

Discerning the Fellowship of Jesus Christ

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of discernment in the last days and the danger of false Christs and false gospels, warning against the self-seeking who use the name of Jesus Christ for their own glory and prosperity.

Duration: 1:07:48

Scripture: Malachi 1:6, Malachi 1:13

Topics: "False Teaching"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of experiencing a sudden encounter with God's power and presence. He compares it to the moment when Lazarus heard Jesus' voice and chose to rise from the dead. The preacher also highlights the weariness and lack of excitement often found in church services, attributing it to a lack of genuine connection with Christ. He calls for a cry in the hearts of believers to hear God's voice and receive His message. The sermon is based on the book of Malachi and encourages discerning the fellowship of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit Series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge, PO Box 260, Lindale, Texas 75771 or calling 903-963-8626.

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Lord, we bless your name today. If you turn with me in the Old Testament to the book of Malachi, please. Malachi, last book in the Old Testament, and then we're going to pray together.

I'm going to speak about discerning the fellowship of Jesus Christ. Discerning the fellowship of Jesus Christ. All of our visitors, we give you a special welcome again, and we do trust that you will avail yourself of the time of fellowship that's available for you after the service today, and we know that that would be a great blessing to you when you do that.

Discerning the fellowship of Jesus Christ. Father, I stand before you. God, I thank you for the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, I know how important this is to your heart, and I do confess, God, I am so limited to convey this. Lord, God, without an anointing, without your empowerment and quickening, there's no man alive that can convey the depth of your passion for your church. I'm asking you, Holy Spirit, to overshadow my weakness.

I'm asking you, Holy Spirit, to come and overshadow the limitations of my own natural mind. God, give me the ability to speak this in the manner that you want it to be spoken. I ask you, Holy Spirit, to animate me.

Let it be your heart that is heard through this human vessel. Lord, I just simply yield myself to you. You've spoken this to my heart.

I know it's come from your throne, and God, I'm asking that you take it and multiply it so that it fits every situation, every life. God, every one that you've brought into this house, and all that will hear it in the coming days. Father, we just thank you for it.

I praise you for it today. Jesus, above all else, I ask you to be lifted up and glorified, and that the desires of your heart might be met. Lord, there's something in your heart today, and I thank you, Lord, and I'm asking, God, that we might be a people who meet that need, who satisfy that desire in your heart.

Help us, God, to hear. Give us ears to hear and eyes to see. We don't want to be counted among the blind and deaf of this last generation.

God, help us. Help us to understand and lay hold of truth. Father, I thank you for this.

God, I praise you for what you alone are going to accomplish in your church and among your people. I cry out today, Lord, for all those who will hear this message on tape in the coming days. Wherever they are, I pray, God, that there be a quickening.

I pray, Lord, there be an understanding and enlightening. I pray there be a deliverance from false Christianity. I pray, God, that your sheep would find true shepherds in this last hour of time.

God, help us all now. Keep us, Father, in the fellowship of Christ, and I thank you for it in your mighty name. Amen.

Now, Malachi, if you'll just open that chapter one, last book of the Old Testament. Malachi is the last writer. It's the last word of God before a 400 year period of silence.

There's something in the heart of God at the end of the Old Testament period, and he lays it out clearly before his people. Then there's a time of incredible silence, and some historians describe that silence as a time when people didn't know what to do. There were a lot of voices, but there was very little, if anything, that came from the throne of God.

I think it's one of the Maccabean historians said that there was a time when they tore down the stones of an idol altar and just laid them aside because nobody knew what to do with them, and they waited for the rising of a prophet who could tell them what should be done with this idolatry that had been in their midst. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 24, verses 3 to 5, the disciples came to him and said, now what will be the sign? What is the last? I'm paraphrasing it, but they said, what are the last days going to be like, and what will be the signs of the last days? I'm sure that they're looking for something very, very specific, perhaps something in the universe that they can look to, and of course we know that they imminently expected it to

come their way even during their lifetime. Now Jesus answers a very curious answer, and he said, take heed that no man deceive you.

He said, many will come in my name saying, I am Christ, and will turn away many. Many shall be deceived. They will come in my name.

This is going to be the characteristic as it is of the last days of our generation. Many will come saying, I am Christ. Now I believe there's a two-fold interpretation of that.

First of all, there will be some who come and actually claim to be the Messiah, but they are generally extremely deluded and not very hard to pick out. If some fellow came on television today, if you have even a scant knowledge of the Bible, and some fellow stood on television and said, hey, good news, I am Christ, most everybody here should be able to discern that that would be false, if you know the scriptures. Yet, I believe it's deeper than that.

I believe what Jesus is saying, there will be many who arise, and they will stand in my name, and they will say, if you're looking at me, you're looking at Christ. Like Paul said, for example, now Paul is a true example, where he said, you can follow me as I follow Christ. In that sense, he's saying, you're looking at me, you're looking at Christ in me.

You're looking at the Christ life, you're looking at what Christ is about, and you can safely follow that. And Jesus said, there'll be many that arise in the last generation saying, I'm Christ. This is Christ.

They will be presenting a false Christ to many, and many within the professing church are going to be deceived. Beloved, the Bible does not speak of an end-time revival. I know that there are many who are talking about that today.

Yes, there will be an end-time warrior church. Yes, there will be an end-time people that tenaciously hold to the truth of God's word. But the Bible doesn't speak of an end-day revival.

The Bible speaks of an end-day apostasy. The Bible speaks of a great falling away. That day of the church's gathering to Christ is not going to happen, Paul said, until there first comes a great falling away.

The devil's most insidious device to turn the church away from the true power of God is to imitate Christ, is to bring another Christ to the people. A Christ that perhaps satisfies the self-interest of man, but does not bring any freedom, brings no glory to God, brings no deliverance, brings no sense of vision or hope or purpose, brings no Christ-life into his church and makes the church a very boring place to be, very lifeless, very powerless. And this church with other Christs now has to invent other gimmicks to get the people to come.

They have to have all types of entertainment in the house because Christ is not there. It's another Christ. And Jesus said, beware of this.

Many, many are going to rise and say, I'm Christ. And many are going to be deceived. Oh, beloved, if ever there was a time that you needed discernment, it's now.

You need discernment. You need that ability. We'll speak more on it in a little while, but you need that ability to know which is Christ and what is not Christ, because it's really a life and death issue for you.

It's about eternity. There is a hell and there is, lately I've been meditating more on this than I think I have in years, thinking about the multitudes that perhaps even sat in a house of worship that are going to end up in hell for eternity, a place of the Bible described it as thick darkness that can be felt. I can't even begin to fathom that.

But I was thinking about it this week and wondering, what is it like for a person to end up in that darkness? What is it like to go to that place where there is no hope forever? There's no life. There's no light. There's only a conscience that never dies, an ever increasing torment.

And hell, by virtue of its definition, yes, it's a place of fire, a place of torment, but it is the absence of God. You see, even the most vile of sinners has an awareness of God. The goodness of God is on this earth right now.

He sends the rain on the just and on the unjust. Nature declares his glory. God's presence is all around.

The Holy Spirit is wooing all who live. Even the worst and vilest of sinners are being wooed even today by the Holy Spirit. He's not willing that any should perish, but all that should come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

But then there comes a day when the presence of God is gone. And you and I can't fathom that. We don't understand what that's going to be like.

As much as we don't understand heaven and the ever increasing glory of God, we don't understand hell either. And the ever increasing despair being cast out of the presence of God for all of eternity. It's a very real place.

And the devil plays for keeps. And he comes to those that are moving towards the light and the life of Jesus Christ. And the greatest weaponry he has against you is not necessarily the besetting sin that you're struggling with as much as God wants to set you free from that.

No, his weapon is it is a false Christ, a false gospel, an imitation that sidelines you and sends you in a direction where there's no life and no eternity. And what a tragedy to have been sitting and following a false Christ only to wind up in hell for all of eternity. This is a reality.

We can't escape it. We can't soft pedal it. We can't back away from it because it's in the scriptures.

And Jesus Christ himself warned his church about it. It was as if the Holy Spirit was saying in Malachi, I want you to see Christ. But if you want to see Christ, you must be open to considering your ways.

You must consider how you're living. You must consider the truth of this relationship and what it involves. It's not too many years before that a prophet called Haggai had confronted the people who had returned from captivity.

But it was because of opposition and self-centered pursuits that they had done little more than lay the foundation of the temple. Little more than make that profession of I'm back, I've returned, I have a foundation. You see, I say this very lovingly.

And beloved, I want you to hear something from my heart today. And I speak for all the pastors on this platform. We passionately love you.

We passionately love Christ. We don't preach like this because we're on some kind of a tangent of trying to dig up and expose everybody's sin. We passionately love you and know that you've got to come into right relationship with God if you're ever going to spend life with Christ in eternity.

And we preach to you in a way that will give you life. There's joy in this house. There's an unspeakable joy because the truth of Christ has been laid hold of by so many who've heard the word of God and have backed away from God's lawful claim in his son on every one of our lives.

And Haggai confronted this generation and as many who perhaps are here today, you've come in, you've gone to new believers class, you've laid a foundation. But that's as far as it's gone. You're not going deeper.

You're not letting the Holy Spirit really, really go after the issues of your heart that have separated you from the life of God. And it makes you wide open to another Christ. You don't realize it yet, but it makes you wide open.

If you have a resistance in your heart to truth, then you will eventually become angered with that which confronts the idolatry in your heart and turn to another message, another Christ. You'll go to your television Sunday morning. Oh, I don't want to go to Times Square Church.

They're just going to go after this thing in my heart again that I don't want to give up. You won't say it that way, but that's the reality of it. I'm not going to go where I'm going to be confronted.

And so you go to the knob. I'm going to television church at home today. And you turn it on and there is another Christ saying here I am Christ.

This is the Christ that you've been looking for. This is the Christ that makes you happy and healthy and prosperous. Asks nothing of you.

Doesn't talk about a cross. There's no blood in this Christ. Oh, no, this is just all peaches and cream all the way into eternity.

By the way, send me your best offering. Give me a thousand dollars and and you're going to have a hundred thousand come back to you. There's another Christ.

It's another Christ. It's just simply catering to the lust of the human heart that doesn't want to walk the way that God has prescribed for his church. Hey, guy, I said it this way.

Consider your ways. He said you so much bring in little you eat, but you don't have enough. In other words, there's so little satisfaction in this relationship that you have.

You drink, but you're not filled. You're clothed, but nobody is warm. He said, consider this.

You're earning wages, but you're putting everything you earn into a bag and it just seems to drain out. There's there's no accumulation of God's blessing in your life. There's no accumulation of his life and his favor and his strength.

Everything seems to be constantly draining out. You just go from week to week, just dragging along, trying to survive. Folks, that's not what Christianity is about.

And if that's the way you're living, you're following another Christ. His life is is takes us from image to image and glory to glory. We grow in grace and knowledge and there is a sense of awe in our hearts every day as we rise up and say, I'm serving the God who spoke the world into existence by his word.

He lives in me. He lives in me. There's no limitation to what he can do now.

All he has to do is speak. And that when we get to that place, we say, God, there's an area in my heart that I can't get the victory over. But Holy Spirit, speak to it now.

Speak to it by the word of God. Just like the Lord called Ezekiel and he said, call for the breath of God to come upon these bones that they may live. Call for the breath of God.

Oh, there's such an anticipation to those who truly live in Christ. All of the boundaries begin to fall. All the limitations begin to fade away.

And we end up like Caleb, who says, oh, give me the mountain. Give me the biggest giants that this place of promise has. Send me in there because I'm just as strong at 80 as I was at 40.

My strength hasn't diminished. My strength has always been in God. Send me in to take the giant.

Send me in to take the mountains. Send me into the worst of the worst places in the world. Send me in where there's despair and poverty and hopelessness.

Send me there because I have something from God that is going to conquer these strongholds of the devil. Haggai says, consider your ways. Now, Malachi is a plea to the Old Testament church.

It's the last word of God between before a 400 period of silence, which is finally broken by the voice of John the Baptist, who comes to introduce Jesus Christ. And it's a plea. And you see, the Old Testament church doesn't end up on a very victorious note.

Similarly, it can be said neither does the New Testament church. Now, I'm talking about the professing church. I'm not talking about the true church.

There is a true church that will always be victorious. They may not be the majority. They may only be a remnant, but they will be victorious.

They will walk in the power of God. They will know the anointing of the Holy Ghost. But there are many who are going to be deceived.

Many are being deceived in this generation. Much of what you see on television now, not all of it, thank God, but much of what you see is deception. And beloved, we could stand in this pulpit and name names, but it would do you no good.

You have to know the truth yourself, because we would have to name names every week because there is numerous as the sand by the seashore. One falls into immorality and pops off the airwaves and another one, another two or three take his place. It's a constant flow of false Christs.

You have to understand now you've got to know you have to have your own discernment. The Lord says through Malachi to the people in Malachi chapter one and verse two, he says, I have loved you, says the Lord. But yet you say, where in house thou loved us was not Esau, Jacob's brother, said the Lord.

Yet I love Jacob. And he says, I want you to consider how you have known my love when you sought me for the blessings that you knew that my presence would bring to you. I have loved you.

I have loved you. What an incredible thing to think that there will be people that will stand before the throne of Christ one day and hear these words. I have loved you.

I passionately loved you. You wanted me. Oh, you didn't come initially with an honest heart.

Jacob, Jacob's heart was wicked. It was deceptive, but but you wanted me. That was the issue.

There were issues in your heart that were not right, but you passionately wanted me. You wanted the blessing that comes from my presence and I gave it to you because I loved you. I loved you.

But then he goes on and says, but I hated Esau and I hid his mountains. I laid his mountains rather in his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness, whereas Edom said we're impoverished, but we'll return and build the desolate places. Thus said the Lord of hosts, they will build, but I'll throw it down.

They will call them the border, the wickedness and the people against whom the Lord has indignation forever. He said, consider now how I've thrown down the religion of self-seeking and those who likely esteem the call of their birthright. God says, please consider this.

He's crying out to his own people now before this great period of silence. It says, you know, the history, you know, it was a man who, who loved me and wanted my blessing that I blessed. And I, I came to him and I gave him all the promises that were made to Abraham and to Isaac.

But you saw what I did to Esau, a man who just lightly esteemed this right that he had to my presence. And he sold it off for the satisfying of his own flesh. And I said, this is a people that I have a controversy with forever, forever.

They will try to build my kingdom, but I will not let it be built. They'll build up, but I'll throw it down. My presence will never be there.

There will always be discord and controversy. There'll always be difficulty. They will build, but not of me, says the Lord.

I'll not be there. I'll not be part of it. And it will be known that I have indignation against this people forever.

Beloved, I want to tell you something. God almighty has a controversy with the self-seeking who used the name of Jesus Christ. It's an everlasting controversy.

Those who come to Christ and say, well, thank you for saving me. Now, Lord, I'm going to use this newfound relationship for my own glory. I'm going to use it for my own betterment, my own good, my own prosperity.

The whole concept of the cross and self-denial is shifted away, put away the whole issue of what Christ is all about. Why he came, why he died, what his mission is on the earth is put away. And now Christ, another Christ has come to me to make me a wonderful, blessed person, prosperous, famous, and all of these other things that the false Christs of our generation are offering to the people of God.

The Lord said, I've got a controversy with the priesthood. In chapter one, verse six, near the end of the verse, he said, oh, priests that despise my name. And you say, well, where in have we despised your name? He said in verse seven, you offer polluted bread upon my altar.

And you say, well, where have we polluted you? In that you say the table of the Lord is contemptible. In other words, he said, you've made the table of the Lord a place that is not to be desired, a contemptible place. In it you offer the blind for sacrifice.

Is it not evil? If you offer the layman sick, verse eight, is it not evil? Offer it now to your governor. And will he be pleased with you or accept your person, saith the Lord of hosts? And now he said, I pray you beseech God that he will be gracious unto us. And this has been by your means.

Will he regard your person, saith the Lord of hosts? Verse 10, he says, who is there even among you that would shut the doors for not? And neither do you kindle a fire on my altar for not. In other words, God is saying, who among you, he's talking to the priesthood, would get up and even close the door for no reason. And he said similarly, you don't come and put something on my altar without a reason, without a purpose.

I require something of you. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts. Neither will I accept an offering at your hand for from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.

My name shall be great among the Gentiles and in every place incense shall be offered to my name and a pure offering for my name shall be great among the heathens, saith the Lord of hosts. But you have profaned it in that you say the table of the Lord is polluted, the fruit thereof, even as meat is contemptible. Now here's the issue.

The priests have made the place of God, his table, his altar, as it is contemptible by allowing that which God had rejected to be offered on it. They had, in a sense, reduced the standard. I don't know how else to say it, but they had they had allowed people to come in and offer blind and lame sacrifices to God, excuses as it is for not living righteously, that you could see this constant parade of disobedience coming into the temple.

God sees this. It is it is very clear that the Lord said, if you give something to me, it's the best you have. You give me the best ram.

You give me the best goat. You give me the best turtle dove. You give me that which is without spot and without blemish.

In other words, you come to me honestly with the best you have. But this priesthood, because of their spiritual laziness, they didn't really want to see God. They'd lost the heart of God.

They now told the people, well, just just come. And there they were giving this false comfort, this false peace to people who are full of disobedience at the altar of God, offering that which God says, I will not accept it. I will not bring into my kingdom those who refuse to forgive.

I will not, irrespective of what any false Christ may try to tell the people. Christ said, I will not. Again, in chapter two and verse seventeen, he says to the priesthood, you have wearied the Lord with your words.

You say, wherein have we wearied him when you say everyone that does evil is good in the sight of the Lord and he delights in him? Or where is the God of judgment? In other words, there is no God of judgment. Oh, folks, God is a God of love. He will not judge anybody.

Oh, beloved, listen to me. God is a God of love, but he is a just God. He will judge his own.

He makes it very clear in the scriptures that the day of judgment is exactly that it is a day of judgment. He will judge his church. Some sins will go beforehand and others will follow after, but he will judge it all because he is a righteous God and he is a righteous judge.

You've taken away the fear of God, he said to them. You tell everyone that does evil that he's good in the sight of the Lord. I remember being in a service years ago.

I just dropped in out of curiosity. Somebody told me there's a great prophet has come to our city. You must come and hear him.

Initially, I felt I wanted nothing to do with it, but they persisted. Oh, you must come and hear this great prophet of God. And so I went into this meeting and I sat there and then this so-called prophet called people forward.

He said, now I want you all to come and line up. And he says, I'm going to have a word for you. And you don't have to be afraid.

I never have anything bad to say about anybody. I was incredible. So I just watched this parade of people.

The Holy Spirit was speaking to me. A couple came up and they're living in immorality. And I saw him laid his hands.

You're going to have a wonderful ministry. You're going to have miracles. You're going to be all over the world.

You're going to be doing this. And it was all I could do in my gut, not to just stand up and scream. Here's this false prophet standing and telling those that are evil that they're good and that no harm is going to come to them.

And he's presenting another Christ. You understand he's standing, saying this is Christ. You can live in sin and there's no consequence to it.

You're going to go to heaven. You're not only that, you're going to have a miracle ministry. In other words, God is endorsing your lifestyle.

One after another, one after another, one after another coming. And I remember I'd had enough of this and I got up to leave. And as I got up to leave, I heard my name called and the pastor of the church had seen me in the back.

And he said, come forward. And I thought, oh, God, I don't want to go. But I didn't.

This man was a friend of mine. I didn't want to embarrass him. And so I came forward.

And now I was the only one that didn't get a good word that day. And the man stood before me and he started saying, repent, repent. You know, everyone else is OK.

I have to repent. I looked into his eyes and I remember thinking, you devil. Now, it's not funny.

This man's standing before the body of Jesus Christ and he's leading them astray. And I remember thinking God is going to deal with you. The Lord struck him dumb a few months later and he lost his speech, as I understand, for the rest of his life.

God's going to deal with you, leading and misleading the people of God and presenting a false Christ before them. Where is the God of judgment, they say? There was a false prophet came to New York City just prior to the 11th of September 2001. He had a crusade in the city.

Now, please don't try to figure the name out. It's no point because there are many of them. There'll be many more in the coming days.

Had a crusade in the city and I'm told, had a camera crew walking down one of the main streets here in Manhattan saying, God is not going to judge New York City. God loves New York City. All this talk about judgment.

I know exactly where he was coming from. There's been a ward that's come from this church by a man of God that was sent here to warn the city of a coming day of judgment. Oh, God's not going to.

I remember thinking, I wonder if the Twin Towers were in the background as this man spoke. You see, just before judgment, there will always be a rise in false prophets. You see it all the way through the Old Testament.

Whenever God was about to judge his people, there would be a multitude of false prophets arise, false Christ demonically inspired to stand and to lull the people into a spiritual complacency right at the time of the deepest, their deepest need of God to get through the coming days. There'll be this voice that rises to pacify them and put them to sleep. God loves you.

God loves the city. God will not judge the city. Now, since that day, the towers have come down.

The economy is beginning to fail. You're starting to see the signs now of an entire nation that has rejected God from its knowledge, pushed Christ out of its borders. You're seeing now the fruit of it come in at all different forms.

Where's the God of judgment, they say. And the Lord says, I have a controversy about this because I'm right here. I've never left under their ministries.

Chapter two, verse 10 says, Have we not all one father? Have not God created us? And why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother? So here are treacherous people coming to the altars under their ministry, treacherous dealers. People are not dealing honestly with one another. People who have issues of the heart that are not willing to deal with.

And here they are coming to the altar under these ministries and everything is fine. There's no God of judgment anymore. No fear of the Lord.

God loves everybody. Come just as you are. So here they come.

Unforgiveness, hearts full of unforgiveness, fraudulent financial dealings, oppressing those that they have advantage over. All these types of issues are going on. Also, verse 11, he says, Judah has dealt

treacherously and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem.

For Judah has profaned the holiness of the Lord, which he loved and has married the daughter of a strange God. So here is unchallenged idolatry. These people are coming in.

Their hearts are full of idolatry. They have intermarried, as it is, with the ways of the nation about them. They are so interdispersed.

Their minds, their thoughts are the same as the people who are going to hell all around them. They're being entertained by that which entertains a perishing society. They are sitting with the same reasonings of perishing minds all around them.

They are intermarried. They're interwoven. Their root systems go deep together underneath the ground, and God Almighty knows that they'll not be able to stand in the days of difficulty that are ahead of them.

And also in verse 13, he says, And this have you done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears and weeping and crying, insomuch that he regards not the offering any more, or receives it with good will at your hand. But you say, Why? How? Wherefore? Because the Lord has been witness against thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, yet she is thy companion and the wife of thy covenant. Under this ministry, under this Christ, immorality and divorce were rampant among the people of God.

I've heard it said, I haven't seen the report myself, but I've heard it said that the divorce rate in the church is now matching or even exceeding the divorce rate in the world around us. It's an incredible thing when you think of that. And this is the controversy that God had with his people in the Old Testament.

He said, Here is a ministry now of priests that are letting treacherous people come to my altar. The idolatry in their hearts is unchallenged, and it's resulting in an immorality. It's resulting in a breakdown of family love.

It's resulting in the people who just simply are living their Christian life for their own selfish interests, even if it means the laying down of family ties, even if it means walking away from obligations and vows that were made at an altar to a husband or to a wife because it's not convenient any more. And he says, I have an issue with this. I have a controversy with this.

Chapter two, again, in verse five, he talks about the priesthood, which is yours is the name of Levi. He said, My covenant was with him of life and peace. And I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me and was afraid before my name.

The law of truth was in his mouth and iniquity was not found in his lips. And he walked with me in peace and equity and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge and they should seek the law at his mouth.

He is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But you're departed out of the way. He's speaking to the priesthood again.

And you've caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, said the Lord of hosts. God said, I had a priesthood and I called a priesthood to me and they were to live in my life and have my peace upon them.

They were to walk under my blessing and they were to turn people from iniquity. Iniquity being defined as that which hinders the life of God in them. This is the call of the priesthood.

The priesthood is to walk with God. Priests of the Lord are to stand in pulpits throughout the country and to say this is what Christ is. This is a relationship with Christ.

And the very identifiable characteristic of the ministry is that they will turn you from iniquity. They will speak to you about issues in your heart that are blocking, obstructing your view of Christ and blocking the life of God from you. This is the ministry.

Every other ministry is another Christ. You have to understand this. It's time, beloved.

It's time. It's time to come out and be separate. It's time to put them away.

It's time to turn them off. You've got to get away for your soul's sake. You cannot play in this playground anymore.

You've got to get out. In every generation there are voices that God will raise. Noah was one of them.

I could hear him standing and warning the people. The day of incredible difficulty is coming. Prepare your house.

Separate yourself from the wicked actions and thoughts and ideas of this society and even those that profess to know God. Separate yourself. But so few were willing to make the sacrifice.

So few were willing to say, I will obey God. I will step away from it. Beloved, it doesn't take a lot of discernment to know who is of Christ and who is not.

If in your heart you want God, if in your heart you say, oh Jesus, I want your life. God, I want whatever that brings to me. It will bless me on one hand, but it will cause me pain on another.

But I want it. I want the sweet and I want the bitter. I want the leading of God.

If it sends me to my death, I want the leading of God in my life. Chapter 1 again, verse 13, he says, this priesthood has taken away the sense of victory and awe that comes from a life which approaches God in truth and has brought them under a curse which all deceptive hearts always fall under. And he says, this have you done? Oh, I've got the wrong chapter.

I'm sorry. Chapter 113, he says, you said also, behold, what a weariness it is. That's the priesthood.

You ever been in a church where it's so boring, it's hard to stay awake, where the priest gets up or the minister and he's got no passion for God, no passion for your soul, just a timekeeper in the house of God. As long as the doors are, as long as the place is semi filled and the offering bucket has enough money in it, you just tell the people whatever they want to hear. But you never noticed it puts you to sleep.

You ever noticed how weary it is, how tiring it is. You have to fight with everything in you just to stay awake and wonder why is it like this in the house of God? How come I go to a sports game, I have no problem staying awake because it's exciting. There's something at least going on.

I go to the house of God and it's so boring, it's so weary. And this is the ministry. It's the fruit of a priesthood that doesn't know Christ.

They're not shut in with God. There's no Christ life in them. There's no changing from image to an image to glory.

They have no message. There's no message. Oh, yes, there are principles that will work from the word of God, but there's no message, no passion.

I believe you can identify many who are not called to the pulpit by their lack of discernment and their passionlessness for the things of God, the passionlessness for the souls of humankind that they're ministering to, the lack of understanding of what the call of God in their life is even about. He says, you make it a weariness and you've snuffed it, it says the Lord of hosts and brought that which was torn and the lame and the sick and you brought an offering. And should I accept this of your hand, says the Lord, but cursed be the deceiver, which has in his flock of mail and vows to sacrifice to the Lord, a corrupt thing.

I'm a great king, says the Lord of hosts. And my name is dreadful among the heathen. God says, you, you have caused the people under your passionless ministry to fall under a curse.

You've taught them that it's boring to serve God. And you've made them so lazy in spirit and lazy in their heart that you can hardly get them to stay for an hour in the house of God. They come in and bring a lame sacrifice and bring that which is blind and bring their excuses.

But there's no sense of God's life in the place. No desire to walk out changed, no desire to follow Christ and live for him and honor him in their generation. Four hundred years of silence come.

Four hundred years now after God's speaking through Malachi of quietness, no voice until finally I believe there's a cry comes into the heart of at least some say, oh God, I want to hear you. God, I'm tired of all this. I'm tired of the confusion.

I'm tired of all these empty voices saying, I'm Christ. I want to hear your voice. I want to hear the word of God that created the universe.

I want to hear the word of God that said it is finished. I want to hear the word of God that spoke to bread and multiplied. I want to hear the word of God that called Lazarus out of the grave.

I want to hear it now. Behold, verse three said, I will send my messenger. You will never see Christ without first receiving the message.

Never, never. There are people all over the world that are looking for Christ. They're running around the last 10, 15 years in the charismatic movement has been a disgrace running around looking for Christ, but not wanting the message.

Running around where people have portrayed Christ in such a foolish manner that it's it's mind boggling. It's tragic. It's terrifying.

As if the Holy Spirit manifests as an animal. Credible, the blindness that has come into this generation running around, not wanting the message that has to precede the message, the revelation of Christ. But he says in chapter three, I will send my messenger.

I will send him to you. If you want me, I'll send my messenger. And you got to hear the message first before you're going to know me before you're going to have the revelation.

And he will prepare the way before me. The messenger comes to open your heart. I'm a messenger today.

Brother Dave is a messenger. Pastor Neil, Pastor Patrick, we are messengers sent by God to prepare the way we can't do the divine work, though we can prepare the way we speak what God is speaking. You and I simply agree.

Our hearts open. Then God comes in his power and begins to do something supernatural. But you have to hear the message.

He said, I'll send the messenger before me. And he said, then the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. Now, understand something.

We are the temple of the Holy Ghost today. When you receive the message. When the messenger can come and say, this is what needs to change and you open your heart and say, God, I agree with you.

The Bible says he suddenly comes to the temple. It's not 25 steps to victory. He suddenly comes.

The power of God, the quickening faith arises. A man just all of a sudden comes to himself, says, I don't have to live like this anymore. It's it's the very same thing that happened to Lazarus when all of a sudden he heard the voice calling him and he had a choice.

I don't have to lay here anymore. I don't have to be dead anymore. I can get up.

I can walk out of this place. He suddenly comes suddenly. Suddenly there's a quickening in the heart.

I've been in services at times where there have been issues in my heart and my heart has been open to God and God has spoken a word and suddenly the victory comes. Suddenly faith arises. Suddenly strength comes.

Suddenly there's a tenacity that gets in your spirit. It says, devil, I'm not, I don't have to bow down before you in this area of my life anymore. I have the victory in Christ.

I don't have to present this lame duck sacrifice to my God. He came to set me free. He said, the truth will set me free.

Suddenly, even the messenger of the covenant, you see, there's a messenger of the covenant that comes. God said, I make promises, but you've got to hear the messenger first, whom you delight in. Behold, he shall come.

Then we ask ourselves now the question, who is the messenger? Who speaks for Christ? Oh, he says, verse two, he says, but who may abide in the day of his coming? In other words, who will remain intact? Who will bring in his deception and not have it challenged? Who will be standing there with his blind lamb and not have it pointed out? Oh, no, there'll be a change. When you are hearing from God, when God's word is being opened, there will be a change. Hallelujah.

Who may abide in the day of his coming and who shall stand when he appears? Now here's the ministry of the messenger. He is like a refiners fire and like Fuller's soap. Now refiners fire is obvious.

It's a things get hot and that which is unlike the gold or the precious metal of Christ in your life. All of a sudden starts floating to the surface. You try to push it down, but the messenger drives it back up again.

You can't get away from it. He doesn't let you escape because he loves your soul. He loves your soul.

I love you in Christ. Pastor Dave loves you. The pastors love you in this church.

We want to see you in heaven. We want to see you around the throne of God for eternity. We want to see your life amount to something on this side of eternity.

We want to know that you're finding Christ. That's all we care about, that you find him and walk with him and love him. Hallelujah.

Who may abide? And he's like Fuller's soap. You know what the definition, the Hebrew definition is Fuller's soap is trampling with the feet contaminated clothing. That's what it means.

It's the strongest soap that was available and clothing that was contaminated in the Old Testament was put in a bucket and Fuller's soap was added to it and then whoever was in charge trampled that clothing and the messenger will trample false righteousness, trample religiousness, trample self-images that are not built on the truth of Jesus Christ. He will trample it. People may not like that, but he will do that because he's come to make a way for the presence of Christ.

Then he says, shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant? Verse four, unto the Lord as in the days of old, as in former years. And he said, now I will come near to you to judgment. He says, you want me and I will come, but I will judge everything in you that is unlike me.

You want my presence, but you won't have it if you're not willing to live in truth. I'll come, but I will come in judgment and I'll be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against the false swears and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, the fatherless, and the turn aside the stranger from his right. And that don't fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

I will be a swift witness against all of it. God says first in you and me, I will be a swift witness against that which is error. And then I'll be a swift witness against those who are leading you into error.

I will show you the spirit of people around you when your heart is right. When you are pursuing me in truth, I will come near to you to judgment. Amazing.

Amazing. There's so many people out there that say, oh, I want to go to a place where God draws in and I just feel so good. Oh, he comes close to me and I just feel fuzzy and warm and happy.

And God is just all around me. And we can all do strange things and just have a great old time. God says, no, you want my presence.

I will come, but I'm the spirit of truth. I will come and judge in you that which is unlike me. You know, there's so many today that call themselves prophets.

It's it's disgraceful. Imagine Jeremiah one more time coming back to the New Testament church. I wonder how many would go to his meetings.

Now, chapter three, verse seven. He said, even from the days of your fathers, you're gone away from my ordinances and you've not kept them. But the Lord says, return to me and I'll return to you, saith the Lord of hosts.

But you said, how? How will we return? Then he said, will a man rob God that you've robbed me? But you say, how have we robbed you? He says, in tithes and offerings. Now, this scripture is always probably used about offerings. But if you look at Malachi in the entire context, it's not just about money.

It's about the thanksgiving offering. It's there's so many offerings that are represented in the Old Testament. It's about all these offerings that you were supposed to bring to me without spot.

And it's the offering of a life that says, God, I'm yielded to your purposes. It's the it's the offering of thankfulness for change has come in for change that have been broken in my family, my home. It's it's the offering of praise for the good things that God has done.

It's the offering of thankfulness for the produce of the field that has come into my house and into my life. It's all these offerings. It's the offering of thankfulness for God's past faithfulness and how he's dealt so well with me in spite of the fact that I deserved his justice.

It's all these offerings. He said, if you want to come back to me, basically just come back with an honest heart. Just come back into my presence with a desire to do what is right.

That's all I ask. That's the whole issue. Just come into my presence saying, God, I want to do what is right.

I want to come to you again. I want to be a servant that can come into your presence and lift up my hands and trust you for the future and lift up my hands and say, God Almighty, wherever you send me, I will go. Whatever you ask of me, I will do.

Lord, make it plain to my heart. Show me, God, reveal your life in me and through me and God, I will be delighted to live for you and to serve you. He said, come in with these things.

Then in verse 10, he says, bring your tithes into the storehouse. And he said, I will open to you the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing. There will not be room enough to receive it.

Actually, when you look it up in the Hebrew, the word blessing doesn't even refer to money. I suppose it could. But the blessing is basically the life of God.

That's the issue. I'll pour out my life to you and you won't have room to receive it. I'll break forth in you on every side.

If you'll come to me with an obedient heart, if you'll come into my house and not just sing empty songs and pray empty prayers, but if you'll come in with a life that desires to live for me and want to walk in truth, he said, I will pour out my life on you. That's the only blessing there's not room enough to contain, folks. There's only one blessing I know that is that deep and that wide and that powerful.

We can contain finances, but we cannot contain the life of God. It is so incredible, this life of God. He says, I'll pour it out upon you.

And he says, I'll open the windows of heaven. In other words, I'll give you an open revelation. I'll show you who I am.

I'll speak into your heart. I'll take you out of your weakness. I'll take you out of your depression.

I'll take you out of your struggle. I'll take you out of all the death that's been spoken over your life. I'll make you what you could never be.

I'll send you where you could never go. I'll pour out a blessing and there's not room to contain it. You want to know why? Because every day it still comes.

There's still more mercy. There's no room to contain it. It has to be given out.

It has to blow through the vessel. It has to be released. There'll be such a life poured into you that it will have to be released.

You'd burst if you tried to keep it inside. You might be the most timid person in this sanctuary, but God said I'll pour such a boldness in you that you will burst to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. He said, I'll rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he will not destroy the fruit of your ground.

In other words, the devil will not come and take away that which you're gaining. You'll be moving forward. And as you go, there'll be new fruit and new life.

And I'll rebuke the devourer because you are approaching me in truth. You'll never be stepping backwards, always forward, always growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, always changing into the image and glory of Christ. Hallelujah.

Able to say with an honest heart, I know Christ. I know him. And you can trust the words that God's put into my heart and into my life.

You can go to your family. You can say, I know Christ to your children. I know him.

I know him. And you can know him too. And he said, neither shall your vine cast your fruit before the time in the field.

In other words, there'll be no quick and impulsive and fruitless Christianity in your life. I will lead you. I will guide you.

I will order your steps and you'll not go into places of unprofitableness. You will hear a voice behind you saying, this is the way, walk in it. But you'll not cast your fruit before it's time.

You'll know my voice. You'll not be out there doing fruitless works, speaking words that fall on deaf ears. I'll lead you.

I'll guide you to the places I want you to go. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. I praise God for that with all of my heart and all nations shall call you blessed.

For you shall be a delightful land, said the Lord of hosts. And the word blessed in the Hebrew text means led in a straight path. All nations shall look at you and say, here is a people who are led in a straight path.

Hallelujah. A people who know where they're going. A people who know what God has for their lives.

A people who are not of this world or of another world. They live in it, but they're not of it. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Now I'm going to close with this.

Chapter 3, verse 16. Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another. They spoke often.

What do you think they said? In other words, there's a turning. The people feared God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

The fear of the Lord keeps us from abusing an understanding of God's covenant of power to our lives. And they spoke often one to another. What do you think they talked about? I really meditated on that this week.

What do they talk about? They spoke often. I think it's this. I think it's calling one another up.

I think it's fellowship in the church. They say, I got to tell you what God has done for me. I got to tell you what he's doing.

I thought it was, I thought yesterday was as good as it's ever going to get. But I got to tell you what has become of my life today. I got to tell you what he's doing, where he's leading me.

I had fellowship with a couple of men in the maintenance of this church this week, and their lives are exactly what this scripture says. Pastor, we got to tell you what God is doing to us. It's amazing.

And they speak often one to another. Often because often because it happens every morning. It happens every day.

There's something new of God. There's some new blessing. There's some new strength, some new revelation of Jesus Christ that comes into our life.

Amazing. And they began to speak often one to another. And the Lord heard it.

Hallelujah. He hearkened to it. And a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and thought upon his name.

And they shall be mine, said the Lord of hosts in the day when I make up my jewels. And the context of that is when in the day that I am making up that which is mine, that's that which is to adorn me forever. It's to adorn me.

It's to be a crown for me, Christ said, for all of eternity. And these that think upon me, these that are walking in fellowship, he says, they will be the ones that I am building. And there will be a sense of expectancy come into their hearts all when others are scorning God and looking in wrong directions.

They'll be looking to eternity. They're not looking to the things of this world other than to glorify Christ in their life. He says, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son that serves him.

Verse 18, he says, Then you will return and discern between the righteous and the wicked and between him that serves God and him that serves him not. Then you will return and discern. You will know.

The fellowship of Christ. The fellowship of Christ, you'll know what it's about. You'll know when a man or woman is speaking for God and when they're not, because you are growing in that grace.

You're walking in that truth. You're not coming to the house with a wrong heart, trying to get God to bless it, but you're walking in truth and the miraculous power of God is being released in you now. And you begin to know those who are not walking in it, because when they open their mouths, there's so little, if anything, of the true Christ in it.

You'll return and you will discern, because you have experienced him. He's at the very center of your heart, the very center of your fellowship. The New Testament writer John says, if we walk in the light as he, as Christ is in the light, we have fellowship, one with another.

And the blood, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. We have fellowship. We have a growth with one another in Christ.

We have fellowship with Christ in each other with this awareness that the mercy of God is covering us. The power of God is carrying us. The grace of God is making us.

The goodness of God is leading us. It's not about the things of this life in this world. It's about the things of God's kingdom.

Hallelujah. Now, Father, I pray today. I pray for this church.

I pray for the church worldwide. I pray God for great mercy to be on those, especially who are being ruined in the house of God this very moment, ruined, dead and dulled to truth by false Christ. I pray that you give us the grace to never try to present a lie to you and have you bless it.

I ask, Lord, that we be a people who deal honestly with you and rightly, people that you can work through, change and manifest your life in. I pray that you keep us. I pray that we have a wholesome fear of God in our hearts.

I don't ever want to lose the fear of the Lord. I ask you in my heart, Lord, that you give me a wholesome fear because one day I do stand before you and one day I do account. I account for every name that's in this sanctuary today, what I have done and how I've represented you.

And we account for our families. We account for our children. We account for our neighbors.

We account for the testimony that should be in us in our generation. What did we do with it? How did we use it? What Christ was our Christ? God help us now. Keep us.

Prepare us for the days of difficulty ahead. Lord, you say in an hour all these false voices are going to perish. You're going to be a swift witness against them and all who have followed them.

But you say there's a people who will arise with healing in their wings and they will go out as calves at the stall. There will be such life, such joy, such purpose. Father, I pray God with all my heart that that be the testimony of every child of God in this house.

Use us for your glory. Father, I ask it in Jesus' name. Now listen to me carefully.

I want to give an altar call. I want to give an altar call for everybody in this house. Education Annex as well.

You can go forward between the screens who has attempted to present a lie to God, a falseness, an area that you've resisted God. You've said, Lord, I don't want to deal with this. But God said, Christ said, if you want the revelation of me, you have to deal with it in truth.

Those that have not wanted to forgive, who are not dealing honestly in financial issues, you've held back from God coming into his presence to take but never to give. And the Holy Spirit will take it even far beyond my words and give you the power to say, Jesus, I want to go beyond where I've been. I want your

life to be manifested both to me and through me.

I want to be part of the fellowship of Jesus Christ. If you're a sinner and you need to be saved, I want to invite you to come to this altar. If you're a backslider and you need to come home, do it quickly.

Do it quickly. God said, just come to me with an honest heart and prove me. And that's my challenge to you today.

He said, prove me. Prove me. You come with an honest heart and watch what will happen to you.

That's all I require. An honest heart. Say, God, this is what I am.

This is, I'm not trying to justify it. I'm not trying to bring it to you and get you to sanctify it. This is what I am.

This is what's in my heart. The Lord says, you come to me with an honest heart and prove me. He says he will open prison doors.

He will give sight to the spiritually blind. He will release those that have been bruised in heart. He will allow you to understand the gospel.

He will give you victory and freedom. He said, prove me now. And that's all I can do.

I can issue a challenge to you, but I believe it's from the heart of God. I know it is today. Prove me.

Prove me. The Christ that I know will not fail you. You will be changed.

God will make you into another person and set you free. If this is in your heart today, the Holy Spirit is drawing you as we stand. Would you make your way to this altar? We're going to pray together today.

We're going to believe God. Up in the balcony, you can go to either exit and make your way down. Main sanctuary, slip out, make your way down.

Pull in closely, please, if you will. And we're going to believe God. We're going to believe God for freedom.

We're going to believe for prisons to open, lives to change. We're going to believe God to begin to do the miraculous in your life, change you, give you hope. This is Christ.

This is the fellowship of Christ. It may not look like much at this altar, but these are the miracles of tomorrow. These are the miraculous lives that God is going to produce in his grace, in his strength.

All he requires is an honest heart. I want to give an opportunity for people here this morning who could say, Pastor, I'm not saved. I'm not a Christian.

I live in sin. But today I'm afraid. I have a realization that there is an eternity that I must face.

And I have no hope of facing it without terror, without Christ. But today I want to yield my life to Jesus Christ. I want to confess that I'm a sinner and I need a savior.

And listen to me, there'll never be a greater decision you make in all of your life because the decision you make on this one issue determines your destiny eternally. It determines the course of your life. To confess that you're a sinner.

Oh, the incredible arrogance of man to harden his heart against the holy God who died on the cross for his soul. There'll be no arguments on that day because there'll be nothing to say. They will stand, every man will stand and see the cross and what will he say when the love of God for his soul is so manifested that he resisted it and chose instead of the love of God and a life eternally with Christ to live with the temporary pleasures of unsatisfying sin.

What a foolish way to live life. The hand of God reaches out to you today, calls you to him. And if you can say unashamedly today, pastor, I am the sinner.

I need a savior. I'm going to ask you to raise your hand with me right now, wherever you are, balcony, go ahead and do it. Main sanctuary, education, edX.

Don't be ashamed. Raise your hand high. People encourage others.

You want to receive Christ as your savior. You want to surrender your life to him. Hallelujah.

Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God. I'm going to pray a simple prayer.

You'll never be the same again. God's going to use you. You'll never be the same.

It's going to touch your life. Let's pray all together for these that are coming into the kingdom of God today. Lord Jesus Christ, I am a sinner.

Jesus, thank you that you gave your life for me, died on a cross to pay the price for all of my sins. I'm sorry for living in sin and I don't want to live in sin anymore. I trust you to give me the power by faith to be able to live a new life that brings honor and glory to you.

I have heard about your promises for me this day and I believe it and I come trusting that as I am honest before you, you will be honest with me and give me all that you have promised me. This day I open my heart. Jesus Christ, son of God who died for me, I invite you into my life to be my Lord and my Savior from this day forward.

I believe that you died for me. I believe on the third day you were raised from the dead by the spirit of God as living proof that my trust in God this day is not in vain. I believe that from this moment forward I am a new creation in Jesus Christ.

I am saved from the penalty of all of my sin. I believe that when I die I am going to heaven to live with God. I believe that you will give me the power to live a new life on this side of eternity, a life of truth, a life of righteousness that will honor you.

I believe this is an exciting life. This is a wondrous life. This is a life of God that will be now lived out in me and through me.

Thank you for saving me. Thank you for saving me. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Now for others, pray with me please. Lord Jesus, forgive me for coming into your presence and trying to offer you things which you cannot accept because they are not truth. I thank you for sending a message to stomp all over wrong righteousness, wrong living, wrong perspectives of God.

I thank you, Lord, for tearing this down that you may build me up now, give me hope, and give me new life in Christ. I thank you, Lord. All you require of me is an honest heart, and then you say you will open heaven to me.

You will pour a blessing into my life. You will lead me. You will guide me.

You will give me strength. You will give me purpose, and my life will honor you. You say, prove me in this.

So, Lord, I'm here, and I believe you with all my heart. I'm going to have a testimony. I'm going to call up a Christian friend.

I'm going to be able to talk with them about all the things that every day you are doing in my life. I will be part of the fellowship of Jesus Christ. Oh, God, thank you.

God, thank you. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

This is the conclusion of the message.

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