-6 says, "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." Now listen. If you're prideful God will resist you. You talk about resisting evil. Well God says, "I'm going to resist you." Now you're getting the wrong guy on the other side of the fight if you want to fight with God. That's not a wise choice. And He says, "If you're prideful, I'll resist you." But He said, "If you're humble, I'll lift you up." God wants us to have the joy of our salvation. He wants us to prosper in this life. But He won't do it for a prideful person, because then that prideful person would do the wrong thing with what He gives him. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He will pick you up. I think King David, he comes to my mind. I remember once in a debate, with a guy who called himself an agnostic. And he goes, "Yeah, but look at the bible, it can't be inspired, look at

all the rotten stuff in it.” But he said, “Look at David. He’s got all this dirty stuff in the bible, that can’t be inspired.” I said, “Well first of all, the word of God is inspired, that means it’s totally true, so what’s being told here is totally true. That’s really what happened. And number two, I really think it’s inspired because God doesn’t only put in the good stuff. He tells it all. He’s unafraid to tell it all. You know why? Because He’s a big enough God to handle it all.” And King David, I thought to myself, killed Uriah. He killed the godliest man in his army. He slept with his neighbors wife. He committed murder. His grandmother was a prostitute. But why does God love the murderer, why does God love the adulterer, why does God love the prostitute? You know why? Because all of them had this last character trait. They were humble. David didn’t say, “Hey, it’s not my fault, God. I opened up the window and she’s standing right there taking a bath on the roof. Not my fault. She shouldn’t have been doing that. Normal people don’t bathe on the roof” He could have had a 30 minute argument with God. He could have blamed her. Rahab could have said, “It’s not my fault, that’s the way our culture is! I had to prostitute myself, and blah blab blab.” You know what happened, though? David, when he saw his sin, instead of saying to God, “Well, I’m so proud, I didn’t do it.” He said, “Oh forgive me, God, for I, not my neighbor, I’m not dealing with them, that’s their business. I have sinned.” And he prayed prayer, “Create in me a clean heart, oh God. And renew a right spirit in me. Cast me not away from thy presence, oh Lord. And take not thy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of my salvation. Renew a right spirit. Renew a right spirit. Make me the man you want me to be.” At that point, God not only gave him mercy, but two chapters later, called him a man after His own heart. Do you understand? There are windows of opportunity in your life, closing story, and then we’ll pray. There are windows of opportunity in your life that are opening and shutting, and you don’t even see them. Do you know why? Because pride stands in the way. Maybe windows of opportunity with friends. I know people that have for 20 years been fighting each other. Should have been best friends. Some stupid incident, and they’ve been arguing for 20 years. They won’t even talk to each other. And all the windows of opportunity of fellowship and sweet friendship are gone. Are you all with me? You know what that’s like. Maybe with a child, bitterness occurred and so that pride got in the way and the windows of opportunity to have a wonderful loving time. The years passed, and one person dies, and it’s all too late. In 1217, Marco Polo’s father was in China, and the emperor’s name was Kublai Khan, but he at that time ruled

all of China and India. I mean, this one man, this is one of the only times that a single individual ruled continents that size. And Kublai Khan was talking with Marco Polo's father. Marco Polo being that great discoverer, and he was a world traveler, and he's the one who brought noodles to Italy, and that's where spaghetti comes from, was a Chinese dish. Anyway, Marco Polo's dad was there and was talking about Christ. He was a born again believer. And Kublai Khan sat there, and you have Confucianism, and you have all these different Asian cultic rituals and you have Buddhism, you had all these idolatries. And week after week, Kublai Khan listened to Marco Polo's father talk about Christ. And after several weeks, asking tons of questions, he goes, "You know what. That's what my nation needs. We need this Christ." He says, "I tell you what you do, you go back to your nation, and you send your, I'll pay for it, you send your top 100 bible scholars to our nation. And I will go to my people and tell them to throw away their idols, burn their idols, burn their images. Get away from their false cultic religions, and I will have those 100 men in the 100 largest cities, and I will tell my people study the Christian faith and get to know this Christ." Marco Polo's father went back to England, and then down to Italy, and the people thought it's not worth the hassle. "Those people are below us." Their pride got in the way.

Now I want you to just think about the 20th century. You've got India. Proliferation of nuclear weapons. You've got Branhamism, and Hinduism, and all these cultic religions. You've got women who are being lit on fire by the tens of thousands of a year in the streets and burned to death, because the husbands don't want to go to the trouble to divorce them, so they kill them by lighting them on fire. Now I want you to think about the cult where cows are walking the street while children starve to death next to the cow, and they can't touch the cow, because they worship the cow as an ancestor. I want you to think of communist China. A hegemonious, expansionist, colonialist, brutal power that has a hatred of Christianity. Murders the newborn children, up to a year old. People drown their own children because the children are female, and they know that in that culture, the child that's female is not going to be wanted. You look at this India and China, that at one time Kublai Khan said, "Send us Jesus!", and nobody came. The window of opportunity closed. Thirty years later, a couple of missionaries finally went, and you know what? It was too late. The window of opportunity was closed. Because of pride. Now listen very carefully today as we close out. This all goes back to submit yourself to God. You know why you and I don't submit at times? We're too proud to admit we need

it. Our pride stands in the way, and you know what's happening in your life, and you don't even know it? You're walking through life, in charge of your life, you think you're in charge of your life, and these windows are opening and closing, and you don't even see them. Your pride stands in the way. And blessings that God would pour upon you, blessings he would pour upon your family. A relationship you could have with Him. Power that you could have with Him. A vision within the spiritual things that you could have with Him. And the ability to conquer in society. You know what? You're missing them all. You know why? Your pride stands in the way. Today, look at these seven steps. You want to have victory getting out of the quicksand of the life that is sucking you under and killing you. You're going to have to start with submitting to God. And if you look at the seven points, they're extremely simple. I mean, it's not like rocket science. It's amazing how simple the word of God is taught.

Number 1, Submit to God. Read these points with me.

1. Submit to God.
2. Resist the devil.
3. Draw near.
4. Cleanse your hands
5. Purify my heart.
6. Be afflicted and mourn.
7. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord.

I want to tell you. Somewhere there may be a weakness in one of those points. Maybe six or seven of those points there may be a weakness. Well let me tell you. You come to the place, you reconcile with God, and get those points right in your life, and I will guarantee, you will live in power as you walk again with the Lord in the garden. Wouldn't that be cool to walk in the garden with Jesus? And it comes down to the prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, oh Lord, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, Oh Lord, and take not Thy spirit from me, but restore unto me the joy of my salvation. Make the right spirit, a correct spirit within me."

Today, if you're ready to do that, you're ready to live in power. Amen? Let's close in prayer. Father God in Jesus Name we thank you that you are a God who loves your children. You're not just standing up there as a judge, you are standing there as a father who loves His children. Father we confess at times that we have put our foot in the door and at times we don't want to drag it out. Forgive us Father, we simply haven't submitted to give you those areas. But all over this audience today, Father I know that you have touched hearts. You touched my heart as I prepared this study, Father. There are those areas of submission that we need to give to you, to have the power that you have promised to us. To have the understanding and the joy of walking with you. While your heads are bowed, I want to give you a challenge. You may have walked in here today and you look at these points to grow as a disciple but you are very realistically saying "I don't even know this Jesus, I have not been born again and I don't even know that I will spend eternity with God. How can I be a disciple? As we've said before if today you cannot say, if you were to die right now and go to the Gates of Heaven and God were to say "Why should I let you in?" If you couldn't say in a single sentence why, then you had better confess Him as Lord and Savior today because you can know why He should let you in. It's going to be because of the work of Jesus Christ, He paid for your sins and you can know Him as Lord and Savior today. The Lord will then open up those gates and you'll go into His presence and spend eternity with Him forever and forever and forever. And also on this planet you will have victory and power in your life. But you will not have it until you confess Him as Lord and Savior. So today if you walked in here and you haven't been a disciple it's because you haven't submitted to Him as Lord and you've never accepted the forgiveness of your sins, you can do it today. It's in a simple prayer and you'll have eternity guaranteed in front of you. Today if you want to be a disciple of Christ but also most importantly you want to confess Him as Lord and Savior and to be forgiven of your sins, just raise your hand. God bless you, Lord bless you, This is an awesome day! God bless you. Lord bless you. God bless you all over there. He's a powerful God. God bless you, God bless you, Lord bless you. The revolution of the Kingdom is the only thing that lasts forever you don't to have to carry the burdens. I had a past that I had a lot of burden but God forgives them all. Today is the day of Salvation.....