

1 Boundary Lines

- Can anyone rescue us from ourselves?

2 Psalm 16

- LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, . . . (Psa 16:5–9 NIV)

3 Boundary Lines

- God gives us “boundaries,”
 - . . . but some of us have a harder time living within those boundaries than others do.
- What’s worse, even when we feel as if the “boundary lines have fallen in pleasant places,”
 - . . . we often have a self-destructive tendency to destroy a good thing.
- Just look at what prominent people in sports, politics and Hollywood have done,
 - . . . to take a good thing and totally trash it.

4 Good Boundary Lines

- What are some “good boundary lines?”
 - Born in a well-to-do family.
 - Born in a Christian family.
 - Multi-talented, good looking, with a great personality.
 - Smart, bright, and self-motivating
 - Attend good schools and are highly trained or educated.
 - Work for a great company and have a good boss.
 - Have a wonderful spouse and great children.
- So then why do so many people who have great “boundary lines” become self-destructive?

5 Self-Sabotage

- If you type the words, “self-sabotage” into a search engine, you’ll get more than 380,000 returns.
- You’ll also find, the Internet is filled with “life coaches” and “self-help gurus” who, for a fee, will seek to work with you to help you stop certain destructive behaviors that are keeping you from the following:
 - Finding a better job
 - Developing meaningful & happy relationships
 - Setting Long-term goals
 - Reduce the amount of stress in your daily routine
 - Maintain healthy self-esteem, and

- Generally . . . live a more productive life
- But truth be known, don't most of us from time to time need help fighting counterproductive behaviors?

6 The Reality

- But what we're talking about tonight is something more insidious.
- It is like what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 7,
 - For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? . . .
- In other words, I hate this thing, yet I will do it anyway.

7 Jesse James

- Not the outlaw, but Jesse James the motorcycle customizer, —who in 2005 married actress Sandra Bullock.
- Before Jesse was discovered by the Discovery Channel, he basically was a nobody motorcycle mechanic.
- But due to his interesting name and knack for customizing motorcycles, he meteoric rose to becoming a star on TV.

8 Jesse James

- But last year, Bullock learned that Jesse was having several extramarital affairs.
- She quickly divorced him and walked away.
- So this lowly mechanic who had risen to fame, fortune, and the envy of others now was despised by everyone.
- The questions were,
 - what was he thinking? and
 - why did he do such a destructive thing?

9 The Most Hated

10 Jesse's Reply

- He said, he still loved Sandra.
- But admits, he threw away what was a “pretty amazing life.”
- He added, “When I was doing it, I knew it was horrible. It made me feel horrible. I knew I would get caught eventually. I think I even wanted to get caught.”
- He further said, “the most hurt Sandra has every had was caused by the person who was supposed to protect her.”
- However, with all the questioning, Jesse never could give a coherent reason why he betrayed her.

11 The Small things

- However, it is not always the rich and famous or the big things that can cause hurt and self-sabotage our lives.
 - We say negative stuff about someone and it comes back like a boomerang.
 - We overcommit because we can't say no.
 - We're willing to enable abusive relationships.
 - We strongly fear responsibility and commitment, so we unconsciously booby trap any success.

12

- We have a fixed income, but wildly unfixed spending habits.
- We make rash decisions, even though we know we should think more carefully.
- We call in to work sick, but we're feeling fine.
- We should attend class and do our homework, but don't.
- We procrastinate, and it kills us every time.
- We insist on spending time with the wrong friends.
- And so on.

13 Psalm 16

- In Psalm 16, however, the psalmist is using boundary lines metaphorically, to say his life is marked by good fortune and destiny in God that can't be taken away because God himself holds it fast.
- But if the psalmist is like many people, he won't leave well enough alone.
- The boundary lines may have fallen for him in pleasant places, but sooner or later, he'll grow dissatisfied with the status quo of the settled life and go looking for what's beyond the boundary lines, deliberately throwing a wrench into his life.
- It's self-sabotage, but it isn't unintentional.

14 Same Old Thing

- C.S. Lewis noted this in his book, *The Screwtape Letters*.
- He wrote the book as a series of letters between a master devil named Screwtape and his nephew Wormwood, an apprentice devil.
- “If they must be Christians, let them at least be Christians with a difference. Substitute for the faith itself some Fashion with a Christian coloring. Work on their horror of the Same Old Thing.”

15 Same Old Thing

- According to Screwtape, “The horror of the Same Old Thing is one of the most valuable passions we have produced in the human heart – an endless source of heresies in religion, folly in counsel, infidelity in marriage and inconstancy in friendship.”

- Lewis has put truth in Screwtape's words. Humans desire both newness and permanence. They want some things to remain reliably the same, but in the course of their lives they also want change.
- For us who follow Jesus, this means we should examine any urge to introduce serious change into our lives.
- Yes the urge to change might be a result of God's calling.
- Nevertheless, urges to change may simply be a desire for novelty or even the nudge of a sinful or selfish willfulness.

16 Stepping Over

- Stepping over the boundary lines will hurt someone, even if it doesn't hurt you.
- Therefore, we should examine seriously – and prayerfully – every urge to rip apart something significant in our lives and start over.
- If God is calling us, we should listen. But if the yen to change is simply change for its own sake, we should count the cost and move cautiously.

17 Wild Urges

- Karen Horney, a pioneering psychoanalyst of the 20th century, wrote: "Fortunately, analysis is not the only way to resolve inner conflicts. Life itself remains a very effective therapist."
- That means when we examine the roots of our wild urges to introduce abrupt, irrational change into our lives . . .we may discover that a more honest facing of our personal situation is a better cure for what's troubling us than is throwing everything out and making new arrangements.
- In other words, Dr. Horney is saying we need to look first look inside ourselves first when we feel the urge to make drastic changes in our lives.

18 Testing our Urges

- When we're aware of such urges, sometimes God's call is involved and sometimes it is not.
- So how can we discern the root or cause of those urges?
 - pray about a matter,
 - check your ideas against the wisdom of a Christian congregation,
 - seek the counsel of friends who are both spiritually sensitive and spiritually sensible, and
 - weigh the potential impact of our action on others.
- The grass may indeed be greener on the other side, but, let us take off the “green tinted” sunglasses first.

19 Observation

- We who are Pentecostals value the ministry and operation of God's Spirit.
- So much so, we often take risk for the sake of being obedient to God's voice.
- But is that what the Apostle Paul means by "walking in the Spirit?"
- For what I gather from the Bible, "walking" or "living" by the Spirit is simply obeying our conscience—the place where God has written His law.
- But we have to be careful. Following our heart can be corrupted by the deceitfulness of sin where the voice we are actually following may be from our fears, anxieties, or fleshly desires—fueled by unsound doctrines or heretical teachings.
- This is why we need to read the Bible. The Bible will force us to judge our motives and will heal those areas of our heart that have become wounded, hurt, or calloused.

20 Source of trouble

- A lot of the trouble we have in life is self-inflicted.
- Like Jesse James we do something we know is wrong and ignore that "quite still voice" speaking to us.
- Then we're shocked at the outcome and start to ask.
 - Why did I go into so much debt?
 - Why did I let myself go to that man's apartment?
 - Why didn't I study for that examine?
 - Why did I leave home and turn my back on my wife, husband, or family?
 - Why didn't I eat more sensibly and exercise?
 - Why did I hold on to bitterness and resentment?
 - Why did I think the grass was greener on the other side?
- Either we are still under the power of sin, or we are freed from sin, but not living as God intended and not honoring the Spirit's voice in our heart.

21 Conclusion

- Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked. (Prov 25:26 NIV)
- A good person who compromises with the wicked is likened unto a "polluted well."
 - They smell
 - They taste awful
 - They contain illness and/or death
- Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. (Prov 4:23 NIV)
- Therefore, let us not listen to the voice of the world or even our flesh, but let us keep in step with the Spirit, for with Him there are "boundary lines in pleasant places."

22 Closing

•And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Eph 4:30-32 NIV)