

# Hating Religion, Loving Jesus

by Gary Wilkerson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God as ABBA Father and experiencing the love of Jesus, rather than just following rules and performance-based religion.*

**Duration:** 46:03

**Scripture:** Isaiah 57:15, Matthew 5:14-16, Matthew 11:28, John 3:16, Romans 8:15, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 John 4:7, 1 John 4:19

**Topics:** "Religion", "Love of Jesus", "Relationship vs. Religion"

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## Description

Gary Wilkerson emphasizes the distinction between religion and a genuine relationship with Jesus, urging believers to move beyond religious practices that can hinder their connection with God. He shares his global prayer for people of all faiths to know Jesus, highlighting the struggles against the flesh, the world, and Satan that often lead to a religious mindset. Wilkerson encourages the congregation to embrace the love of Jesus, which transcends religious norms and fosters a true, intimate relationship with God as their 'ABBA Father.' He calls for a radical love that manifests in everyday life, urging believers to be the light of Christ in a dark world.

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## Transcript

I travel all around the world and everywhere I go I pray the same prayer. I pray when I'm in Buddhist countries, I pray that every Buddhist comes to know Jesus Christ. That's just my prayer.

I love to pray for Buddhist people to come know Jesus. And when I'm in the Muslim world in the Middle East, I pray that all the Muslims come to know Jesus as well. And when I'm in Israel or other places like that, I pray all the Jews would come to know Jesus Christ.

Wouldn't that be great? Wouldn't that be amazing? And when I'm in America, I pray that all the Christians would start to know Jesus Christ. And that's what I want to talk to you today because it's not about religion, it's about Jesus. It's not about religion.

The Bible tells us that we have some things working against us. One of the things is called the flesh. And you know what that's like, right? Okay, that's a bear, right? I mean, that's a rough one.

It's your human sinful nature that you want to do things right, but you end up doing things wrong. So that's against us. And then we have the world.

When you walk down the city streets, it's rough and it's tough. And our family life is difficult and our financial life can be difficult. And on the job, there can be pain and sorrow and a difficult work environment.

And just everywhere we go and our bodies sometimes fail us and just the world is attacking us. And then if that's not enough, you got Satan after you as well. So these three things are against us.

And so I began to wonder, well, the Lord was having me talk this morning about how he hates religion, but he seems to categorize the things that he's fighting against in these three realms of flesh, the world and Satan, the devil. And I thought, well, I wonder why religion is not necessarily categorized as one of those elements. Why is there not four basic elements that are fighting against the real love of Jesus in our heart? And the Holy Spirit spoke to me is because religion is in all three of those.

Religion is in the flesh. We in our flesh want to be religious. Uh, it makes us feel good about ourselves.

We in our own, we're living in a world that wants to make everything religious because it's more comfortable to be religious than full of the love of Jesus, full of love. Jesus make you crazy in a good way. Uh, religion will make you safe in a bad way.

Religion will make you be careful. Religion will make you wonder what you think of. And, and Satan certainly loves religion as well.

If somebody can't, uh, they're beginning to think of a life in Christ. And then all of a sudden the devil can't get you to back away from that. He'll do what my uncle said.

My uncle, Don Wilkerson said one time to me, he said, not everybody backslides away from Christianity. Some people front slide. What did he mean? They, they go into the devil, takes them into religion norms and rules and regulations and practices that don't produce life in us.

And so that's what I want to talk to you about this morning. Let me pray and ask God to bless the message today. Father, we thank you that your presence is here in this room.

Lord, uh, you know, I live in Colorado and sometimes, uh, um, sometimes I forget just to my right, as I'm driving to my office every day, there's these beautiful, majestic mountains. And sometimes I just forget and I'm busy about them. But when I stop and look, I'm grateful.

And father, I pray that my friends here at time square church would, would realize in the midst of the city that you've given them a church that, that, that the beauty of Christ rules and reigns in. You've given them a choir that loves them and loves to sing the praises of the Lord. Lord, pastors and elders and staff and leaders that love them.

You've given them ushers, children workers right now who are, who are with our little brats and they're loving on them so well, we want to stop for just a moment and give thanks to you, Jesus, for the church you've given to us. We bless you for that. Jesus, we bless you for that.

Thank you. Thank you. The Lord, the mountain peaks for us is really not even just our church.

It's you, you're, you're the beauty that we want to pause and look at every day. You're, you're not, you're not the religious system that we are tempted by our flesh to try to live in or by, by the world trying to force us into it by, by, by a religious community that says you have to behave and act and think and pray and live this way rather than being led by your spirit and the devil or trying to introduce religion as a place of

division and, and hatred and, and, and war and, and, uh, uh, and, and lifelessness in our own hearts. So thank you, Jesus, that you're greater than that.

You're greater than that. And you're going to show yourself strong here in this room today. We give thanks for that in Jesus name.

Amen. In order to hate religion as Jesus does, you have to be able to learn to identify religion. Um, here, here's a hint.

I was walking here from 53rd street, two blocks. I was scared to death, not because I'm not used to New York city, uh, but because I was nervous about being here. I was getting, what am I going to say? What are the people going to think? Is this going to be a good sermon? Will pastor Carter ever invite me back again? After here's what I have to say, all these thoughts were going through my mind.

That's religion and Jesus hates it. Why is it religion? Because I'm more concerned about myself, my performance. How will I do that? I am concerned about you.

I am, I am, I am here for you. I'm not here for me to sound good, to look good, to, to have you download the sermon afterwards, to, to, to have you invite me back. I am here for the love of Jesus, for the love of God, for the love of his people, for that.

He would love you that, that through my words today, you would know that you're loved by a most Holy God, that your ABBA father loves you. That, that, that he's one of the thrills of my heart recently has been just knowing how big Jesus is. He's he's in Isaiah 57, it says he's high and Holy and he's lifted up.

And he's, he lives among the high and low. He's lofty. And some of us learn about God that way.

He's high. He's Holy lifted up. When we learn about God like that, we usually pray almost Reverend, Holy distant father, how art thou today? Uh, but we don't understand the second part of that same scripture says, but he also dwells with the lowly and the broken and the contrite of heart.

And so we need to learn to see God as you are high and lifted up and the train of your robe fills the temple and to, and to reverence him and honor him and his holiness and his majesty. And yet at the same time say, Oh, you dwell with little old me in my brokenness. And then so you can call him great majestic one.

No one like you, no other name above all the names. No one like you, God, most high, but you can also say ABBA father, ABBA, ABBA father. When Jesus said ABBA father, he was saying what we would say today is daddy.

What my, what my granddaughter calls me pop up. It's, it's, it's a, it's a, a name of endearment. Jesus only other person in all of history that called God father was David.

And one of his prayers, he called God father throughout history. No one had ever called God father before. And here's Jesus walking down the streets and he was praying and he was talking and he, and he not only called God father, which would have been a shock to the religious system of his day.

You don't call God father. You call him most reverent one. And, but he had an intimacy with them.

So he could call him yes, most high and Holy, but he also say him father. So he called God father, but not only that, he really broke the religious rules. He called him daddy.

And I want to encourage you to be able to, I kind of come from a history or background where I like the high and Holy. And when I hear somebody call God, daddy, I get a little bit, that just makes me feel funny. You know, it's just like, because some people can be too casual with God.

Right. And some people call him daddy or papa and, and they miss the reverence and holiness of God. But some of us are not careful.

We can know the holiness and reverence of God, but not know him as papa as daddy. When my, when my daughter was about five years old, she's older now, but I came home from preaching on a Sunday and I was exhausted and I wanted just five minutes to, to read the, particularly the sports section. You got to check.

Yeah. You got to keep your eye on those Yankees, right? And so I wanted to read the sports section and my little daughter's head popped up underneath the newspaper. And, uh, and I pushed her head back down and said, I just want, I just want five minutes to have a little dad time.

You know, just a little quiet time for myself. And she popped her head up again. One more time.

Hey daddy, daddy, I want to tell you something. I said, not right now, honey. And she pushed her head back down and I'm thinking to myself, oh man, these kids are irritating.

And, uh, and she popped her head up a third time underneath the newspaper and I pushed down this and I hate myself for this. Well, not anymore. I asked God forgive me.

So I feel okay now. So you don't have to pray for me. But, but, but I hated that.

I did this that time. She, another time she popped her head underneath this newspaper and I, I pushed her down and anger said, Annie, can't you just give me five minutes alone? I've I've I'm exhausted. I'm tired.

I've been preaching all morning. And she popped her head up underneath the newspaper. Persistent little girl takes after her mother.

She popped her head up on a newspaper again with tears in her eyes. She said, daddy, I just wanted to tell you, I love you. Yeah.

Right. Yeah. Oh man.

Talk about feeling miserable because I knew religion and she knew love and she, she knew ABBA father. She knew she had a daddy. She could crawl up in her lap.

She was believing she had a daddy that, that she was more important to than sports or that she was more important to than the sermon. I had just preached in the morning because to her, I wasn't a preacher. I wasn't the pastor of the church.

I wasn't the head of world challenge ministry. I was, I was daddy. And I, and I want to encourage you to know God both in the high and lofty and Holy place, but I want to encourage you to know him as your ABBA father too.

There's times in New York city where you need to see him as the high and Holy one, the Reverend God, the most high and Holy, uh, the he's lofty and exalted and you don't mess around with God. You need to

know him that way. I'm serious, right? But there's all comes a time, particularly, I believe here in New York city where you got to know him as daddy.

You got to know him as, as your, as your faithful father who loves you church. Do you know that this morning that the father, God loves you. He loves you so much.

He's thinking of you. He cares about you. You are the apple of his eye.

You are the delight. He formed you in his mother's womb. Uh, Psalms one 39, 17, I think it is says, says that, that his thoughts for you, how precious are his thoughts concerning you? You couldn't even count them all there.

His thoughts for you are more than the sands that there is on the earth today. That's a lot of thoughts. We were talking about this at the conference.

That's a lot of thoughts God has for you. How many times has he thought about you? If it's more than the number of sand, there is sand. There's a lot of sand.

And, and here's what I want to invite you to do is, is just picture. What if you could take four or five pieces of sand in your hand and say, okay, this sand, the, all these, all the sand on all the beaches are all God's thoughts, precious thoughts concerning me, not, not evil thoughts concerning me. Sometimes we think God, all he thinks about us is, man, what a miserable person, what a failure as a Christian, what a failure as a follower of God, what a failure as a father, what a failure as a mother.

And that's not the precious thoughts of God for you. And if you could just take four or five of those precious thoughts of God and say, here's one of them, even though I fail him, he's still merciful to me. That's a precious thought.

That's a piece of sand. He, he not, here's another one. I think he thinks about me and this, this is a revelation that set me free.

He not only loves me, he likes me. That's awesome. You know that? Because, because if, if he loves me, it's because he's God, God is love.

Hey, he can't do anything else. He's just, but, but he, he actually likes me and, and, and he likes you. He like pastor Carter.

Remind me of the day I said something, I didn't remember saying it, but sometimes, you know, we, we describe God as holy and majestic. And sometimes I describe him as being very nice. Isn't, isn't he nice to you? That that's his precious thoughts over you.

Religion will cause you to think about yourself as I'm miserable. I'm no good. I'm always failing.

I'm not doing enough. I'm not living up. I can't make it.

I'm not sure if I can go on. And then, and that's why Satan introduces religion, a religious system into your life. So that, so that you begin to feel that, that, that you can't go on and that's what he's after.

So you don't go on, but, but God brings the life of Jesus into you. So there's, there's after that, there's no more wrestling with whether I go on or not. You can't help when you're loved that way.

You can't help, but go on. Who would leave a love like that? Who would leave a relationship like that? Who would leave the most precious love of all who would, who would deny that? And that's why Jesus, his love draws us to him and religious, religious heart moves us away from him. You can know you're religious.

If you say, I love you, Jesus on Sunday morning here at church. And then you curse all week long. You're in religion.

You can say you can come here and you can worship Jesus, but all week long, you're worshiping your idols. Then you have religion, not Jesus. You can come here and fellowship with each other and give each other hugs or New York, high fives, whatever you want in about a fist pump.

If you want, you can do anything to show love, give each other a big hug. But if you don't love your family, you're in religion, not in relationship with Jesus. You can, you can come here and sing.

You can come here and sing songs and put your mind on Christ for, for 30 minutes as we worship him. But if all week long, there's no worship of your heart. Your, your mind is as the rapper says, your mind is on your money, right? My mind is on my money and my money's on my mind.

I'm probably not supposed to say rap songs from the fourth. That's the only one I know. It's not true.

But if that, but if, but if your mind is on, Oh, how let's sing praises to Jesus, but all week long, it's it's wall street stuff and not Jesus. Then it's religion. That's not love.

Love consumes you. Well, that's what the song of Solomon says. It's like a fire that consumes you.

It can't be quenched. It's just too much. It's just burning within your soul.

It's amazing to have that kind of love relationship with Jesus and religion robs us of that. It robs us of that. Just the life, that natural life that flows religion is, is things you have to go do in, in, in a, in a building or in a place.

And love of Jesus is something that's inside of you. It's in your mind. It's in your heart.

It's in your words. It's in your, it's in your behavior. It's in your actions.

It's, it's a natural outflow. It's not something you go do for me. I have to battle religion because sometimes I think that for me, I get religious because I prepare, you know, like a big time to prepare for this talk here.

You know, I want to say something good, but if I'm not prepared to go to my neighbor, just the simple love of Jesus or invite them over for a meal and let them know how much Jesus loves them, then I'm getting stuck in religion. And the Lord spoke to me clearly when I was in Amman, Jordan with pastor Carter, and we were sharing with the brothers and sisters in Christ there and in Jordan. And, and I was at these, I go to these, you know, okay, there's a nine o'clock session.

Then there's 11 o'clock session. There's a three o'clock session. There's a seven o'clock session.

And then we go back to the hotel and, and, and I was prepared, you know, and when I go back to the hotel, I pray, Oh God, you know, speak to me through to me tonight and bless these pastors and leaders that have come from all over the middle East. And all this time I'm passing by hundreds, if not thousands

of people that have never even heard the name of Jesus, but I'm only thinking about the church service. You see what I'm saying? If you're only thinking about the church service, what happens on Sunday at nine and then one and three and six and Tuesday night, then, then, then that, if you're not careful, please don't hear me say don't attend those or be part of those or, or pray or read your Bible or have, have the joy of congregating together.

But what I'm saying, if that's all there is to your life, you're missing Jesus. And Jesus is meant to be all and all in all and through all and for all. And because of all, he's meant to be, he's meant to be all in all.

And so at this, at this conference, I thought, forget that I'm not going to live that way anymore. And I said, I want to tell everybody I meet everywhere. I go every restaurant.

I'm in every elevator. I'm in every hallway. I'm in every train.

I want to go. I want to tell everybody about the love of Jesus, because if it's love, you're going to be like Jesus. If you love the master, Jesus, then you're the servant.

You're going to become like the teacher. And Jesus didn't have like, just, you know, he walked around and said, Hey everybody, we got to stop because we're going to go to a religious service now. And that, and then this religious service, that's where we get to be like religious.

That's where we get to sing our songs and pray our prayers and pray for the sick people in our religious service. And, and, and no Jesus, there was no difference when he was in the religious synagogue service. He was preaching.

He was praying. He was healing the sick. He was casting out demons.

He was loving on people like the father loves people. And then when he got out of that religious building, he came in and he didn't change. Right.

He was totally the same walking through Judea or Galilee or Samaria religious areas or Samaritan areas, wherever he was. He was just, it's like one big church service everywhere we go. You don't come to get the light.

You are the light. You don't come to escape the darkness of New York city. You are the light of the city.

You are the light of the world. And religion will put a bushel over you because it makes you feel uncomfortable. It makes you feel like, what are people thinking of me? What, what if I, if I do that, well, people think I'm strange.

That's too, that's too crazy to do that. That's too far gone, but, but I'm fed up with that. I want to be, if it's okay to be crazy for God, I want to be crazy for God.

I want to be radical. I want to be, it's, it's actually in New Testament. It's just nothing but normal.

So it's nothing but being like Jesus. He wants us to be like him to walk as he walked. Those who say they are in Christ ought to walk even as he walked.

And I want to walk like Jesus. I don't, I don't have to put sandals on or grow my hair long. I just, I just want to walk like Jesus everywhere I go.

I want to pray for people like Jesus did. I want to love like people, I want to love people and religion will keep me from that because it will make me feel like, uh, you know, I have to study, you know, 20 hours to prepare one sermon. I used to do that up to about three months ago, 20 hours, prepare one sermon.

I was more concerned about that one sermon and that one 45 minutes. I was going to say that one, two hour sermon, but I didn't want to scare you. Uh, that one 45 minute sermon or 30 minute sermon.

I used to prepare half my week for that. And the Lord just said to me, where did you learn to do that? I said, uh, Bible school, the birthplace of religion, not, not, not all Bible schools, but, but the one I went to now, not, not summit. So religion makes me worried about just saying that right now and saying, I know in Jesus, he loves me.

Even if I said something like that and sister Teresa loves me. Um, but, but, but I just want to walk around like Jesus. And so I was asking Jesus, where'd I learn to, where did I learn that pressure of 20 hours? And, and, and, and it, you know, like a good joke to introduce things and three point sermons and a good conclusion and, uh, uh, get Greg up here and say, just as I am and give an altar, where did I learn that the preaching in this book's totally different.

They got up and they remembered what Jesus said, just open up your mouth and the Holy spirit will give you something to say. They were, they were now, wait a minute, wait a minute. You're clapping, but you would not like to hear some of the sermons they preached.

Some of them were not all that interesting. I read, have you read Steven sermon? It's like all these religious leaders gather around him and he starts preaching. It's the second longest sermon in all of the Bible.

Jesus's sermon on the mounts of first Stephen sermon to the religious leaders is second. And, and really, if I heard the sermon, I would probably be a little bit bored till except till the end. Cause the sermon is, uh, you know how, uh, Abraham did this and he was our father.

And then he had a son named Isaac and his Isaac son, his name was Jacob and Jacob did this. And then after Jacob, there was so-and-so and then there was no, uh, there was Moses and Moses gave the law. And it's just like a history lesson.

How would you like that? If I just like, just told you, just give you a history lesson of Israel here today. And then at the end, it's not that great a sermon really in some ways. Uh, cause he just gives a history.

And at the end of the history lesson, he goes and you kill Jesus. Where did that come from history? You kill Jesus. It doesn't it like at my Bible school, they taught me like the three points are supposed to make sense one point after another.

Right. But I started wondering, what if Jesus wants to say something to you about prayer and something to you about faith. And my sermon is well, Bible school taught me to, you know, three points sermon, and they all have to have one main theme to it.

That's religion because the Holy spirit may not want one thing. He may, he may want five themes. That's not the best preaching in our American culture today, because we're taught like just, just get one main point and have three ways to kind of highlight to like a diamond, highlight that point.

But, but, but, but I want the Holy spirit to speak. I do. I want, I want God's spirit to speak.

And I want, I want to be like Jesus when I'm in the pulpit and when I'm in my prayer room and when I'm with my wife and with my little daughters and grandkids, and when I'm with the grocery store and when I'm on the subway, I just want to walk around and be like Jesus. And I'm praying Jesus, give me opportunity to escape religion because you hate it and enter into the love of Jesus because that's where you delight. And if you'll do this, you'll, you'll walk around all over the city and the darkness won't have to be so much necessarily curse.

Oh, I hate this city. And, and, and, and the government's doing this and the politicians do this and this culture does that. And that minority does that.

And these people do that. And you can get in an environment of antagonism and, and, and just be, you know, you know, the saying, if we're not careful, we'll spend all our time cursing the darkness and rather than shining the light. But, but if you, if you'll get, if you let Jesus kill religion today in you and bring to life, the love of Jesus inside of you today, then you're going to find that you truly are the light of the world.

And you will make a difference in the darkness of the city, wherever light goes, darkness has to flee. Am I, am I even in the room? That's that's if we turn off all the lights in this theater, that'd be cool. If we could do that for a second, but if you can turn off all the lights in this theater for a second, and then just maybe just turned on that one that can't be hidden.

Can it, no matter how much dark this isn't there, you're going to see that light. You are that light in a dark city. You can't be hid when you let it shine and Jesus.

And that's what I want to talk about in the last few minutes. Not only get out of religion, but get into the love of Jesus, get into the love of Jesus. Just walk with him and talk with him.

Let him tell you you're his own. Let him love on you once. And you won't find this love of Jesus, unless you first let Jesus love you.

And Jesus said that himself, I love you first. Then you love me. You love me because I first love you.

In other words, we could try to love Jesus, but our love is at best religious. It's, it's, it's a form of worship without the power within it. But when Jesus comes, he smashes into us.

He crashes into us. He empowers us with the kind of love that he shows us that he has. And that's what he says in Corinthians.

The greatest of these is love. There's faith. That's good.

There's hope. That's good. But love is the greatest.

And that's what Jesus comes to us with, with the love, the love of the father, he puts that love in our heart. And then we walk around both with a knowledge of the high and holy one, and also a knowledge of ABBA. And we're walking around with ABBA father in us.

The father's love is in us and everywhere we go, people are getting to know the love of Jesus. And this life is, is, is it's wild. It's, it's, it's, it's, it's a little bit unusual, but it's delightful.

Yesterday, my wife and I walked down to battery park down south there. And I just thought, let's go say hi to the, to one of the guys pulled up alongside one of the guys. And, and it sounded like he was from maybe Jamaica or something.

We talked for a little while and asked him how he fishes. And, you know, and he used to show me this bait that he was doing. It was smelly stuff.

And I said, and I said, and I was just, but I was praying. I just want to love this guy. I didn't want to necessarily, you know, like make sure he kneels and prays with me and goes through the four spiritual laws and says the sinner's prayer there at battery park.

I mean, that'd be great if he did, but, but that's not my job. My job is to be a light to the darkness and love to those who don't know Christ. And so, and so I, so I just started hanging with him, but while I was hanging out, I just thought, wouldn't it be great if there was an opportunity somehow just to slip in a little bit of love of Jesus.

And, and, and he said to me, look, since I pray that he gives me, I've been fishing all day and I've caught nothing literally those exact words. And in my spiritual discernment, I thought, I wonder if this is an opportunity. So I immediately said to him, that's exactly a question that was asked in the Bible.

I said, have you ever heard of Peter? The fisherman goes, no, I've never heard of Peter. I said, Peter was one of the followers of Jesus. And Jesus was a man who loved people and healed people and preached about his father's love for people and how our lives could be changed.

And he's looking at me like, what? Like you'd never heard this before. And then I'm not recommending this as a form of evangelism, but I said, I said, I'm going to pray for you right now. And, and I want you to throw.

And I was thinking, oh, this is so weird. I want you to throw your, I want you to throw the, your rod in again, because he's getting ready to quit. He was frustrated.

I said, you throw your rod in. And I said, within the next hour, you're going to catch five fish. Now I didn't stay around to find out if he did or not, because I was thinking if, if I stayed around and he didn't, he's going to be like wasting another hour.

I kind of, I kind of think he did. I kind of think Jesus loves him enough to do that for him. I think he loves me enough to let me risk a little bit and say some crazy things and some strange places.

My wife's like this too. We were in the subway last night coming up on 53rd street. And, and she saw a woman who was looking like she was kind of like lost and, and, and a little terrified and afraid.

So she was going to walk up to her and she walked up to her and just said, God loves you. And I love this lady's answer. She goes, which one, which, which God loves me.

And, and, and my wife said, the God, Jesus loves you. She goes, oh yes, yes, that one. Yes.

Yes. How exciting, how exciting it is. You have an amazing pulpit here in this city, not this pulpit, your pulpit at battery park, your pulpit in Spanish Harlem, your pulpit on 42nd street, your pulpit, uh, in the towers where you work in the building where you work in the, in the house that you help clean in the restaurant that you work.

What a pulpit, what a pulpit. And, and, and, and just go out and show the love of Jesus everywhere you go. That's love orphans, love, needy people, love, hurting people, love, rich people, love, haughty people, love, love, love the homeless guy on the street.

Love Donald Trump. Even love them love. If, if you hang on, if you, if you are a Democrat here today and you saw Donald Trump, would you be able to show the love of Jesus or would you want to talk about your agenda? You better stop doing this.

And why are you being so crazy? And if you're a Republican here today and you met Hillary Clinton here in the, in the front of the street, would you, would you want to talk to her or would you walk around her? Oh, that's Hillary Clinton. Or would you say, I just want to tell you, Hillary, Jesus loves you so much. You know how much Jesus loves you.

We have something bigger than politics. We have something bigger than religion. We have something bigger than the UN.

We, and you have a pulpit wherever you go, wherever you go, you can preach Jesus. We, we had dinner last night and at the dinner, more weird stuff. I got up and, and I just told one waiter that Jesus loves him.

And, and, and he went and told all the other ladies. So as I'm leaving the thing, one way to walk up and say, can you pray for me? And I'm looking around like, and there's, there's people here. The guy at the table next to you is telling me how much he hates Fox news and loves CNN.

So I'm knowing, I don't think he's probably going to like prayer in the middle of a restaurant. That's what I'm thinking. And, and, and, and then I said, okay, yeah, let me pray for you.

Jesus. I'm putting my hand on his chest in Jesus name, Lord, we're baptizing your spirit, given the love of Jesus. And then I walked about three more steps.

Another guy walks up. Can you pray for me too? Religion, not fun. Jesus fun, religion, dead, boring, divisive, Jesus alive, loving unified.

There's, there's a huge difference. There's a huge difference. And that's, can you understand that? Why Jesus hates religion and loves you and loves you just simply walking around as an ambassador of Christ to show his love, wherever you go to demonstrate it to your own family, to demonstrate it.

And, and, and not only the love of Christ, but, and it doesn't have to be, as I said earlier, it doesn't have to be, you know, what hinders us from showing that love of Jesus is we we've been mentally trained to think it has to have a, you know, gong and symbol ending to it. Like, and they knelt down at the street and there was tears in their eyes and they all prayed to receive Jesus. I walked them through the four spiritual laws.

You know, do you know that God loves you? He has a wonderful plan for your life, but sin has separated you from God. And if you repent right now, you can come back to Jesus and pray this prayer with me, dear Jesus, dear Jesus, forgive me my sin, forgive us. And then they go, okay, now you're born again.

Maybe they are, maybe they're not. Maybe they're born again. Soon as you say, Jesus loves you.

And they go like me, a sinner like me. And you don't even know they're saying it, but maybe they're born again. Then do you know that there are, there are many people all over the world from different religions that are having right now dreams and visions of Jesus.

And, and you know what Jesus is saying to these people of different religions. And even hopefully some Christians will start getting this dream too. Jesus comes to them and says, I am Jesus, the son of God.

And I love you. And I've been, been asking questions when I hear people from middle East and from Asia and from all around the world saying, you're having this dream, this revelation of the love of Jesus. I'm going to ask him, like, did he ask you, like, did he tell you the four spiritual laws or, I mean, did he pray with you, the sinner's prayer? No, he just told me he loved me.

And now I'm going to search out somebody that maybe has this, this book that you have, this Bible that you have, or I'm going to search out a man or woman who knows this. Jesus Nicodemus was very religious, right? And he came to Jesus at night, right? That's what the Bible says. Quote unquote night.

I don't want anybody to see me. I don't want anybody to see me see religion puts us in a place where if we get radical about Jesus, it makes us feel nervous. And so he comes at night where nobody could see him.

And, and Jesus just simply says to him, you must be born again, born again. He doesn't walk them through, uh, you know, I'm assigned a decision card or anything like that. He just, he just tells them about a whole new start.

He could have, you can be like born again. And Nicodemus doesn't understand. I mean, like in my, in my, in my flesh, I have to go back into my mother's womb.

That's impossible. That doesn't happen. And Jesus says, no, it's not in the flesh.

It's in the spirit, your old spirit, that old nature of sin or the old nature of law or the old nature of religion can, when it's buried, it can die. And that's why in water baptism church, we hold people, not hold people. We, some of you need held you got so much past, but normally we just, we dunk people underwater and we lift them up.

It's representative of the old man, the old sin nature, the old addictions, the old hatred, the old selfishness, the old fear and anxiety that rips at your heart day and night. It's, it's buried and up from the grave, not only Jesus rose, but you arise with him. Jesus wants you to rise with him.

You're, you're, you're seated with Christ in heavenly places. In other words, you're, you're come up to a new ground. You've come up to new territory.

And so Jesus is, is his dream for you. So to speak, what does he do when he has you dream about him? I'm Jesus. I'm the son of God.

Come and follow me. Love me because I love you. That's the heart of real faith.

And then from there, we learn about repentance and we learn about faith towards God. And we learn about gifts of the spirit and we learn about the word of God, but it's all born of just faith. If you're here today, I'll just do it now.

Okay. Um, if you're here today and you don't know Jesus, you don't have a relationship with him. Um, you haven't, there's kind of, you don't have to have a physical dream or, or nobody has a physical dream.

Um, whatever dreams are made of the mental dream. Uh, you don't have to have that. Um, but, but, but Jesus is inviting you to come to know him today.

If you don't know him, you're not walking with him. You're not in a relationship with him, but you would like to let the love of Jesus just shine on you today and take you out of sin and addiction, take you out of aloneness and fear, anxiety, take you out of religion where you're trying to perform all these religious duties, but you don't have any real life in God. If that's you right now, you want to do it.

Would you just raise your hand really high and hold it up for just a second. I want to pray for you. Is there anybody here in the room today? Yes, ma'am.

Oh, thank you. Praise God for you. All right.

Anyone else? Yeah. Okay. In the back there.

Hi sister. How are you doing over here? I never know the difference between somebody who's raising their hand and charismatic. Are you, you, you're using your hand there or is that just to praise the Lord? Okay.

All right. Praise the Lord. Anyone else? Just this right now, you didn't feel that you feel, is there somebody over here? One more time over here.

Somebody raise your hand over here. Oh, okay. All right.

Um, yeah, if you have to get in an argument with somebody about it, it's not, you're probably not ready to raise your hand. Um, but man, let's, let's pray for them. Okay.

Jesus. Um, I pray for these friends of ours who walked into this building today and they want to, they want to know you, God. They want to know they're, they're, they're tired of, of, uh, living apart from God and the life that's in him and the love that's in him and the spirit that's in him.

And they want to just be free, free to, to, to, to be loved by you and to love you and to walk with you and to have a new life. Father, when I, when I came into this faith, I just simply said, Jesus, forgive my sin. Cause I'm a sinner.

I'm a, I'm a horrible sinner. I'm If you really rose from the dead, like you said you did, then I can be raised from my sin life. And then I just said, I believe in you and I trust you.

And you can pray that now you can just say, Jesus, I'm a sinner without you, but I want to trust you now. I want to put my life in you. I want to give you my all in all.

Amen. Amen. Stand with me.

If you would, please, I want to pray for some other folks here today. If you are, uh, if you want to move today from religion to love of Jesus, would you step out of your seat and come to the front? I'm going to pray a special prayer over you from the front here in the balcony. Just come even right now.

You don't have to wait for music to start. You can come right now and just say, I'm tired of like religion and tying me up and, and binding me up and, and keeping me in fear. And I want to walk like Jesus walked.

I want to love like Jesus loved. If that's you, would you step out of your seat? Come to the front. We're going to sing a song as you're coming in the annex.

You can come to the front. Are you still doing that pastor in the front, in the annex, you'd come to the front where the screens are in, right in the very room that you're in. And there'll be people who I'll be praying

over you as well.

There I'll be remembering and thinking of you. And, uh, yeah, just step out of your seat right now. Let's can we just sing this song together while people are coming.

Um, before we pray, thank you for being so bold as to come forward and just say, I want to get out of some stuff. That's it's just religious and into that love of Jesus before we pray over that, can I interrupt and go somewhere else for a second that are with you guys that came forward? I'm going to do it. Whether you say yes or not, you might as well say yes.

But, um, I, I don't know how to say this without sounding like a rebuke. So maybe it is kind of a little bit, but the problem with religion, I don't think really is whole lot right up here, because if it was, if it was a real gut rooted religious spirit, you probably wouldn't have come forward. The problem I really want to pray for right now is those of you who knew you should have come forward, but you didn't because you're afraid of what it might lead to.

I don't want to act like lunatic, Gary. Um, you're afraid of what it will lead to. It was like, I don't know if I'm ready for this 24 seven walk with Jesus.

So I'm afraid of what people might think. Maybe they'll think I'm religious. If I walk out of my seat, I think you're religious because you stayed in your seat.

Not all of you, please don't hear that. I don't have a blanket saying all of you, everybody who didn't come forward is religious. I didn't come forward.

I'm not religious. I'm free. Oh, but, but just for some of you, a few of you, and I'm not going to even invite you to come forward, but I want you to know Jesus loves you so much.

He can free you in your seat. You don't have to come forward. He'll say, as a, as a young man, as a young man in the church, I used to think if I didn't come forward to the altar, I'd go home.

So guilty and full of shame. I missed it. I could have, I could have received the Billy Graham anointing to be an evangelist and I didn't go forward.

I missed I'll never be an evangelist. I could have received healing, but I didn't go forward. And I'll know I'm going to walk with a limp the rest of my life, you know, and just, you know, and you didn't miss it because he loves you so much.

Even in your pride and stubbornness, if you stayed in your seat, when he was calling you to come and you didn't come, he loves you so much. He's going to come to where you are right now. And so I want to pray for you first.

Okay. Jesus in, in, in the mighty power and love of God, I pray for my brothers and sisters who you love so much, who, even if they were a little bit shy or, or unwilling to, to, to humble themselves before you, then, then you come to them. And by your grace, you're going to move on them, God.

And they're going to walk out of religion because of your power and your love and your grace touch them right now, wherever they are, God touch them in their seat, as they're standing in the, in the balcony and the annex as well, touch them God. And I pray that they would see the demonstration of the transformation that you give that they walk out of this auditorium feeling like, wait a minute, something, you

shook off something. You shook off heavy bands.

Now I can lift up real holy hands. You shook them off God. And now I'm free.

I can, I don't, I'm not concerned what people think of me on my job or in the subway, in my neighborhood, in the projects and the tenement buildings and the high rises. I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And that's one of the signs.

You'll be know that you've been set free from religion is that you'll not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It won't be fearful to love on people. It'll be delightful to do that.

It'll be natural. It won't be sort of like you become loony tunes. It'll be just natural.

So Jesus, give us a natural love for you. Give us a supernatural, natural love for you. Give us, give us grace to walk about as Jesus walked.

He went about doing good filled with the holy spirit. Oh, Jesus, let's pray that Jesus fill us with the holy spirit right now, fill us with the holy spirit Lord in an instant, come into this room, come into this room right now and fill us with the baptism of the holy spirit. God fill us with the baptism of love and power and a sound mind.

Give us holy ghost power. Now in the name of Jesus, where we've been powerless, where we've been fruitless, where we've not demonstrated the light and love of the gospel, fill us with power now and Lord that that power would be, it would be power because it's love, not power because it's strong or rough or masculine powerful because it's love. And it comes out of a sound mind, a mind that hears Jesus.

Talk to that person, pray for that person, be, be loving to your neighbor, bring your neighbor, some food, just show the acts of kindness and the mercy of Jesus. Lord baptize us for that kind of spirit right now, baptize us, baptize, you know, Jesus is here. The Bible says where the spirit of Lord is, there's Liberty and where the Lord is, there's the spirit.

He can heal as well. If you have a physical ailment in your body, you, you are hurt even right now. And, um, I want to pray specifically for some people here.

Um, the pain in your body is not like, um, you know, I have this condition, uh, you know, but right now you're actually in pain, migraine, headaches, um, your back can't hardly, it's like frozen up. You're you would walk out. If you were to walk out of here, you'd walk out with a limp or in pain.

You're there's tension in your shoulders. You're you walk around, you hold that tension in this city and in your lifestyle. Do you know how much Jesus loves you? He wants to, and he will heal you right now.

There's healing power in the name of Jesus. Sometimes even in our Pentecost, we forget where the Pentecost believes in the baptism of the Holy spirit of beliefs and tongues and interpretation of beliefs and signs and wonders of beliefs and healing. But sometimes it becomes almost like just religion.

That's more just about information. Jesus is a lot more than information. He's here today.

If you need a, if you're, and I'm going to ask you to do something a little bit strange. If, if something's hurting on your body, um, you know, say it hurts to raise your arm right now. And at the end of we're done praying, you raise your arm and it still hurts.

It probably didn't work. You know what I mean? Uh, it probably, and that's okay. You don't leave here feeling guilt or shame.

Uh, you get prayed for today. And if you're healed, amazing. If you're not healed, you're still loved.

So that's good news, right? But, but if you want to be healed today, would you just raise your hand? If you can raise your hand and say, you need some physical healing in your body. Wow. Look at this.

That's like three, four, four. That's like, that's not, is there anybody not raising their hand? My goodness. Wow.

Oh my. Can you see this church? This are you, wait, did you understand me? I was talking about in physical pain right now. Okay.

All right. Let's just go through this. I'm getting scared.

Is that bad? Oh, Jesus, this is too big for us. Too many needs for us. So won't you come, won't you come into this room right now and take issues that are far beyond our pay grade.

Take, take issues with our body right now, where it's out of alignment, take issues and, and, and, and show your power here today in this room. Holy spirit, just heal headaches and backaches and leg aches and, and, and arms that can't be lifted. And, and, and, and, and people that can't walk, they're shuffling.

They can't walk. God heal stomach viruses, throats that are tied up in soreness, people that they can't speak because of ailments in their, in their larynx and their vocal box. Jesus pain right now, go in the name of Jesus, go pain right now, in the name of Jesus, Satan, we rebuke you.

You can't live in, in this way and, and, and destroy bodies without getting, without getting some confrontation on you Satan. And so we're here to confront with the works of darkness and say, greater is he that is in us than he, that's in the world. Greater is he that's the love of Jesus in this room than there is in the love of religion.

It's not, it's not there. This is not religion here today, friends. This is Jesus.

And he's wanting to heal you. He's wanting to heal you right now in the name of Jesus, be healed in Jesus name. Amen.

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