

# Sunday School Address - Penknife (Quality: Good)

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Each time I undertake this, I won't say task, it's a privilege. I have very many thoughts about it, many things which come into my mind, many difficulties.
- The fact that I'm getting seemingly rather older, and yet I look at the class today, and in one way, it's perhaps a little less difficult than in other things.
- Most of you are grown up enough, all of you are grown up enough, that I do not feel that I should be speaking above anybody's heads. And that is quite a help.
- I want first to ask you a question. When I began to think about speaking to you, I did quite a lot of thought and prayer on a quite different subject.
- And then one day, when I was working, the thought dropped into my mind. I needed a penknife. We all know what a penknife is.
- [ 1 : 09 ] And I suddenly thought of a penknife in the Bible. And I just wonder if anybody can tell me where a penknife is mentioned in the Word of God.
- It's only once the Word comes in the hold of the Scriptures. It's only once. So if you don't remember, I don't think it's anything too much to be ashamed of. But if I tell you what a penknife was, not is, it was what the scribe used.
- He used to have some feathers, quills. And to turn them into pens, he needed a knife. And so he had a penknife. And that's why the name was given to it. And he cut the end off obliquely, and then split it, and then he had a pen.
- And so it was a scribe's tool in the first place. Mine was an electrician's tool. It's in my pocket at the moment. Well worn.
- It never made a pen in its life. And it's done a lot of other work. Well, I shall have to tell you, if you look into the... You don't need to turn it up.
- [ 2 : 19 ] I'll read it to you. The prophecy of Jeremiah. And you remember the king that burnt the roll, called Jehoiachem.
- It tells us that he cut the roll with a penknife and threw it into the fire. And that is the only town we haven't mentioned. I want to look at a lot of penknives.
- I think I've got five to look at. And none of them are mentioned as penknives. Yet, when we look at them, we see exactly that spirit which was in the king.
- He desired to destroy the word of God. The prophet's words had been written and given to him.
- They were recognized. Some of the people with him recognized them and they pleaded with him not to. But, as somebody else has said, he would not listen. And he burnt the roll.
- [ 3 : 19 ] We need to think about it rather carefully. What did he do? He burnt a piece of paper. Go into your history.
- And think about the time that Tindale was sending his scriptures over to Britain. And the bishop bought them and burnt them.

And he thought what a good job he was doing. But he was providing the money that better ones could be printed. And so more came over. And the bishop didn't manage to burn all of those.

And they began to spread about the country. The word of God will not be destroyed by the wickedness of men. And the fact that we have it at this time proves it to us.

How many people throughout the ages, and we regret to say, even in this age, continue to try to destroy the word of God. And yet the word of God will not be destroyed.

[ 4 : 24 ] It is our own testimony. And remember, its own testimony is of God, which liveth and abideth forever. Now I want to look at it very simply.

And I need to try and keep my comments in each part rather brief. Yet, we have to look. Sometimes we see, comparing scripture with scripture, something that enhances an idea.

And as I thought of this pen knife destroying the scripture, another thought came into my mind. And I'll have to read it to you. It is like this.

David in the Psalms speaks of the tongue as a razor or a sword. And James in his epistle speaks of its evil.

And so we find there is a pen knife. And if I put it like this, don't misunderstand me. In each one of us, when we are left in our natures to speak against the scriptures.

[ 5 : 35 ] And remember that when we speak against the scriptures, we don't speak against the written word. We speak against God. It is that which comes into our hearts.

And it causes us to sin in just the same way as Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, sinned in those far off days before the captivity in Babylon.

Now I want to look at these five pen knives very briefly. The first pen knife is denial of the word of God.

And it's the first one in more senses than one. Where was the first sin? I expect you can all tell me that.

But the first sin was in the Garden of Eden. And how did it begin? You remember the serpent said to Eve, hath God said?

[ 6 : 36 ] And then Eve confirmed what God had said. And the reply was immediately given. Thou shalt not surely die. There was a denial of the word of God.

And, yes, it shows what the hearts of people are. If even Eve's, and she was freshly made from the hand of God, would begin to listen to that which was false more readily than that which was true.

Don't find too much fault with Eve. We need to search our own hearts about this. Don't we find it easy to listen to the things that are wrong rather than to listen to the things that are right?

But then to look at this denial, we have to find it like this. That whatever the devil might have said, he was proved wrong.

We do not find the word written of Eve. But we do find the word written of Adam. And the days of Adam were 930 years.

[ 7 : 46 ] And what follows? And he died. And we read elsewhere, sin entered into the world and death by sin. The word of God was proved.

It has been proved millions and millions of times since. Because we do not find anybody on the face of the earth that has lived contrary to the dicta that sin will bring death.

We all have to look back upon that which is past. And each one of us knows that we are only here for the time appointed.

And one old doctor I used to work for a long time ago, he used to say rather strangely, the only sure thing about life is death. And why is it?

Because sin has entered into the world and death by sin. It's a thought, isn't it? And we have to keep it solemn in this particular part.

[ 8 : 50 ] The sin, the penknife of denial. What did the dear Lord say? I want to finish each section with a text and some of them were solemn to think upon.

And he said, Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my father.

The second penknife I want to bring to you is dislike. And to keep it simple and short, we'll go back to Jehoiachin. And the word was read to him, he disliked it.

He had no, well, it upset him. He was a king. And there was a prophet saying his kingdom was to be overcome. And so he thought if he burnt the word, he would prevent it.

He didn't. The kingdom was overcome. All that Jeremiah had prophesied came to pass because it was, Thus saith the Lord.

[ 9 : 58 ] And it mattered not whether it was burnt or not. In fact, so far as the word was concerned, it was rewritten. You read in the following chapter that Baruch and Jeremiah got together and he wrote again all the words of the Lord.

And it said and added many more words. And so that prophecy of his was, yes, reaffirmed.

And it did become a blessing. Estrangements of the Lord. The Lord will overrule them for blessing. I like to look into the captivity.

And I see Daniel. He knew by the words to Jeremiah. Those words which were not acceptable to a lot of people. But were acceptable to Daniel.

A holy man, a good man. And yet Daniel, when he saw those words, It brought him into confession. And to prostrate himself before God.

[ 11 : 01 ] And to plead that the mercy of God might yet be fulfilled upon his nation. That there might be that restoration promised. We can also say that some of us have found a blessing in Jeremiah's prophecy.

I look back to a time when, in much need, the Lord spoke to me from it. He said, I have loved thee with an everlasting love. And therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.

And I thought of Jeremiah's prophecy. Not burned. Confirmed. The Lord in his grace will preserve his word. Whatever man should do.

Whether he likes it or dislikes it. And we have to look. My thoughts came like this. Let us humble ourselves in confession like Daniel.

And contrition. We may not like to look. We may dislike the thought that is given to us. The wages of sin is death. And if there is given to us confession and contrition.

[ 12 : 09 ] We may be able to come to the end of the text by the grace of God. And what does the word finish with? That the gift of God is eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Lord said, blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me. Offended in my word.

Offended in the word of God. Able to look upon its truth. And whether we dislike it or not. To bow before it.

Thirdly. I put the word like this. Disbelief. Simply because. I rather like. From my own memory.

To have a row of things I can remember. And unbelief would have been a better thought. A better expression. But I think you understand that if you look in your dictionaries.

- [ 13 : 13 ] The rendering is the same in both words. Yet. Look at it like this. Unbelief. It's a very busy penknife. And it is a penknife which.
- In a metaphorical sense is in each one of us. All by nature are unbelievers. All by nature are unbelievers.
- It's a solemn thought isn't it? We listen. I cannot remember the time when I did not hear. Outwardly the word of God.
- From my earliest days of being able to. Put interpretation on words. I've heard the word of God. I have a hope that I began to be a believer in my late teens.
- But. Before that it was only a matter of what I'd learnt. And. In the. Expression of it. I could not have said.
- [ 14 : 18 ] Not. In the depth of what I understand now. That I believed. I accepted the truth of it. I accepted. That it was true. That Christ Jesus came into the world.
- To save sinners. But I hadn't accepted. By the grace given. That I was a sinner. And needed that saving. There was something lacking.
- And this is nature. We do not understand the grace of God. Until God gives us his grace. So unbelief is a part of us all. Let us try to.
- Look at it a little more quickly. We can listen even to the words of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus said something. So wonderful.
- In his prayer to his father. He said. Thy word is truth. Do we need any further. Affirmation to our minds.
- [ 15 : 17 ] That the word of God is truth. When he who is the very truth himself. Declared it to be so. Thy word is truth. So our hearts.
- Need to be controlled. Whenever we look into the word of God. By the grace given. There will not be. Immediately.
- Which is in our natures. There's something to. Question it. We do it instinctively. We do it instinctively. It is.
- A hard thing. But until God is pleased to give us faith. To blunt the penknife. Of unbelief. We have that need.
- At all times. The need of the help of God. We have it. We have it. Even when he has given us faith. We have it. Even when he has given us faith. But until he has given us faith.
- [ 16 : 14 ] It is a need that will. Perhaps not be realized. But it will be very apparent. We shall find it like this. We look into the word of God. And. We.
- Perhaps shrug it off. We perhaps. Look at it. And. Well. Turn aside from it. Turn to something else. But. May the day come.
- When. That evil heart of unbelief. Will be. Taken from us. There is an awful example. In the word of God. I will tremble over it.
- I look at Balaam. You know. He was a prophet. And you know. When he prophesied. He. He was asked to. Bring a curse. Upon Israel.
- Before they came into the promised land. And. The Lord gave him a word to speak. And three times. Balaam had to bless Israel.
- [ 17 : 12 ] And then. How did we find that Balaam died. He was. With the people. Who were trying to frustrate. The thing. Which.
- God had shown. To him. And he died. With the enemies. Of the will of God. And oh. I thought. What a word it is.

For those of us. That try to speak the word of God. At times. And as we. Are enabled to. And sometimes feel to be helped to. We have to look. We have to look. Balaam was helped. He wasn't allowed to say.

What the king wanted him to say. He had to say. What God wanted him to say. And yet. It was only in his expression. And it was not in his heart.

In his soul. He was a speaker of the word of God. And not a partaker. What a dreadful thought it is. As I said. Especially for those of us.

[ 18 : 08 ] That have the responsibility. Laid upon us. To say sometimes. Speaking from the word. Not. Making the word. As the prophets were. Able to.

But speaking from the word. To say. Thus saith the Lord. And yet. How can we look at it. It. The word says. Take heed.

Lest there be in any of you. An evil heart of unbelief. Take heed. It's something to think about.

Something to pray about. An evil heart of unbelief. In departing from the living God. And say departing from the living God. And say departing from the living God. This seems strong language.

But let me tell you this. If we do this. To the word of God. Throw it away. We are departing from the living God. We do not need literally. To throw it away.

[ 19 : 07 ] It is when in our hearts. We discount it. Unbelief. Fourthly. A very solemn pen knife.

Awfully prevalent. The pen knife of disobedience. I found some of these things.

Search my heart. Very much. And as I looked upon this one. Let me read what I have written. Because I am running out of time. This pen knife is so subtle.

And so prevalent. Not a word needs to be spoken. Just a walk. Just a life. Which demonstrates. Manifests.

A disregard. To God's word. Whether it is the commandments. The precepts. The exhortations. Or even the gospel invitations.

[ 20 : 07 ] How many people in the word of God disobeyed. And we find there was chastisement for them. And sometimes we find it was worse than that.

They had the eternal wrath of God upon them. But oh. When there was chastisement. What a blessing it was. One of the prophets shows to us.

Jeremiah again. And he is speaking. The word of God. To the people of God. And he said. Ask for the old paths. And walk therein.

And what were the replies? Disobedience. We will not walk therein. And my friends. In the prayer just now.

There was a very. Necessary prayer prayed. I look back upon. The early teenage. And sometimes I felt just a little rested. In the house of God.

[ 21 : 11 ] And. I wondered if I would continue. In the mercy of God. I was made to continue. Not outwardly. But inwardly. And. How many of us.

Sometimes have this. Reply. We will not walk therein. It is not always. A going away. From chapel.

There is an awful lot of it. It is a no denomination. We will not walk therein. We give lip service. To the. Wonderful things. That are given to us. We listen to the word.

Which says. If ye love me. Keep my commandments. And do nothing about it. What a blessing it is. For your Sunday school. That you can look. On recent years.

And months. And even weeks. And see. When sometimes. The word of God. Has been. Yes. There have been those. Words. Given.

[ 22 : 09 ] Ask for the old paths. And walk therein. And then. There has been. That constraint. To walk therein. What a blessing. When obedience. Is given of God.

Rather than the disobedience. Which comes into our own hearts. May we all. My dad would have said. Suffer the word of exhortation. And yet.

We need to look. Just a little further. There was another thought. With those people. They said. We will not hearken. We will not listen.

No one heard. I remember the times. When. I've been in the chapel. And not listen. Other things have been in my mind. I have problems.

And difficulties. And everything would turn round. By the time the sermon had finished. I couldn't have really. Said much about it. Except what the text was. And.

[ 23 : 07 ] Yes. It wasn't. Shall we say. Deliberate. But not all sin. Is deliberate. Some of it. We could say.

It is a sin of omission. Rather than a sin of commission. It is a sin. Which. Shows. There is a lack of interest. A lack of desire. And. There is a lack of exercise.

And I must be guilty. I hope. I can say. In times past. Yet. There is the word. And there is a thought. That has been given upon it.

But we do see. God's mercy. I looked at one very wicked king. Of him. It is said. He made Jerusalem streets. To run with blood.

And yet. You look at. About halfway through his reign. The Lord dealt with him. It was Manasseh. And when we look. One of our hymns said.

[ 24 : 06 ] A Mary. O Manasseh's stains. Of sins as vile as they. But the Lord is merciful. The Lord is gracious. And sometimes the Lord.

In his grace. And mercy. And mercy towards his disobedient people. Will give to them. The spirit of obedience. Oh. Should we not all pray. For that spirit of obedience.

And yet. We need to finish again. On a solemn note. We have to find it like this. If the word spoken by angels. Was steadfast.

And every transgression. And disobedience. Received a just recompensive reward. How shall we escape. If we neglect. Neglect. So great salvation.

How shall we escape. If we neglect. Neglect. So great salvation. Oh. To pray for an exercise soul.

[ 25 : 05 ] Lastly. Something which came into my thoughts. And I couldn't leave it out. I thought of the. Awful.

Penknife. As dissension and disagreement. Now. I was not thinking of it personally. I remember. In my. Childhood. The things I used to listen to.

Yes. Sometimes I listened. And. One. Man. Was occasionally. Mentioned. Not very often from the pulpit. But in conversation.

By my dad. And he was called Voltaire. I don't know anything about Voltaire. I've never read any of his works. I only know that he was somebody. That was famous for his.

Atheism. He was a philosopher. And he wrote books which. Upheld philosophy. Over what he called. The.

[ 26 : 01 ] Bigotry of religion. When he came down to die. The last words. The last words. That he's reputed to have spoken. He wished he'd never been born.

His death was unhappy. He knew. That he was lacking. And. In that lack. There was. No. Opportunity.

There was no. Eleventh hour. 59th minute. Confession. And repentance for him. What an awful way. To come to the end. Of life's journey. An atheist.

Suddenly. And if I say converted. Suddenly. Brought into the realization. That atheism. Which had been. The tone of his life. Was something which was false.

Another man. Also. In my. Slightly later days. I was reading my bible. Yes. It did happen. In the barrack room one day.

[ 27 : 05 ] And. A chappy. I used to fly with. Came along. He said. Pete. I'll show you a book. Which will make you throw that one away. And I said. You'll have a job.

But he said. It's got by Tom Payne. And I said. Yes. It's called The Age of Reason. Have you read it? I said. No. He said. Well I dare you to. To bring it along.

He went to his room. And brought it along. And I read it. And I'm thankful to say. That even in those days. I had enough knowledge. Of the word of God. To be able to point out. Several of Tom Payne's arguments.

In their. Stupidity. Not just their falseness. And. I said. No. Let's have a challenge. I've read your book. You'll read mine.

He didn't accept it. He was a Scotsman. And. We'd always. I've read him. Because of Covenanters. The Scotsman. Were. You know.

[ 28 : 01 ] Fairly religious people. But. He rather upset my. Understanding. Neither would he. Accept my challenge. And. Then I heard of him. He also died.

In misery. That which he had. Written. Condemned him. And in his condemnation. I am not aware. That he ever found. Any repentance.

But he did find the misery. And then. The third one. I have to mention. A man of Kent. And. I objected. When. One of the. One of the. Houses.

At Bedleston School. Was called Darwin House. However. They. Picked out famous names. From Kent. And. He was famous. I think. Notorious is a better word. But.

Oh. Just think. That how much. This awful. Pen knife. Yes. What used to be called. Darwinism. Nowadays. We call it. The theory.

[ 28 : 58 ] Of evolution. What awful havoc. It was wrought. In the minds of men. Regarding the word of God. I hope. That's. That's. The way. The way.

The way. The way. The way. The way. The way. The way. I hope. That some of you. Read those. Beautiful books. On creation.

As against it. And you see. Extracts. From them. Sometimes in the companion. And quite often. In cheery words. And as you look at them. You see. How false.

That theory is. How utterly. Unprovable. And. How deadly. Because. It has turned. Many.

And. Oh. Just think. What the Lord said. Those. That offend. Against. These little ones. It were better. For them. That a millstone.

[ 29 : 53 ] Were hanged. About their neck. And they were cast. Into the depths. Of the sea. Oh. This awful. Pen knife. Of. Disagreement. With the word.

Of God. Published. And so prevalent. Even. What an awful thing. It is. When. Take such a hold. On the minds. People. Now.

I must very briefly. Bring it to an end. Darwin. Is not alone. In his accountability. Before God. But he was. A roll cutter. Wasn't he? He cut the word of God.

He tried to cut. Genesis out of it. The first part of Genesis. Out of it. And. Has done much. To offend. Against the word of God. The word says.

Let. God. Be true. And every man. A liar. And then. The Lord said. Many false prophets.

[ 30 : 50 ] Shall arise. And shall deceive many. May we. Endure. To the end. Because he says. The same. Shall be saved.

Oh. To have the faith. That was given. To the soul. The soul. The soul. In. Psalm 144. I. Especially. Like the 11th.

Verse. Thy word. Have I hid. In mine. Heart. That I might not. Sin. Against thee. May the Lord. Bless.

These few thoughts. And give us. Each. Blunted. Penknife. Broken. Penknife. None of these. Sins. Enter.

Into our soul. For us. Amen.