

The Underground Church of America

by Merle Weaver

The underground church is a group of people who are not afraid to get together with brothers and sisters who love Jesus and are seeking God's power.

Duration: 32:26

Scripture: Malachi 3:1-3

Topics: "Underground Church"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being faithful servants of God. He mentions the desire to hear the words 'well done' from God at the end of life. The speaker also highlights the need for believers to passionately love Jesus and rely solely on Him. He discusses the significance of embracing the cross and submitting to God's will. Additionally, the speaker mentions the importance of being wise and doing exploits in these last days, and the need to have the courage to stand against the system, regardless of the cost.

Transcript

He said to them all, if anyone will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever shall desire to save his life shall lose it. For whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, he shall save it.

For what shall man profit if he shall gain the whole world, and have destroyed or come under the penalty of the loss of himself? For whosoever shall have been ashamed of me and of my works, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in his glory, in the manner of the Father and of the Holy Angel. I think I'll finish reading there. Tonight I would like to share with you a thought that may be a bit novel to you in the way it's presented initially, and yet I trust is the heartbeat of any true follower of Jesus.

I would like to talk tonight about the underground church of America. Now, tonight there are many people that believe there will be, and there may be one day, an underground church in America. But I am here tonight to say that God is raising up a group of believers, a group of people who will follow him, that will not fly under other flags.

Their allegiances will not be split to other things. They are willing to die for Jesus. Tonight I'm less concerned about the exact form, and maybe even the exact function of those persons as they are about their commitment to Christ, and their commitment to die for Jesus.

I was impressed recently, Brother Yoon, the heavenly man many of you know of from China, told of his story when he was being tortured for Christ. And there came a moment in that journey when his spirit left his body, he could see his body laying down below, and he was begging Christ to just take him home, just take him home and let him die. And the Lord told him, no, I have more work for you to do, you need to go back.

And he said these words, it is a lot easier to die for Christ than it is to live a dying life, and to suffer. And tonight I would like, by the Spirit of God, to challenge each of us of whether, not only whether we're willing to suffer, that should be part of our covenant, our legal agreement of the Lordship of Jesus, that he has that right to take us wherever he wants to take us. And we're willing to suffer if so be.

And I would like to suggest tonight there's times we should even embrace suffering. Earlier tonight, Brother Blaine talked about the Martyr's Mirror, a thick book of hundreds, maybe thousands of stories of people that have willingly suffered and died for Christ. And there could be many other books that could be quoted as well.

But these folks, there was many of them that considered it a great honor to testify for Christ and to die for him. I thought about that story about somebody coming through the front door. And I remember Darrell Champlin talking about those that were faced with various things.

Afraid of what was the title of the poem. And it went on to share a lot of different things that mortals have faced. And it said, afraid of that? And the end of the poem, it lines up by saying, all the old-time apostles and prophets and all the martyrs and all the missionaries, all down through time, all answered, not afraid.

And tonight, I'm less interested exactly what may or may not be in your possession or your lot in life. But I'm interested tonight about the standing of your heart and soul. And where the love relationship with Jesus is at.

Is Jesus everything? I was so impressed, again, at the Chinese house church where there would be full churches functioning without ever having the Word of God. And I love the Word of God. And it's wonderful to have the Word of God.

But if we're just studying the Bible with our minds, then we're not in love with Jesus. If Jesus is not our all in all, then we will not be able to suffer. And we certainly will not willingly embrace pain.

And tonight, there's a very real Jesus that is alive. And he's calling to you, and he's calling to I tonight. And he's saying, do you love me? Do you love me, dear? Will you do what I've asked you to do? I think in the psalm, it says, I'm a prisoner of love, a slave to the master.

I'd willingly toil through the heat and the cold. I seek no reward in this world. The love of payday will come when those pearly gates unfold.

And, you know, at the end of life, when we come home, will we hear that well done? Well done, now good and faithful servant. Is that what our very being cries out for and longs for? That we would see him and want to show love? That we would hear those words, well done? And are we pressing hard into the kingdom? And tonight, across America, God is raising up a bride. God is raising up a group of people, a network of believers and brothers.

And they look different, and they have different shapes and sizes. But they have a passionate love for Jesus. And they don't care about anything else.

They do have other things they've learned in the battle. There's other things that they've learned about how the Holy Spirit works and about the scriptures, and they're wonderful things. But when it all comes down to it at the end of the day, the one thing that they care about above all else is they love Jesus.

And tonight, I am less interested about when persecution comes to America. I hear people talking about that. When will it come? How will it come? I want to say tonight I don't really care about that.

What I care about is whether the value of Christ is so on fire for Jesus and presses in so much that they cause the persecution to rise. You know, light and dark just can't mix. And I believe many places over the world, even in China today, there's all kinds of persecution that is illegal.

Did you know that? Even by their own laws, all over the world, there's people being persecuted illegally. And somehow we think that's over there. We think that can't happen here.

We don't think that we could be so bright for Jesus. And I'm not talking about just going out in the flesh and making enemies. No, no, not at all.

But when we walk in the Holy Spirit and we see the powers, the forces that want to control people and finances and things like that, and when they're threatened by how we preach the gospel and live the gospel, there will be persecution. And yes, I believe there's darker times ahead. But I'm not so concerned about that.

I'm more concerned that there's a network and that we would join what God's doing where he's raising up leaders in these days, men who have been tried by fire, men who have embraced the cross in these times so that when the hard times come, they're not being fired then. They're not being going through first grade then. They have already passed.

They're already up at seventh or eighth or ninth or twelfth grade or whatever it is that God has them because they've submitted to the cross and they've embraced the cross. And God wants to do this in America. In my short little journey, there was a time in my life, and still is in many ways, where 1 Corinthians 14 was a very important chapter to me about all the bodies functioning together.

And that's still very beautiful and important. I looked at the New Testament, and I saw how they met from house to house, and I thought that was wonderful, and I wanted to meet that way. And that's great, and that's wonderful, and that's okay.

But tonight, if it's about a certain mode of meeting, or if it's about we meet this way and now we are the underground church, I've got news for you. That is not what makes the church of Jesus Christ vibrant and hot, following just a certain model. Those things may have their advantages, and I believe in them.

They're wonderful. But it takes people that are in love with Jesus, a passion in love with Jesus, people that are not afraid to get together with brothers, seek them out, even if they can only find one, two, or three. Jesus said in Matthew 18, 20, where two or three are gathered in my name, there I'm in the midst.

And they have a passion for other brothers, to meet with other brothers and sisters that love Jesus and that embrace the cross, and they'll get together and they'll pray for hours on their knees together. They

learn to fast together. They get together maybe multiple times a week, sometimes early in the morning, sometimes late into the evening.

And I know some of you on these calls have been doing that. Praise God. And they find out wherever they can do that, and they get together, and maybe with tears running down their face or whatever God's doing, and they pray through.

And God builds something among them. One brother may have more certain viewpoints on the sovereignty of God, and other ones have certain viewpoints. They're stronger focused on the choice of man.

But those aren't even the issues of their fellowship. Their focus is not around that. It's around Jesus Christ.

And they learn how to pray through. And they see heaven come down, and they see souls get converted, and they see people get healed, and they see miracles happen. They have prophecies, and they have visions, and the Holy Spirit is really living and operative in their midst.

Hallelujah. God wants to do that not just in the 1040 window, not just in China or Vietnam or North Korea or Iran. He wants to do it here.

But we need to seek him. And I'm here to say, and I praise God. I praise God for what he's done, and I want to go on further.

But I'm here to say that whatever brothers do that, God is no respecter of persons. He will always meet those brothers and sisters when they come together and seek him like that. And they will see signs.

They will see the mighty power of God. They will see grace, great grace. Most of all, they'll see love.

When people see the love, we have one for another. And Jesus said they'll know that he came from God. A lot of other things I could share tonight.

But I would just like to, oh, at the risk of sounding like works, something we earn, I don't believe that at all. I believe salvation is a gift of God. By grace we're saved through faith.

But I do believe that how we embrace the cross is going to affect the level of anointing on our life. It would not be fair from God for him to just, like the song says, must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas. Sure, I must fight if I would reign.

Increase my courage, Lord, I'll bear the toil and endure the pain supported by thy works. And, you know, if we want to have an anointing, we've got to spend time in prayer. And I believe there's a time to do that personally and to wear out our prayer cloth.

And then there's a time that God leads us to find one or two or three or more others and pull together and pray, to get up maybe early in the morning before work and to practice in prayer and in that agreement. And God will always, always, always meet with those people and do that and seek him in seriousness and draw nigh to him. And today across America, I believe he is raising up people that want to do that, that are done with just a Sunday morning meeting, that are done with just nice church.

They want to see God glorified. I remember Leonard Ravenhill said, the revival is when God gets so sick and tired of being misrepresented that he shows up himself. Maybe the Spirit of God in us would give us

the same heartbeat that is there not a cause, is there not a time for God to be represented in mighty power? And I believe that is his heart even here in America.

My heart tonight in sharing this is that we would not pull back, that we would not look for easy streets, that we would press into the kingdom, we would press hard into the kingdom. We would pray much. We would gather with others.

We would press in because he is raising up, even now across America, here and there, little pockets of believers who will do this, who do not care what Obama is doing in Washington so much. They don't care so much about what's happening at the state level. Yes, they might pray for it, but they are impassioned about one thing.

They are servants to most high God. They are servants of King Jesus. They don't worry about the most despotic emperor of all time, the Emperor Nero himself.

They care more about what's the reputation of King Jesus. They are not so interested in what the laws of the land are and all those things. They are interested much more in how they are working and how they are walking.

And they are interested in bringing the rule of King Jesus to hearts and lives around them. And they are interested in seeing the mighty power of God displayed. You know, even in Israel, when it came time for Elijah to face off with the powers that be of his day, it was not about what they did wrong.

It was about calling on Almighty God and letting God represent himself and show himself strong. And today, I have a passion. I don't care whether you are Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, whatever persuasion or denomination it might be.

I think it's time that we get done with hype. And we get done with glitz. And we get done with glamour.

And we get done with church buildings. And I'm okay with using church buildings. But I'm talking about making them our focus.

And we get done with focusing on theological debates. And on and on and on. And we want to see.

And all these things. We actually want to see God show up and show himself strong. Where's the man who will go into hospitals and will confront death and disease and take it on as a challenge to Jesus? I was at a meeting the other night.

And there was a great news final. I wasn't speaking to anyone. But there were these young ladies up giving testimonies about a vitamin program and about some other things they were giving testimonies about.

And I thought in my heart, where is the glory for King Jesus? Why can't people begin standing up and saying, I got saved. I got healed. Last night, my eyes got healed or whatever.

I'm tired of showmanship, and I believe God is too. And he wants people that will just seek him with all their hearts, with all their souls, until the Holy Spirit comes and does something through them. It's not always going to be the same gifts.

But I do believe it's time that there's a mighty move of the Holy Spirit in our lives in such a way that those around can see Jesus at work. And I believe there's people from every spectrum, if I can say it that way, that God wants to call forward to walking in the mighty power of God and with a very, very close relationship with King Jesus, a love relationship. And I believe even at this moment across America, he's raising up people.

They don't care about position, it seems, anymore. It's almost dangerous to be in a position on every hand. Some of you probably follow me on every hand.

Mighty men are falling, men of position, men of power, men of prestige, and men of organization, what we call the big names. God wants humble men, men who don't care about their name at all, don't care about preserving anything. They only have one passion, and that is to monitor King Jesus' lordship.

That's all they want to know. Am I hearing the actual, his actual functioning headship in the body? Is it actually happening? Is he actually directing the meetings that I'm involved in? Is he actually directing me? Is he actually directing my word? Is he telling me what to pray and what to say here, and now I want you to go here, now I want you to do this? Or is it just so many good ideas? Is it just a fallen mind trying to interpret what we think the Scripture means and what we ought to do? Or do we actually hear, to the right, to the behind us, to the right, to the left, here's the way, walk in it. And I believe, as this system, this system around us winds tighter and tighter, that in these last days, God wants to raise up a generation that Daniel talked about.

They'll be wise in another God and do exploits. We're going to need to know how to do that, or we're going to get quagmired in the system. We're going to be wound in.

We won't know how to pass quietly through. We won't know how to do it, and we certainly won't have the courage to stand up against it, no matter what it costs. The other day, I had a businessman in my office, a Christian businessman, and we were talking about something and about some possible activities, and I just kind of said, no, I didn't think that's what we wanted to do in that particular application for some other reason.

And right away, he thought, well, is it because you're afraid of the homosexual community? I said, no, I'm not afraid. I'd gladly die. That's not the issue.

I said, it's time we repent of being afraid. What kind of love is afraid? Perfect love casts out fear. It's time for people that are not afraid to sit in prison.

Yes, I know we have families. I know somehow we're going to have to trust God for those things, but fear cannot govern our actions. It must not govern our actions, not even in America.

It's time that we have a passion and a love for souls that causes tears to run down our face. I know there's someone that's called it. How's that? And I praise God for all of you.

I believe many of you are part of this, if you will, underground church. What's underground about it? You might say, well, that just sounds like the church to me. What's underground about it? Well, I believe there's a number of things that are underground about it.

Number one, it's the people that's prepared for when things are less trackable and visible. But even so, they're not registered by a name. They know who they are according to who they are in Christ.

And they can connect in any given place at a moment's notice. It doesn't matter about denominational affiliation and all those things. It's just about Jesus.

And they can meet in a garage. They can meet in a high school gymnasium somewhere. They can meet in a home.

They can meet in a church. They can meet wherever. And they learn how to blow where the Spirit's blowing.

And they can't be traced and tracked. That's the one thing. If we can be so traced and tracked by the carnal and natural mind, then it should put an alarm in our minds.

Because maybe we're actually just functioning by natural principles. Maybe we aren't functioning by the Holy Spirit at all. Because Jesus said, those that are born of the Holy Spirit, they're going to blow around like the wind.

You can see where it comes from, where it's going. Maybe they're going to be like Philip sometimes, and they're just going to show up somewhere. And I do believe God wants us to hear His voice.

That's the passion in my heart tonight, that we hear His voice. And we ask Him, do you want me at that meeting, Lord? Do you want me over here? What do you want? And we stop trusting in our own understanding. And I believe there's a pain and a price.

Even here in America today, I do not believe that there's one cross for the Christians in Eritrea, and another one for North Korea, and another one for Iran, and another one for Communist China. But somehow, we have a padded American version to carry over here, and we don't have to bear the cost. No.

There's one cross. And it will be the intersection of the will. It will be the intersection of all that we hold dear.

And God will take care of it, because God is sovereign. He's so engineered circumstances. He will take every man, woman, and child at their word that says, I will follow you.

I will go with you even unto death. He will engineer the cross. So that in its own way, we will have much agony and pain as we die to the world.

Yes, we may not have the physical suffering that some of those brothers and sisters have, and I would not minimize that at all. But I can tell you that when Brother Yoon came to America, after he suffered unimaginable torture, he said the hardest persecution he ever suffered was among the church in the West. And the reason he suffered that persecution was because he was a man of God, and because he walked unto the Holy Spirit.

And I watched him even when he was here, brothers and sisters. He listens to God, and I'm not endorsing or bumping up a man at all. But I understand why he suffers persecution.

I understand how it's going to be with every brother and sister that walks with God. And I pray tonight that we would, in our hearts, we would all together make a commitment that the Word says, all that will of God in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. And we would say, Lord, show me the cross you have for me.

Show me, like General Wesley many years ago was riding along on his horse, and he read that verse. And he thought, oh, I haven't experienced any persecution recently. So he got down off his horse and out there, he cried out to God, Oh, my God, am I Christian? Am I walking with you? Is something wrong? Just like that, a lad behind a bush saw him and picked up a tomato and threw it at him.

He didn't know what he was praying. General Wesley jumped up, praising the Lord, and rode off on his way. And may it be that way for us, because I know I can say from my short little journey that when we're in love with Jesus and we learn how to follow His voice, it will always, always cut across the wisdom of man.

We'll be misunderstood. We'll be run out of town. We'll be told, don't let him come back.

He's dangerous. Don't let him preach here. We're not going to always be popular.

Yes, there'll be times when we'll be amazed. When God takes us as a little farmer boy, as a little shepherd and sets us before great men, and we'll say, how did I ever get here, God? I know who I was. And he says, that's right, but I'm changing you into who you are, into who I am in you.

We'll always be misunderstood. It's like I was talking with one of the organizers at a Brother Yoon meeting, and he said how they're being told by the church in the West, you should go to these megachurches and get a big name so people know who you are and all that, and God's leading them a different way. And what he told them, no, you go to where your heart connects, and they're misunderstood.

And they're judged. And they're all these things. And are we okay with that? Are we willing to do like Malachi 3? I want to turn there in closing yet.

Stay right verse from the Old Testament. Behold, verse 1, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to this temple, the angel of the covenant whom you did light in.

Behold, he cometh, said Jehovah of hosts. But he shall enjoy the day of his coming, and he shall stand when he appears, for he will be like a refiner's fire and like fuller's lye. And he shall sit as a refiner and purify as silver, and he will purify the children of Levi and purge them as gold and silver.

And they shall offer unto Jehovah an oblation of righteousness. Then shall the oblation of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto Jehovah, as in the former days of old and as in the former years. And I'll stop reading there.

You know, tonight, Jesus, just like he was asking Peter, is asking you and I. Do you love me? Are you committed to me? Do you really love me? Are you willing to let me take you to the fire? Are you willing to let me make you a leader, a prophet, a prophetess? Are you willing to let me deal with that flesh and burn it off? Are you willing to let me turn up the heat? He will literally come to you. He will ask you, may I? He will wait for your response. I'm not saying that he only chases people who are given permission, but his will is that we would voluntarily invite him.

And even through our tears, we would say, yes, Lord. If it's for your glory and my good, I want it. And it is not a cruel God that does that.

It is not at all. In fact, what we always say, what we always say on the far side, is it would have cost a lot more. It would have hurt a lot more for me not to get rid of that flesh.

I'm so thankful he took me through that. It would have been sooner. And when we learn this principle, then the cross becomes our friend.

And then calling up onto that altar as a burned offering, as a living sacrifice, becomes something we look forward to because we know that glory that shall be revealed. Somehow, because he's such a loving God and he does not do it to afflict his servants, he is there with us in the fire. He was in all points tested like we were, yet without sin.

He wants to change us from one degree of glory to another. He wants to present us before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. And I wonder tonight, how many of us, how many of us want to be like that gold that has come through the fire? I'm thinking back a number of years ago when I was in a hard time in my life and a brother came to me and he said these words, Meryl, true gold doesn't fear any fire.

It fears no fire. And in my simple foolishness and child-likeness at that moment, I just jumped from the center of the pain. I can tell you, brothers and sisters, at that time it was the best thing I could have done.

It became the fastest path to my deliverance. It also became a way to learn the lessons and leave the grip of the flesh behind. And tonight, he wants to make leaders.

Not the way the world thinks of leaders. He wants to make servants. He wants to make nobodies.

But men, they're full of love but have hearts of steel. And he can't just cut them out in those times. There's a process.

There's a fire process. I know we're praying for revival. We're praying for the believers in other lands and I'm very grateful for that.

And I pray we continue doing both. And I pray that we pray for us and say, God, I want to be that gold. I want to be somebody that when all hell breaks loose, that you can trust and has been through the fire ahead of time because I've embraced the cross.

And I won't just fall and I won't knuckle. I won't be in confusion and consternation at that time. When many of those that are named by your name don't know which way to turn and what to do, I want to be prepared in the fire so that I know that voice to the right, to the left, here's the way.

I want to know how to hang on and have our love and our relationship be so strong that when even my mind's confused and when all the winds are blowing against my soul, that my anchor holds very strong on the rock and I know it will hold because I've tried it. Because I know it's been storm-tested. And you know and I know that it's good.

You've formed your grace in me, not just in a free-yifting sort of way, which is wonderful, but you've formed it in me experientially and you've formed it in fire and you've formed it in storm. And tonight, brothers and sisters, God is raising up across America men like that, women like that. He's doing it.

He's doing it in churches. He's doing it in little pockets here and there. The question is not whether He'll do it.

The question is not whether He's going to have a beautiful shining fire. There is no question about that, brothers and sisters. The question for you and for I and I is will we be part of it? Will I embrace the cross? Will I be tried now so that when all the sort of that breaks loose that's coming comes, I'm rooted and anchored and I'm repaired and ready with my sword drawn and I'm ready even to die? That's the challenge from my heart and I believe the challenge from the Holy Spirit to us tonight.

Father, as far as I know, I share the words that you've given me tonight. Father, would you quicken them to our hearts when you speak to our hearts tonight? Would you change us from people who know about revival, people who know about persecution, people who know about suffering to people who know revival, who know persecution, who know suffering, and most of all, who know you? Would you make us men and women of steel, covered and coated with love and tenderness? Would you make us men and women that know how to pray through even when, like the song says, when all around my soul gives way? I ask that you would do that for each and every one tonight that has in their heart answered this call either earlier tonight and answered this call and said, God, I'll be one of them. I will, Lord.

I'll be a fire-tested, storm-proven saint. For your glory and because I love you, Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray.

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