

The Common Blasphemy

by Daniel Kenaston

The sermon challenges listeners to recognize the common blasphemy in their lives through the lens of the mockery faced by Jesus during His crucifixion.

Duration: 1:22:59

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 15:16-19, Galatians 5:16

Topics: "Blasphemy"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by sharing a story about drilling through a rock to reach water, comparing it to the power of God's Word. He then introduces the passage from Mark chapter 15, where Jesus is mocked by the Roman soldiers. The preacher suggests that despite the blasphemous nature of the soldiers' actions, there are five elements of a worship service present in that moment. These elements include bowing the knees, worshiping, praising, and using words of glory and honor. The preacher concludes by reflecting on the significance of these elements and the question that God posed to him.

Transcript

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I bring you greetings from the Concombe Church. Very few of you have had the opportunity to meet your Concombe brothers and sisters, but you do have them. And they're grateful to you, and I do wish that it was possible for you to meet some of them.

I know that it would encourage you here tonight. That's not possible for them to be here, so I bring their greetings to you. And I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity tonight to share God's Word, to share what God has put on my heart tonight.

This is very different for me, I have to be honest. And I know that we are brothers and sisters in Christ, and we have the same Lord, the same God, and we preach the same Word of God to you as we preach to our people there. So I'm trusting that God, by His Spirit, has something He would like for us to learn tonight.

Just about two and a half weeks ago, we finished a meeting similar to this in Concombe Land in northern Ghana. I don't have a group of leaders this size. I have about a tenth of what you have here.

But we just finished another series of Bible classes with 60 men from 30 village churches. I think here we have about 600 men, probably from 30 states and provinces. Maybe the tape ministry knows better.

It's quite a lot of difference, and yet it's the same Spirit of God that works among all of us. You pray for me in that switch. I knew I would be speaking here when I was finishing speaking there, and so I've been praying already.

Lord, help me to make that adjustment. 30 villages to 30 states. 60 men to 600 men.

60 men on a dozen mahogany planks. 600 men on maroon chairs. It's a lot of difference.

I have to be honest. America is very, very different from the world we live in. But I thank you for giving me this opportunity tonight.

I would like to say a couple of things by way of introduction. It's a little hard for me to come and preach the kind of message that I feel God wants me to preach tonight when I'm only here back from Ghana six days. I don't know all of you, but especially those of you from the three churches, which used to be one church, Charity, now Charity, Living Hope, and Ephrata Christian Fellowship.

You're my people. You're my home. You're the people who've sent me.

You're the people who've prayed for me and supported me. It feels a little hard to come back and get in your face with God's Word. So I beg you to bear with me tonight.

I appreciate all that you've done for us, and I trust that I'll have a number of other opportunities in which I can share my gratefulness with you. But tonight is not a time for me to do that. Tonight we're in the middle of a week of meetings.

I know that God has things He wants to do in our hearts, and I want to fit in with what God is doing here. So you try to bear with me there, especially my home churches. I don't have anything new to say tonight.

As I sat here the last couple of evenings, I thought, you know, I don't have anything else to say. I want to say the same things in a different way. I want to put an amen behind what the other preachers have preached.

And you know, God's Word is God's Word. And it just says the same thing over and over and over again. It talks about the life that Christ desires for us to live.

It talks about how we need to get there and how we need to repent and turn from our sins and walk with Christ and live in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. And I can't pull anything new out of God's Word tonight. I can only say the same thing to you in maybe a slightly different way.

I remember watching a well be drilled at my parents' home maybe a dozen years ago now. And I remember watching that drilling rig stand their tower up and begin drilling. And they put several of these, I think, about 20 foot long bits into the ground before they hit rock.

And of course, once they hit rock, it's a very, very different process from drilling through the soil. But they continued drilling and they continued this whole truck out there just shaking, drilling away. And that same bit just kept going around and around and around.

The same bit with a hammer on the end of it and slowly but surely the rock was broken. And they got through the rock and got down to the water. So I would just like to be one more turn on the same drill bit tonight.

And that's God's Word to our hearts. I'd like to preach this evening from Mark chapter 15 and verse 16. Mark chapter 15 and verse 16.

Not 16:15. I'm a missionary and I would love to preach a missionary message to you tonight. But I don't believe that's what God wants us to hear.

I want to fit in with the way that the Spirit of God is moving here. So Mark 15, 16. Not 16:15.

Which would be the Great Commission. This is the story of the crucifixion of Jesus according to the book of Mark. And I would like for us to read these verses tonight.

And I would like for God to minister them to our heart. Maybe in a little bit of a different way from how you're used to hearing the story of Jesus' crucifixion. Mark chapter 15, verse 16 to 19.

This is the place in which the soldiers are leading Jesus away. Mark chapter 15, verse 16. And the soldiers led Him, Jesus, away into the hall called Praetorium.

And they called together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple and plaited a crown of thorns and put it about His head. And began to salute Him.

Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote Him on the head with a reed and did spit upon Him. And bowing their knees, worshipped Him. Let's bow our heads to pray.

Father, this is Your Word tonight. We thank You, Father, for the opportunity that I have, along with these my brothers, to hear Your Word tonight. Father, I stand equally needing this Word in my own heart tonight.

I stand here tonight, Father, equally needing You to minister these words to me. I need You to convict me, Father. I need You to direct me.

And I pray, Father, that as You do that, You will help me to pass the same words along to my brothers here. I pray, Father, that You will speak to our hearts. I pray that You will somehow break through the hardness that especially we as men tend to erect around our hearts, Lord.

And speak to us in our innermost beings, Father. Connect with that element of our heart that desires to please You and worship You tonight. And show us, Father, where we're wrong.

Show us, Father, where You desire to change us, so that we can more ably and more fully reflect Your glory. Cover us in the blood of Jesus tonight. And may every word come from You, we pray in Jesus'

name, Amen.

If I could give a title to these words tonight, I would title this message, The Common Blasphemy. The Common Blasphemy. And I hope that we shudder in our hearts to hear the word common put beside the word blasphemy.

I hope that in all of our hearts, blasphemy is a strong enough word that we shudder to hear common and blasphemy beside each other. Because we hope that blasphemy would be something that's very uncommon. Particularly uncommon among those of us who call Jesus our Savior and our Master.

But I would like to title this message, The Common Blasphemy. I'm sharing with you words that God has spoken into my own heart in the last few weeks. I'm not sharing with you something that I'm perfect in.

And I'm sharing with you something that God continues to bring in front of my eyes. And every time God brings it in front of my eyes, I shudder at the reality in my own life of need for this message. I share with you not from a place of perfection tonight.

But from a place, brothers, where I would like to challenge us with this title, The Common Blasphemy. A few weeks ago, I was reading over this story of the crucifixion of Jesus. And I was meditating here on the blasphemy that the soldiers put Jesus through.

How they gathered around, called the whole band of soldiers together, put Jesus on some kind of a stool, wrapped a royal robe around Him, put a reed in His hand, Matthew says, as a scepter, and began to salute Him, began to greet Him, began to praise Him, began to hail Him as the King of the Jews. As I meditated on these verses, my heart was struck with the reality of the pain that Jesus must have felt as He sat there upon a throne. Remember that Jesus was, in fact, the King of the Jews.

He was also the King of the Romans. Jesus was the King of the entire world. Even as He sat there, mocked, Jesus was the true King of the world.

And so those words that the Roman soldiers brought against Him, those words of mocking praise, cut Jesus to the quick. They cut His heart. Because He knew that they were true.

And yet He knew that those men who said them did not believe them to be true. And I shudder to think of those Roman soldiers. They didn't know what they were doing.

Here they were, an occupying force in Israel. And here was a troublemaker who was stirring up the people. And the people were angry.

And the people wanted this man gotten rid of. And Pilate said, go take him out. Whip him.

Scourge him. That was their policy in those days. And so this was a commonplace thing.

They gathered the soldiers together. And the soldiers must have heard that this was the King of the Jews. And so they decided to have a little fun with Jesus.

You know they hated the Jews already. They hated the Jews. So this was their opportunity to pick fun at both sides.

And they put Jesus there on a throne. And they gathered the whole guard around Him. They wrapped Him in a royal robe.

Probably a purple piece of cloth. They put a reed in His hand. And then this verse says they bowed their knees.

And they worshipped Jesus. And I was thinking as I read these verses, just down the normal line that you and I always think about when we hear the story of the crucifixion. We think of how Jesus must have felt.

We think about the things that Jesus suffered for you and I. And that's a wonderful frame of mind to put yourself in when you're reading the story of the crucifixion. I've heard these verses preached from many times at a communion message. And it's right for all of us to think about the suffering of Jesus.

To think of the shame He bore. To think of the reason why He bore all of that shame. I was thinking about these Roman soldiers and my heart, I have to be honest, my heart was filled with an indignation against these Roman soldiers.

Who were they to mock the Son of God? Who were they to put Him there and then bow their knees in mockery to Jesus who was in fact the King of the Jews and their King and their Creator? My heart was filled with indignation against these Roman soldiers. How unfair that Jesus would be there and they would be allowed to mock Him. They had no idea how the heart of God was holding back His anger against them.

God could have obliterated them in a second with the white hot heat of anger that was created in the heart of God by listening to these Roman soldiers mock His Son Jesus. You know that to be true if you think about it. Jesus was the Son of God.

And God observed this measly little band of Roman soldiers put His Son on a stool or a throne and begin to mock Him. And yet God held the anger of His heart as He did repeatedly through this period of Jesus' crucifixion because God knew His plan. He knew that He had a greater plan and He knew that Jesus was going to have to go to the cross in order to purchase salvation for you and I. But though that fact is there, make sure that we don't in our hearts begin to think that God's heart was not angry with these Roman soldiers.

And as I meditated upon how the heart of God must have felt towards them, I began to feel a little bit of the indignation that God felt against these Roman soldiers. And if you think about it for a moment, I think you also will begin to feel some anger, some holy anger against what they did to our Jesus. The Son of God, the Creator of the world, the One who had come and lived a sinless life on this earth out of love for you and I, was seated there seemingly powerless while these few little Roman soldiers mocked Him as the King of the Jews.

As if the Jews would ever have a king. That's how the Romans felt. You know, sometimes God allows us in our heart to walk down a certain frame of mind because we think this is where God's going, but God's actually going a totally different direction.

I'm sure you all have had that happen in your life where maybe you started thinking wrong of someone, you judged someone too quickly, and then God turned around and had that person bless your life, and you realized, whoa, I missed it. I thought I was judging rightly in this direction and God was going to use that brother to turn around and bless me. I thought God's Word was moving in this direction, but God was

actually trying to get me here.

Now, to be honest, that's what I feel God was doing in my heart on this day when I was meditating on these verses. God allowed my heart and I allowed my heart to become angry at the Roman soldiers. And then God put a finger on my heart and turned my own indignation against the Roman soldiers, who, by the way, are long dead and they faced their judgment, and they will continue to face their judgment, and God did have the last word.

But that's 2,000 years ago. And God turned that indignation that I felt against the Roman soldiers and pointed its heat at my own heart. How did God do that? You and I sit here tonight and we would say, I don't agree with what those Roman soldiers did.

Brother Daniel, I feel that same anger in my heart that you were just describing when I think about what they did to Jesus. I don't agree with what they did. If I would be there tonight, I would not stand with them.

I would stand against them. I don't agree with what they did. I don't side with them.

In fact, I stand on the other side. I know that every one of us would say that tonight. Our heart tonight would be that Jesus be the real King.

Our heart tonight would be that Jesus would reign not only over the Jews and the Romans, but over the entire world. I believe that every one of us tonight would say there will be a time when Jesus will rule over the whole world. And so every one of us tonight, we would like to distance ourselves, and rightfully so, we would like to distance ourselves from what those Roman soldiers did there.

And we would like to stand back in indignation at what they did. And point an accusing finger at them. We would like to say to them, you Roman soldiers, you have no idea.

You think you have a common rabble-rouser seated in your midst tonight. You Roman soldiers, you think that this is an opportunity for you to mock the Jews. But you will not win this round.

You are messing with fire, Roman guard. Pilate said you should scourge this man. That's not a man.

Every one of us feels that tonight, and rightfully so. And yet I believe that God would like to take that indignation that you feel and that I felt and turn it much closer to home, into our own hearts. And I would like to do that for you tonight as God did it for me.

We're speaking tonight on the common blasphemy. I think you'd agree with me that few things could be as blasphemous as what occurred there that night in the Praetorium. Few things can be as blasphemous as the God of Heaven sitting down while a few soldiers mock Him and He appears powerless before them.

Few things could be as blasphemous as what God allowed there to happen to His Son Jesus. And yet tonight our title is The Common Blasphemy. The Common Blasphemy.

This is how God ministered to my heart. I began to reread over these verses. Let's reread them again.

It's only four verses. Mark 15, verse 16. And the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium.

And they called together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple and plaited a crown of thorns and put it about His head and began to salute Him. Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote Him on the

head with a reed and it spit upon Him and bowing their knees, worshipped Him.

I'd like for us to look this evening at the elements in these four verses. I would like for us to look at the elements of a worship service which are present that night when the soldiers gathered around Jesus. And it may seem almost blasphemous to you to imagine that there could be any comparison between a worship service and what happened that night to Jesus.

And yet, brothers, that is what I would like to venture. Please bear with me on this. I would like for us to find the elements of a worship service which are present in this passage.

We see that the soldiers took Jesus away into the hall and they gathered together the whole band. So there was a gathering of people here. The soldiers gathered the entire battalion.

I don't know how large of a group it would have been. But they gathered their entire guard, their entire group of soldiers. They gathered them into the praetorium, into the hall, into their one central location.

So there was a gathering of the whole band of soldiers there that evening or that afternoon. Secondly, there was a crown. Now I know you'll say it was a crown of thorns, but just follow this through with me.

There was a crown. Thirdly, there was a royal robe. Fourthly, there was a group of people bowing their knees.

Bowing your knees, especially in that culture, was a sign of obeisance. It was a sign of submission. You know, in our culture, in Ghana where I live, if I'm greeting someone who's much older than me, I cannot greet that person standing upright.

Now, Kukumba culture, we don't bow like they did probably in the Jewish culture, but you have to bow a little bit. And some people ask me here, since I'm back in America, people ask me, why do you bow when you shake people's hands? And that's because that culture is getting ingrained in me that it feels somehow haughty to walk up to someone and say, good evening. If it's someone older than me, I need to bow.

Good evening. So we have a group of men here who are bowing on their knees. It says, and bowing their knees, there's one point, and the fifth point was that they worshipped.

It uses the word worship. In Matthew it doesn't use the word worship. That's why we're using the book of Mark here because this fits our purpose as well.

It says they bowed their knees and worshipped Him. And it even says the words that they used, hail, or glory, or praise, King of the Jews. So we have five ingredients here in this evening of infamy, this evening of blasphemy, where the Roman guard is mocking Jesus.

You may be shocked to find that we have five ingredients of a worship service in this night. I was shocked in my heart as God began to put these thoughts in my heart. I was shocked to begin to realize that five elements, the main elements of a worship service were present that night.

The same five elements that are present here this evening as we sang and worshipped God, these same five elements were also there that evening when the Roman soldiers gathered around Jesus to mock Him. Then I feel like God asked me a question. I want to ask you the same question that God asked me.

What element was missing? What changes a gathering like we just described, a gathering of people, a royal robe placed on a royal person, a crown sitting on a royal head, bowed knees, and words of worship? What element is missing? What element can take those five ingredients of worship and turn them into blasphemy? What element was missing on that day which took that afternoon and turned it into a blasphemous mockery of the Son of God? Yes, brother. Sincerity. A broken heart.

Truth. The fear of God. God.

Faith. Love. Holiness.

Thank you, godly people. All those words can fit together into one single theme. One single ingredient which was missing from that worship service, if you will allow me to call it that, because it was a worship service which became an occasion of blasphemy because one ingredient was missing and that one missing ingredient turned that entire occasion into an insult, into a mockery, into a blasphemy of the Son of God.

You can't say that the physical things weren't there. You can't say that they didn't get the physical things right. They had them.

They were there. If you would have walked up, you would have seen a man seated on an elevated throne, stool. I don't know what they sat on.

He would have been sitting elevated above the people. He would have had on a royal robe. There would have been people around him bowing their knees.

There would have been a crown on his head and unless you came up real close, you would not have seen that that crown was made of thorns. But you would have seen a circle of people bowing their knees and saying words of worship. Right? All those elements were there on that infamous afternoon.

And yet something took that occasion and turned it into blasphemy. There was no heart. There was no reality in the words that they said.

There was no sincerity. I like that word. I'd like to use that word.

You could say there was no faith. There was no love. There was no fear of God.

There was no truth. All of those things are right. But there was no heart sincerity to take all of those ingredients that I've just described and turn it into a worship service.

Those Roman soldiers that afternoon, my brothers and sisters, were frighteningly close to a worship service. Frighteningly close. They had five out of six necessary ingredients, you could say.

One more ingredient, and they would have had a worship service. One more ingredient, and those Roman soldiers would have had the opportunity to bow their knee and worship their true King. One missing ingredient turned that from a worship service which would have warmed the heart of the suffering Savior and turned it into one of the greatest pains of His entire experience of the cross.

No sincerity. No reality. No heart reality behind the form that they were walking through.

No heart reality behind the words that they were saying. It was shocking to my own heart to realize how close worship and blasphemy can be. You know, as someone who ministers in another language, my men don't speak English.

As someone who ministers in another language, I look at the English language in a different way than all of you do. I look at it as an outsider looking in. I see little quirks.

I see things that are very unclear. I see what confuses my men. I see how incredibly easy it is to miscommunicate something.

Something doesn't go right. I think I scheduled a meeting. It gets off.

Now what did I do wrong? Then I think back through and I realize that was not very clear. The time that I gave was not clear. The way I explained that was not clear.

So I look at the English language in a little bit of a different way than you do. Sometimes when people are learning to speak the English language, they get the words right, but they don't have the tone right. Sometimes people ask me, is Konkomba a tonal language? Because everybody hears about these strange languages around the world where the same word can equal several different things.

And the Konkomba language is a semi-tonal language. There are a couple of words which can mean several different things. You can say the word, Tikwa.

Tikwa. Tikwa. And you can mean the metal roof on a house, an hour of time, or the shell of an oyster.

Tikwa. Tikwa. Tikwa.

It's tonal. So we think the English language is not tonal. What's the difference between a machine that harvests grain and the process of mixing ingredients? Combine and combine.

The English language can also be tonal. I'm going somewhere with this. I'm not just teasing you with your English language.

Sometimes when people are learning the English language, they can get the words right. But if they don't have the tone right, it would be almost better if they didn't speak the English language. Because if they don't speak the English language, you know that they don't know it.

But if they use the words and have the tone wrong, sometimes it can be incredibly difficult to understand. Some of my men are learning to speak English and they'll come to my house and they call me Mr. Daniel. And they'll say, Mr. Daniel.

And then they'll start into a sentence. And I can't for the life of me understand what they're trying to communicate. But they're using English words.

If I took you there tonight, I could introduce you to a couple of our church leaders who can speak English. But if I did not tell you to listen carefully, you would not think they were speaking English. Think about the difference in these two words.

Yes, sir. Is a term of respect. Two words which we use in the English language to give respect to a man.

Generally someone who's older than you. Yes, sir. But with a different tone, those two words can have an entirely different meaning.

Yes, sir. You can actually rebel while using words of respect. And I think every one of us would recognize the difference in tone if you said to your child or maybe to an employee, do something, and they said, yes, sir.

You would listen to that tone and say, those words say, yes, I respect you, my authority. But the tone says, I disrespect you. I insult you.

Right? Those two can be very, very close together. And I would like to suggest to you tonight that in this way, you and I can also join the Roman soldiers in their blasphemy of the Son of God. And that is why the title is there.

The Common Blasphemy. Think of the pain to the heart of Jesus as He sat there surrounded by those Roman soldiers. They treated Him like a king.

He listened to their words. And Jesus knew down in His heart that He was the King. Jesus knew that He was the rightful ruler of the Jews and the Romans and every human being on the face of the earth.

Think of the pain in the heart of Jesus as these soldiers gathered around Him and gave Him what seemed like respect. And yet He knew there was no respect there. There's not one of us that can read this passage of Scripture and think, oh, the Roman soldiers respected Jesus.

The Roman soldiers worshipped Jesus. Verse 20, which we did not read, says, And when they had mocked Him, they took off the purple from Him and put His own clothes on Him and led Him out to crucify Him. We did not read verse 20 on purpose.

Because the end of verse 19 says, And they bowing their knees worshipped Him. And if you would take that phrase all by itself, you would think that maybe these Roman soldiers really respected Jesus. And yet every one of us knows that they did not.

There was an emptiness in their praise. There was a mockery in every element of their treating Jesus like a king. They had a reason why they put a reed in His hand.

They had a reason why they put a crown of thorns on His head. They said, this man says he's a king. Let's treat him like a king.

And then enjoy spitting and laughing at the king of the Jews. May God help them. And may God help us.

We know that the worship of verse 19 is not a real worship. Because there is an absence of heartfelt reality in their worship. There is an absence of heartfelt reality in that entire process of gathering the soldiers, putting Jesus in the middle, bowing their knees and saying those words.

It's called blasphemy. And every one of us is frightened by that word blasphemy. There are verses in the Scripture which speak very strongly about blasphemy.

And rightfully, we are frightened of the thought of blasphemy. And I shudder to think of those Roman soldiers on judgment day when God reminds them of how they mocked Jesus. But we know that it was not real worship because of one missing ingredient.

There was no sincerity. There was no reality in the worship that those Roman soldiers gave to Jesus. These are the things that God ministered to my heart.

Sometimes you may have the idea, sometimes I have the idea that if I am not real in my heart before God, if I am not sincere in my worship of God, if I am not true in the way that I live out my Christian life, then I'm just a blank. I'm just a zero. If I worship God without a sincere heart, God does not receive any worship.

That's true. Sometimes I've heard it said, and I agree with this, but I'd like to take it further. I've heard it said that if you pray prayers with sin in your heart, the prayers go only to the ceiling.

And that's true. But that can suggest into our hearts, dear brothers and sisters, that when we are not sincere in our praise, when we are not sincere in our prayers, when our life does not back up the words that our mouth is saying, that somehow it's a zero. Somehow it's a wasted half an hour.

If we get on our knees and pray without a sincere heart, if we live out the Christian life without a reality in our lives, then it's a waste of time. And it is true that it is a waste. And it is true that it is a zero.

And it is true that your prayers don't reach heaven. And it is true that your worship does not bless the heart of God. What I feel God is saying to our hearts tonight is that it is a negative.

It is less than a zero. It is what they call a negative integer, if I remember my math correctly. It is a negative number.

It is not just a zero. It is not just that you have wasted time. It is not just that my life does not make an impact for Christ.

If I live in unreality, it is not just that I've wasted my time. It is not just that the Creator does not receive His rightful praise from my life. Brothers and sisters, you and I run the risk of becoming an insult to our Creator.

We run the risk of joining those Roman soldiers in blasphemy against the Son of God. We become guilty of the exact same thing that the Roman soldiers are guilty of. Because there was no reality in the words that they said.

There was no bowed heart when the knees were bowed. Hail, King of the Jews! If they would have meant it, oh, what a difference. But they didn't mean it.

And the fact that they did not mean it turned it into blasphemy. I would like for you to remember, as I do, the indignation that is in our hearts when we think of what those Roman soldiers did against our Jesus. I would like for you to think about that indignation as we continue on through the rest of this message, and try to point that indignation that we feel, not against those Roman soldiers, but point it back to our own hearts.

And allow God to mirror and reflect that indignation, that concern, back into our own hearts. The common blasphemy. Maybe you can see now the reason for this title.

Maybe you can see now how that something which is so staggering to imagine, the Son of God being openly mocked. Maybe it's possible now for you to see how blasphemy could become common. It's tragic, but it's very possible that blasphemy could become as commonplace as all of us sitting here in this room tonight.

I know that tonight there are two different kinds of insincere people here tonight. There are those here tonight whose entire life is fake. There are people here tonight, I know, there are people here tonight whose entire life is a charade.

It is not real. It is not true. What you are is not what people think you are.

And I know that all of us here tonight would agree that, yes, your life, if you are a fake, your life is an insult to Jesus Christ. You're faking. You're not what you say you are.

You're not what you look like you are. And yet tonight I know that there's another class of fake people here tonight. And this is a class that includes me at times.

And that's those of us who do live a sincere life before God at times. We do have a sincere desire to worship our Creator. We have a sincere desire to live for Jesus.

We have a sincere desire to live out the Christian life. And yet, there are elements of our lives which are not real. There are times in our lives in which we are not real.

There are hidden things in our lives which make a mockery of the very words that our mouths say. I asked myself on the day that God spoke these words to my heart and I continue to ask myself this question. Does my life negate or wipe out or obliterate or remove what my mouth says? Does my life negate the things that I say with my mouth? I don't mean to all of you.

It is possible for me to live as a fake to such a degree that one day you would say He was a fake. And my testimony would be wiped out in front of you. And there's a concern in that.

But tonight I'm mostly speaking of you and I standing before God on a day-by-day basis. Does my life negate the words that I say? Does my life remove? Does my life erase the words that I say? Somehow I have a picture in my mind of my life somehow like a line. My praises.

My service to God. The things that I do to build Christ's Kingdom. I have a picture in my mind of my life somehow negating the things that I say.

This is the picture that I have in my mind. It's a very simple picture. But I picture my life as this marker My mouth, I'm sorry.

I picture my mouth as this marker. Saying things. Doing things.

Trying to reach out. Trying to live a life for Christ. And yet, if my life before God, if in the sincerity of my heart, God knows me to be other than what my mouth says I am, it's as if there's an eraser that goes along right behind my mouth and the things I say I'm doing for Christ and just erases them just as quickly as they can be written.

Does my life negate the praises that I give to my Creator? Does my life negate the prayers that I pray? Does God look at me? Does God look at me and see me as a Roman soldier? Saying, but not meaning. Bowing my knee, but not submitting. Saying praises to Christ, but not living praises to Christ.

Does my life negate what my mouth says? The common blasphemy. I spent some time meditating on what is necessary to create an insult. What is necessary to blaspheme? What is necessary to mock? And I was stunned to realize that mockery almost always has a heavy ingredient of truth in it.

Or it would not be mockery. When the comedians stand up to mock some head of state, maybe the president, or they stand up to mock some other public figure that everyone would know, they must talk, act, and look enough like the person that they are mocking that people will know who they're mocking. Right? Otherwise it would not be a mockery.

But if you know that I'm trying to copy someone and then turning their words around to mock them, the only way that I'm mocking them is if you know who I'm mocking. So sometimes the very most painful mockery, the very most painful blasphemy you can imagine is that which is most similar to the real. That which is most dangerous is often that which is fake while being a very, very close copy.

I live in West Africa. I live in a country that is flooded with cheap Asian counterfeits. Now, I lived in the United States before I went to Africa.

But just follow this through with me. In the market, in the little village where I live, on market day, you can go to the market and buy a Casio watch for three dollars. A Casio watch for three dollars.

Sometimes Casio is spelled with two S's. Sometimes the O at the end of Casio is a Q. But sometimes Casio is just C-A-S-I-O. When you look at that Casio watch, I remember watches that I've seen here in the United States.

It looks like a Casio. The writing that's supposed to be blue is blue. The writing that's supposed to be red is red.

All the buttons are positioned right. It says shock resistant. It says water resistant to 150 meters.

It says all the things that a Casio watch is supposed to say. Now, if you're a careful and wise shopper, the first clue should be that it's only three dollars or whatever they are. And you should wonder, how can they make a Casio watch for three dollars? But if you were to buy that Casio watch, you would find out very quickly that what it says it is and what it looks like it is is not what it is.

Test out that 150 meters of water resistant. You can't put your hand in three inches of this water without spoiling that watch. It's not a Casio.

Wear it for a couple of weeks and the battery will die. It's not a Casio. And yet, to the untrained eye, it is a Casio.

And if I had lived in Africa before I lived in America, I would believe that Casio is a very cheap, poor quality watch. But I lived here first. And I know that that same three dollar Casio sells for 29.99 here.

And if you buy it, it is a quality, rugged watch which can probably be worn for three or four years before you'll have any problems, including water, batteries, dirt, anything. It is a quality watch. I know that.

Most of my people don't know that. Those counterfeits which most closely resemble the real thing are the dangerous counterfeits. I remember leading a team to Ghana about ten years ago.

A young man came back from a shopping day with a pair of Nike shoes. And he said, I bought this pair of Nike shoes in the town of Cape Coast for six dollars. Can you believe that I bought Nike shoes that should be fifty dollars? I bought them for only six dollars.

I was a little bit unsure about whether they were real Nikes. But I hadn't lived in Ghana yet. So we just waited.

Two weeks later, those Nike shoes fall apart. Those were not Nike shoes. Sometimes in Ghana, we have this brand, Niki, or Nike with two I's.

Sometimes the checkmark goes that direction. Sometimes the checkmark goes that direction. When you see Nike shoes spelled N-E-K-E, you know they're not Nike.

So you don't buy them. But when Nike is spelled N-I-K-E, and the checkmark runs the right direction, and it looks like a quality shoe, you will believe it to be Nike. It's not the poor quality money counterfeiters that worry this government.

It is those counterfeiters who have learned to source their paper from the right companies and get their ink in the right places and get the watermark just right and create a piece of money that only an educated banker can tell is a fake. Those are the counterfeiters which worry our government. Because the average person can't tell the difference.

Let me take this one step further. The killer of Africa is malaria. Most of you probably know that.

Malaria kills a couple of children every minute in Africa. It shortens the lifespan of the average African across the board by probably ten years. And it's a scourge.

It's a terrible disease. Something that the governments of Africa are very concerned about. We have a drug right now which is derived from a Chinese tree.

This drug is called artesunate. And artesunate is a very, very effective treatment for malaria. It is the most effective treatment for malaria right now.

I have a couple of boxes with me here in the States just in case we get sick. So artesunate is a very effective drug. It costs about six dollars for a dose of artesunate.

That makes it a very, very expensive drug. And since it is a very expensive drug, it is a counterfeiter's magnet, if I can call it that. And suddenly across the world, gangs, mafias, whatever, they have begun to counterfeit artesunate.

Because what else can you use cornstarch to make? Here you can take a little bit of cornstarch and put the right packaging on it with the raised seal and the hologram on the front of the package. It costs you 50 cents to make it and it sells for six dollars. It's tragic to be a money counterfeiter.

That hurts economies. It's really tragic to be a counterfeiter of drugs that are meant to save people's lives. It's even more tragic, brothers and sisters, it is even more tragic for you and I to be fake when we are the only reality that can save this world.

When we have the only reality which can change men's lives. When we have the only medicine in our hearts and in our hands which can cure this world of a sickness far worse than malaria. It is tragic for us to be fake.

Even a little bit fake. Even for the dosage to be watered down just a little can have tragic consequences. The governments of Africa are very, very concerned.

They say 50% of the drugs which come out of the country of Nigeria are fake. That means when you have malaria and you walk into a little pharmacy to buy your anti-malarial drugs, you basically can throw off a coin as to whether you're getting real medicine or you're getting starch in pill format. It has tragic consequences.

People go home, they take the drugs, they expect to get better, they expect to get better, and yet they don't get well. They get sicker. Some of them go back and buy another pack.

Some of them go to the hospital and some of them just die. The common blasphemy. Remember, it is those counterfeits, it is those fakes which most closely resemble the true that are most dangerous.

Brothers, are we real? Are you real? Am I real? Are we truly representing with our life what we say with our mouth? We say, I love You, Lord. We say, You are my King. We say, You are my Master.

We say, I give up anything for You. We sing, I'd rather have Jesus than anything. Are we real? Are we true? If we are not true, my brothers, if there is some element of our life in which we are not living real before God, what do I mean by living real before God? I do not mean living perfect.

I mean being real with God about where I am. If I'm not walking in victory, then I need to be real with God that I'm not walking in victory. And I need to be striving against the sin in my life.

I need to be honest with those around me if I'm not being real in an area. I need to be working to be real. I need to be walking in victory.

Or I need to be honest that I'm not walking in victory. When we are honest that we are not walking in victory, we become real. In that moment, we become real.

That's why God's Word says we need to confess our sin. When we confess it, He is faithful and just to come behind our honest confession and cleanse us. But when we are not honest, God cannot cleanse us.

When we do not confess, when we do not forsake, God cannot cleanse us. We are not real. In whatever area of my life, in whatever area of your life, we are not real with God.

In that area of our life, we are fake. In that area of our life, our words are a mockery. In that area of your life and mine, dear brother, we are sharing the common blasphemy.

That blasphemy which is common, that insult which occurs on an everyday basis, that's you and I, brother, where we are fake. That's you and I where we are not sincere. That's you and I where we are hiding our sin.

The common blasphemy. Verse in Scripture which says, these people, they honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. I trust that God can't say that about us tonight.

But if He can, even in one corner of your life and my life, brothers, we need to become real so that our praises, so that our prayers, so that the life we live is no longer a mockery to Jesus. These people honors me with their lips, but I really don't want their lips as long as their heart is far away from me. Is that not what God is saying? I don't really want their lips.

I really don't want them to elevate me on a throne and put a royal robe around me and a crown on my head and bow their knees and say, Hail, King of the Jews, if their heart is far away from me. I want your

heart, God says. That's what God wants from you and I tonight.

Our God is a jealous God. He wants all of our heart. What God is saying into my heart tonight, brothers, is that when my life is not real, even in a small area, and I am not willing to face up to that unreality in my life, my life is a mockery to Jesus.

My life is an insult. I share in the common blasphemy that the Roman soldiers started when they mocked Jesus. Think of the pain to the heart of the Lord Jesus as He sat there on that stone or little throne and listened to these Roman soldiers mocking Him, praising Him with their lips, but their heart a million miles away.

Think of the pain in the heart of Jesus. Brothers, you and I bear the name of Christ. We bear the name of Christ.

Shortly after our current president was inaugurated for his first term, the twins, George Bush's daughters, were caught trying to buy alcohol. They were underage. You're aware of that? This is years ago now.

It was a disgrace to the name of George Bush that his daughters were trying to break the laws of the land which he represented as the president. Right? Here's the president of the United States. The one who holds our democracy.

The one who's supposed to protect the citizens and enforce the laws and all those things. And here are his daughters trying to circumvent the law and buy alcohol before they're old enough to buy it. It was an embarrassment.

Why? Because of the last name of those two girls. Bush and the newspapers and the media had a jolly time with it. Just embarrassing the president as much as they possibly could.

Headlines everywhere. Bush daughters caught trying to break law in a Texas bar. Brothers, you and I bear the name of Christ.

You and I bear the family name of Christ. Your last name is Christian. Your last name is Jesus Christ's name.

The world knows you as a Christian. When we are not real, we are an insult to our Father. We are a blasphemy to our Father because we bear His name.

It's not good enough to be a good fake. Sometimes being a good fake is worse than not faking at all. Because our mouth continues to praise a God whom our life is not praising.

We continue to call ourselves Christians and the world doesn't see us to be the sons of Jesus Christ. The common blasphemy. Brothers, we need to ask God tonight to speak into our hearts.

We need to ask God tonight to look into our lives and show us where am I fake. Where are you fake? Where is there an area of your life that you are not walking in victory and you are not being honest about it? You are not striving. You are not confessing and forsaking.

In that area of your life, my brother, your life is a blasphemy against Jesus who died for you. In that area of your life, whether it is all of your life you are a total fake, or just one small corner of your life where you are not real. In those areas of our life, brothers, we need to place ourselves in that ring of Roman soldiers and

turn the indignation that we felt a few moments ago on to our own heart because we are one with them in a common blasphemy.

Because their hearts were not in the words that they said. Their hearts were not bowed when their knees were bowed. Their praises were not sincere.

I'm frightened even to say this, but is it possible, brothers, that this very gathering here, this week, could become an insult to Jesus? Could become a blasphemy? Maybe not the entire meeting, but your presence here, my presence here, going through the motions, looking like we are something that we are not. Is it possible that your being here tonight could be an insult to Jesus? It is possible tonight. It is fearful, but it's true.

The common blasphemy. Oh, that God would look into our hearts tonight. Oh, that God would show us how close we come at times and what areas of our life we are a blasphemy to Christ.

Oh, that God would show us tonight that there are times where we stand along with those Roman soldiers and mock the king. There are times where we deserve for the indignation of others to be turned against us because we are fakes. We are not sincere.

We are not true. We are not real. Our life does not back up and live out what our mouth says.

Brothers, I don't want to be a good fake. I do not want to be a fake. I do not want to be such a good fake that you don't know it, but God does.

We'll never deceive God. Never! We can never become such a good counterfeit that God will hold us up and say it's real and it's not real. You can't slip one past God.

I can't slip one past God. God discerns perfectly every time. I don't want to be a fake.

It is not enough for me, brothers, and it is not enough for you, for others to think we are what we say we are. It is only enough to be able to stand before God and have God look into my heart and know that I am sincere and honest before Him. I did not say perfect.

I just said sincere and honest. Because when we become honest with God, God can begin the process of lining our heart and our words up. But as long as you are not ready to be honest with God about your failings, as long as you are not ready to be honest with your brothers and sisters about where you are at, God cannot begin that sanctifying work.

You've hidden it away from Him. I want to be real. And I trust that you want to be real.

I want my praises to God to be music in His ears, not a stinging insult. I do not want to join those Roman soldiers in mocking my Jesus. I do not want to join them even with one fingernail of my life.

I want my life to be sincere. I want my life to be real. I want my life to affirm and not negate the things which I say.

You've all said them. Whether you've stood here and said them or not, you've all said them. The songs we sing, we've all said them.

I want my life to affirm and not negate what my mouth says to Jesus. I do not want to blaspheme. I do not want to mock with my close counterfeit.

I do not want to mock Jesus. Tonight, brothers, as God looks into our heart and shows us where we are not real, my desire and God's desire tonight is not to beat you over the head about that. If you are ready to be honest and real, then this is a positive motivation.

If you are not ready to be honest and real, then it's frightening. But if tonight you are ready to be honest with God and become real and become sincere and mean what you say to your Creator, then it's not frightening tonight. It's sobering, but it's not frightening.

My desire is not to beat you tonight. My desire is that you with me would reach out to Christ with a new burden for sincerity, a new desire to be honest through and through, a new realization that when I'm not true, it's not that I'm a zero. I'm a mockery to my Jesus.

That's my desire for us tonight. It is possible for you tonight to become real if you are not real. It is possible for you tonight to stand before God and say, honestly, God, You know me.

I'm hiding nothing from You. Because God already knows you. You're not going to surprise God by what's in your heart.

And you're not even going to surprise your brothers, because we are all one in this. There is no temptation that has come to you that has not come to others. You will not surprise your other brothers tonight when you share honestly.

Brothers, let's be real. Let's be honest. Let's have a renewed desire to make sure that my life has the right tone when I say, yes, sir, to God.

Let's make sure that when we bow our knees and say, hail, my King! Hail, my Master! Let's make sure that our life agrees with our lips. Let's agree together, brothers, that we want to be sincere. So that when we lift our voices tomorrow morning or tomorrow evening in song, God looks down from heaven and sees worship.

Not blots of blasphemy amidst the worship. Not a single place in my life where I'm hiding. But honest and sincerity before God.

May God turn the searchlight of His Spirit and the searchlight of His Word upon our hearts. And show us where we're not real. And fix in us a new desire to become real.

Tonight, a desire that will bring you forward. A desire that will send you to a prayer room where you can confess before God and your brothers. And by that act, you can become real tonight.

If you have a sincere desire. May God put a fire in our hearts and a desire not to blaspheme Jesus. Not to put Him to an open shame.

Not to once again mock Him as those Roman soldiers did. But to glorify Him as our King, who He really and truly is. Thank you, my brothers.

I stand with you before God. May He speak through our hearts. Jeremiah 17 says this, The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart. I try the reins, even to give it to every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. And the Lord Jesus said, The hour cometh and now is when true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

I think Brother Daniel has opened up here the invitation. It's very plain. I don't think you need much more explanation.

If you're sitting there and you know you're not real, you're faking. Maybe you're faking entirely. Maybe you're not converted and you're making out that you are.

Or maybe you're just sitting there and there are areas of your life you don't want anyone to know about and you aren't prospering. The altar is a place where you can come and get real. Not perfect, but real.

Just come out and say, this is who I really am and join the rest of us who are just saved by grace and growing in grace. Go ahead, brother. O Lord, as I awake Thou art the water I am the flame Mold me and make me After Thy will While I am waiting Yielded and still Have Thine own way, Lord Have Thine own way Search me and drive me Master today Wider than soul, O Lord Watch me just now Gladly I bow Have Thine own way, Lord Have Thine own way Wounded and weary Healthy, I pray Power, all power Surely is Thine Touch me and heal me Savior Divine God bless all of you that are clear and clean and your hearts are open to God and you've examined yourself and you can say, I think I'm real.

I don't think there's anything in my life that I'm hiding. God bless you. But I think there's some of you sitting there that are saying, I'm not going to open up.

I'm not going to be real. I dare not. You dare not not.

You dare not. The Lord searches your heart. You are not hiding in the darkness.

You are hiding in the broad daylight. The darkness and the light are the same to God. And He searches the heart.

And you could get real tonight or you could get real before the beam of seed of Jesus Christ. Do it tonight. Just get up out of your seat and humble yourself and say, I've been pretending and I want to be real.

I'd encourage you to do it. Would you please? Let's sing the last verse. Have thine own way, O Lord, have thine own way.

Hold, O Lord, thy feet at the loose way. Fill with thy Spirit till all shall see Christ's holy always living in me. Thank you, Father, for these that have responded here tonight.

We stand in agreement. God, thank You for giving them the courage to acknowledge their need and be real. We pray You'd bless them, Lord.

Bless them as they go for help. Bless them as they bow their hearts. And give them a reality that also yields a joy and a meaning to their Christian life.

We ask it in Jesus' name.

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