

Servanthood - Keeping a Pure Heart

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of serving God with a pure heart and not out of vanity or pressure, highlighting the dangers of seeking glory and recognition in ministry.

Duration: 45:33

Scripture: Exodus 28:3, Exodus 29:9, Leviticus 1, Leviticus 3 - 5, Leviticus 10:1-2

Topics: "Servanthood"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of individuals seeking attention and glory for themselves instead of focusing on praising God. He expresses his frustration with those who try to draw attention to themselves during worship, rather than genuinely seeking to honor God. The speaker also highlights the importance of sanctification and obedience to God's commands, using the example of Aaron's sons who had not been sanctified and were possibly involved in drinking. Additionally, the sermon emphasizes the importance of giving to God willingly and joyfully, rather than out of constraint or pressure. The speaker references Jesus' teachings on righteousness and warns against seeking recognition from others, emphasizing the need for genuine commitment to God.

Transcript

The Lord has given to Moses the plans and the instructions for the building of the tabernacle, a model of heavenly things. The tabernacle has been built and thus in the book of Leviticus, the Lord begins to instruct Moses concerning the various offerings that were to be offered unto the Lord. The burnt offering, the offering of consecration unto God.

The peace offerings, that offering of communion with God. And then the sin offerings, the trespass offerings. And so having, giving him now the instructions on how the various offerings were to be made, the various ways the animals were to be cut up and the various parts of the animals that were to be burned unto the Lord.

And the whole thing is all set up. So that beautiful moment has come, the trial run. Now we're going to do it.

God has given all the instructions, the tabernacle is built. And so all of the congregation of Israel gathers together around the tabernacle. And according to the instructions of the Lord, Moses and Aaron went in and offered before the Lord, the sin offering, the burnt sacrifice and the peace offerings.

And so we read in Leviticus 9, 22, and Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people and he blessed them. And he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation and they came out and blessed the people.

And at this moment, the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord and it consumed upon the altar, the burnt offering and the fat. And when all the people saw, they shouted and they fell on their faces.

This was a tremendous movement of God and tremendous excitement among the people. God was being glorified among his people. The offering had now been offered.

They had obeyed the commandment of God. The tabernacle is built. They're going through now the actual ceremonies.

And to inaugurate and to initiate this whole thing, God's presence, God's power and God's fire came down. The glory of the Lord appeared to the people and the fire of God came out and the people saw it and they were just all in awe of this glorious work of God. They fell on their faces, worshiping God.

And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer and they put fire therein and put incense thereon. And they offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them and they died before the Lord.

Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come near me. And before all of the people, I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

God wants to work among his people. God wants to manifest his glory to his people. God wants to move by his spirit amongst the people.

But unfortunately, many times as it happened here, when God's spirit begins to move and the hearts and the lives of the people are being touched by God, there are certain people with spiritual insensitivity. And because there's an excitement and an emotion of the moment because God is moving, they don't have enough spiritual discernment to just let God move. But they have to somehow insert and interject themselves upon the scene.

Now, what the strange fire was, the scripture doesn't really specify. So it gives us an opportunity of exposition. But the fact that Moses said that this is what God was talking about when he said, I will be glorified.

Would seem to indicate that somehow Nadab and Abihu were trying to catch some of the glory. Hey, man, I'm pretty important here. Look at me.

I've got my golden incense. Look, I'm offering before God. You see, I'm trying to get in on the scene.

God is moving. I want to get in. I want people to see me.

I'm important around here. I'm a priest. I'm in this thing too, folks.

See what I'm doing. But God will not share his glory with man. And God has no intention or desire to bring glory to your name.

And one important thing in the ministry is that we must minister in such a way that when men see the good works, they glorify your father, which is in heaven. Let your light so shine before men. Now it is possible to let your light so shine before men that when they see your good works, they go around saying, what a wonderful person you are.

Your light is shining the wrong way. Let your light so shine that it brings glory to God and not into men. There is a evil about our flesh.

I've come to hate my flesh, but there's this crazy mixed emotion because I love it too. This love-hate relationship. But you know that even engaged in some of the most spiritual activities, my flesh can get in the way.

My flesh is wanting recognition. My flesh is wanting a little glory, wanting a little attention. I want people to think that I am a deeply spiritual person.

I want the people in the church to think that I'm really a spiritual giant. I want them to admire my walk with God. And because of that horrible desire of my flesh, there are times when I sort of let slip.

How that when I was in prayer this morning, waiting upon God, the Lord seemed to just really come into the room and speak to my heart and laid this upon me. Oh, he was up in the morning. Beautiful.

My, that's powerful. God bless him. Oh, I wish I was spiritual like that.

Jesus said, take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of men for verily I say unto you, ye have your reward. Then he talked about how you prayed and how you gave and how you mortified the flesh. And there are two ways to do it.

There is a way to do it by which you draw attention to yourself and people know how deeply committed you are to God. And there's another way to do it by which God knows how deeply you're committed to him. But if you're doing it in such a way that people might know of your deep commitment, then God doesn't seem to know of it.

I am doing my works either before man to be seen of man and to receive the glory and the credit from man, or I'm doing it before the Lord as unto the Lord to receive the glory from him. It isn't enough that I am just serving God. God is interested in how I am serving him and why I am serving him.

And God is looking on my heart and God is looking on the motivation. And then when God looks at my works, he's not just looking at what I'm doing. He's looking at what motivated me to do it.

Did I do this because I felt it would bring a lot of attention to my ministry. The reporters might come out and find out what's going on out here. And, and, and my motivation was for some fame and some notoriety.

What was the true motive? Why did I really do it? That's the thing that God examines. And I'll be honest with you. I don't always know what my true motivation is.

And many times God nails me after I've done something and I think, wow, that was all right, wasn't it? You know, and, and then the Lord really nails me and shows me that my motivation was wrong. You didn't do that for me. You did that because you were wanting this person over here to recognize what you, you know, what you're doing.

And that really wasn't for me. So it isn't that I serve the Lord, that isn't enough. For many will come, Jesus said in that day saying, Lord, Lord.

Well, he said, not all who say Lord, Lord are going to enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father. For many will come in that day saying, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not do miracles? Did we not heal people? Wait a minute. These people are talking about serving God.

But Jesus said that it is possible to be doing things of service and yet not really be doing the will of the father. Not everyone who says Lord, Lord, but he who does the will of God. Now, these people were talking about what they were doing, but what they're doing wasn't the will of God.

What they were doing was no doubt motivated by improper motivation. And the Lord's not about to accept it. It is difficult to be in the ministry.

It's difficult to maintain a true balance in the ministry because there are always people that are wanting to heap rewards upon you now. And our flesh would love to receive and accept it and acknowledge it. But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ.

So it could be that these guys were glory seekers. Things are moving. Hey, people, I'm spiritual.

I want you to see my spirituality. I'm a part of this whole thing, man. I'm an important part here.

Look at me. I have found so many times when God's spirit begins to move that quite often it's an open door for the flesh. And many times that work of God, that beautiful work of the spirit is actually quenched and destroyed because someone is wanting to get some glory out of the move of God.

And they are not moving in the spirit, but moving in their own flesh seeking to show, well, I have gifts too. And I have seen marvelous moves of God's spirit quenched by people who were looking for glory for their own flesh, seeking to draw attention unto themselves. Now in the exercise of the spiritual gifts, which we desire and which we want, which we need, or God would never have given them.

I cannot buy this theology today that says, well, you know, I really don't want those gifts. I feel that I have all that I need and I really have no desire for the gifts of the spirit. I can't buy that theology because I know that I need everything that God has for me and I even need more.

But in the exercise of our spiritual gifts, we must be careful that we exercise them in such a way as not to draw attention to ourselves or glory to ourselves, because the moment we do, we are taking people's attention off the Lord. There have been times when I've been in beautiful worship, just the spirit of God has given me such a glorious revelation of the glory and the beauty of Jesus Christ. I'm just caught up in the spirit.

It's just, oh, it's so glorious. And then some freak and there'll be this glorious move of God's spirit and it'll go, Hallelujah! You know, and it shades you, you know, and you look around and say, who's that nut, you know? But what has happened? My mind and my heart has been taken off of the Lord completely and onto some idiot who's carried away in his flesh, who was seeking to draw attention to himself. He wasn't really praising God.

He was conscious that God's spirit was moving. People were being blessed. And so I want some attention here, folks.

I'm spiritual. I'm holy. Look how I can yell Hallelujah.

I can, you know, shake and all when I do it. But I am surprised sometimes that God's fire doesn't come down and consume some of these people. And many times I wish it would.

Man, oh, I'd love to see that. All right, there goes another one. The Holy Spirit did not come to magnify or exalt himself.

The Holy Spirit came to exalt and to magnify Jesus Christ and to testify of Jesus Christ. And a true manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the effect of the true manifestation will be to draw men's attention and hearts unto Jesus and unto him. And in the exercise of your gifts, be careful that you don't do them in some kind of an odd, weird way that draws attention to you.

But seek to exercise them in such a way that you blend, that you flow, that it brings the worship and the praise unto the Lord, that it just flows with the whole flow of the Spirit. Be careful that you don't get involved with strange fire and seek to offer strange fire to the Lord. The Lord doesn't want strange fire.

This strange fire was no doubt fire that God had not kindled. Now, God kindled the fire there at the altar and it consumed the burnt offering, the fat and all. Where they got the fire, the Bible doesn't say, but it wasn't a fire that was kindled by God.

We have to be careful of fire that is kindled by our own emotions. And when God's Spirit is moving, there is a glorious emotional response within our hearts. But I am not to serve or to make my commitment to God out of a high emotional kind of a thing.

Now, many times there are services where an evangelist or a minister will deliberately work up the emotions of the people. And there are men who have, through experience, learned how to get certain emotional responses. They know by doing a certain thing, by saying something a certain way, or by manipulating, they know how to manipulate people's emotions and build people up into a high emotional pitch.

And people are offering fire that is not really kindled by the Spirit of God, but they're offering fire that is kindled by their own emotions unto God. And that strange fire. There are attempts to work up the Spirit in a meeting.

And there are men who are masters in the ability of working up a feeling and a frenzy within a crowd. All right, let's all say, praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Oh, bless God! You know, and they can really begin to work people into a real frenzy. And they try to work up the Spirit rather than to pray down the Spirit upon a meeting.

God wants to work. God wants so much to work. God wants to work more than any of us really desire for Him.

We think, oh God, we want you to work. Hey, you don't want Him to work nearly as much as He wants to work. But God has a difficulty working because it's hard to get a group of people who will stay in the flow of the Spirit.

It's hard to get a group of people where someone isn't wanting to receive a little glory or attention all for himself. And so God so many times begins to work. And then there's that quench from the flesh.

Let's look over at verse 9. Moses then came to Aaron. Oh, the Lord spake unto Aaron, verse 8. The Lord spake unto Aaron saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when you go up to the tabernacle of the congregation, lest you die. This shall be a statute forever throughout all your generations.

I remember in verse 3, Moses said, this is what the Lord was talking about when he said, I will be sanctified in them that come near me. Aaron's sons evidently had not really been sanctified. They had probably been doing a little drinking and their judgment was probably clouded a bit from their drinking.

And so God warned, hey, Aaron, don't you ever come before me or your sons. He warned them. And they've been drinking, lest they die.

Now, some of you feel a liberty in Christ. You think that you can maybe have a little wine with your dinner now and then, or maybe an occasional beer. But God said, I will be sanctified in them that come before me.

And God warned, this is a statute forever. Don't come around because God doesn't want you serving him out of any false stimulant or any false stimulation. God wants your mind to be totally clear and your judgment totally clear.

When you come before Paul in writing to Timothy concerning the choice of elders said they are not to be given to wine. If you want to be an elder and overseer in the body of Christ, then you are not to be given to wine and you should make your choice. If you say, but I like my wine, I want to have a glass of wine now and then fine, have it, be a deacon step down because he's not to be given to much wine.

But if you want to be an overseer in the house of God, let's face it. You're not to be given to wine and don't beg the grace of God as a cloak for deliberate disobedience to the command of God. God is not interested in any service that comes from false stimulation.

And herein, I feel terrible concerning the early years of my ministry, but God knows I did it out of ignorance or I am guilty of stimulating people to serve God out of Paul motivations and false stimulus. I have motivated people to serve God by offering them new bicycles, beach ball, giant lollipop. I have sought to motivate people through carnal motivations, getting them all whipped up in a contest, the men against the women, the reds against the blues.

And in so doing, I am guilty of encouraging people to serve God out of a wrong heart and out of wrong motivation. I've handed them the strange fire, so to speak. And I am guilty before God of giving false stimulation to these people in their service of God.

God doesn't want any service from us out of false stimulants. God wants us to only serve him from a pure heart, a pure heart of love. Paul the apostle said, for the love of Christ constrains me.

Now, if you are in the ministry for any other reason, for your sake, for your church's sake, and for God's sake, get out. In looking at your own heart, if you can't say, for the love of Christ constrains me, as you're looking at your ministry, if it isn't that compelling love for Jesus Christ, then get out. Because God doesn't want you to serve him out of any other motivation than the compelling love of Jesus Christ that he's placed

in your heart for him and for his work and to serve him.

When this is our motivation, then we don't go around talking about our sacrifices or our commitment or anything else. I wonder just how God does feel when he hears us complaining or bragging about what we gave up in order to serve him. What I could have been, but I gave it all up.

I could have been a total flop, an absolute failure. I gave it all up. The fall of Jesus.

I wonder how he feels when he hears us complaining about what we have to do. I know how he felt when he heard the children of Israel complaining. He doesn't like complaints.

He just doesn't take kindly to gripes. Paul, in talking about giving to God, he said it should never be out of constraint, never out of pressure, for God loves a hilarious giver. I don't care what you're giving to God, if it's funds or if it's your life.

God doesn't want you to give it out of pressure, out of constraint, but he wants you to give it willingly from a willing heart, hilariously, so that I've given it to God from my heart because of my love for him. I'm not going to go around griping about what I have given up or griping because I gave it. We've got to be careful as we motivate our people to serve God, that we seek to motivate them only through one motivation.

In giving to God, let them be motivated by only one motivation, and that's their love for Jesus Christ. You're not helping your people. You're hurting your people if you use their own vanity and you play upon their own vanity in order to get them to give to God.

Now, how many will give \$1,000 an hour? I feel led that there are 10 people who are going to give \$1,000. That is pandering to the flesh of man, getting him to receive glory because man wants glory to stand up. I'll give \$1,000.

Oh, isn't that wonderful? Yes. If you use that kind of motivation, you are encouraging people to offer strange fire to God. They should give only for one reason, because God's love is constrained.

You should serve God for only one reason, because God's love is constrained. God does not want false fire. God refuses to accept false fire.

It's interesting and also very gratifying to me to recognize and to realize that God won't even recognize my works of the flesh. You know, one of the most killing things in the whole world is to try to do the work of the Spirit in the energy of your flesh. That is disastrous.

Nothing will wear you down more and wear you down to a frazzle than to try to do the work of the Spirit in the energy and the ability of your flesh. I know. I've tried.

The work of the Spirit cannot be wrought with the energy of the flesh. And if I am able to simulate some work that is the result of my flesh, God doesn't even recognize it. And I'll never receive any kind of credit, glory, reward or anything for it.

It's wasted effort. It's wasted energy. You might as well not do it.

And if you are encouraging your people to serve God in the energies of their flesh, you're pressuring them. You're pushing them. You are hurting them.

You're going to make them rebel against God ultimately and against the church. And there are millions of people across the United States today that are burned out on church because they've been pushed into serving God rather than called. And they've been burned out in their flesh and they want nothing to do with church, nothing to do with God because they've been pushed and pressured into areas where God never called them by pastors who were eager to see the work of God done but didn't have patience to wait upon God to do it.

You remember in the book of Genesis when God appeared unto Abraham and said unto him, Abraham, take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac. Wait a minute, God, aren't you overlooking something? What about Ishmael out here? He's a fine young man. God didn't even recognize Ishmael.

Yes, I am overlooking something. I'm overlooking your work of the flesh. That's what Ishmael was.

He was Abraham's attempt to fulfill the promise of God. He was the result of Abraham's fleshly endeavors. Doesn't God want me to have a son? Yes, he wants me to have a son.

Isn't it obvious that Sarah will never be able to produce one? Yes, it's obvious Sarah will never be able to produce one. Well, if God wants me to have a son and Sarah can't produce one, then let's get busy. We're going to have to help God out, obviously.

God can't do his program. So, in the works of the flesh, he took Hagar and she conceived and bore a son. And when Ishmael was 13 years old, the Lord came unto Abraham and said, Abraham, I'm going to bless you.

I'm going to give you a son. And Abraham said, oh, that's all right, God. Let Ishmael live before you.

Yes, I'll let Ishmael live before me, but I'm still going to give you a son by Sarah. God's still going to accomplish his work. But when we try to do it in our flesh, we only get in the way of God and we only create future problems.

And look at the problem that Abraham's flesh brought upon him and upon his descendants. It is a problem that exists to the present day for Ishmael is still after Isaac. One man's work of the flesh created havoc for the people of God.

A work of the flesh that God refused to recognize. Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac. For God did not recognize Ishmael because he was the product of the flesh.

People are going to be coming to God and going to be offering the fruit of their flesh to God. Look, God, what I've done here, Lord, I offer this to you. And God will refuse to recognize that which you have done in the energy of your flesh or that which you have done for the glory of your own flesh.

So we need to let God's spirit search our hearts for they are deceitful and desperately wicked. But the spirit searches the things of the heart and let God show us tonight what is our motivation for being in the ministry. And if any of us are offering strange fire to God, let's just thank God for his grace in not consuming us.

And let's either get in or get out, get into the flow of God and the flow of the spirit or get out of the way and stop hindering the true work of God. Shall we pray? Our Father, as we are here before thee tonight, you said, let a man examine himself. Or if we will judge ourselves, we will not be judged of God.

Lord, we really don't know ourselves. Our hearts are so deceitful. So we pray that you would search us, O God, and know our hearts.

Try us, O Lord. Know our thoughts. See if there be any wicked way because, Lord, we want to walk in your path.

We want to serve you. We want to please you. And God, we need you and we want you and we want the work of your spirit and we want the moving of your spirit.

We want to be open, Lord, to the work of your spirit and we want to offer up unto you sacrifices, Lord, that are pleasing and acceptable in thy sight. Let thy Holy Spirit kindle the fire of love in our hearts. And may we come into a greater love relationship with Jesus than we have ever known before.

God, help us that we would never ever again complain about the ministry, about the difficulties, about the hardships or the sacrifices. But may we count it all joy that you have chosen us to serve you. And may our service unto thee be out of a heart of pure love, not counting cost.

For you, Lord, didn't count the cost when you gave yourself for us, but you gave your all. And may we do likewise. Lord, we do love you.

We thank you that you did first love us. And we thank you, Lord, that you chose us, that we should be in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. We thank you, Father, that we were predestined to be adopted as your sons and that you then redeemed us by the blood of the cross.

And then, Lord, you chose us as your inheritance. And you gave to us your Holy Spirit and sealed us with that spirit of promise. Oh, Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.

And how we thank you for all that you have done. And now, Lord, we present our bodies as living sacrifices, which is only a reasonable thing to do. Glorify thy name.

Glorify Jesus Christ. And may we never, ever be guilty of trying to take away any of his glory and divert it to ourselves. God forbid that we should glory except in the cross of Jesus Christ.

Let's just wait upon God. Let's let the Holy Spirit search our hearts, revealing unto us that which maybe we don't even know ourselves. Motivations that may not be all that it should be.

God really desires tonight to bless your life and to bless your ministry. One thing that stands in the way of God's blessings is our self and our own failures. Now, the reason why these stand in the way is not because God won't bless us or doesn't want to bless us as we are, but because of what we are, we feel and we believe that God won't bless us.

The blessings of God come to us because of God's grace, not because of our works. If they came to us because of our works, then they would be of our deserving and no more of grace. But God wants to bestow his grace upon your life tonight by blessing you.

So, put aside from your thoughts, your own unworthiness to receive the blessing and believe and expect God to bless you now with a new anointing of his Holy Spirit upon your life. Just simply because God loves you, even though he knows you and he knows your heart, but he still loves you and wants to use you and wants to draw you into a deeper love relationship with himself. And he wants to show his love unto you tonight by giving to you as love demonstrates in giving.

And thus he wants to demonstrate by giving unto you of his blessings and of his power and of his anointing. And the goodness of God will bring you to that change, that repentance that you need as you begin to experience God's power and God's work and God's love in your life tonight. So, just open your heart now to the blessing of God and just receive now from God a fresh anointing of his love and of his Spirit upon your life, just because he loves you.

No other reason, just because he loves you.

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