

Gold Tried in the Fire

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking true gold, a pure and willing heart, and being guided by the Holy Spirit to build a Christian life that glorifies God.

Duration: 1:07:00

Scripture: Psalm 50:15-17, Isaiah 56:7, Jeremiah 7:8-11, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 21:12-13, Revelation 3:17-19

Topics: "Laodicean Church"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher expresses his deep concern and disappointment with the modern gospel being preached on television. He believes that it is a disgrace to the name of Jesus Christ and that the true gospel is hidden behind false prosperity and peace. He warns that a time will come when the rug will be pulled out from underneath this false gospel, and only that which cannot be shaken will remain. The preacher urges his audience to seek what is of eternal value and not settle for temporary satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of understanding and joining in the work of Jesus. He also cautions against following false preachers who do not address sin, holiness, the cross, and yielding to God's purposes. The sermon references Mark chapter 11, where Jesus curses a fruitless fig tree as a representation of religion. The preacher concludes by surrendering himself to be a vessel for God's message and praying for God's kingdom to come.

Transcript

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However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. If you'll turn in your Bibles to the book of Revelation, we're going to start there, but I'm not staying there. We're going to be traveling quite extensively through the scriptures tonight.

I have a message that was given to me during our time of prayer and fasting this week. It's called Gold Tried in the Fire. Gold Tried in the Fire.

Let's pray together. Father, Lord, I just want to step back from this pulpit tonight and acknowledge that I need you. Lord, I acknowledge that this is your church.

These are your people. This is your word. This is your kingdom.

This is your plan. This night was planned by you before the world was created and you had something in your mind about it. You had something that you wanted to accomplish in the lives of your people.

Lord, I surrender my life tonight just to be a vessel that you can pour your mind in and through, that you can quicken by the power of the Holy Spirit. God, you can override my weakness. Lord, you can touch my mind and I'm asking you, God, to remove me out of this message and to speak your heart and your mind to the people that you want to speak to tonight.

Lord, we want your kingdom to come. We want your word. We want your will to be done.

We don't want anything of man in this house. God, if you don't build it, we labor in vain. I'm not interested in empty labor tonight.

I'm asking you, Holy Spirit, to come and literally animate my heart and animate my mind and my voice and everything about me. Just come and animate me and use me as a vessel. Help the people to get their eyes off of man and to understand that you, Holy Spirit, are the one who speaks to the church.

God, give us ears to hear what you are speaking. Lord, you are speaking something to every heart and to every life. Give us the ears to hear it.

God, give me the ability to convey it. Help me to get out of the way of this word. And, Father, I thank you for it.

In Jesus' mighty name. Gold tried in the fire. Revelation chapter 3. Now, this is a scripture where the Lord is speaking to a church called Laodicea, the last that he addresses of seven churches in the book of Revelation.

Most of us who have been in the church for any amount of time are familiar with this church. This is the one that he says is lukewarm. He said, this is the one that if there's not, I'm standing at the door.

I've been pushed outside as it is of all your religious activity. All of this stuff is going on. This is a church with a testimony of increase in wealth and gold.

And he said, I'm outside the door of all of this and I'm standing. The incredible humility of God just sometimes overwhelms me. The God who created the world would stand outside and knock on the door of his own church.

He said, but I'm out there and I'm looking for people who will open the door of their heart to me. And if they will, I will come in and I will sit down and we will, in a sense, he says, sup, in other words, I will open substance, food to you. And we will commune with one another.

And he said, I will take away, in a sense, I will give you an overcoming power to overcome this thing that is gripping this entire church called Laodicea. And many commentators feel that Laodicea typifies the end time church age that perhaps we're beginning to live in now. And Jesus says to this church, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, in verse 16 of Revelation chapter three, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

Now, the spewing, in a sense, is that I will no longer testify of you before the Father. If we understand that Christ is before the throne of God right now and he's confessing us before the Father, and by virtue of that confession or intercession, we are accepted with God the Father fully and completely, as if we have never sinned. And here is a church, he says, well, I will no longer, the spewing out, in a sense, is I will no longer confess you before the Father.

So this is a serious issue. Serious enough that Christ says I will literally stop confessing you. The testimony that's on my lips of you will no longer be there.

It will be spewn away as it is out of my mouth. Because, he says, thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

Verse 18, he says, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire. That's the name of this message tonight. That thou mayest be rich and white raiment.

That thou mayest be clothed and the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. And anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Now, beloved, the lukewarmness of this church was evidenced by the fact, the apparent fact, at least, that they were content as long as their own outward needs were met. There was no real hunger of God in these people beyond this.

Their testimony was just simply this. We're rich, I'm increased with goods, and I have need of nothing. Incredible when you think of it.

As long as everything on the outside is okay, that's fine with me. This is the testimony of this church. I have money in the bank, I've got a job, I'm healthy and I prosper, and all these things seem to be in order, therefore, I have need of nothing.

Absolutely nothing. I'm complete and entire just because the exterior around me seems to be provided for. That was the testimony of the Laodicean church.

Now, Christ says to this church in verse 18, I'm paraphrasing him, he says, but you are so lacking the cloak of Christ which could be yours. He says, I want to put a clothing upon you. I want to do something to you and through you that would be an evidence and a testimony to the world of the reality of the fact that I have risen from the dead and sit at the right hand of all power.

I want to open your eyes. I want to give you eyes to have and open your eyes to a kingdom and the glory of that kingdom that extends so far beyond your own needs. Then he reaches out to Laodicea and he says, I counsel you because I'm sure Laodicea had many counselors, probably a church of all kinds of theories.

The apostle Paul says in the last days that people are no longer going to endure sound doctrine, but they're going to be turned to fables. If you understand the definition of the word fables, these are not necessarily lies. These are stories with a good meaning attached to them.

And they might even be true, but they really have nothing to do with the kingdom of God. They could even be stories about Christ. We're living in a church age now where they're inventing stories about Christ all the time that have no appearance at all to the Christ of the Bible.

They're inventing and reinventing God. Absolute foolishness. And the people don't want to hear true counsel that comes from the heart of God.

And now they're turning to heaps of teachers who will just simply tell them what they want to hear and invent stories with good morals even about Jesus Christ. Tragic, absolutely tragic. I tried to counsel a young man on Friday night here in this sanctuary who has come through one of these churches that tells fables about God.

And he has embedded such confusion that it's so difficult to get through that hodgepodge of confusion because there's no quest for the real truth as Christ has revealed himself in the Scriptures. Jesus says, you've sought the wrong gold. There's another that you should be seeking.

It has been proven by God and it is pure. I counsel you to buy of me gold dried in the fire. There is another gold and the gold that you're seeking.

I think of in past years the modern charismatic generation has been so lusting after gold that they're seeing gold dust in the air and running around talking about gold fillings in their teeth. To what end? To what purpose? Tell me what is the purpose? You walk out to a man who's struggling or going through difficulty and disease or the tragedies that affect humanity throughout their life and tell him I was in his service and saw gold in the air. So what? So what? What does it do for him? What is the point? What is the purpose? You see, the Latter-day Saint church was completely satisfied by the exterior.

Completely satisfied. As long as there's something in the bank and something on my back and I have a semblance of health and I've got this testimony of being healthy and happy all the time, everything is fine. But Jesus says, no, you've been seeking the wrong gold.

There is a gold that has been tried by God. It is pure. And I counsel you to buy this gold that you may be rich.

Now, go back to 1 Chronicles, please, if you will. Chapter 28 in the Old Testament, right after Kings. In Chronicles, go to chapter 28.

In 1 Chronicles, this is the story of Solomon being commissioned by God through his father David to build a temple that was a place where the Lord was to be glorified. Now, keep in mind, we're talking about gold that's been tried in the fire. Chapter 28, verse 6. And he said to me, Solomon, thy son, he shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son and I will be his father.

Moreover, I will establish his kingdom forever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments as at this day. Now, keep in mind that the inference there is that Solomon was obeying God. He was seeking God.

The Bible does definitively say that God loved Solomon. He was a man who was seeking the heart of God. And God spoke to David and said, if Solomon continues to pursue me as he is this day, I will establish his kingdom forever.

Now, therefore, in this site, verse 8, of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord and in the audience of our God, keep and seek all the commandments of the Lord your God, that you may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance, for your children after you forever. And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. For the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts.

If you seek him, he will be found of thee. But if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever. Now, the Lord was about to build a temple.

And keep in mind, in this temple, the glory of God was going to come. And God had commissioned a man to build this temple. And, beloved, just like he has commissioned you and I, in a relative sense, that when we came to Christ, we were given a calling.

We were becoming the temple now of the Holy Ghost. And God said, I've called you now to allow me to build something into your life. I've called you to allow me to work in you a weight of glory as it is.

I'm going to do something in you. And that something that I'm going to do in you is going to reflect my glory, that people from all over the world will be able to look at the work that I have done and they will be dumbfounded at the goodness of God and the glory of God. He said to Solomon, serve God with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

The perfect heart in the original Hebrew text means a complete or untouched or a heart that's been unformed by an iron tool. Or, in other words, it's something that is untouched by the hand of man. It is a heart that cherishes peace and friendship.

Jesus himself said in Matthew 5, 8, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Oh, beloved, you cannot see God without a pure heart. You cannot see Christ without desiring peace with him and friendship.

It's more than just a religion. It's more than just a pacifying of the conscience. It's more than just coming in so that tomorrow's provision will be there.

God said, no, I want more than that from my people. I want a people who desire me, who want to know me as Abraham did and was called as it is the friend of God. Jesus said the pure in heart are going to see God.

It's my desire for you and for my own heart that for the rest of my life I would have this clear vision of Christ. I would understand things about Christ that are hidden from the carnal. They're hidden from people who live lives of self-seeking.

They will never know these measures of Christ. They'll be forever locked outside with Christ knocking on the door saying, you've been looking for the wrong wealth. You've been seeking the wrong gold.

I'm standing outside and I'm knocking on the door of your heart. And if you will open to what I want to speak, what I want to do, you will understand things that you've never understood before. Not only Solomon are you to seek him with a pure, perfect heart, but also with a willing mind.

Now, when you look in the Hebrew text, it's an extremely lengthy definition of the willing mind. I brought it down to my own definition. And it really means a willingness to move in the direction of something which is contrary to my natural appetite or inclinations.

Jesus said, I'm going to reveal something about myself to you. If you have an honest heart and you desire my friendship, I'm going to show you some things. But you have to have a willing mind, not only just a perfect heart.

It's not enough just to say, I know lots about Jesus Christ. It's not to know about him. We're to know him.

We are to know him in the way that he is able to build his kingdom within us. And he says, if I reveal what I reveal to you, you're going to have to have a willing mind, or in other words, a willingness to move in a direction that you don't want to go. Remember, he said to Peter, after Christ rose from the dead, he said, Peter, when you were young, you dressed yourself.

I'm paraphrasing him, but he said, basically, you did your own thing. You went where you wanted to go. You did what you want to do.

But as you're growing older, he said, you're going to stretch out your hands and you're going to be led where you don't want to go. You have to have a willing mind, or you and I can never fully glorify Christ until that mind is in us. Until we can honestly say, not my will but thine be done.

Oh God, if it be possible, take this cup away from me. I'd rather not go here. I'd rather not do this.

But Lord, not my will but thine be done. For you have revealed your heart to me. You have shown me what it is you want me to do and how my life may glorify you.

It says about Peter, it said, by this he showed him by what death he would glorify his Savior. It's an incredible thing, really, when you begin to think about it. Take heed now, he says to Solomon.

Solomon, rather, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and do it. Verse 11.

Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch and of the houses and the treasuries, the upper chambers, the inner parlors, and the place of the mercy seat. And verse 12 says, the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit. You see, beloved, you can't build a Christian life in the flesh.

It can only be built by the Spirit. You see, when God saved you, when you came to Christ, and by his mercy he saved you, he had already a pattern for your life. He had something already destined for you to be and to do for him.

A path, in the sense that you would walk, or a person that you would become that would bring honor and glory to Christ throughout your life and into eternity. Incredible. But there's no way of knowing it but by the

Spirit.

There's no way of knowing where we're to go as a church but by the Spirit. There's no way to know how our ministry should be run but by the Spirit. Woe be to the church that trades in the Holy Spirit and adopts committees and begins to build from the minds of men.

And what they get is a man's organization that has the name of Christ on it but has no power. There's no glory. There's no sense of reverence.

There's no sense of awe. Sinners walk in and are totally unconvicted. And so the church, instead of looking at the flaw that's in their fundamental worship of God, now has to make the church sinner-friendly as they see it.

They have to find a way, in a sense, to make the sinner somehow stumble over himself and see his need of God because there's no reflection of God's glory in the house anymore. The Holy Spirit is not there. The Holy Spirit is not in charge.

The Holy Spirit is not designing the house of God. The Holy Spirit is not leading the people. Whenever we begin to build anything that is called by the name of Christ and the Holy Spirit is not leading us, we are building with fool's gold.

We may say it's prospering, but is it really prospering? If it's not that which is tried and pure, if it's not that which has been called by God, if it's not that which has stood the test of time, is it really good? Is it really gold? Is it really prosperity? Will it really last? And in times of difficulty and trial, will it stand? Oh, folks, there's a lot of fluff in the church of Jesus Christ that calls itself prosperity and calls itself pure gold and calls itself doctrine. But I tell you, the day the economy goes, you're going to find out what truly is God and what has not been God. The day hardship hits the nation and touches everyone, then you'll find out who has oil and who doesn't.

Jesus said, find gold. Find gold that's been tried in the fire. Go back in the Word of God and find gold that's been tried in the fire.

David gave to Solomon the pattern of the house by the Spirit. The cry of your heart and mine has always got to be, Holy Spirit, lead me. Holy Spirit, teach me.

Holy Spirit, guide me. Holy Spirit, make the Word of God real to me. Holy Spirit, give me a heart and a mind to embrace not only the Word but the will of God that's revealed to me in it.

Give me the power to embrace it, O God, that your kingdom may come and your will may be done in me, that you might be glorified on the earth as you are in heaven. He gave him the pattern. Verse 14 says, gold for things of gold and instruments, for all the instruments of service.

Verse 15, even the weight of the candlesticks were of gold and their lamps were of gold. Verse 16, he gave gold for the tables of the showbread. Verse 17, gold for the flesh hooks, which is a type of how the ministry was to live by faith, and for the golden basins.

Verse 18, and for the altar of incense, refined gold by weight, and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubims that spread out their wings and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord. And all this said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me even all the works of this pattern.

David says, God gave me an understanding of what is pure.

God gave me an understanding of what glorifies him. And he gave it to me in writing, not only by the spirit, but in the writing. You see, Jesus himself said, there's a time coming, the Father is looking for people to worship him in spirit and in truth.

A people who know the book, and the Holy Ghost has made it real. The Holy Ghost has given illumination. The Holy Ghost has birthed a desire, and the man or woman of God looks at this book and says, this is to be the pattern of my life.

Not what other people are saying, not what my own heart thinks, this is to be the pattern of my life. This is to be the life that glorifies God, and the Holy Spirit will show it to me. He will open it to me, and what God says is truth, and let every man be a liar.

Gold, you can see it now. Solomon's Temple is a magnificent building. Of course, it's a type of something that was to come.

If you were to walk in, if you were to go back there with me thousands of years ago, and walk into that temple, and you see the golden, there were golden shields. Walls, there were golden candlesticks. There were golden basins.

There were golden altars. There were golden tables. And on the sides of that temple were lamps that were lit, which represented the presence of God.

And everything in that temple was designed by the Spirit, and when the lamps were lit, they were to reflect the glory of God. Incredible. People walking in from other nations and other countries, Solomon in 2 Chronicles 6, 32, 33, he said this is to be a place where even the stranger would be drawn to God.

Solomon said, Lord, when the stranger walks into this place, and the inference that I would like to draw from this Scripture is when the stranger comes in, he would be awed by the glory. He would be awed by a strange sense that I am witnessing the reflection of God. I'm seeing something of God.

It has been designed by the Spirit. Beloved, that's what our lives are supposed to be like. When the stranger comes in contact with us, and we begin to converse with the stranger about things that would overwhelm everybody in society around us.

He listens to us. He watches our countenance. He looks and he's awed by something that has been designed, but it's not been done by the hand of man.

There's a reflection of the glory. Hallelujah. A reflection of the glory is in that vessel.

What we say, how we touch, how we react to situations. There's a reflection. There's a stability.

There's something of God that's been built into us. The Holy Spirit didn't come into us simply just to make us happy. The Holy Spirit came to redesign us.

And to build into us those things which God has already revealed to us in His Word. Pure gold. They've been tested.

They've been tried. They've gone through the fire. They've stood.

They've been proven. They were in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They were in Daniel.

They were in the Hebrews. They were in those that were in caves and dens and saw the thunder. They were in Isaiah and Jeremiah.

They've been proven. Gold tried in the fire. Hallelujah.

Thanks be to God. The Bible says that God's glory was to be manifested there. 2 Chronicles chapter 7, verse 1 says, When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house.

And the priest could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. Nothing of man could be found there. Nothing of flesh could enter.

I love it. Because the glory had filled it. The glory.

Oh, folks, once you've tasted of the real, let me tell you, anything of the false will make you sick to your stomach. Once you've tasted of His glory, once you've been made a partaker of His heart, once you begin to understand this is an eternal kingdom, this is not about the here and now. Yes, we live in the here and now.

But the here and now living of the believers to announce the coming kingdom of God. Sorry if I'm yelling. When Solomon made an end of praying, the fire came down, consumed everything.

The priest could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory had filled the Lord's house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good, for His mercy endures forever. This is the testimony that's to be manifested in the house of God.

This is what pure gold will produce. That no matter what happens, no matter what changes around us in society, there will be a testimony of God's goodness and there will be a song of praise of His goodness and His mercy that endures forever. It cannot be taken away because it didn't come from anything this world has.

If your trust is in anything this world has provided to you, even if it's masquerading as the gospel of Jesus Christ, it can be taken away. Trust me. And it will be.

John, in the book of Revelation, chapter 21, he saw something. He saw an incredible city. Revelation 21, he said, I saw, verse 1, a new heaven, a new earth.

The first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea. And I, John, verse 2, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There shall be no more death. Neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. You see, this is the testimony of God. He that sat upon the throne is Christ.

He said, Behold, I make all things new. I make everything new. I redesign everything.

I fashion everything by the Word of God that's been tested and pure and tried. And I create new creations. When Christ came into your life, just as He sits, as John saw, on the throne of this heavenly city, when He sits on the throne of a believer's life, the testimony is the same.

I make all things new. I make everything new. And He said, Write, for these words are true and faithful.

Verse 18. Speaking about the city. The second half of that verse, we'll read the whole verse.

He said, The building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was pure gold like unto clear glass. Verse 21. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, and every several gate was of one pearl.

And the street of the city was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass. Verse 22. I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it. And the Lamb is the light of it. Hallelujah.

Oh, this is a coming city. It's a coming time. It's a city coming down from heaven sent by God.

A city of pure gold, beloved. Pure gold. You know, I've heard people say, Well, I'm going to walk on streets of gold, the cities of gold, as if... And they say it in a kind of a financially lustful way.

As if, What are you going to do? Carry a jackknife and scrape it off the streets and put it in your pocket and tell me where are you going to spend it up there? No. You see, this is a type. This is a type of what the kingdom of God is built out of, pure gold.

And the Lamb is the light of it. The gold, in a sense, reflects the glory of God. Now, we just went from Solomon's temple to the new city, Jerusalem.

Both, in a sense, with a similar design. The light in Solomon's temple was to be a reflection as it is on the gold and produce a sense of the glory of God. In New Jerusalem, the light of the Lamb reflects on the pureness of the city and it produces an awareness as it is of the reality, rather, of the glory of God that is the reflection of the Lamb.

But today I'm talking about something that lives between Solomon's temple and the city of New Jerusalem. There is another temple. The Bible calls this other temple the church of Jesus Christ.

This is today the temple. We're no longer living in the days of Solomon's temple and we're not yet in New Jerusalem. So there's another temple right in the middle of those two.

The church of Jesus Christ. Paul said, 2 Corinthians 6.16, You are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

We are now the temple of the Holy Ghost. The light as it is, is now in us. And God, by His grace, is designing something that is to shine and be a revelation of His glory to all nations.

Beloved, go with me now to 2 Corinthians 3, if you will, please. 2 Corinthians 3. Pastor David preached from my text this morning. 2 Corinthians 3. How the Lord, verse 17, the Lord is that spirit.

Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. The Greek definition is generosity, really. Or freedom.

But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord. We are changed. As we behold Him, we become a reflection of His glory.

Incredible. Not just a reflection, but we become the actual substance of His glory. His image is formed in us.

It's an amazing thing. He fashions us and we become as we behold Him. But you see, you have to have a pure heart and a willing mind.

You'll never know the refashioning without it. You'll never understand the pure gold. Always be living on the periphery of some sense of wealth and abundance, but never understand the kingdom of God.

Never amount to anything in God's kingdom. Never reflect His glory. Strangers never convinced of their need of God.

Listening to your conversation or hearing your story or just being in your company. There's no conviction because there's no glory. Christ said if you are beholding Me, I am changing you into My image.

You're not just holding up a picture of Jesus. Jesus is actually being formed in you. He said they are My people.

They are My temple. I will dwell in them and I will walk in them. I will walk in you.

I'll walk through you. We are the temple now of the living God. It's an incredible truth if you can come to the realization of it.

And as we behold Him with a pure heart and a mind to say, God, give me what is of eternal value. Give me what lasts. Don't let me settle for the temple.

Don't let me settle and be satisfied just for the now. There's an eternity in perspective. What was your work, Jesus? You walked through this world.

You weren't even touched by it. There was something on your mind. God, help me to understand it and help me to enter into that work and to join you in that work on this side of eternity.

Therefore, Paul says in chapter 4, verse 1, seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully. That's an incredible thing. In other words, listen to what Paul is saying.

We understand the ministry. And because we do, we're putting away these hidden dishonest things and many of them that would want to masquerade and come into the kingdom of God. They'd want to pretend that they belong to God's kingdom.

Fool's gold, as it is, would want to come in and masquerade itself as the prosperity of God. And we will end up with Christ on the outside knocking, trying to get in. Nor walking in craftiness.

In other words, sneakiness. When I see this word, I get a picture of Aaron just refashioning God to the likeness. What do you think of this? Do you think he should have ears here? How do you feel his legs should look like? And refashioning God to suit the people.

And we have a ministry doing that, even in the professing born-again church of Jesus Christ, fashioning and refashioning and refashioning God, a palatable savior that caters only to the appetites of the carnal, nor handing the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. There it is. Paul says, we allow the truth, which is Christ, to be manifested in us.

And that truth which is manifested in us, that pure gold which is shining out of our lives, commends us as it is to every man's conscience in the sight of God. In other words, people seeing the change of God in my life are convicted. They're convinced there is a God.

Hallelujah. That's why Peter says, be always ready to answer for every man who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. It's an inference in the Scripture that there should be such a hope that people should be asking.

If they're not asking, perhaps there's no hope. Commending ourselves to every man's conscience. I don't want to walk through this life and have people unconvinced that there's a savior because of me.

I don't want to walk into a room and have people unconvicted of their sin, unconvicted of their need of God, and have them just walk casually on their way to hell with no testimony of Christ in their midst. Paul says, no, that's not what the temple is supposed to be. The temple is supposed to be an awe in the temple.

An awe because it's been designed by God. And what's been designed is pure gold. It's been tried in the fire.

It's not mixed with other metals and other materials. It has come from God, from the hand of God. But if our gospel be hid, verse 3, chapter 4, it is hid to them that are lost.

In whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. You see, the Laodicean gospel was hidden because the church had a focus on the wrong prosperity. That which looks prosperous compared to that which is.

The gospel was hidden. Beloved, I say it with a broken heart. But much of the modern gospel today on television is an absolute disgrace to the name of Jesus Christ.

It's a disgrace, folks. The true gospel is hidden. It's a false prosperity.

A false peace. And in a moment of time, by God's grace, the whole rug is going to be pulled out from underneath it and it's all going to be gone. And only that which cannot be shaken is going to remain.

And America is going to live to see this. Beloved, you will remember the cautions that have come from this church. Go with me very quickly backwards to Mark chapter 11.

Mark chapter 11. Jesus is coming up into the temple. As he enters Jerusalem, I remember in this particular passage, the very first thing he did was he cursed a fig tree that looked like it had fruit, but it had

no fruit.

And he cursed it and said, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. Then in chapter 11 of Mark, verse 15, he says he went into the temple and he began to cast out them that sold and bought. He overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves.

And he would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. In other words, there's to be no human plans, no human ingenuity here. There was to be nothing of the flesh here.

And he taught and said to them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. Now, a lot of people feel that the thievery was going on in the tables of the money changers and the dove sellers. But I want to show you that's not necessarily the case, because he was saying, Is it not written? He was quoting from the book of Jeremiah.

Now go with me to Jeremiah chapter 7. You're going to see something here in just a minute. Jeremiah, right after Isaiah, you'll get Jeremiah chapter 7. Now, Jeremiah in chapter 7 and verse 8, he said, Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Now, he's warning of people who are about to be judged because of a false gospel.

He said, Will you steal and murder and commit adultery and swear falsely and burn incense unto Baal and walk after other gods whom you know not and come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name and say we are delivered to do all these abominations? Is this house which is called by my name become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord God. In other words, he's just saying simply this. Do you think you can steal heaven? Do you think you can steal your way into heaven? That was simply the question that Jeremiah was asking.

And the Lord was saying, It is written that my house shall be called a house of prayer. But here are people gathering who think they can allow the kingdom of God in their lives to be designed any way they want and they're going to just steal heaven. As if there is no door they have to go through.

As if there are no requirements of God. As if they can just steal it. They can walk in and be absolute thieves.

Be worshiping other gods. Living for other purposes. Doing all kinds of abominations.

Committing adultery. Murdering. In a sense, you know, the New Testament says even hating your brother is murder.

Swearing falsely. In other words, making all kinds of false promises even to God almighty himself. And all these things.

And burning incense to Baal which means trusting in the gods of the nation. And come into the house of the Lord and say we're delivered to do these things. Do you think that you can come in and steal my kingdom? It's an incredible, it's an incredulous statement.

Now go with me to Psalm 50. Go backwards in your Bible to Psalm 50. Verse 15.

Now the Lord says in Psalm 50 verse 15. He says, Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee. And thou shalt glorify me.

But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes? Or that thou should take my covenant in thy mouth? God says I have a controversy. And I'm bringing this controversy to my house. To my own people.

You've taken my covenant promises in your mouth. Everything that I've said I would do for you. If you would approach me with an honest and a sincere heart.

You've taken it and you've said that we are partakers of the covenant of God. But verse 17 he says, You hate instruction. And you cast my words behind you.

And when you saw a thief, You consented with him. Now let me explain this to you. Remember that he said you've made my house a den of robbers.

In other words you had a choice. I gave you a pure word. I spoke to you words that were gold.

I showed you the way to go. I made a clear and open declaration of what I wanted to do in your life. I brought pure gold to you.

I told you my intent and how I would refashion you and establish you as a testimony. But you knew that it would cause you to have to go in a way that you are not naturally inclined to go. You wouldn't want to go this way.

Because one of the requirements really of the kingdom of God is a denial of self. He said so you turn to a thief. And here's another person that is professing to know me.

Professing to preach the way to eternal life. Thinking they can steal their way into the kingdom of God. And you cast my words behind you but you consented with a thief.

And there are people that even attend this church in Times Square. Now hear me now. Hear me.

And the words that I speak to you tonight and you hear from this pulpit you cast behind you. You go home. You turn on your television.

And you consent with an evangelistic thief. They don't preach about sin. They don't talk about holiness.

They don't talk about the cross. They don't talk about yielding your life for the purposes of God. They steal from you.

They steal from God. And you consent with them. They are thieves.

They are not going into the kingdom of God. And neither are those who follow them. I know this is hard preaching.

But what do I do when I see it? What do I do with it? Do I ignore it? Do I become a thief like many others? Back again in Mark chapter 11. He cursed the fig tree. He cursed this fruitless representation of religion.

That's what it was. The fig tree always represents Israel. Or Israel dwelling under the favor of God.

He walked up to it. It was fruitless. It was just an appearance.

And he cursed it. And he said nobody eat fruit from you forever. Then he went into the temple.

You see, it's a continuous story. If you ever break up in your Bible, it's only there because the people who put this book together chose to make it that way. But there is no... it's a continuous story.

Cursed the fig tree. Walked into the temple. Overthrew the tables.

Threw out the money changers. The sellers of doves. And he said it is written.

My house shall be called a house of prayer. In other words, where I dwell, there are a people who walk in and they are awestruck with the glory of God. It is written, my house is to be a place where people ask me for what they need and I do it for them.

When they are put to the worst before their enemies, they come in and ask me and I fight for them and defeat their enemies. When they are oppressed on every side, they come in and they ask me and I give them victory from their oppressors. When they find themselves captivated and in a foreign place, they look towards me and they ask me and I set them free from their captors and I bring them back into my heart and into my presence again.

It is a place where the stranger comes and sees the glory and calls out and I answer the stranger. It's to be a house of prayer. But he said you've made it a den of people who think they can steal their way into God and there's no glory here.

There's no conviction of sin here. There's no sense when the stranger comes in of his need of God. You see, that's why Christ was angry.

Not just because it was not his order that was being followed. He was angry because this religiousness was stealing from the people the victory and deliverance that has been always in the heart of God to give to humanity. That was the root of the anger.

That was why the violent overthrow of the temple. Imagine how it must have shocked so many people who had a perception of the Messiah. Then he comes and makes a scourge and they watch him standing in the back of the temple and he makes a scourge of leather.

There's something stirring in him. The Bible says there's an anger which is not sin. He walks into the temple and he flails that thing.

Because these misrepresenters of God were robbing the people of salvation and victory and prosperity as God has seen it. Then he walked out. Now, the scribes and the priests thought how they might destroy him.

I remember I get up and preached in the convention one time and I warned the people who were there that they were about to build a cave. I warned them that you are about to form something and call it Christ and it's going to do great harm to the church of Jesus Christ. I remember they had a meeting right after that service to decide how they were going to get rid of me.

Even though 400 or more people got saved, that meant nothing to them. Their utensil kingdom was being challenged and ultimately they all went into the foolishness that began to plague the Pentecostal movement for about seven years. They walked out of the temple and they passed by and they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots, verse 20, and Peter calling to remember it said, Master, the fig tree which you cursed is withered away.

And then Jesus answered something very strange to him and said, Have faith in God. For verily I say to you that whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and be cast into the sea. And shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass.

He shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you that what things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them and you shall have them. Christ was saying to Peter, listen Peter, not just the fig tree, the fig tree which represented keep in mind just a pretense of life, but there's no real life in it.

He said not just the fig tree, but this whole mountain of fruitless rubbish. I wonder sometimes if he's pointing to the mountain the temple was on, doesn't tell us which mountain. I think he might have been.

Whoever shall say to this mountain, Solomon's temple was on Mount Moriah, you know that. Or the temple of his day. Pointing to the temple and saying, whosoever shall say to this mountain, be removed and cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, he will have whatsoever he saith.

Then he said, so I say to you, whatsoever you desire when you pray, believing you shall have it. It's the man or woman that says, God, I see things the way you see them now. And I'm asking you to take this mountain of religious rubbish out of my life.

All of these things that I have embraced that don't glorify you. The things that you hate and I've said I love them. The false prosperity.

The false caring. The dove sellers who would have had a ministry of providing for the poor, but it was falsehood and Christ knew it. It was all self-serving.

Everything was self-serving. It bore no resemblance to the heart of God whatsoever. And Christ said, if you pray, this mountain of rubbish can be taken out of your life.

And I firmly believe it should be the cry of every genuine Christian in this hour. My God! My God, take out of my life everything that offends you. Everything that offends your nature.

All the fool's gold in my heart. All the false prosperity. All the false comfort.

All the false seeking. All the false theology. All the wrong concepts of Jesus.

God, in the power of the Holy Ghost, get it out of my life. To go and stand before Parliament in Jamaica. I'm surrendered to Christ.

I might as well stand there with a pop-gun. The Holy Ghost doesn't come behind vessels that don't honor Christ. It's written in the word of God, those that honor me, I will honor.

There's only one cry, I think, in the bride now. Because the cry is going out, the bridegroom comes. Go out to meet him.

We live on the edge of eternity, beloved. If you can see it, the Lord is now giving nations to the righteous. I believe that with all my heart.

He's speaking things to me that are so far beyond now, anything I've ever heard before. There's no limit to what God can do. If we will not touch the glory.

If we will let him build his kingdom into our lives. If everything that we yearn for and long for has his intent of heart and mind in it. If it's pure gold that we're embracing.

See, Christ embraced the purest gold of all. He embraced the cross on Calvary. That's the purest gold that was tried in the fire.

There's a cry in the heart of every righteous Christian now. And it's just simply this. Jesus, I want gold.

I want pure gold. I want your life in this area of my life. I want you to move me in this direction.

I want you to give me a willing mind. My cry is, Lord, let your glory come. Give me a song for today and tomorrow of your goodness and enduring mercy.

Give me a song that can't be taken away by the coming adversity. Give me a song that reflects your glory. Oh, God, let your kingdom come.

That your will be done. I feel in my spirit, beloved, we're getting so close to the last call. Maybe just for this city.

I really don't know. But we're getting so close now. We're getting so close.

Only that which is God is going to stand. Do you understand that? Nothing else is going to stand. Only that which is Christ.

Hard times are coming our way for everyone. Only pure gold. That which is designed by God can't be shaken.

Thank God. Father, I have delivered your heart. Lord, you have enabled me.

You have impassioned me. You have manifested your heart in this message. Lord, I have no axe to grind.

God, I just simply am sensing your heart. I'm feeling your heart, Holy Spirit. I'm asking tonight that you would give all in Times Square Church and all who can hear this word, the courage to look and say, Jesus, the gold that I have pursued, has it been tried in the fire? Is it real? The life I live, is it God's life or is it fool's gold? Where am I? What's in my heart? Where am I going? Is your glory reflected in me? Are you touching men's consciences through my life? In my office, my home, my children, my family, are there consciences touched through my life? Are you seen in me? Have you designed the inside of my, the work that's going on? Is it your design or is it something of my own making? Have I truly come into your kingdom or am I looking for some other way? Have I heard your word and understood it and embraced it or am I consenting with a thief? God, help me to understand.

Help me to move forward. Help me to embrace your kingdom. If the Holy Spirit is convincing you today.

Education Annex, you can come and join us here at the main sanctuary. There's only a few of you there, so you can come and join us. But if the Holy Spirit is convincing you that there's an area in your life that is fruitless, religious rubbish.

Fruitless, religious rubbish. I had a man who was counseling in my office one day who had a marriage problem and he had difficulty in his home. He was a very unloving husband.

The whole time they were in the office, he was quoting scripture at his wife. Until the point I got to the point where I almost exploded and told him to be quiet. I said, I want you to speak another scripture in this office.

Because it was fruitless, religious rubbish in his life. Yes, he was quoting the word of God, but in him it was religious rubbish. He had no heart for his wife.

He had no heart for God. Beloved, I want to challenge you because there's areas in every life where there's just religious rubbish and it's fruitless. It has a semblance of God, but there's no life in it.

It doesn't reflect his glory. It isn't alive. It's fool's gold.

You have a sense of prosperity, but it's not prosperity the way God sees it. It has no enduring value to it. It doesn't glorify Christ.

It hasn't been designed by God. If people were willing to embrace this, we wouldn't even need counselors here at Times Square Church. Because the answers are very clear here.

There's nothing hidden in this book. But I know tonight there are people here that say, Pastor, I'm hearing something. I don't maybe even understand it all, but in my spirit, I'm hearing something.

And I want this religious rubbish out of my life. And if you can honestly say that, if the Holy Spirit is speaking about some area of your life, and you can say that if somebody were to come to me to find fruit, there's a lot of talk, but there's no life there. There's no fruit there.

And if you can honestly say that about this area of your life, I'm going to ask you in humility to start the walk as it is to allowing the Holy Spirit now to design your temple. Say, Holy Spirit, you come and design this temple. I'm sick and tired of listening to thieves on the radio, people who don't know God telling me how I should live the Christian life.

Holy Spirit, you come and design this temple. You come and take this pure gold and you begin to form the lamps and the candlesticks and the basins and the altars and the showbread table. You do it, God.

Because I'm not reflecting your glory. I'm not reflecting it in my office, my home, my neighborhood, to my children. I'm not reflecting your glory.

Nobody's convicted or convinced of their need of God through my life. Jesus, come. I've been a fool.

I've embraced the wrong gold. I'm asking you, Lord, to come and begin to speak into my life and begin to design this temple of the Holy Ghost. If that is genuinely the cry of your heart, you are going to become a joyful Christian.

You are going to have a song. I prophesy to you, your song is going to be, God is good and His mercy endures forever. The glory of God will come into your life.

As surely as I stand here and breathe, God's glory will come into your life and you will have a song even in the midst of adversity. You will have a song. God is good and His mercy endures forever.

Let's stand up in the balcony of the main sanctuary. If the Holy Spirit is drawing you, please slip out right now. Balcony, you can go to either exit.

Main sanctuary, slip out. Make your way to this altar. Let's pray.

Let's get this stuff out of our lives. All this religious garbage, get it out. We'll be vessels of truth that glorify Christ.

Slip out, please. I know this is a tough altar call, but God will meet you. God will bless you.

Make your way down, please. Move in close and we're going to pray together. Hallelujah.

You want to know why I preach the way I do? It's because I see what you could be in God. I see where God could take you because I've lived it. I've come from living in panic attacks, unable to go into a crowded room for fear if I was singled out that I would have a panic attack and have to go to the hospital, to preaching to 600,000 people and telling them what God can do in their lives.

And I'm jealous for what God can do in you because He's not a respecter of persons. It's not just something He does for a few. There's a plan for every one of you.

And only religious falseness can steal it from you. Incredible. Or somebody telling you there's another way and it's really to steal the plan.

It's incredible when you see it. Offering you a shortcut and the shortcut puts you in the wrong town. You end up at the wrong destination.

You see, Jesus said, He said, if you say to this mountain, be removed and cast into the sea and don't doubt, it will be done. And then He goes on to say, Now I say to you, whatever things you desire now, pray and believe, you shall receive them and you shall have them. So in other words, once you want this other stuff out of your life, He says, you want love? Just ask.

I'll give it to you. You want peace? Ask me. You want joy? Ask me.

I'll give it to you. You want me to use your life for my glory? Ask. I'll do it.

You want me to give you boldness to witness? Ask me. I'll give you the boldness. You want to understand my word? Ask me.

In other words, there's no limit. Just keep asking me. As long as you don't want the falseness, as long as what you want is pure, it's real, just ask me and there's no limit to what I will do and give you.

It's an endless supply. It's an endless supply. And the constant cry of your life will be, God, just keep taking me where I can't go.

Just keep making me what I can't be. Take me deeper. Take me farther.

Let your glory come in an ever-increasing measure to convince men all around of their need of God. To convince everyone that God is well able to give them even beyond and above their own heart's desire. Incredible.

Incredible. Hallelujah. Pray with me.

Jesus, take out of my heart fool's gold. Help me not to consent with the gospel of a thief. Those that come to offer an easier way to cause me to trust in other things and take me away from the path of true life and

true victory.

I ask you, Jesus, to take out of my life all the religious garbage. Everything in me that doesn't glorify your name. And I invite you, Holy Spirit, to open the Bible to me.

Show me the pattern of God for this temple of the Holy Spirit. Your Word. Let it become to me pure gold that I value and cherish because it's been tried in the fire.

It's been proven. And it's true. I'm asking you, Jesus, to reveal your life in me and to be glorified through me so that people who know what you have done in my life would have a sense of awe not at me, but at you and what you are able to do in any life of any person who calls out to you.

Now, listen to me. We're going to just... Ask the musicians just to play softly. Maybe you can sing a soft chorus.

Now, if you've really meant that, Jesus said now, ask what you will. I want you to do that, right? I want you to just start tonight. We're going to just take a moment to worship.

I want you to ask what you will. Not only at the altar, but up in the balcony. Education annex.

If you know your heart's right before God, ask what you desire. Actually, it says in here. Believe in your heart, and it will be done for you.

Now, keep in mind, the desire's got to be according to God's will. But ask for it. You need love? You want to understand the Bible? You want to find the plan of God through your life? You desire God to do something in you and through you? I want you to do that right now.

Would you do that? Everyone in this sanctuary, raise up your hands and ask. Just ask. Don't be ashamed.

Whatever you need, Charlie, ask Him right now. Just ask Him. Just ask Him.

Ask Him for it. And believe in your heart that He's going to do it. Ask Him.

Father, I just thank You right now that, Lord, You are hearing every heart. You hear every voice. You're Almighty God.

Lord, You are answering prayer. Miracles are happening right now. Your kingdom is coming.

Your will is being done. Lives are being changed. You're setting up shop in some temples here tonight.

God, thank You for what You're doing. Thank You for what You're doing. Your kingdom is advancing with power.

God, we praise You for it tonight. We praise You, God. We praise You for husbands that are going to love their wives.

We praise You, God, for mothers and fathers that are going to love their children. We praise You, God, for young people who will be able to honor their parents. We praise You, God, for the things that You are releasing into people's lives tonight.

Lord God, You are doing it right now. I believe it with all my heart. We thank You, Jesus.

Thank You, Lord, that You are doing it, God. You are releasing things into people's lives. Thank You, Jesus.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

God, we bless You. God, we bless You. We praise You.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Thank You, Jesus. Thank You, Jesus.

Jesus said, believe. Believe that you have it and you shall have it. Believe that you have it.

If your heart is right, God says, I won't withhold it from you. I'll give it to you if your heart is right. I'll give it to you if you want to glorify Me with it.

I'll give it to you. I'll release it to you. And you will know, and others will know, that God Almighty is real in your life.

Hallelujah. God, thank You. God, thank You now.

God, we praise You. Lord, we bless You, God, for what You're doing. We bless You, Jesus.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Glory.

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