

A Warning to an Evil Generation

by Carter Conlon

The sermon warns against the evil and adulterous generation that seeks after signs and wonders, but does not truly seek God, and emphasizes the importance of discerning God's voice and relying on His power and presence.

Duration: 1:02:49

Scripture: Matthew 12:38

Topics: "Last Days Deception"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that Jesus came to fulfill specific purposes on earth. These purposes include saving sinners, opening prison doors, giving sight to the blind, healing the wounded, and preaching the gospel to the poor. The preacher also highlights the importance of following in Jesus' footsteps as the bride of Christ. He mentions that seeking signs is not the right focus, and the only sign given is the sign of the prophet Jonah. The sermon is based on Matthew chapter 12, where Jesus warns an evil generation. The preacher prays for the anointing of the Holy Spirit and expresses gratitude for God's presence.

Transcript

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Matthew Chapter 12. A warning to an evil generation. A warning to an evil generation.

Father, I thank you from the depths of my heart for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Lord, it's all about your presence. If you don't come, then the Word is just a dead letter.

It does nothing. We don't want information about you. We want you.

Jesus, we want you to walk in the midst of this candlestick, this church that you've established. We want your presence here. We ask you, Lord, to make the Word more real than life and breath itself.

We ask you, God, to come and walk in our midst today. Prove us. Reprove us.

Challenge us. Change us. Encourage us.

God, I'm asking for an anointing that far transcends any ability that I may have that you've given me, God. I ask that it all be transcended. Lord, that you come and establish my thoughts.

Establish even how this message comes from this earthly vassal, that it be your heart that might be seen and not mine. Give me great grace, Holy Spirit, to step out of the way and disappear, that you may increase, that you, O God, may be seen. Jesus, we want your Word.

We know that there's no other foundation that will keep us in the coming days. We want your Word. God, help us.

Now help me, help this congregation to hear what you are speaking to the church. Father, we thank you today. We thank you, God, from the depths of our heart for what you are doing.

Hold us in the palm of your hand. Speak to us all this day. Let there be, let heaven record, that there was a shout of victory and glory came from this house this Sunday, this day, O God, where we chose to meet together in your presence.

And we thank you for it in Jesus' mighty name. Matthew chapter 12, beginning at verse 38. Brought my glasses because sometimes I can see and sometimes I can't.

The first time I had to wear them was in Ireland. It's not a bad thing, really. They say the lights go dim before the curtain rises in a good production anyway, so.

Matthew chapter 12. Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah.

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah and behold, a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it.

For she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. Now in this passage of Scripture, here are people that are at least outwardly, they have the garments of being seekers of God. Scribes and Pharisees with their respective roles given them in the spiritual leadership of Israel would be looked upon as the people that are the seekers of God, the setters as it is of the of the pattern and form of worship for the people.

And they approach him seemingly with a harmless request. They said, we would, we want to see a sign. And he answered them in some of the most powerful words of condemnation that you will find in the New Testament.

I think elsewhere you'll find him speaking of the scribes and Pharisees and calling them a brood of vipers. And he says, how will you escape the damnation of hell? He called them whited graves, whitewashed graves that appear holy, but are full of dead men's bones. But here he seems to speak about more than just the Pharisees.

He speaks about a generation. That means a type of people. Let's put it that way.

He said it's an evil and adulterous generation that seeks after a sign. That's an amazing thing when you begin to realize. And of course, again, in I think it's chapter 16 and verse four, he repeats himself.

He says, a wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah. And he left them and departed. Now, this is a warning to what Christ said was an evil generation, an adulterous generation that were seeking a sign that he was indeed the Messiah, the Christ, the one who he said he proposed that he was.

Now, the Bible clearly warns us, clearly warns us that in the last days of this world, there will be masses of people led into spiritual destruction because they have failed to discern whether supernatural manifestations being performed in their midst were or were not of God. And beloved, we are living in the last days. The last days are going to be characterized by these things.

Christ himself warned in Matthew chapter 24, verse 24. He said there shall arise false Christ's false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders in so much that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. I thank God for those four words that are inserted there, if it were possible, which means that there are a people who so know their God that they're not moved or they're not shaken, they're not they're not deceived.

If a man appeared at Broadway and 50th and could call down fire from heaven, they would have a discernment in them whether it were or were not of God what they were seeing. They're not deceived. There's something in these people that will hold them, that will keep them.

Beloved, if ever there was a time that we need to know this book, because there is a rise now in our generation, a rise of false signs and wonders now, and we're seeing the the beginning of something that will culminate ultimately with a man rising on the scene who calls himself a man of peace. But the Bible describes him as a lawless man who will attempt to rule the world. Second Thessalonians, put a marker in Matthew chapter 12, because we're going to be back there.

Second Thessalonians chapter two and in verse seven, the apostle Paul speaks about the day that is coming. He says, and let's start in chapter two, verse one, in second Thessalonians. He says that we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together to him, that you be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled, neither by spirit nor by word nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

Now, Paul had written an earlier letter about the coming rapture, as we call it, of the church when Christ is going to come and take his church physically from this world. Those that are dead rising to life first and those who are alive and remain are going to be gathered together. The actual physical removal of the church from the world.

And Paul says, now, don't be troubled by this letter. And verse three says that let no man deceive you by any means for that day will not come except to come a falling away first. Now, falling away means you have to have been somewhere to fall away.

There has to have been a people who believed or embraced something and they've been led away from it except to come a falling away. And that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped so that he is God, sits in the temple of God,

showing himself that he is God. This day is coming.

There's a man going to rise. Many believe it's going to be out of the new European Union and he is going to make a treaty with Israel, a seven year treaty. At the end of that, halfway through that treaty, he's going to Israel, declare himself to be God and severely persecute the Jewish people.

And it will be at that time that the nation will begin to cry out to Christ. And what a day that is going to be. The receiving back of Israel again.

I just look forward to that. What an incredible day that's going to be. He said, remember when I was with you, verse five, I told you of these things and now you know what withhold it, that he might be revealed in his time.

For Paul says the mystery of iniquity, this mystery of lawlessness that leads up to almost a worldwide rebellion against the laws of God. Yes, there will be an elect, there will be people saved who were on this earth at that time. And but he says the mystery of iniquity does already work.

And now he who lets will let until be taken out of the way. In other words, there's a mystery of lawlessness, but there is a restraining power of God. Now, there's much discussion about this.

I personally believe the restraining power is the Holy Spirit manifested through the church of Jesus Christ. But he says this restraining power is going to be holding this back until he be taken out of the way. And when he's taken out of the way, shall that wicked be revealed from the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

Now, even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. In other words, there is going to be a power, a spiritual power in operation in the world at this time that leads up to this rebellion and this man of lawlessness sitting in in Jerusalem, declaring himself to be God. There's going to be an increase in this lawlessness and this lawlessness will have a spiritual power behind it.

But the spiritual power is not God. The spiritual power is a deception. It's a delusion.

There are there is another power, but the Bible talks about it as an abomination. It's a forbidden knowledge, a forbidden power. You remember Saul when he lost touch with God, going to a witch at Endor and this witch at Endor was able somehow to call up what some believe is the spirit of Samuel.

Some believe it was an imitation, either or that whatever happened, the truth was spoken to Saul. There is a power, but it's a forbidden power. It's the knowledge of evil.

It's the very thing that God warned Adam and Eve about in the Garden of Eden. Don't partake of this. Don't touch it.

In the day you touch it, you're going to die. And he says this age will culminate with this man of lawlessness rising up and there will follow him a false religion as it is a false theology that will point to man and not to God. And it will have power and signs and lying wonders.

Amazing. I mean, if you really look it up, it will mean there will be a marvelous supernatural happening, but it's got nothing to do with God. It's an absolute deception.

Now, Paul says this lawlessness is already at work. It's always been at work. It's been at work since the day of Pentecost.

It's been at work from the creation of the world, really. This lawlessness is there. This undercurrent as it is of evil, the devil himself trying to get man to be his own God.

That's what the devil wanted. That's why he led a rebellion in heaven. He lost it after the power of God.

He wanted to be as God. Now, it is little doubt, I have little doubt that Satan before his fall, this was in his heart. He was the anointed cherub.

That's what the scripture describes him as. He seems to, in the book of Ezekiel, be described as a creation of great beauty. And yet he was not satisfied with the position that he had been given.

He saw this incredible power in God and he wanted this power, but not for God's purposes. He wanted it for his own glory. And beloved, listen to me.

This has been the spirit behind every person who lusts for power and recognition in the church of Jesus Christ. The same spirit, not the spirit of Christ. It is the devil himself that animates every rebellion that you ever see in the church of Jesus Christ.

Every associate pastor that gets tired of being the associate pastor and all of a sudden reaches out and grabs for the reins of leadership has that same spirit on him. It's the devil himself. It's the same spirit.

And yes, there may be a power even sometimes that comes behind it. I fear in my heart, every pastor, every leader throughout church history that has ever usurped the authority of God, one day has to stand before God Almighty himself and give an account of how in his lust for recognition, he supposedly was representing the man who made himself of no reputation. It's incredible.

It's an oxymoron. It doesn't make any sense. It's totally foolish to think that these things can be and somehow ever be blessed by God.

Acts chapter eight. If you go there very quickly with me, Acts chapter eight tells us about a man, Philip, who went down into Samaria and he preached Christ. And there were marvelous miracles began to happen.

You see, Philip was an obedient man. If you know the whole story from this place of the miraculous God called Philip into the desert and Philip obeyed God, that's always a mark of a man of God. It's not always bigger and higher.

It's wherever you want me to go, whatever you want me to do. It's not my will. It's your will.

And Philip went up into Samaria and the Bible tells us that there were great miracles and unclean spirits were cast out of people and people were healed and there was great joy in that city. And verse nine says, but there was a certain man called Simon. Acts chapter eight, verse nine, which before time in the same city had used sorcery and he had bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one.

And that's, that's always, always the spirit behind, behind demonic activity. It's a person, even in ministry, who is promoting themselves. It's all about them.

It's all about that. There's some great man of God. There's some great woman of God.

And it's a self-promotion. It's not hard to spot it. It's not hard to hear it.

It's, you can see it in many places, even today in what professes to be the church of Jesus Christ. And they all gave heed, it says in verse 10, from the least to the greatest. And they said, this man is the great power of God.

You see, here's Samaria and they have this man in their midst before Philip arrives. And this man is, is a self-promoter. He's, he's promoting himself that he's a great man of God.

That's always a warning. Be careful of that. Whenever you see a man allowing himself to be promoted in that regard, be very, very careful of it.

And then it says they, the people in Samaria gave heed and they said, this is the power of God. But the Bible says he was using sorcery. It was not the power of God.

It was the power of the devil that was animating this man. But the people said, this is God's power because they were ignorant of the knowledge of God. Now, when Philip came, a humble man of God, a man who had the genuine power of heaven moving with him, the power of the Holy spirit, the people's affections were turned from this self-promoting man and they were delivered.

You see, the Bible says that unclean spirits had gotten ahold of a lot of these people and Philip came. And as he began to preach, these unclean spirits began to lose their hold. You see, they were getting ahold of the people through the ministry in part, I'm sure, although the Bible doesn't declare it.

I'm absolutely positive through the ministry of this man, Simon, these people were becoming demon possessed as it was. And there was great joy because the gospel had finally come in clarity, purity, and in truth. And people were getting free.

A man who's a man or woman of God doesn't point to themselves. They point to Christ. They talk about Jesus Christ.

They talk about the cross. They talk about what God has done. They encourage the people to look away from them because they know they're absolutely nothing.

It's not about us. It's not about flesh. Flesh can't do anything for you or for me.

Not a single thing. It's only God. It's only the power of the Holy ghost that can set you free today.

Nothing else can set you free. And there was great joy. And Simon lost his authority.

He lost his power because the people had a contrast. Just like in the day of Elijah, when the prophets of Baal had cornered the spiritual market as it is in Israel, they had all the people gathered around thinking they were really speaking for God. But one man stands up, builds a proper altar.

The true presence of God comes. And in one moment of time, at least the whole gathered portion of that nation is turned back to God again. And that's exactly what happens when there's a contrast.

And now he says they gave regard to him from the least to the greatest. And verse 11 says they had regard because for a long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip and

verse 12 of the things concerning the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Then Simon himself, believing also was baptized. And he continued with Philip and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. That's an incredible thing.

Simon lost his power and he saw that there was a power greater than what he was putting forward before the people. And he began to follow and he believed. He said, this is a greater power than I've ever known.

And there appears to be a conversion. But it's a it's a very doubtful conversion. I'm going to show you why.

Now, in verse 18, he says, when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money and saying, give me also this power that on whomsoever I may lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. And Peter said to him, thy money perish with thee, because thou has thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. Thou is neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. Peter said, for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. On the iniquity in the Greek, it means unrighteousness.

In other words, Peter says you are you are gripped by unrighteousness. You are bound by iniquity and you are gripped by unrighteousness. So this man had had an apparent conversion, but his apparent conversion produced no transformation.

And the evidence of the lack of transformation is that he's still full of himself. He's still a self-promoter. He just wants to use now the power of God to promote himself.

And Peter said, you don't have any part in this. He thinks the ignorance in the man some exposes itself by thinking that somehow money is going to buy the power of God. Money is going to change the world.

And folks, we have preachers like that today. They promote themselves and they have this impression that money is somehow inexplicably intertwined with the preaching of the gospel, forgetting the fact that the 120 in the upper room didn't have a lot of money. As a matter of fact, they might have had very little at that time, but they had something that this world needs to have something that the church needs.

They had the power of God. It's not money that's going to change the world. It's the power of God that will change this world that we live in.

Now, in John chapter five and verse forty three, Jesus warned the people. He said, I've come in my father's name. And he said, you don't and you receive me not.

If another shall come in his own name, him you shall receive. Now, it's incredible thing. Christ is speaking to the religious circle of his day, and he says, I've come in my father's name and you don't receive me.

But if another man comes in his own name, you'll receive him. This was in the hearts of the people. Here's the son of God speaking to this generation, saying, here I am, God Almighty, literally in the flesh.

I'm the son of God. I'm the I am, but you won't receive me. But if another man comes in his own name, you'll receive him.

This was the heart. It was the spiritual condition of that generation. I was reading about it in the Hendrickson pulpit commentary, and the author said at the time of the writing of the Hendrickson commentary, Israel to date had in part or whole received 64 messiahs as their savior since the day of Christ, 64 messiahs.

Jesus said, I came, but you did not receive me. If another comes in his own name, him you will receive. Now, John 5 tells us why this happens in verse 45.

He says, now don't think that I will accuse you to the father. There's one that accuses you, even Moses, in whom you trust. For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me.

For he wrote, he wrote of me. But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words? You see, this is the issue. They simply didn't desire the messiah about whom God had written.

That was the issue. God had given a clear revelation in the scriptures about this messiah, but the people didn't desire this type of messiah. They had something else in their mind.

That's why they wouldn't receive him. That's why if another man would come offering immediacy, controlling the kingdom, ruling, reigning without pain, all this other stuff, he said you'll receive that, but you won't receive the true messiah because you don't want me the way I've been written about. Isaiah said it this way in Isaiah 53, he said, Lord, who has believed our report? God, you, I saw you in your glory and you opened your word to me and you gave me a report about who you are to take to the people.

But who has believed it? He said, God, you're like a dry root out of the ground. He said, the way you reveal yourself, there's no form, there's no coming. There's nothing attractive about you that people should want you.

He said, I've been declaring to my generation who you are and how you're going to manifest yourself. But who has believed it? Who wants it? Nobody wants this. And Isaiah was exasperated.

And that's why he says in Isaiah 53, he said, there's no form, there's no comingness. He said, you're a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we esteemed you not and hid our faces from you.

We didn't want this kind of messiah. We didn't want a messiah that understands sorrow and is acquainted with grief. We didn't want this broken hearted messiah that was going to come down and pour his life out as a servant.

We wanted a messiah that'll reign. We want a messiah that takes us to the throne right now. We don't want to have to go through the fire.

We don't want to have to go through the flood. We don't want to live yielded lives to the purposes of God. We want it all now.

We want to hear all the blessings now. We want none of the sour parts. We want just all the sweet parts of the scripture.

And Isaiah says, God, who has believed it? I've told the people who you're going to be. I've written it clearly. It's clearly there.

You gave it to me. But who has believed it? We hid our faces from this sorrowing messiah, and we didn't esteem him. And actually, in the Hebrew, it means we didn't consider him worth very much.

As a matter of fact, they sold him for 30 pieces of silver. Now, back to Matthew chapter 12, where we started. Verse 41, Jesus said, The men of Nineveh will rise in judgment with this generation and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

And behold, a greater than Jonah is here. Now, he's basically saying to the people, the men of Nineveh will rise. There's a day coming when the dead and living will rise and stand before the throne of God.

And he says, the men of Nineveh are going to look at this generation. He's talking now about the people he was speaking to, and they're going to condemn it because they repented just hearing a word from God. They had a word.

Forty days. The judgment is coming. Forty days.

It's all over. That's all they had of God. They had a little word.

God has looked at your society. It is wicked. He's going to judge it in 40 days.

It's all over. That's all they had. That was Jonah's message to them.

And Jesus said they repented just in hearing a word. He said, but now you have the word himself in your midst. You have the word.

You have God incarnate. The word became flesh, John says, and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

And Christ says they had a word and repented. But you have the word now. You have the word himself.

You have God walking in your midst. And yet you're turning and looking in another direction. He said in verse 42, the queen of Sheba shall rise up in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it.

For she came from the outermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And behold, a greater than Solomon is here. He says the queen of Sheba came from the ends of the earth, as it is from a far distance to hear the wisdom which God gave to a man.

But you now have the very wisdom of God before you. And instead of receiving him, you require a sign. Instead of receiving God, you want a sign.

It's amazing. You know, in the light of living in a generation where many people who profess Christ seem to be looking for signs now. If they hear that it's always been a part of nominal religion, you read it in the papers, a supposed piece of fog appears between two panes of window in some country and you have people flying from all over the world to see it and worship it.

They require a sign. I mean, it's the characteristic of religiousness without God. They're looking for God, but they don't know how to find him.

And I find tragically in much of the modern day charismatic movement that it is moving the same way. If a sign appears somewhere in the world, it could be as foolish as some of these other things. You'll find charismatic Christians now flying all over the world, looking for God.

And that's a mark of something being very, very wrong in the church and the professing church of Jesus Christ. Now, I'm not talking about the whole church. There are wonderful charismatic leaders and Christians and churches that are preaching and teaching the word of God.

I'm talking about a segment of it. And it is rather distressing to see this happening in our present generation. And unfortunately, it will only increase because the Bible says that the signs will become greater.

The false miracles will become more profound. And there will be a generation that will fall away because they don't know what is of God and what is not of God. And I'm hoping to share with you why before we get to the end of this message.

Now, Matthew 12, 38, they said to a master, we would see a sign. Now, obviously, they've had a lot of signs. There have been they've been around.

The multitudes have been fed five thousand with a few loaves and fishes. They've seen the blind. They have the testimonies of the blind that were given sight and the lame are walking.

They obviously are signs. So what is it they're asking for? Not another miracle. Actually, if you look at it, the original text is more than a miracle of healing that they were asking for.

But they were asking for something else. I haven't got time to turn to it. But if you look in chapter 16, verse one, in Mark chapter eight, verse 11, in Luke chapter 11, verse 16, they were asking for a sign from heaven.

They were asking for a supernatural display in the sky that would be a sign of his mission. Incredible. Just give us a sign.

Stop the sun, move the stars, have the clouds go around in circles. Just give us a sign. And he looks at this generation and says, this is an evil and an adulterous generation.

He turns and calls it something very profound. Now, that should have been a shock. How would you feel if you went to your prayer closet and said, God, I really do believe that you love me.

I believe you have a call in my life. But just give me a sign. A lot of Christians do that.

I look out the window and if I see a red car pass by in the next two minutes. Now, how would you feel if the Holy Spirit clearly spoke to you and called you evil and adulterous? That's evil and adulterous. I mean, it's incredible when you begin to think of it.

What is it? What's so evil about it? What's so adulterous about this? He says, in other words, here's what it means that your pursuit of God does not line up with God's pursuit of you. God says, yes, you have an appearance of pursuing me, but I am pursuing you. But those two pursuits have got to line up.

We've got to meet in the same place. If we're not walking in agreement, we can't walk together. And if your pursuit of me does not line up with my pursuit of you.

It's evil. It's evil. You can be a pursuer of God and be all wrapped up in evil.

Simon could have very well said, I'm a pursuer of God. What are you talking about, Peter, that I'm full of iniquity? I'm a pursuer of God. But you see, Peter could clearly tell him that your pursuit of God is not matching up with God's pursuit of you.

You see, he's got something for you, but you don't want that. You want something else. And we're living in a day today where I think there's a I won't mention titles or anything, but there's there's people chasing God now all over the world chasing God.

But their pursuit of God is not lining up with God's pursuit of them. And I have people tell me quite often they say, I don't understand it. That man, that woman, that church, they were so hungry for God.

They were so pursuing God. How could they have gotten so far off track? I want to suggest to you that their pursuit of God did not line up with God's pursuit of them. I want to suggest to you there was a hidden agenda.

I want to suggest to you that even though they were betrothed, as it is by testimony to Jesus Christ, they've never become one with him. They're not one in heart with him. They don't want God's way, just like the generation of Isaiah.

As he reveals himself, they don't want him. That's not the Christ they want. I'm pursuing the Christ, but not the Christ of this Bible.

I want another Christ. And we're living in a generation like that, folks. Oh, if ever there's time to get in this book and say, holy spirit, not my way, but not my will, but yours, not my thoughts, yours, God, open this book to me, God, and prove my heart.

Examine me. Show me whether or not I'm in the faith in this pursuit that I have. God, am I really pursuing you? Is it your heart that I want? Is it your call? Is it your mission? Is it your purpose for my life? Or do I have another agenda? And in my supposed pursuit of you, I'm trying to cram that agenda into my life and call it God.

God says, no, that's adulterous. If you are my wife, if you are my bride, we're walking together. We're saying the same thing.

We're moving in the same direction. You have my heart. If you're my bride, you don't come to an altar and receive me as savior just to go live your own selfish way in your selfish life.

Christ says I have a mission in this world. I'm acquainted with grief and acquainted with sorrow because millions are dying and going into a hell for eternity. Christ came to save sinners.

It's conclusive in the Bible. He came to save sinners. He came to open prison doors.

He came to give sight to the blind, to heal the wounded. He came to preach the gospel to the poor. There's no other purpose for being on this earth if we're the bride of Christ than to be following in his footsteps.

And Jesus said, it's an evil generation that seeks a sign and there shall be no sign given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonah. No sign given but the sign of the prophet Jonah. I did some research on this.

I was profoundly touched by what I found. The word given in the Greek text, I want to give it to you line by line what it means. The word given means bestowed.

In other words, he said there's going to be no sign given to this generation but the sign of the Jonah. Now we know that Christ was talking about his Jonah was three days in the belly of the whale. I'm going to be three days in the grave.

And as Jonah came back, I'm going to come back. And those that are mined are going to be resurrected. We'll get there in a moment.

There'll be no sign given but the sign of the prophet Jonah. The word given in the Greek New Testament means this. It means bestowed.

This is the first word. And I'm going to read you some corresponding scriptures. This is the sign.

He said, I'm going to give to you. Bestowed. First John 3.1. Behold, what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.

For the world knoweth us not because it knew him not. The word given means brought forth. Luke chapter two, verse seven.

And she brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. Christ said there'd be no other sign given. The word given means delivered up.

Acts 2.23. Him being delivered by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God. You have taken by wicked hands and have crucified and slain. The word given means offered.

Hebrews 7.26 and 27. For such a high priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens. Who needs not daily as those other high priests to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins and then for the people's.

For this he did once when he offered up himself. It means offered. The word given.

The word given also means struck with the palm of the hand. You can look it up for yourself in your Greek concordance. Matthew 26.67. They did spit in his face and buffeted him and others smote him with the palms of their hands.

The word given means to suffer. Luke 17.24. For as the lightning that lightens out from under one part of heaven and shines to the other part under heaven, so shall also the son of man be in his day. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected of this generation.

The word given means to take. Matthew 16.24. Jesus said, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. The word given means utter.

Matthew 13.35. He says, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. In other words, there's a people, a bride that I have. I'm going to speak.

They're going to know my voice. I am their shepherd. They are my sheep and they're going to hear me.

These things have been kept secret. They cannot be found by the self-seeking. They cannot be found by those who are looking for signs.

They cannot be known, but by those whose hearts are right towards me. The word given means to yield. Matthew 27.50. And Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

When he cried with a loud means to yield. This is the sign. This is what will be given to the people.

Luke 23.46. The Bible says he cried out, Father, into thy hands. I commend my spirit into thy hands. This is the sign, he said, that's going to be given to this generation.

I'm going to go to a cross. I'm going to die on the third day. I'm going to be raised again by the power of God.

And he said, here is the sign. Romans 8.11. If the spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwells in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you. This is the sign.

There is no other sign. The sign that Christ is alive is his life in me. It's his life being lived through me.

When people are running all over the place looking for signs, it is an evidence. It is a conclusive evidence that their pursuit is not in line with the pursuit of Christ. If you are pursuing the heart of God, if you want him, want his will, his way, he said, ask what you will, it will be done to you.

He said, you've not asked for anything. But now he said, I ask, I tell you to ask and it will be given you that your joy might be full. He said, not seek, ask.

He said, your father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. And when the Holy Spirit comes into a person's life who's belonging to Christ, there is a transformation inside. There are changes.

I don't care if a hundred people go out onto Broadway and start calling the stars out of heaven. What does it mean to me? I've got the life of God inside of me. I've got the heart of God living in me.

It means nothing. It means nothing. You go to a meeting and somebody can tell you you had an aunt who had red hair.

So what? What does it mean? Somebody can tell you the numbers on your driver's license. Big deal. It doesn't mean anything.

It doesn't mean anything. And it's an evil generation that seeks that kind of a sign. And you'll find those that give those signs are always promoting themselves, always talking about money, always, always, always, because that's the spirit that animates them.

God help the people that come under their ministries. God help the Church of Jesus Christ in this age. If we should be praying anything, we should be praying, Almighty God, be merciful to your church, be merciful to your people, be merciful to those that are called by your name and are running the world looking for the wrong signs.

The sign is a transformed life. The sign is within you. Jesus said it this way in Luke chapter 17, verse 20.

Scripture says that when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come. You see, they were looking for this great conquering king that was going to come and just throw down the Roman Empire, establish his kingdom, and they were going to live in happiness and peace and prosperity,

no more sighing or crying, no sorrow. And they're looking for this kingdom.

You see, Christ was coming with another one, but they didn't want that one. They wanted the other one. They wanted the ruling one.

They wanted the one where there's no trouble, no trial. Does this sound familiar, folks? No sorrow, no poverty, no difficulty. They wanted another king, another kingdom.

And they asked him, when is the kingdom going to come? And then he answered them in Luke 17, 20. He said, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. In other words, you can't see it.

It doesn't come with some big display in the sky. He was just giving them a plain answer. It doesn't come the way you want it.

It doesn't come the way you think it's going to come. You can't really see it. Incredible.

He says, neither shall they say, lo here or lo there, for behold, verse 21, the kingdom of God is within you. He said, so if people are saying, well, God is working here, don't go running after it. There's no need.

The kingdom of God is within you. The kingdom of God doesn't just appear in Kansas and then in Los Angeles and then over in Buenos Aires. The kingdom of God is in you.

You don't have to run after it. The greatest sign is the transforming power of Christ in your own life. And he goes on to say, he says, and he said to his disciples, the days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man and you shall not see it.

And they say they shall say unto you, see here or see there. Go not after them and don't follow them. Don't follow them.

Don't follow the ones that say, hey, there's the Lord is manifesting in Timbuktu. Save your plane fare. Save the money on the tape.

You see, the kingdom of God does not come without word observation. The kingdom of God is within you. Isn't it amazing? The kingdom of God is within you.

You and I are called out of the grave like Christ was. That's our calling. We are called out of the grave of sin, the power of death and hell.

We are saved by faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. Then the Holy Spirit comes, the same spirit that quickened Christ and rose him from the dead comes to us when we have trusted in Christ for our salvation. He comes for a purpose.

The Bible says he comes to quicken us, lead us into truth and comfort us with that truth. And the truth will set us free. He comes to convince us when our lives are not in line with the purposes of God.

He can. We call it conviction. He convinces us.

He comes to say, no, this is not God. He's it's and he leads us into that truth. And once we're we line up in our minds and hearts with the agreement of God's word and God's truth, then the Holy Spirit makes it a reality.

He is the spirit of Christ. He is the life of Christ. He makes it a reality.

We can be praying for things for the wrong reason. And quite often God will withhold it until our minds, our hearts are in line with his. We finally see why we need this, that we're praying for.

And then the Holy Spirit comes and makes it a reality. I have lived this. I continue to live it.

This is not a theology. This is an experience. I know this is reality.

I know this is true. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ. And God's purpose is to come into my life and into your life and in saving us and in changing us, bringing glory to God and then through us as his body, bringing his love, that's Christ, his healing and his salvation to a fallen world.

This is the church of Jesus Christ. So let people gather around images on walls and pictures on mirrors. I don't really care about that.

That's not what the kingdom of God is about. The kingdom of God is about Christ in me, the hope of glory, Christ in me, changing me from image to image and glory to glory by the spirit of the Lord. The hope of God's kingdom is God coming and giving me knowledge that I don't possess, giving me strength I don't have, taking me places I can't go, making me a man I never could be without his spirit within me, putting compassion in my heart for the lost, giving me the mind of God, helping me by God's strength to enter into the burden of Christ for my generation.

This is the kingdom of God within me. Hallelujah. And that's why Christ calls it evil and adulterous.

In other words, you don't have my heart. You say you're my bride, but you don't walk with me. You want me, but for another purpose.

You don't want to bring my love to a fallen world. That's a serious issue. Because in our pursuit of God, we all have to answer it.

Why am I pursuing God? What's the end result of this pursuit? Is it Christ in me? Is it going to be my life yielded to God for his purpose, whatever that is? Or am I, though I already have a preconceived Messiah in my mind and I'm looking for that Messiah. And so I miss the real one and have Christ stand before me and say, the men of Nineveh will condemn you. The queen of Sheba will stand and say, what a fool.

I came from Africa or I came from another part of the world just to just to hear the wisdom that God had put in the man. But now you have the wisdom of God. And you turned aside from it and said, no, give us a sign.

Give us a sign. See, we want power, but we don't want the cross. We want to reign, but we don't want to be acquainted with sorrow.

We looked at this Messiah and said, no, he's not worth much. I don't want that. There's nothing about him that's attractive.

I want this one. I want the one that sits at the right hand of power. That's the Messiah I want.

You see, you can't get this one without this one. It's the same Christ. Beloved, one day we will sit there with him.

We do by faith now in Christ. But one day it'll be an actuality. But till that day, we are on this earth fulfilling the ministry of Christ.

The things that you read about in the Gospels that he started, we are moving forward with it with same calling, same type of alienation from God, same type of rejection of his ways, same generation we're called to be. You know, the Bible says I read an author recently that or he said that so many people say the whole world will be evangelized before Christ comes. Well, that's fine.

But I want to remind you that every 50 years or so, the whole world perishes and another generation comes. The whole world has to be evangelized in every generation. And it has to be done by a church.

God could send angels, but he didn't. He could make his voice so loud that he could speak to the whole world, but he didn't do it. He called us to be co-laborers with him.

He called us to be his wife as it is his bride. And he said, I'm going to give you my heart, my life. We're going to come to an altar and exchange a vow.

You're going to give me what you have. You're going to give me your failure, your weakness. You're going to give me your confusion.

You're going to give me your lack of ability. And that's all we give to him, right? I mean, could you imagine just imagine the vow that a bride makes with Christ? I give you my sin. I give you my confusion.

I give you my. And then he looks at us and says, I give you my power. I give you my love.

I give you my strength. And then he says, now, come, let us walk together. Let us walk together through this world.

Let us go out into the vineyard and see if it's the time of the harvest. Come with me. Walk with me.

Follow me through this world. Take up your cross. It's not heavy and the burden is light.

It's not. The yoke is easy. The burden is light.

Take it up. Begin to walk with me and you're going to know a joy unspeakable that's full of glory. It's full of glory.

The joy that I had with my father, you will have with me and we will be one just as the father and I are one. This was my prayer for you, that we would be one as the father and I are one. I never want my seeking of God to end up being called evil and adulterous.

It is a warning to an evil generation. This is a very self-seeking generation. And of course, self-seeking is deeply embedded now in the Church of Jesus Christ because it's in the culture, especially in the Western world.

And the Western world is very reluctant to accept the Messiah as he's revealed. But you see, because of it, they will never know the power of God. They will never know the power of his kingdom.

He will always be out there somewhere and they will be forever running, forever looking, and never finding. Ever learning, never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. The spouses of Christ as it is, but their very lives are a denial of his power.

That's what the scripture says. Talk about Jesus and know scriptures and memorize the Bible, but their lives are a denial of the reality of Christ. Oh beloved, the hour is late.

Don't be caught looking at the wrong places for him. There's only one place to find him. You find him on your knees with a bent heart, a tongue that confesses that he's not only Savior, but he's Lord.

That's where he's found. I'd like us to sit just for a moment. Just for a moment.

And just meditate on what the Holy Spirit has given to us today from the word of God. Please don't move. Same in the education annex.

Just take a moment. Hallelujah. Thank you Jesus.

Thank you Jesus. Thank you Lord. The question that we must ask ourselves today is does my pursuit of God, does my pursuit of Jesus Christ line up with his pursuit of me? And I'm believing right now that the Holy Spirit is showing many where that is not so.

Your pursuit of him is not lining up with his pursuit of you. And that is very dangerous. Because if you don't let it go, it will cause you to go in the wrong direction and look for the wrong signs.

You may even fall under the influence of ministries that have nothing to do with Christ. Lord Jesus, we do love you. I speak first for my own life, Lord.

I'm asking that my pursuit of you for whatever years I have left are in truth. Let it be a pursuit of truth. I pray God with all my heart that it lines up with your heart.

And if it doesn't, I ask you to deal with it. Deal with it, Holy Spirit. Deal with it.

Don't give me any rest. Don't give me any peace until this is dealt with. Father, I pray for your church here at Times Square, Lord, that our pursuit of you would be according to truth.

The sign that we would look for is the life of Christ in us. Father, I thank you for it, God, with all my heart. If you are unsaved today, you're outside the kingdom of God.

You don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. But today you'd like to say, I confess that I'm a sinner. I need God.

I'm going to open my heart and give Jesus Christ the Lordship of my life. And I'm going to receive him today as my Savior. I'm going to believe that as I open my heart to him, that he will receive me as his own and set up his kingdom in my heart, change me and make me into a new person.

If this is in your heart to do this today, if you want to become a child of God, I'm going to ask you unashamedly now, wherever you are, to raise your hand with me. Anywhere in this sanctuary, education, God bless you. God bless you.

Others, God bless you. Don't be ashamed. God bless you.

You too. God bless you. Others, bless you.

Keep going. Raise them high. God bless you.

There's more. I know there's more. Up in the balcony.

Raise your hand high. You don't have to be ashamed of Christ. He died on a public hill for you.

The least we can do is publicly give our lives to him. Raise your hand high. Raise it high.

God bless you and you and you way in the back and cross the back. God bless you all over the sanctuary. God bless you.

God bless you. You'll never be the same again. More.

There's got to be more in the balcony. This is God Almighty today inviting you to eternal life with him, opening heaven to you. You'll never have a greater decision.

God bless you and you husband and wife. God bless you. Others, others.

Praise God. Praise God. Bless the Lord.

Now I'm going to pray together, then give another altar call. I want us all to pray for these that have raised their hands today. The simple prayer, if you meet it in your heart, Jesus will save you today.

Let's pray together. Education addicts, I haven't seen your hands, but God sees you over there today. Let's pray together.

Lord Jesus Christ. I am a sinner. Jesus, thank you that you love me enough to become a man and die for me.

Oh, God, thank you for the offer of forgiveness. I open my heart today and I receive you as my savior and my Lord. I believe you are the son of God.

You died to pay the price for the wrong things that I have done. You were raised again from the dead as living proof that my trust in you is not in vain. I open my heart and I invite you, Jesus, to set up your kingdom within my life.

Be my Lord and my God and teach me how to walk with you. Lead me into your life, which is the only life that will set me free and set others free around me. I love you, Jesus.

I thank you for giving your life for me, saving me. I believe at this very moment that my sins are being washed away as if they had never happened. I am clean and I am free and I'm saved.

I believe it in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.

Sincerely, I would encourage you to get to a Bible teaching church if you don't have one, you're welcome to come here and fellowship with us at any time. We do believers classes every Friday night. We're going to stand in a moment and as we do, I'd like our musicians, our song leader to lead us in the song.

And as he does, if the Holy Spirit's been speaking to you in an area of your life where your pursuit is not the pursuit of God or you're backslidden, I want to invite every backslidden Christian to come to this altar and get right with God. Get right with God. If your pursuit of God is not lined up with his pursuit of you, then please do come to this altar.

Please do. And let the Holy Spirit begin to work. And if you're not sure, come to this altar and say, God, I'm not sure, but I want my pursuit to line up with your pursuit of me.

I want to be a son. I want to be a daughter of God. I want your kingdom in my life.

I don't want to be caught looking in the wrong direction in these last days. If the Holy Spirit has been speaking to you, come join. We'll pray together.

Let's all stand balcony. You can go to either exit main sanctuary as we stand. Make your way down.

We're going to pray together. We're going to believe God together here. Hallelujah.

You know, some of the deepest transactions that ever go on in heaven's kingdom are without words. I can lead. I'm going to lead you in a prayer, but really that can become just form and tradition.

The issue is the heart. As soon as you rise up and say, I agree with God, I agree with God, that's where his kingdom begins to come. His throne is established.

God, I agree that you should line my life up with yours. God says, he's so gracious. He's so merciful, so willing to give up his power, his life.

So kind. It's only in the deepest failure that you begin to understand the kindness of God, how kind he is, how good he is, how merciful he is. The devil has tried to condemn many of you and tell you, you'll never amount to anything.

You'll never have the life of Christ, but he's a liar. He's an absolute liar because he himself knows the kindness of God. That's why he has to fight so hard to get you to believe another argument.

He knows that the moment you understand this, you'll open your heart and a kingdom will come into you that so threatens his kingdom. That's why he fights so hard against it. God is so merciful, so full of mercy, so incredibly merciful.

The older I get, the more I'm aware of his mercy. Morning by morning, new mercy. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Pray with me, Jesus. I ask today that I be a person that you would keep with the power of truth and the Holy Spirit.

I ask you to keep me from looking in the wrong places. Keep me from all deception. I ask you to give me a spiritual mind and a heart that loves you and loves your truth.

Jesus Christ, I want you the way you are. I want you the way you've revealed yourself and the way you will show me who you are and who I am because of you in the Bible. I don't want another Christ.

I don't want the Christ that my flesh desires or some false prophet would tell me about. I want the Christ of the Bible. I want my life to be the life that you want it to be.

Lead me, Holy Spirit. And wherever you lead me, I believe you will give me the power to be the person and to fulfill the calling that you place on my life. By your power in me, I will know the kingdom of God has come.

I never need any other sign. This is the only sign I will ever need. Let me pray for you now.

Father, I pray for these that have come to this altar today. I pray, God, for the breaking of chains. I pray, Jesus, for the unlocking of prison doors.

I pray, God, for the release of oppressed minds. Lord, I lift up those that are oppressed by the devil and I command you, Satan, in Christ's name to loose your hold. Loose your hold off of them.

You have no power over them. You have no power. We tread on your power today.

We tread on your weaponry. We tread on it. We bring it underfoot.

We command it to be broken because of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary. We come and oppose you in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Father, I'm asking, Lord, that every contrary argument be cast down, but that which is truth.

I'm asking, God, that your kingdom come with power. God, that you raise up these that are yielding to you and those in the sanctuary and annex that are yielding to you. I pray, God, raise them up and let there be a church that glorifies Christ in our generation, in our city, wherever we come from.

May we be people and lives that glorify Jesus Christ. Our prayer is, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in me and on earth as it is in heaven. God, we want no other kingdom, no other sign, no other leading.

You lead us, Holy Spirit. God, we thank you for it. We praise you that you will.

You will, O God, because we ask you from sincere hearts to do this. I ask you now to bless this gathering, bless their coming in, bless their going out. Let your countenance shine on us, O God.

Lord, reveal yourself to us, Jesus, and we will we will receive you as you are, as you want to reveal yourself. That's who through the word of God, that's how we will receive you. We need no other sign.

It's your life lived in us and through us. God, thank you that miracles are happening at this altar right now. You are infusing life where there has been no life.

You are giving people gifts where they have been barren. God, you are putting things in that cannot be put in them but by the Spirit of Almighty God. I ask, Lord, that tomorrow morning there be a testimony, tomorrow morning, not next month, next year, tomorrow morning.

When they awake, there be an awareness that they've been touched by the power of God. Lord, confirm your word. Let this be the sign that confirms your word.

Let there be an awareness. Let love be where love wasn't. Let hope be where there was no hope.

Let boldness be where there was shyness. Let strength be where there was weakness. God, let clear vision be where there was blindness.

Let a love and passion for truth be where there was confusion. Let these be the signs, O God. Let these be the signs.

Let it be the only sign that your kingdom has come and you are moving and working through your people. O Jesus, we will glorify you. We will give you the honor.

We will give you the praise. We will give you the glory. We will, O God.

We will, O God. We'll give you the glory. We will thank you, God.

We will thank you. We will thank you, God. This is the conclusion of the message.

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