

The World within the Church

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon delves into the book of 1 Corinthians, focusing on the significance of Paul's calling as an apostle of Jesus Christ and the impact of his message on the church in Corinth. It emphasizes the importance of responding to the gospel message with a passion for holiness, a desire to please God, and a commitment to walk in purity. The sermon warns against allowing worldliness to infiltrate one's life and calls for a return to a deep surrender to the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:1, 1 Corinthians 1:2, Matthew 11:28, 2 Corinthians 6:17, Galatians 5:9, John 10:27, 2 Corinthians 3:17, Jeremiah 6:14, 1 Corinthians 1:9, Romans 12:2

Topics: "Apostolic Calling", "Holiness and Purity"

Description

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Transcript

Welcome to the book of 1st Corinthians. 1st Corinthians and chapter 1. I'm going to read just the first three verses of the chapter. Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthen is our brother.

Let's understand that clearly. If you can see the word called right at the beginning, and put a bracket around it, and another bracket around the word and. So it's Paul who's writing with Sosthen is our brother.

But this Paul is called an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. Amen.

Lord, we pray that you will bring something out of these words, something out of your heart, and speak to us individually and directly this morning. Lord, only you know what we really, truly need to hear, and what we truly need to respond to. And so we pray, Lord, that you will speak and you will emphasize in that particular way your word to our individual hearts.

And we ask, Father, in the name of Jesus, Amen. The ancient city of Corinth had been ransacked some 100 years prior to this moment in time. And somewhere around 50 years or so ago, it had been re-established as a colony outpost of Rome.

And it was a very significant location, standing on a narrow strip of land, dividing two major land bodies and a sea on either side, just a four-mile-wide strip. And so Corinth was very strategically located. It had two harbors, one on each body of water.

And as a result, it was on a major trade route. So it was a very significant seaport. And it was a place that was buzzing with activity.

It was typical, I'm sure, of any international seaport. And it would also have been a mosaic of different cultures and different religions, and just a diversity in every possible way. The year, as Paul is writing here, was approximately 50 AD.

And this particular day, can I suggest, that is in focus, was seemingly just like any other day, just another day in that context, in that city. And then a seemingly unremarkable Jewish man walked into that city and entered that location. But appearances, as we know very well, can be very deceptive.

The man who, to all intents and purposes, was unremarkable, was the man that we have come to know as the Apostle Paul. And it is generally claimed, and I'm sure we all would agree with this, that apart from the Lord Jesus Christ himself, Paul is recognized as the most significant spiritual contributor to the Christian faith and to the Christian Church. We're reading his words this morning.

Words which have been, according to him himself, as he wrote another letter to Timothy, have been inspired by the Spirit of God. But I have no sense and no ability to understand, nor do I truly believe, that when Paul was writing these words or dictating them, that he had any real sense of appreciation that these very words would be included in this holy book. And so when we read his own words writing to Timothy, speaking about Holy Scripture having been given by inspiration of God, I'm sure that his emphasis at that time was on the body of truth which we now refer to as the Old Testament.

And though here he is, as he is speaking and writing, those very words would come to be included in the whole body of truth that we have here in this book. And which is an amazing thing to think about. But how grateful we are to God that he ever called the Apostle Paul.

And I'll say a little bit more about that as we proceed. But we're very grateful to his words and we do appreciate that as we read them and as we meditate upon them that the Holy Spirit is indeed speaking to us through these words and revealing truth to us for which we are completely and utterly indebted to God for. Paul, this man entering into this busy, busy seaport on this occasion, is carrying within his heart and within his mind the most crucial and most defining message in the whole of the world throughout the ages of time.

Amazing, isn't it? A seemingly insignificant man, unremarkable no doubt in his appearance, a Jew coming into this big, busy city. And yet we're saying that as we look back and contemplate this simple activity of him entering the city, walking within the city limits, he's bringing into that city the most important message in the whole of the world. It's a message which would deal with the really big questions of human life.

Questions about personal freedom. Questions about purpose, the purpose for our lives. I said to a man earlier this week, what is your purpose in life? This man had the answer to this.

He had the answer and an explanation for man's purpose on this earth. And he also carried a message concerning human destiny. Where it's all leading to, what the future is all about.

He carried these great truths within his heart and within his understanding as he entered into this city. He was a very incredibly significant man as he entered into that place. This information that he carried would be unparalleled by any other information, by any other philosophy, by any other religious words or messages.

Throughout the whole spread of time, until the end of the world, that message remains the most important and crucial message that can possibly be preached and can be possibly heard throughout the rest of time. Supremely, that message would unlock the door for man to experience fellowship with almighty God. That's the supreme feature of it.

Answering the various questions, dealing with the various issues that are crucially important to us as human beings, but then overarching everything. A message which would open up a door so that we could see and know and experience the living God. What an amazing thing.

That message would be given various terms in scripture, even by the apostle himself. The particular term I'm thinking of this morning, when he addresses his letter to the church in Rome, he refers to the Gospel of God. He would word it differently at different times.

The Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and so forth. But this Gospel of God. Amen.

Paul would preach that message. He would preach and declare that message with an intensity of passion as he preached it. This was not just some sort of casual presentation of something, but every fibre in his being was engaged in this supreme process that he deemed to be the most important thing in the whole of the world.

And he preached it with passion in that way. I think, first of all, because he had personally experienced it in his own life. He'd not picked up a book in the bookstore or he'd not listened to some preacher saying something.

He had been directed by God himself. He would say on another occasion to yet another church, the church in Galatia, he would say, that which he's teaching, he didn't receive it from anyone. It wasn't the result of going to Jerusalem and listening to the other apostles, for example.

He said, I received it from God. And that formed a granite rock-like foundation for his own life and for his entire ministry. He was never in doubt about the fact that what he was teaching had come from God himself and was God's sovereign word of truth that men and women need to hear.

In fact, it would be true to say that he experienced the gospel before he understood it. God would then reveal truth to him. But we remember the story so plainly and I hardly need to remind you of it.

But it was that journey to Damascus that was the pivotal moment in his life. When, I think the way I've described it on some other occasions, I'm thinking, perhaps foolishly, of a motor vehicle travelling at 100 miles an hour and slamming into solid concrete, just arrested, brought to a halt immediately. That was Paul.

He was on his own mission at that particular time, destroying the church of Jesus Christ. And once again, this was the kind of man he was. Every fibre in his being was engaged in that activity.

And none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the living Lord Jesus Christ, stopped him in his tracks. And he was arrested. And of course, there was the development of that story.

And we remember the events in the home of Ananias that he was directed to go to. But his whole life pivoted on that occasion. And from there on, God began to reveal truth to him.

Clearly, the Lord brought him to one side, very lightly in the quietness of some Arabian desert, so it is generally believed. And God revealed this whole body of truth to his heart, which would become the gospel that he would preach. So he preached it with an intensity because he'd experienced it himself, and because he'd received it directly from God.

But he preached it with an intensity also because he'd witnessed its effect on the men and women to whom he preached it. He saw what it accomplished. And no wonder he would then rise on another occasion.

If any man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new. He'd witnessed that happening in the lives of men and women.

All of this just bolstering up his absolute confidence in the message. He declared that this gospel of God was, in fact, not merely information, although it was and included information, but it was the active power of God. He would say, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto deliverance to everyone that believe it.

And so he preached with passion and confidence. He saw it completely transform people, and with his greater understanding that God opened up to him, he knew that in that moment of response and opening up to this message, to this truth, to this gospel, men and women's status before a holy God was changed and transformed. They became accepted in the beloved.

Guilty, vile, lost sinners, the hymn writer puts it that way, accepted by a holy God and counted righteous. Do you see, we saw that, didn't we, in our reading? Those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

He saw men and women released from their slavery to sin, and slavery even from their flesh lives. This, of course, the product of the ministry was preaching. It was the power of God unto deliverance to everyone who believes.

And he knew, as I have already indicated, that this response to this message would actually determine their eternal destiny. What message could be more important and more significant than this? So, he enters into the city of Corinth. As he is approaching Corinth, God speaks to him.

And he said to Paul, don't be afraid. He said, for I have many people in this city. Paul would enter into the city, and he would remain there for 18 months.

And the story of those, at least some information concerning that time he spent in Corinth, can be found in the book of the Acts of the Apostles in chapter 18. But it would be there that he would preach this word. He would declare this message to the people I have been referring to as I speak of this mosaic of humanity.

And he would preach the message there. He would see the gospel at work. And by 18 months, as he left the city, he left behind an established Christian assembly, a group of people, a body of people, I don't know how many people were part of that by the time that he left.

But he moved on, leaving behind, there in that city, the church which is at Corinth. Some five years later, the Apostle Paul, having moved on and continued on his missionary travels, preaching this great gospel, he would receive a letter. It would come from Rome.

It would come from someone who was, we're told, of the household of Chloe. We don't know who Chloe was. There's speculation being given as to who this was.

But in any event, he receives a letter. And basically the letter would be very troubling for the Apostle. It was a letter which would have been very hard for him to read, because there was trouble in the church at Corinth, the church that he had founded.

And the letter would catalogue a list of issues. If you want to know what they all are, just read through 1 Corinthians, because they're all here. This is a reference to his response to those things which had been put before him.

There was a range of troubles. They ranged from a completely inappropriate and wrong approach to the Lord's table, to the breaking of bread. And yet, at the other end, it would refer to gross immorality that was in the midst of the church.

And all of this would have been incredibly hard for the Apostle to hear. And the natural response to that kind of statement would be, Well, what did he say? How did he respond to it? And once again, we read through 1 Corinthians as he deals with these different issues, as he moves through systematically and reminds them of truth. I think, as I've read these opening verses, and there's far more in these verses than I am prepared to deal with, or even try to deal with, this morning.

But the fact is, in these words, I find, to all intents and purposes, a very seemingly plain, straightforward way of starting his letters. And, as a matter of fact, Paul, in the course of his ministry, as far as we are aware, and this is limited information, he wrote seven letters, seven epistles. I only know the seven because they're right here, but there are those who believe that Paul very likely wrote four letters in all to the Corinthian church.

There's certainly at least a reference to a third letter that we find in his own writings here. But there's another phrase that we could look at, which seems to suggest or give some basis to believe that there was at least four letters that he wrote. We don't know what the others were, of course, or what they contained.

But notice how he begins this letter here. In verse two, he says he's writing to the church of God, which is at Corinth. Again, the words, there's nothing startling to us at first reading here.

But let's just consider these for a moment. Let's deal just briefly with the word church. The Greek word which is translated church here for us is ekklesia, a word we've come across and thought about on other occasions.

It means, quite simply, called out. So we've got the ekklesia in Corinth, the called out people in Corinth. And they had been called out by God himself.

Paul was the human agent. He brought the message with all of his clarity and passion and so on. But clearly when he refers to this calling, saints by calling, he says in verse two, he clearly is referring to the fact that God was the instrument behind it all.

And after all, God had said to him, before he actually got involved in the city, that he had many people there already. So God knew exactly what he was doing and what it was all about. It would yet unfold in time for the apostle Paul.

So Paul's behind it. So we've got this called out body of people within a city of worldliness. That's what I'm reading here.

That immediately presents itself as a tremendous and glorious testimony to the power of the gospel that he was preaching. It was one thing for him to declare information, but what we're reminding ourselves of right now is the fact that God was working through him and through his words, through this message which he calls the gospel of God, and it was having such an impact upon these people that its goal, its purpose, was actually coming into effect. That within the body of people in that city, there were those that were being divinely called out, that were being separated from the group at large.

This would also speak to us of the grace of God, that this would be in God's heart at this time, and the miracle of his grace that he's calling people. He's calling people today as we are here. This again re-emphasizes to me the fact that the message that he's carrying and that he's proclaiming is not merely theological information.

This is a big issue. I think it's a big issue today, and I hope that I'll make it even clearer as we proceed, that is so far as what I'm thinking about at least. But today, if we're not careful, we can get so wrapped up in the theological information.

There have been other occasions quite recently, I know, where I have quoted Jesus when he said, as he was preaching to the crowd around him back then, he said, you search the scriptures, the theological information, if you will, for in them you think you have eternal life. Then he went on to say, but you won't come to me that you might have life. The gospel is not merely theological information.

It is theological information, and it came from God, and we do well to spend our time studying it and reading it, but unless it becomes transformed from being merely black letters on a white page, or red letters on a white page in some cases, into actual experience, it has not produced its purpose. That's why we sing, beyond the sacred page we seek thee, Lord. A man can be a master of the theological information, and still not come to him to receive his life.

And that's the challenge. It's a very important one. We'll see it more clearly as we go on.

True preaching of the gospel, which is what Paul was engaged in, let me clarify, true preaching, authentic preaching of the gospel, is not just words, but in a mystical sense, because this appears to be so intangible to us, and for some people unbelievable, but when it is being ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit, it actually can infuse that life into the inner man of men and women. It's the presence and activity of God the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who is the key to transforming what would otherwise be theological words and concepts, and transforming the life inwardly of a man or a woman. He, the Holy Spirit, is the supernatural divine power bringing about this transformation.

The Apostle Peter would say, the prophets, he's referring back to the Old Testament, the prophets preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. The Apostle Paul would say, writing to the Thessalonians, he would say that he, Paul, had preached the message not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost. Do you see this? We can all read the Bible, because we have access to the Bible, we can study it, we can talk about it, we can have Bible study sessions, which are not without profit, please don't go away thinking that I'm discrediting this, but what we are saying, we can do that without ever experiencing the Holy Spirit's power working in our lives.

And it's this speaking, this mystical speaking, this speaking which doesn't come to our outward ears particularly. We hear someone preaching, but we're talking about something else going on. That's what Paul was talking about when he said this to the Thessalonians.

He said, you know, we came and we preached to you. But it's as though he's saying, but something else was going on. The Holy Spirit was working through that ministry, through that opening up of truth to you.

It wasn't just to their minds, but something inwardly was being opened up. And this constitutes what we will call the mystical call of God. God is calling men and women today.

Do you remember another phrase we can find? He that has ears to hear. Let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Having ears to hear.

Or yet another passage I'm thinking in John chapter 10, where Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice. There's a hearing that is beyond what goes on at this level. It's something else.

It's where the Word of God penetrates deeply within us, and something inside recognizes it. Paul would talk in yet another occasion, also in this epistle, he'd talk about a certain sound. And I know there was a context for that statement.

But yes, the Word of the Spirit of God has a certain sound. And those who have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying, hear that sound. They hear in that sound the very Word of the Lord Jesus himself.

My sheep know my voice. Amen. And this calling of the Spirit of God, it could be well illustrated, I think, by turning our attention back to that moment when Jesus stood at a tomb, the tomb of Lazarus, you remember.

And he calls out the name Lazarus. Lazarus has been dead for four days. His sister said, Lord, by this time he stinketh.

Old King James. But to all intents and purposes, it was an utterly and completely impossible thing. But there Jesus stands and calls upon Lazarus.

And Lazarus came forth, it says. That's a profound illustration and a good illustration of what we're talking about. The Spirit of God can accomplish something that awakens and stirs that inward part of us.

And we hear him calling us. The call of God is, on the one hand, it's the calling out. It's the ecclesia, he's calling out.

But in another sense, it's a calling to, a calling to himself. Come unto me. Come out from among them is the call.

Amen. So there's always this dual aspect to the call of God. It's a call from and it's a call to.

Or in terms of a great story in the Old Testament, it's a bringing out to bring you in. God says, remember, out of Egypt to bring you in to Canaan. This is what's going on.

God's not just calling out people and saying, well, you go and stand over there until whenever. But he's calling people out. This is what's going on.

The church in Corinth had within its context a group of people who had been divinely called out through the preaching of the apostle, which was true preaching because it included the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. There were people there who had ears to hear and they responded to it. They were the called out, but they were called unto.

Called unto him. Amen. You know, I think when we, in our preaching, when we attempt to be clever, there's a word I read years ago of Oswald Chambers.

There's a little booklet. Some of you may have come across it. Sorry for you if you haven't.

It's called Disciples Indeed. Oswald Chambers didn't write any books. We know that.

There's plenty with his name on it, but he didn't write any. And they didn't have the modern technology that we have today. But his wife took all of his messages down in shorthand and were grateful for that.

And then they've been compiled into books and so on. And one little booklet is called Disciples Indeed. And he's giving encouragement and direction for preachers or would-be preachers.

And I remember on one occasion he said this was a serious warning to, I'm going to say to young preachers, it's a warning to older preachers too. Never be clever because God is not clever. But we can, if we're not careful, we become so professional.

We know how it's supposed to be done. We know how to behave in the context. And we know how to preach, we may think.

And we can go to classes and listen and learn and have diagrams put on boards before us of what to do and how to do it. And how to break down the text, to give a proper exposition of the text and so on. All that information is out there.

But when a man attempts to be professional or to be clever, the only thing we succeed in doing is grieving the Holy Spirit. And our preaching of the gospel becomes a caricature of the true gospel and doesn't produce what God intends it to produce. But when the Holy Spirit speaks, and not so much the preacher, it produces something which is altogether different.

The response to this message, to this call, it transforms everything. As we've seen, it infuses life. It infuses sacred fire into the soul of a man and into a woman.

It gives and imparts a passion to truly know God. That's what happens. It's as though a light has been turned on inwardly.

Another world, another dimension other than the immediate one in which we live and the things that have engaged us and preoccupied us all fade into insignificance. Something new is focused. And right at the

heart of that that's new is a desire and a passion to know God.

The people called out, truly called out, who are truly responding to this message of the gospel, they're found engaged in another pursuit. They're going after God. They're seeking him for a greater and clearer understanding of him.

They have a passion. I know no other word better than the word passion. They have a passion for holiness.

They hear the word of Scripture, be ye holy for I am holy. Or another, without holiness no man shall see the Lord. But these called out people, they're not simply responding to those texts as though they're a commandment being imposed upon us.

But something inside is rising up. There's just a hunger to know God ever more fully. There's such a desire and longing and commitment to walk in purity in this life.

They become lovers of righteousness. They become haters of iniquity. They've been changed, indeed transformed, deep within.

They have this passion to be pleasing to God. It concerns his people, these people, these true responders to this true message. Their heart is grieved at the thought that their behavior, both outwardly and inwardly, would be unpleasing to God, their Holy Father.

This is the core, the core of the Christian gospel. And in response to this message, we're told by the Apostle in 2 Corinthians, let me just read this, it's a familiar verse, certainly here. Paul writes, But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of him in every place.

The whole text is worth spending a lot longer on it than I am just now. But at least let me take from this, this clear understanding of the Apostle, that for those who hear this message and respond to it fully, they experience in their lives a victorious life, they experience victory over the things that would oppose them. The Apostle Paul knew very, very well, indeed, that insofar as a man or a woman responds to this gospel, on the one hand there's victory promised, but on the other hand they will become a target for opposing pressures and spirits from that moment.

Victory promised, victory experienced, so far as we're walking in faith and in a full devotion to him. But at the same time, being pursued and chased by seductive influences, which are seeking to distract such a man and such a woman from that life that is pleasing to God, that life which is holy and that life which is pure. And the Apostle Paul knew that very, very well, even as he preached.

He knew it from his own experience. There would be demonic seductions in one form or another, coming through the very surroundings in which we live, through the world, with its seductions being taken, as it were, and used to full advantage by dark spirits, which seek to defame the glory of Christ and the image of Christ in his people and their faith in Christ and distract them from this life of victory and blessing. But not only the seductive things of the world, but the seductive things of our own flesh also, which if pursued and followed and fed, would once again be encouraged greatly by every demonic spirit that opposes Christ, and they all do, to draw us away.

It's always to draw us away from that place of security, that place of purity, that place of blessing that God has ordained for us. And there would also be, and there continues to be, the distortions of the very message itself which would be used. It was happening right before Paul, even here in this passage.

It is referred to and alluded to, but the message being altered. Do you remember how Paul would address that in a couple of his letters in particular, not least in Galatians? But how the people come in and creep in and bring distortions to the message, so it becomes altered, it becomes weakened and is separated from the power of God, the Holy Spirit. And it's at this very point where the root problem of what was going on in Corinth really comes to light.

In other words, they'd given way, they'd given space, they'd given occasion to the enemy and to the things of the world and to the things of the flesh. You know, you'll have heard this, it's a truism really. All the water in the world, however hard it tried, could never sink a ship unless it got inside.

All the water in the world, however hard it tried, could never sink a ship unless it got inside. Do you see? And, you know, in many cases it's those little compromises that allow the water to begin to get inside. To change the metaphor completely, we all are well aware that in the event that a huge dam is found to have a crack in it, no matter how small, we know that left unattended, it's only going to be a matter of time before there's some catastrophic collapse and a great calamity which will take place.

Give the world, the flesh and the devil any degree of room, any space in your life and leave it in that condition and sooner or later it will bring a collapse to your faith. And the world's torrent will just come flooding in to our lives. Paul will say to these Corinthians, Do you not know that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Its yeast spores permeate whatever it touches.

And Solomon of old would say, It's the little foxes that spoil the vines. The seemingly innocent things, the seemingly insignificant things that we give way to, that will do the damage. And the inevitable event will be exactly what took place here.

Because we started out by reading that Paul was writing to the church of God, the ekklesia, the called out people, which are in Corinth. The church in the city had become the city in the church. The water had got inside.

The world had got inside. And we're right at that place in these days, I'm thinking in the broader sense, but then we have to take this challenge very personally as well. Some of us had John MacArthur saying just yesterday in a particular interview, speaking of the United States.

And he said the church has lost its conscience. Inevitably when we lose our conscience, we're giving way to the enemy. We're allowing the water to come inside.

Instead of being the separated people in the midst of an unclean city, the unclean cities come in the church and the church is no longer an ekklesia. It's lost the central virtue upon which God was intent on establishing. We lose our moral conscience.

We lose our consciousness of God. And we're left with words in a book and maybe social commitments and friends within the context of what we call the church. But we've lost the heart of it all.

We've lost the most important thing of all. And frankly, I think there's good evidence to suggest that much of the professing church today is blind to the rising floodwaters of worldliness within her ranks. That may

be true in your life.

I don't know. But the preachers today are very likely moving toward the preachers of yesteryear, which we read about in the book of Jeremiah, when the record of scripture says they were healing the hurt of the people slightly, saying peace, peace, when there is no peace. In other words, we're telling people that they're born again when they've never been born again.

That they're new creatures when they've never experienced the power of the Spirit of God. And we're preaching information which is lacking that vital power of God, the Holy Spirit. Amen.

If the leaven is not dealt with quickly, it will spread and it will affect every area of our lives and every area of our ministry. It's that razor sharp word of God that exposes sin and that confronts sin at close range. But that message has become unfashionable in our dulled consciousness of God and in our dulled consciences to immorality.

We need to return again to the pattern which was shown in the mount. Do you remember those words? Perhaps our attention is far more on our sound systems and the honing of our musical performances than on the things that we need to be paying attention to far more. Paul writes to these Corinthians and in this letter he reminds them of their lofty calling.

And that is that you are the ecclesia, you are the called out body of people, the elected people of God. And maybe that word has an application to many of us who are listening today. Could it be that you have allowed the world's water to find an entrance into your life and into your lifestyle? Or perhaps on the other hand you have never fully grasped the compass and the potential of this great gospel of God.

Everything of the city must be forsaken. The scripture says, be separate, come out from among them, touch not the unclean thing. We are told in this very chapter we are called into fellowship with his son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Or John Wesley or Charles Wesley actually put it like this in a great hymn which starts out, Come Holy Ghost all quickening fire. He said, let earth no more my heart divide. With Christ may I be crucified.

To thee with my whole soul aspire. Dead to the world and all its toys, its idle pomp and fading joys. Be thou alone my one desire.

The bottom line to all of this really is this. Whatever the issues were then in Corinth or whatever the issues are in the churches today or whatever the issues are in your individual life today, the unchanging unswerving solution will always be found in first of all a fresh exposure to the truth of the word of God and secondly a more complete surrender of one's whole being to this powerful working of the Holy Spirit. And my last question is this.

Are you ready for that? Let's pray. Father we pray that by your Holy Spirit you will shed that light within our hearts that illumines everything and so stir us inwardly Lord that we see as never before the absolute emptiness, the folly of pursuing the things that would just simply attract our flesh for a moment. Give us a sense of the worth and the value and indeed the transforming power of the things of God and of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Father turn all of our hearts to a return, a full and complete and consistent return to this place of yieldedness. This place Lord where we give ourselves entirely to you. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

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