

Revelation Overview Pt. 6

by Chuck Smith

The sermon discusses the judgment of the church and the rise of the Antichrist, emphasizing the need for repentance and faithfulness to God.

Duration: 1:03:09

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Revelation 19:6-7, Revelation 19:9-10, Revelation 22:8-9

Topics: "Revelation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of debt and how it can trap individuals. He then transitions to the book of Revelation, specifically chapter 19, where the church is mentioned. The speaker acknowledges that the history of the Church has not always been positive and mentions the negative aspects that have been done in the name of Christ. The sermon also touches on the judgment that will come upon the house of God and the distinction between the judgments of religious Babylon and commercial Babylon in Revelation chapters 17 and 18.

Transcript

Shall we turn to Revelation chapter 17. Peter said the time has come when judgment must begin at the house of God. Sad and sorry to say, the history of the Church of Jesus Christ is not a pleasant history.

One of the difficult things in going to a secular college is that many times the professors will bring up church history and it is not good. Many things have been done in the name of Christ through the years that are really a disgrace to the kingdom of God. And sitting in those classes and hearing Christianity sort of downplayed and downgraded because of the history of the church, I would often interject that I have no excuse or no defense for the history of the church.

If you want to talk about Jesus Christ, I'll defend him to my death. But talking about the church, the history of the church is not good. In Matthew chapter 13, where Jesus gives us the parables of the kingdom, there are hints in these parables of the problems that would come in the church.

For instance, the kingdom of heaven being like a mustard seed growing into a tree and the birds coming and sort of landing on its branches. That's abnormal growth. Mustard seeds don't grow into trees.

And in the Bible, birds are always a symbol for evil. So the abnormal growth of the church, but in so doing embracing much evil. The parable of the woman taking and placing the lemon in the bread until the whole

lump, the three lumps are leavened.

Leaven is a type of sin. It's a type of evil. The evil that would permeate the church.

Jesus talked about the farmer that sowed wheat in his field, but an enemy came and sowed tares. And so the servant said, shall we go out and root up the tares? And he said, no, let them grow together until the time of harvest. And then we will take the tares and gather them and burn them in the fire.

So from the parables that Jesus gave concerning the kingdom of heaven, his church, there were indications that there would be an abnormal growth. That evil would come into it. And as Peter said, the time has come when judgment must begin at the house of God.

And if it begins here, then where will the ungodly appear? So as we get to the 17th chapter of the book of Revelation, we get to the judgment of the spiritual Babylon or the church. Judgment beginning in the house of God. Now, this is the church that is still here after the true church has been raptured.

Once the true church has been raptured, it's not going to really hinder the ministry of many churches that are nothing more than man-governed organizations. And they'll go on. But their judgment will be coming and we find the judgment in the 17th chapter of the book of Revelation.

There came one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials. And he talked with me and he said, come hither, I'll show you the judgment of the great whore that sits on many waters. Whore in a spiritual sense, prostituting, and many waters are representative of many nations.

With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit to the wilderness. I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet colored beast, full of the names of blasphemy, and having seven heads and ten horns.

The scarlet colored beast, of course, is the Antichrist, which has arisen out of the European community. We've already studied that. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, decked with gold and precious stones, pearls, having golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, the abominations of the earth. I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and when I saw her I wondered with great wonderment. And the angel said unto me, why did you marvel? I'll tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

Today, as we are recognizing and realizing that the world cannot go on in its present state, with super weapons we're going to have to create a one world government. But with the one world government, we're also going to have to create a one world religion. So you're reading much today about the global globalization, the global economy.

And they're beginning to look at the world in a global sense, a one world, one world government, one world religion. And they do point out that in history so many of the wars that have been fought have been fought on religious issues. The woman is drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

I would recommend highly the reading of Fox's Book of Martyrs. And as you begin with chapter 4, I think it's about verse 47, or page 47. In Fox's Book of Martyrs, he begins to list the horrible atrocities, the wars against the true Christian believers who wanted to follow Jesus Christ, who honored the Word of God, and read the Word of God, and sought to keep the Word of God.

And the wars that were waged against them by the Roman Catholic Church, and the thousands of Christians that were martyred by the Roman Catholic Church, because they dared to read and study the Word of God, and they wanted to live separated lives unto Jesus Christ. I recommend you read that. I recommend you read Fox's Book of Martyrs, not just the fourth chapter, the first three are fascinating also, and of course the rest of the book.

I read Fox's Book of Martyrs every once in a while just to sort of cause me to realize that people were willing to really suffer and give their lives for Jesus Christ, and it sort of challenges me in my dedication. The history of the church is not pleasant. Let me read you just a brief summary of some of the history of the church.

Pope Adrian II, 867-872. John VIII, 872-882. Maranus, 882-884.

With these popes began the darkest period of the papacy. 870-1050, the two hundred years between Nicholas I and Gregory VII are called by the historian the midnight of the Dark Ages. Bribery, corruption, immorality, bloodshed make it just about the blackest chapter in the whole history of the church.

Adrian III, 884-885. Stephen V, 885-891. Formosus, 891-896.

Boniface VI, 896. Stephen VI, 896-897. And all of these popes.

It was known as the period of the rule of the harlots. Sergius III, AD 904-911, was said to have had a mistress, Marosia. She and her mother Theodora and her sister filled the papal chair with their paramours and their bastard sons.

They turned the papal palace into a den of robbers. They are called in history the rule of the harlots from 904-963. Anastasius III, AD 911-913.

Lando, 913-914. John X, 914-928, was brought from Ravina to Rome, made pope by Theodora for a more convenient gratification of her passions. He was smothered to death by Marosia, who then in succession was raised to the papacy.

Leo VI, 928-929. And Stephen VII, 929-931. And John XI, 931-936.

Her own illegitimate son. Another of her sons appointed the four following popes. Leo VII, Stephen VIII, and Martin III.

And so it goes on. They were guilty of almost every crime. They violated virgins, widows, high and low, lived with his father's mistress, made the papal palace a brothel, and was killed while in the act of adultery by the woman's enraged husband.

When in history classes or in other, and they seem to like to bring it up in almost every class, the university, they like to bring up the black part of church history. And there is nothing that you can defend in it. God is going to judge.

You can't do these things and just get by with it. The time has come when judgment is going to begin at the house of God. And here in chapter 17, the judgment against this great religious system that is called Mystery Babylon the Great.

When Constantine signed the Edict of Toleration, ending the persecution against the church, he then sought to marry the church and the state. Bringing in the pagan religions of Babylon and their practices, and taking unto himself the title of Pontifus Maximus, which was a title from the pagan Babylonian religions. But then from a Christian standpoint, he was then called the Bishop of Bishops.

And in joining the church and state, it began the dark ages of the church history. There are people who talk about historic church doctrine. I'm not interested in historic church doctrine.

I'm interested in the doctrine that you find in the Bible. The early church was probably the only truest form of the church in church history. And even it became corrupted before the first 60 years of church history was complete.

As we pointed out when we were going through the second and third chapters, here just at the end of the first century, as Jesus is addressing the churches, he is rebuking them for the doctrines that they have embraced. He is threatening them with judgment. He is castigating them for the things that they were doing, calling upon them to repent.

Church history is black. And as you read church history, you will discover just how dark was the history of the church. And so we get into verse eight, the beast that you saw was, that is the system that will be supported.

The church that will remain will unify and will support the rise of this man of sin, the beast, the Antichrist. But the beast that you saw was and is not, he will ascend out of the bottomless pit, he'll go into perdition. And they that dwell upon the earth shall wonder whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world when they behold the beast that was and is not and yet is.

The identity of the Antichrist. Here we are told that he was, he is not, but he shall ascend out of the abuso or bottomless pit. Now in the scripture, we have four places of incarceration for the evil spirits, souls of men and evil spirits.

There is first the Sheol or Hades, translated hell, described as in the center of the earth, prior to the death of Jesus Christ, divided into two compartments, Luke chapter 16. One a place of torment and suffering, the one compartment, the other compartment, a place of comfort and and consolation as they are being consoled by Abraham, as they are waiting for the promise of God to be fulfilled, for the Messiah to pay the price of redemption for the world. The Bible tells us that when Jesus died, that he descended into the lower parts of the earth.

And when he ascended, he led those captives from their captivity, and he gave gifts unto men, the gift of apostles and prophets, evangelists and pastor teachers. The part of Hades where they were suffering in torment still does exist. And those who die without Jesus Christ go into this place called hell, Hades in the scriptures or Sheol.

There is a shaft, abuso it's called in the Greek, that goes on into this bottomless pit. It is a shaft from which, or where you might say, evil spirits of angels are incarcerated. And in the earlier part of the book of Revelation, we saw the angel come with a key to the abuso.

And as he opened the abuso, these demonic spirits covered the earth, bringing torment and torture to those who were dwelling upon the earth. This is the place where the Antichrist has been confined. This is the place where Satan will be confined during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, the abuso.

There is another place called Tartarus, and we don't really know much about Tartarus, as it is only mentioned once in the Bible. And it again is a place of the incarceration of very evil angels, who will be released from Tartarus and wreck great havoc upon the earth in just a very short period of time during the great tribulation. They are being reserved in chains of Tartarus, awaiting the day of judgment.

But then there is this place in the Bible called Gehenna. Jesus describes it as a place of outer darkness. Very fitting.

It is a place where those who love darkness, rather than light, will ultimately be consigned for eternity. Gehenna, a place of outer darkness. Jesus said there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Now one day, hell will give up the dead which are in it. We'll get that this evening when we get to chapter 20. Death and hell deliver up the dead that are in them, to stand before the great white throne judgment of God.

And then whosoever's name is not found written in the Lamb's book of life will be cast into Gehenna, the eternal place of punishment, banishment from God. Those who hate the light will receive a just kind of reward. They'll be cast into outer darkness, so far out that no light will penetrate to it.

Years ago when I was a child, our family went on vacation up into Oregon and we went into the Oregon caves. And when we got down there into the bowels of the earth, the ranger that was guiding our group through the Oregon caves said, we are now going to extinguish the light. We ask you not to light any matches or use any flashlights.

We want you to experience total darkness. Now when God sent a plague on the Egyptians of darkness, there is a reference to how you could feel it. And when we were in the Oregon caves and they turned out the lights and we experienced total darkness, you could feel the darkness.

There is something about it that just is eerie in total darkness. And thus it would seem as a description of Gehenna, a place of outer darkness, weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth. So now the identity of the Antichrist.

We are talking about emperors who have ruled in Rome as we go on. Let's read a little further and then we'll come back to it. Here's the mind which has wisdom because that's what we're wanting now.

The seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman sits or the city of Rome, always known as the city of seven hills. There are seven kings, emperors, five are fallen. One now is and the other is not yet come.

And when he comes, he must continue a short space and the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth and is of the seven and he goes into Gehenna. The ten horns which you saw are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive power as kings and for one hour with the beast and these have one mind and will give their power and strength unto the beast. They'll make war with the lamb and the lamb will overcome them for he is the lord of lords and kings and they that are with him are called faithful chosen and faith are called chosen and faithful.

And he saith unto me, the waters which you saw where the horse sits are the peoples, the multitudes in the nations and languages. The ten horns which you saw upon the beast, these will hate the whore, will make her desolate and naked and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it in their hearts to fulfill his will and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

And the woman which you saw is the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth, the Roman Catholic Church. There is the book written by Dave Hunt called *The Woman Rides the Beast*. And if you are still sort of dubious about the identity of the woman, I would recommend to you Dave Hunt's book which is pretty thoroughly documented as he goes through the description here and gives you actually the history of these various things will cause you to realize that this is what is being identified.

Now let me say that I believe that there are many sincere devout Catholics, Catholics who truly believe in Jesus Christ, who love him as their Lord, but who are not knowledgeable as to the history of the church. They're not aware of these things and I believe that there are many who are genuinely born again. You say, but how can you say things about the church like that? Well, I don't say just things about the Catholic Church.

If there are things that I see going wrong in our church, I'll speak out against it. If I see things going wrong and I do in the modernistic church or even the churches today that are seeking to create a seeker-friendly church, I will speak out. And I feel that there is a necessity to speak out.

There's no sense of trying to hide the truth. Better to recognize the truth and deal with it. The beast that you saw, he was not.

He is one of the five of the Roman emperors who reigned prior to John's writing the book of Revelation. As he is writing the book of Revelation, there is a Roman emperor who is reigning at that time. One more is to come and then the eighth will be of the five.

And as you look at the five Roman emperors prior to John writing the book of Revelation, you'll find that the one who best fits the descriptions of the beast would be Caesar Nero. When Caesar Nero first began his reign, he wasn't a bad guy. Too bad, that is.

He was bad, but not too bad. I mean, he wasn't as bad as he got. Paul the Apostle, when he was getting the political runaround in Caesarea, exercised his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar.

Festus, the Roman governor, was bound by law to send Paul to Caesar. The Caesar that happened to be reigning at that time was Caesar Nero. And Paul was brought to Rome and he had to stand before Caesar Nero.

Now, the Bible doesn't tell us anything of the appearance of Paul before Caesar Nero. But looking at Paul, when he stood before the other Roman judges, when he stood before Felix, when he stood before Festus, when he stood before Agrippa, Paul always gave a witness of his testimony of conversion. Jesus told his disciples, they're going to arrest you, they're going to bring you before the magistrates and all, but don't take any forethought as to what you're going to say.

For in that hour, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and it will turn to you as a testimony or it will give you a chance to testify. Paul took that quite literally. Every time he had to face a judge, Paul would witness to the guy and would seek to convert them with Agrippa.

It got so heavy that as Festus was listening, he finally just stopped Paul, he said, Paul, you've studied too much, you've gone crazy. And Paul turned to Herod Agrippa and he said, Agrippa, you know all about these things, it wasn't done in a corner. Agrippa, do you believe? And he's pressing now for Herod to make a decision.

And Herod said, almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian. Paul was seeking to do that. In his mind, he was thinking, if I can persuade Herod Agrippa that Jesus was the Messiah, what that would do, you know, man, I've got a real prize here.

Don't you know when he stood before Nero, that he laid on Nero the heaviest witness Nero had ever heard? I mean, you can be sure that Paul laid on him a witness second to none. There's an interesting thing as you study history, just about that time in history where Paul had to stand before Nero, there was a dramatic change in Nero, almost as though he became possessed by an evil spirit. And the horrible things that Nero did can only be explained by a man who was possessed, riding through his garden at night in his chariot without clothes on, screaming incoherently as the garden would be lit up by Christians who were being burned in the fires.

Horrible man. The early church called him the beast. And they thought that indeed he was the beast.

And it is quite possible that that demon spirit that possessed Caesar Nero to commit such atrocities against the early believers will also be embodied in the Antichrist as he comes up out of the abuso and takes control over the world in the last days. It is interesting that in Hebrew and in Greek, the letters all have numeric equivalents. Alpha, beta, gamma, delta in Greek is one, two, three, four, as well as the first four letters of their alphabet.

And the same with the Hebrew, Aleph, oh boy, Beth, Gimel, Dilith is too long, is again each one with the numeric equivalent. Taking the name Caesar Nero, translating it into Hebrew, totaling the numeric equivalent, guess what it totals? 666. Interesting.

The beast that thou sawest was and is not and will ascend out of the abuso. He will take control of the European community. The kings will give their power to him, and he will rule over the world.

But then they will turn against him. The church that helped bring them into power and the great judgment upon the religious Babylon. Chapter 18 brings us into the judgment of commercial Babylon.

And the interesting things about the judgment of the commercial Babylon is that we have two views of its destruction. One, from the human standpoint. Verse 9, the kings of the earth who have committed fornication live deliciously with her, shall bewail her and lament for her when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

And standing afar off for fear of her torment saying, alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come. It seems to be a hint, indication at least, that this commercial Babylon and whatever city that is, we really don't know for certain, but it will be destroyed in an atomic blast. The fact that they stand afar off, the fact that they're afraid to approach it, the fear of coming close, and the fact that its destruction came in just a moment of time, one hour, and it's destroyed.

And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no man buys their merchandise anymore. The merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet, and the thymine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and the minor vessels, most precious wood, and brass,

iron, and marble, and all the various spices, and perfumes, and so forth. The fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

This is going to be a, during the heavy part of the tribulation, and these things are not going to be meaningful to anybody. Survival will be the only thing that they'll think of. And the merchants of these things, which were made rich, shall stand afar off for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen and purple, scarlet, decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, one hour, the great riches have come to nothing.

And every shipmaster, and all the company of ships, sailors, and many that trade by sea, stood afar off, and they cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like this great city? And they cast dust on their heads, and they cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, the great city wherein were made rich all of those that had ships by the sea, and so forth. That's from the human standpoint. What do we get from the divine standpoint? Rejoice over her thou heavens, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her.

And the mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall the great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of the harpers, and the musicians, the pipers, the trumpeters, they shall be heard no more at all in thee, and no craftsman of whatsoever craft he be shall be found any more in thee. The sound of the millstone will not be heard, and the light of the candles shall not shine, and so forth.

And so the destruction of the commercial systems of the world that have enslaved people's souls. So many of you tonight are enslaved. Don't really realize it, but the debt that you've piled up on your master and visa cards, and so forth, and then the interest that they begin to charge you, you get in a trap, and you find that there's often no way out.

Going into the 19th chapter now, after these things. You see, 17 and 18 fit back earlier in the book of Revelation. These are just sort of giving you amplification on certain parts of the judgments.

But now, going into 19, after these things, I heard a great voice, many people in heaven. Once again, the church comes into view. While we were dealing with the judgments of God upon the earth, you didn't see the church.

It had been taken up in chapter 4, verse 1. It was there in heaven before the throne of God in chapter 5, declaring the worthiness of the Lamb to take the scroll and loose the seals. And now, as we go back to the heavenly scene, we've been on the earthly scene, we haven't seen the church. Now, when we go back to the heavenly scene, we find the church again.

And they're saying, hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God. This is about the last thing that we were saying back in the fifth chapter. And so, we sort of pick it up again.

We're still there praising God around His throne. For true and righteous are His judgments. For He has judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication.

He's avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again, they said, hallelujah. And the smoke, her smoke rose up forever and ever.

And the twenty-four elders and the four cherubim fell down, and they worshiped God that sat on the throne saying, amen, hallelujah. And a voice came out of the throne saying, praise our God, all ye His servants, ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, as the voice of a mighty thundering, saying, hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

That probably is Jesus. Described in chapter one, the voice was like many waters, mighty thundering, as He joins in, declaring, hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice.

Give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come. His wife has made herself ready. Paul said that he was seeking to prepare the church as a bride for Jesus Christ.

The marriage supper of the Lamb, joined together with Jesus Christ, our Lord. And to her, that is, the church was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. And the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

God has imputed to us and has put on our account, righteous. Not because of what I have done. Not because I am perfect.

Not because everything I do is lovely and sweet and kind and of pure motive. But God puts on my account righteous, because I have put my trust and faith in Jesus Christ, and His finished work for me, in dying for my sin, and in redeeming me from the powers of darkness. And because of my faith in Christ, God accounts me righteous tonight.

In Jude, he closes off that little letter by saying, Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. You that have put your trust in Jesus Christ, you who believe in Him, when you stand before God, you'll stand there spotless. He'll present you spotless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

I will stand there clothed in that fine linen, pure and clean, which is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which has been imparted to me by faith. Paul the Apostle, in his letter to the Philippians, in the third chapter, as he is talking about that righteousness that he was seeking to create for himself by keeping the law, by the fact that he was born a Jew, tribe of Benjamin, the fact that he had gone through the rituals, he was circumcised the eighth day, the fact that he had done his best as a Pharisee to keep all of the little statutes and all of the law. And speaking of this righteousness that he had achieved, which when you look at it, pretty good from an earthly standard, he said concerning the law blameless.

Now I can't say that and I don't know very many people who can. In fact, I haven't met any yet. But he said those things which were gained to me, all of this past legal righteousness, all of the keeping of all of these little things, he said, I counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, but I count them but refuse that I might know Him and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of Christ through faith.

Gladly, Paul cast aside all of the efforts that he had done in the past to try to be righteous before God. When he came to the knowledge and the understanding that I am accounted righteous by God, just by my faith in Jesus Christ. As he looks at me tonight, he sees me in Christ and thus he sees me in the perfected state.

He doesn't see me in my present state of imperfection as I am struggling and striving striving to do the right thing, but he sees me already complete in Jesus Christ. You know, it's a beautiful scripture. God said, I find no fault in Jacob.

I love that because Jacob was a guy with a lot of faults. But God is saying, as I look at him, I find no fault in Jacob. And you know, as God looks at me, says, I find no fault in Chuck.

Man, that's great because I got a lot of faults, but God doesn't see them. He sees me in Christ because of my faith in Christ. And so when he looks at me, he sees the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And there's no way you can improve on that. And that's where Paul was now, not my own righteousness, which is of the law. I counted that, but refuse that I might know him.

I want to be found in him, not clothed in my own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of Christ through faith. And so the bride, adorned with this beautiful righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ, the righteousness of the saints. He said unto me, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

And then he said unto me, these are the true sayings of God. Now I have to confess that when I read some of these things, they sound almost too good to be true. And thus, when God begins to talk about these glorious things of giving me the righteousness of Christ through faith, being invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, being a part of that great company, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ.

Sometimes it just sounds too wonderful and too rich to be true. And so what does the Lord do? He affirms, hey, these are the true sayings of God. This is true.

Though it sounds too good to be true, this is true. This will happen. This is going to happen.

And I believe very soon. John said, I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, don't do that.

I am your fellow servant. You see, an angel is for the most part giving this revelation to John. I'm your fellow servant.

I'm of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The Bible centers around the person of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament is looking forward to him. And the prophecies of the Old Testament are centered around the person of Jesus Christ.

Now, as we're reading the book of Revelation, the prophecies are centering around the person of Jesus Christ. He's the heart of prophecy. He's the soul of prophecy.

It's all about him. And the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to focus our attention upon Jesus and what Jesus is and what Jesus has done for each one of us. And I'm sort of like that old farmer who, when the church got a new preacher, and as he was sitting in church, he would go into just these shouts of joy and blessing and excitement, praising God.

But it was really bugging the new pastor. And he would just get so, I don't know if it's the word, discombobulated, that he would lose his place and just sort of, you know, lose it. And this happened for a few Sundays.

And this new pastor, it would just upset him. So he got together his board and he said, you know, you fellas are gonna have to do something about old farmer Jones. When he goes into this praising God and bless God, hallelujah thing, he said, I just lose it fellas.

And I just, you're gonna have to, you're gonna have to deal with him. So the board members went out to his farm and he was out there in the field with his old mule plowing his ground. And so they went through the barbed wire and he hauled at his mule and they came walking up to him.

And they said, farmer Jones, we're here from the church. He says, fellas, I know why you're here. He said, I realized that my praising the Lord and shouting gets on the pastor's nerves and he's having a hard time with that.

I recognize that. And he said, I, I determined I'm not going to do that anymore. I don't like upsetting the pastor.

And he said, so I go to church. I'm determined not to do it. He said, but as I'm sitting there, I began to think how good God is to me.

I began to think about God's love. And he said, I think about this little farm God's given me. I think about this old mule that God has given to me and how I'm able here to just farm the land and God just provides for me.

And he said, would you mind holding this mule? I got to shout. And you know, when I start thinking about what God has in store for us, I feel like shouting. Yes, that we will stand before him complete in Christ Jesus.

Blessed is he who is invited to the marriage supper of the lamb. These are the true sayings of God. No wonder John fell at his feet to worship, but he was worshiping the wrong one.

He was worshiping the messenger. We need to worship the one who has sent the message. Well, I tried.

Too many exciting things yet to come. Exciting things. Father, we thank you for the hope of the gospel, that these are true sayings of God.

Lord, we've noticed that in the last few chapters here, there's about three times that you affirm to us the truth of these sayings. Thank you, Lord, that you have provided for us that righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. Thank you, Lord, that you have washed us and cleansed us from our sin and you've clothed us in your righteousness and that we stand before you tonight clothed in the righteousness of Jesus, because we've put our faith and trust in him.

Lord, we look forward to that day. Oh, Lord, what a day that will be when we see you face to face and when we hear the call to the marriage supper of the lamb, for the bride has made herself ready, clothed in that beautiful righteousness in Christ Jesus. Lord, we do pray for those that are here tonight that are still struggling, trying to become righteous by their own efforts.

Lord, how frustrating it is. Help them, Lord, to realize that we can't attain to that righteousness necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven. Our only hope is in Jesus Christ, his righteousness.

And so, Lord, help us that we might indeed stand before you in the righteousness of Jesus Christ through faith, because all other ground is sinking sand. May those that are here tonight that have not yet

experienced or known the joy of having their sins forgiven, the joy of fellowshiping with God, that certain knowledge and hope, more than hope, a living hope that one day we're going to be with you in your kingdom, enjoying your glory and your presence forever. I pray tonight, Lord, that they will make that decision to leave the path of sin that only is destroying, and to walk, Lord, with you, in fellowship with you, clothed in your righteousness, a child of God, the bride of Christ.

Thank you, Lord, that you've invited each of us to partake of your blessings. Help us, Lord, to not neglect the great salvation, but may we receive, Lord, your love and the forgiveness of sins. In Jesus' name, amen.

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