

# When God Comes Man's Religion Must Go

by Mose Stoltzfus

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*The sermon calls for a rejection of man's religion in favor of a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ, emphasizing the dangers of hypocrisy and the need for true faith.*

**Duration:** 1:17:24

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Luke 12:1-3, Romans 6:11

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the contrast between Jesus and religious elites in society. He emphasizes that Jesus, unlike the religious leaders, did not seek titles, honor, or respect from men. Instead, Jesus associated with sinners and ministered to their needs. The speaker also highlights the importance of having a personal encounter with the living Christ, who can save people from their sins and free them from the dominion of sin. Additionally, the speaker criticizes the behavior of some preachers who distance themselves from the common man and seek special treatment, contrasting it with the humility and servant-heartedness of Jesus.

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## Transcript

I bring greetings tonight in the worthy name of the Lord Jesus. I appreciate to see so many visitors that have come with an interest in worshipping and sitting under the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ again tonight. I appreciate it so much that Brother Laverne gave the proper introduction of what these meetings are about.

And I would like to echo a hearty Amen to that. We are not here to glorify or lift up men or a man, but the Lord Jesus Christ. If you're followers of me and me alone, you might do all right as long as I'm right next to you.

But if I go home, I'm not going to be here and I know you're going to need somebody else to be next to. And I recommend the Lord Jesus Christ to live inside, not just next to you, but inside your heart. Well, tonight I'd like to speak another message on the series that we've had this week, When God Comes.

When God Comes. My subtitle tonight is, Men's Religion Has to Go. Men's religion has to go.

Now, I suppose by now you've already got me figured out. And I am not here to capitalize on a specific or particular religion tonight. But I do not apologize for the fact that I come from a very unique and different

background.

My background is Oloramish in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. But what is so unique about it is that I come from the strictest sect in that county by my background. My grandfather was one of the strictest and most loyal and religious men that I knew lived.

My father, when I was a boy, he began to search, knowing that something was missing in his own life. He had a smoking habit, for one, that was burdensome to him. And he had gotten into it just because he thought that's the way you do, you know.

But as time went on, and I was maybe 10 or 11 years old, we were living in a community where there was just a little bit more freedom. Even though my father had come from that background, he brought us up with quite a degree of openness. And we began to get some literature into our house.

And my father dared, in my young years, to go hear an evangelist preach. Happens to be the one who compiled the songbook that you have on your laps there, or on your seats. George R. Brunk.

You went to hear him in the great revival of the 50s in Lancaster County. One night, I believe, is all he went. And then he had another opportunity to go hear him some time later.

And that tipped his view concerning meetings like this. By the time I was 15 years of age, I came upon one of the greatest privileges that a thousand Amish boys never, never have in our vicinity. A revival meeting came into the area.

My father, again, had read the writings of this evangelist and had a desire to go. But strangely, he had changed so much in his desire for God and for good that he did not want his boys to go into the Amish young people and not experience or not know about Jesus Christ. And so he was bold enough that night, as an Amish father, totally taboo.

His grandfather would have been terribly upset, my grandfather, if he had known it. He decided to go to that meeting and he invited me. I was the second of the oldest and my oldest brother was 16 and a half or so to go along.

Well, my oldest brother was already in the youth group and because of the peer pressure and the ridicule that he knew he would face, he opted not to go. But I was as hungry as a bear for truth. I don't know what put it into me other than God, but I wanted to know the truth.

I was a curious sort of fellow and I had to know who was right and what was right. I was depressed at that time. I was living in sin.

The burden of sin was at times heavy upon my back. But I had the privilege to go with my father at 15 years of age to a revival meeting. That all took one night.

I sat down and heard the Gospel preached in a language I could understand that made sense, that wasn't sing-songy, that rocked everybody to sleep. And I took absolutely earnest heed to about every word that came out of that man's mouth. Now remember, it was totally new to me.

But that night I was too timid and too much of a stranger to respond to the invitation that was given to come forward and accept the Lord as my Savior. I kind of would have wanted to, but I just couldn't do it. I was a total stranger in that building.

I had met a few young boys at another place one Sunday and I sat beside them for a little bit of acquaintance. And they were kind to me and shared their Bible with me. I didn't carry one and they carried one, I think.

But I went home that night and knelt beside my bed and I cried out to God with all that was within my heart. No one to help me, at least that I knew would have helped me, but there would have been if I had asked at those meetings. But because I didn't dare do that, I did it on my own and God had mercy on me and saved my soul.

He saved my soul. For over 40 years now, totally changed the direction of my life that night in one swipe. I had aspirations of going with the youth group.

I was hoping I wouldn't fall into the drunken debauchery of many, but I still had my worldly drive and thrust. But that one night changed my vision and my view and I had no more desire. Already making friends, I cut them off like a stone and desired others from that night forth.

But I want to tell you tonight that in my father's searching in those early years, he taught me something that tipped me off concerning religion in the right direction. He told me that the Amish people reminded him so much of the Jews and the Catholics. And I knew that the Catholics for a little bit of what they were and that they were the persecutors of the Anabaptist people in medieval times and through the Anabaptist times and I began to watch that statement and think upon it and consider how much truth there was in that statement.

And a lot of the things that I'm going to tell you tonight in that when God comes, when God comes, man's religion has to go. Now I know the Bible talks about true religion, not only found before God is this, to visit the fatherless and to witness in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world. And that's right.

There is a true religion. And I realize in a light use of the word, a lot of people would say, we've got religion here tonight and I understand what they mean. But for the most part, the word religion is wrong.

It has to do with dead religion, man's religion. And it's so dangerous. I'd just like to bare my heart tonight on how dangerous it is and like I say, I don't want to single out a given group, although you'll notice in my message that I will reflect a bit on my own experience.

But as time has gone on, I have been able to watch that statement and I've forgotten a lot about Jews and Catholics and Amish. But I have seen this in many, many other facets. Tonight, the Pope in the Vatican is courting the Muslim religion, one billion Muslims, and trying to bring them into unity with the Catholic Church.

And I tell you, if I may be a prophet tonight, he's going to get it done. That is unthinkable, that a group of billion people who don't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, other than that he was just an earthly born man who had done a few good deeds, who believe in an Allah who is not God, he is the sun god. There's a lot of people confused over that.

They think that that's the name for their name of the true God. But it's not. Allah is the sun god.

And they worship him with their faces toward Mecca. They have an incredible religion today, just like all the rest that we're talking about. If a devoted Muslim is driving down the interstate and it's time to pray,

he'll stop that car, get out his rug, put it beside the pavement and kneel down with his face toward Mecca and do his daily prayers five times a day.

He rises at five o'clock in the morning to the call for prayer and gets over there in a certain place again with his face toward Mecca and he bows in prayer. And I have found over the years that there is tremendous similarity in all the major religions of the world. Tremendous similarity.

And the reason for that is because by and large they believe, Do and you'll be saved. Do and you'll inherit the earth. Do and you'll go to heaven.

Do and you'll be okay in the next life or be translated into something better somewhere along the way. But none of them recognize the fact that it's done and I believe in it and I'm saved. And that typifies or illustrates the great difference between the religions of this world and the belief of Jesus Christ and Him crucified on Calvary's cross for the redemption of mankind.

Now let us turn for a scripture tonight to Luke chapter 12, verse 1 through verse 3. In the meantime when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people insomuch that they truth one upon another, He began to say unto the disciples, first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore, whosoever ye whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light, and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

What I want to capitalize on and draw out of these three verses is the word, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. Now, the Bible describes a bit about leaven and talks about the leaven of malice and wickedness. It talks about the leaven of hypocrisy.

It talks to us about how a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. And if we'd have time to go into the Old Testament, we would be able to tell you crystal clear that leaven is a type of sin. It's a type of sin in the lives of people.

And if sin gets into a man's life or gets into a church or gets into a society, and is not speedily dealt with, as I said last night, then it will permeate the entire body. It will find its way through and draw like leaven does through dough, bread dough, through the whole lump. And therefore, we recognize what he was talking about.

Now, I'm not here today to put all of my emphasis on the Pharisees. Even though that I will probably speak more specifically to the leaven of the Pharisees tonight, I also want to make known that we also have the leaven of the Sadducees. The Pharisees were the strict ones and the Sadducees were the loose and liberal ones.

They were both wrong and they were both against Christ and they both helped to crucify Christ. And tonight, it doesn't matter which side of the ditch you may happen to be. On the liberal ditch or on the ultra-conservative and legalistic ditch.

You're not in the right place and you're not on the road. The road is somewhere in between there. That is, understands the grace of God and the power of God.

And that does not put merits on human works or human appearance as far as on getting to heaven. But is washed in the blood of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and puts their merit in the shed blood that atoned

for men's sins. Alright, but we are to beware of this leaven of hypocrisy.

The leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Now the word hypocrite means a stage actor. I don't know if you ever knew that or not, but all those folks out there in Hollywood that make a profession of this, of being an actor, they are hypocrites.

They are acting the part of another. They are not that individual, but they'll act out an Abe Lincoln or act out a western cowboy of some kind who was a celebrity 150 years ago or they'll act out a king or a queen or somebody else. And that makes them, in the Greek word, it's hypocritos, which means an actor.

They are a stage actor. It also means pretending. Someone who pretends to be religious.

Someone who pretends to be a Christian, pretends to be alright. But in their heart, they are miles away. And I have been amazed over the years, even though I am not a movie goer or a film watcher, but I understand that there are biblical films made and I've read about them, like Ben-Hur and Jesus Christ and the Twelve Apostles and Peter, James and John and some of these religious movies that are played by these hypocrites.

And they play Jesus Christ and they play Peter, James and John and they play Moses and they play Joshua and men like that. And these men can do this from morning till night for months, you know, and go through that whole biblical story and seemingly be totally unaffected by it. And that's because they put themselves into a stage of a pretense there and nothing in it in their heart.

And not only that, hypocrites usually have a numb heart. And they have made themselves numb. I understand that those who get to live, not too many do, but a few who get to live to be 70 years old are so deranged sometimes that they don't know who they are.

They have played the part of so many people that they don't know who they are themselves anymore. So it's a dangerous work. It also refers to paper or counterfeit money.

Hypocrite is paper or counterfeit money. Or we would also say someone who lives a double life. A double life.

Now they tell me that in persecution there are few hypocrites. That has a way of purging it out. If you have to suffer for your actions, then that usually purges a lot of the hypocrisy out.

I don't know, maybe that's what God needs to bring us today, to do some of that today. And I would suppose I could also say if the one billion Catholics and now you know the word eject, I don't know if you know that word, evangelical Jews and Catholics together. So the evangelical world is united with the Catholics and the Muslim world is united with the Catholics.

And you will probably have about three billion people on your hands that will unite on that. And that is the makeup, I believe with all my heart, on the one world religion. And after that all gets united, I don't suppose there will be much mercy for the rest of us who take a different path altogether than religion.

But I want to tell you today again, if you are going to be amongst the group where God comes, where God sits, and where God rules and reigns in the hearts of people, you will not join that thing. Absolutely not. I'll be bold enough to say if you do, it will probably kill you spiritually.

Because of its ecumenical effect that it will have to take you away from truth and right and have you compromise with false religion and false doctrine. All right, let us turn to Matthew 23. I know that this is a hard chapter.

But I want to show you some similarities of what will come out of a people when God comes or what, the type of religion that gets exposed and has to be rooted out of our hearts and lives. When God comes, man's religion has to go. That's the title of my message here tonight.

And in the 23rd chapter, Jesus Christ exposed this whole matter of hypocrisy in such a real way. And it is not only applicable, I find as I read across it, it is not at all only applicable to the Jews. It is applicable to many, many groups.

And there are many groups represented here tonight by background and even by present attendance perhaps. And I don't want you to get your focus tonight on whether what I am saying refers to the Catholics over there in the Vatican or over there in Chicago or somewhere else, or refers to the Amish in Allen County and point your fingers at them. I will say this, however, that if the shoe fits, wear it.

If the shoe fits, wear it. But what I want you to do tonight is to examine whether you have religion or whether you have had an encounter with the living God. And in between there is a vast difference.

And I want to exemplify that difference tonight and emphasize it and help you to take it apart a bit so that you can understand when the evening gets over whether you have religion or whether you have Jesus Christ. Whether you have a system or whether you have a person, a living person. Whether you have a code of ethics or whether you have a power in your life that is able to help you overcome sin and overcome the old human nature.

Whether you have been born into a certain system and a certain religion and you have been tried to keep loyal to it and all of that. But you have never had an encounter with the living Christ of Nazareth who is able to save His people from their sins. And as I said in Romans 6.11, that sin shall not have dominion over them and that is the greatest freedom as Brother Laverne already alluded to in his devotion.

The first point, and I wish I could read this entire chapter, but I'm going to have to, for the sake of time, not do that here. I have a number of things on my heart that I would like to unburden myself again tonight. But the first thing we notice, if you scan over the chapter, you will find bits and pieces of what I'm going to say here.

I'm hoping that you will take the time to sit down and to read them specifically, these verses, and see where you're at with them. That's my hope and my prayer tonight. I don't have the time to do all of that.

But the first point that you will notice that men's religion will do, is that they will say and do not. They will make a profession that they are holy men. And if I could take you to the Vatican just as an example, that's exactly the way it is there.

You would see men walk straight in all their royal robes of Catholicism with all the right colors on and everything. And they would act just as pious as can be. Nobody laughs and nobody smiles.

And everybody stands as straight as an arrow in the right place and knows exactly how to hold their hands and everything. They will sing. And they will tell you what to do and what not to do and where to go and where not to go.

But when it comes to behind the scenes, all you have to do is be acquainted with the newspapers of America a little bit and you will know what a terrible debauchery that is coming out, that has been happening in the priesthood for years and for generations. And not only that, if you have read the books concerning back in medieval history how the cesspools of children's bones have been unearthed and uncovered because of the illegitimate birth that took place between priests and nuns, you will know that the recent dilemma that is upon that church is not recent, but has stood for hundreds and hundreds of years. Immoral debauchery they say, but they will not do it themselves for the most part.

They are hypocrites. They make a profession of religion, but it is man's religion and it is not right. And we find the same thing in many Anabaptist groups likewise.

And we find the same thing in many charismatic groups, the same way. You know the exposure that has taken place in the recent decade of great men of God, supposedly evangelists and great preachers who drew tens of thousands of people together and preached to them only to live in secret debauchery behind the scenes. Once again, they say and do not.

They have a profession of religion, but no reality in their heart. And the Bible says, when God comes, the man's religion, the commandments and doctrines of men have to go. And man has to be real and transparent.

One of the marks of revival, my dear people, is a transparency of heart and life. And when God comes, that is what you will have. Their walk is different here.

When they say and do not, you will notice that their walk is different from their talk. Great, swelling words while they talk about praying hours a day and being up in a tower and seeing a 900 foot tall Jesus, having signs and wonders galore, healings insurmountable, unbelievable, cancers and blind people and what have you. Some are even claiming resurrections from the dead.

But I tell you, I have yet to meet one blind person that was born blind or was stone blind that they made their eyes to see. And I have yet to meet a person who I know was dead four days and stank and got raised from the dead. I am not saying there are none in some far away country that God has chosen to do a miracle like that.

But I know with all this false claims, I want to see it. I want to touch Him. I want to talk to Him.

Because there are so many signs and wonders that are not genuine today. Man's religion, and it is for the most part what I am picking up, hypocrisy. It's hypocrisy.

The next point that I have, excuse me, I have another one on that say and do not. We notice also that in Matthew chapter 23 it says that they bind, excuse me, yes, in verse 4 it says they bind heavy burdens and are grievous to be born. Grievous to be born.

Some of you remember of reading some of Christmas Carol Kaufman's books perhaps over the years that were pretty popular in many of the local Christian bookstores. But you remember how in the Not Regina book there, I remember as my father read that book to us as we were just children about 50 years ago, and I remember how they were so fearful of owning a Bible that they took it out of fear and buried it into the garden out back. I remember that.

And one of the things that this man fear has such an incredible grip upon people. And I have watched that through the years. I have watched that through the years and my recent work with a lot of religious people in Manitoba and South Dakota and various places like that.

And the fear of man is at such an incredible level that you cannot imagine that such control is put upon a people that are just simply common people, but they are put there by the fear of the leaders. And you know what? I have worked with the leaders too and I find out that they are in fear of each other likewise. And I realize tonight this tent should probably be packed to the walls all over and beyond.

But because of that one thing, the fear of men and the fear of the preachers and the fear of their authorities, men will not come to a meeting even when they would like to. That is the way it was. That is the way it was in the Jewish times.

That is exactly the way. Not only did the Catholics operate that way in medieval times, but here this was spoken to the Jews. They are binding heavy burdens upon people that are grievous to be born.

Again, lay themselves on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. You know, this is incredible. Some of the things we see is so absolutely incredible.

I meet people sometimes. I met people from Wisconsin here some time ago. And I remember my father when I was a boy, he always said haymaking time was the hardest work of the farm when they had to load loose hay by a hay loader.

But you know that leaders will make men load that hay loose with a hay loader like that and haul it on a wagon into the barn hill of their barn and then fork it by hand through a baler in order to bale it because it is a sin to take that baler with wheels on it through the field and pick up the hay itself. And men worked themselves skinny just simply because some leader is putting grievous things on them to be born and yet he is probably 65 years old and won't lift one of them with one of his fingers. That's wrong.

That's wrong. And it is hypocrisy to live like that and to submit to those kind of things. One of the grievous things about the Lord Jesus Christ is that He gives liberty to the captives.

And His yoke is easy. And His burden is light. It is not heavy and hard to be borne and difficult to live by.

He does not put standards upon us that are so thick, a standard book that is so thick and so difficult that we hardly know how to get it all done. The next one we notice is that they wear special clothing. The Bible says, but their works they do in verse 5, to be seen of men.

They make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments. They wear special clothing. You can go to the sea and visit the Muslim clerics.

You can go to the Vatican and watch them or to any local Catholic church and watch them. Or you can go to the local Amish church and you'll see the same everywhere. People of prominence and leadership are wearing special clothing.

Over the years, true Christianity has been known by wearing in Europe and through the ages. When true Christianity shows up, people can wear simple peasant clothing that are modest and cover their body and be Christians. But as soon as you get into these groups and cults, you have to wear special clothing.

And that is a mark of hypocrisy. I'm not against modesty. Those of you who know me know that I'm an earnest contender for it.

And I'm not interested in the fashions of the world. Not for a minute. But I'm also not interested in religion requiring a uniform, special, weird clothing that cannot be identified as Christian, but only as weird.

I think that's wrong and again, it's hypocrisy. And I've also found out whether it be Jews, Gentiles, Catholics, or whatever. You know, it is amazing as you notice with these priests that I was talking about, what hides behind that facade of religion.

That show of sobriety. And it's interesting to me. It's just incredibly interesting to me that for the most part, religions like that will choose the color black.

Isn't that interesting? That's the witch's color incidentally. Not God's color. That's the witch's color.

But they will require the color black to hide their sin behind and their hypocrisy behind. And I have found it is incredibly amazing in any of these groups I have mentioned hitherto for of what can hide behind beards and clothing, whether it be orthodox or whatever, or even thousand dollar suits on the charismatic front. But usually what you will see is that there will be an extreme emphasis put on the outside on clothing.

And they do not see the principle of modesty. The other thing I've seen, just if I can say this concerning the head covering. For the most part, you know, tourists come driving through these communities and they ask these young ladies, well, why do you cover your head? And they say, because the church makes us do it.

That's the only answer they have. Not a clue that this is in the Word of God and it's a commandment in Scripture. Number three.

They sound the trumpet. Well, it says also in verse 6, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues. That's another thing to watch.

When the elders and the preachers are lifted up so high in the midst of the group that they have one of those special big armchairs up front beside the pulpit in order to sit in before the service starts. And in every other way, they have their special room and their special place and their special way that they are being handled. And you know, most of these preachers are teaching, I find out.

It's amazing how far this goes that a preacher, in order to retain his austere framework, I can't think of the right word, but his influence among the people, he needs to keep aloof from the common man so you don't get socially attached to the people, so that when you walk in there on Sunday morning, there's an austere reverence for the man when he walks in. So he has to keep himself aloof. Like up in the Hutterite colonies, you know, he doesn't eat with the rest of the people.

He eats privately in his own little house, you know. And the rest of them eat at a common table, but the preacher doesn't eat with the people. He doesn't socialize there, so when he comes on the scene, you know, everybody kind of, oh, there comes the preacher.

He's not a man who mingles with the people. That is also part of this thing that you will find spoken of in Matthew 23. They love these special seats in the synagogues and the rooms at the feasts.

And then, of course, what goes with that in verse 7 is they love the greetings of the marketplace. And whether that be a reverend or bishop or rabbi and really love those words and those names and be addressed by those particular words, that's also part of it. So the fourth point simply is that he loves titles, honor and respect of men.

The example of Jesus, if I can take you over to Him, is totally different than that. Jesus was a common man. He didn't even, not just socialize with His members or with His twelve apostles, He sat with sinners and shared a hamburger with them.

No problem with Him because He wanted to get down where they were and minister to the needs of people. And you have a great difference there when you have the religious elites in these societies, in these systems. They won't do that.

They won't make themselves, they won't sit halfway back in the church house and just sit there among the brethren. But they always have their special seat in which they sit in. The highest seat in the church.

But Jesus was a nobody. And I want to tell you He was born in Bethlehem. He was born in a slum town.

A slum town. He chose that on purpose because He on purpose wanted to cut across the grains of this entire Jewish system and show Himself to be a humble and lowly man of Nazareth. He has become through the years a drunkard's curse and a bastard, an illegitimate child.

And God knew that He would be accused of that when He mapped out His birth and ordered His birth in the way that He did. But He did it anyhow and left the people to talk and hiss and accuse. Why? Because His men are humble men and they bear a cross and they don't care what the people say.

They only know what's true and what's right and they stick to it. My next point is that He strains at gnats and swallows camels. A religious person strains at gnats and swallows camels.

I don't care which one of these groups you choose. Pick any one of them at random and watch them if they do that. If you're a member of a church like that and they do that, you watch them.

But they will emphasize and lift up and spend hours of discussion on the most minutest little thing. And the major issues of the heart are never talked about hardly. If that happens, you better look for another one to go to somewhere or pray that God would bring a revival in the one you're at, one or the other.

But that is what they do. I remember years ago, some years ago, and I'm sure it's happening in this community here this week. It happens everywhere we have revival meetings.

It happens everywhere. Just everywhere. About.

And that is, they'll sit in a living room and they'll be watching television and smoking cigarettes and they're telling their children, don't you go to those tent meetings, they'll deceive you. Imagine. Or else, they are an angry person.

They can't control their tongue. They rail and carry on and fume and fuss and say all kinds of unkind words in a heated, angry manner. And yet, don't want you, or perhaps they're into pornography or into lust and they cannot control it and all that.

But you let one of their children want to go to those meetings over there in Harlem Park at that tent and they are furious. This happens all the time. It's not unique for Harlem Park.

I'm used to that. But I want to tell you it's hypocrisy. And God's going to judge it.

That is not right. When their own lives are such a mess and yet, and you know as we go down through Matthew chapter 23, this thing gets worse, not better, as the Lord Jesus centers in on this thing. Strains at gnats and swallows camel.

I've seen them with restrictions and members meetings and what have you concerning telephones or electric or whether you have steel wheels on your tractors. I remember the law was so heavy in the state of New York and the townships were so against it that it made every man, when he had fields across the road, he had to stop at the edge of the road and roll out rubber belts on the road in order to drive his steel wheel tractor across and then he had to roll them up again when he took the load of manure out on a winter morning so that the cars wouldn't hit him and then when he came back again, he had to roll these rubber belts out across the road again and bring his steel wheel tractor across and then he would go back to his barn. And yet in those same settings, if you would have a Bible study or a prayer meeting, there would be a members meeting pronto! And people would be upset and out of sorts because of it.

I say they're hypocrites. They're hypocrites. I believe that is a thermometer for all of us.

How much of a joy and you go back again to what I mentioned concerning the book Not Regina or the Catholic Church in the medieval times when they did not want their people to read a Bible. And it was that way yet for the most part 40, 50 years ago. Don't read your Bible! And Mass was said in Latin so that the people could not catch on much and I believe that that's some of the reason that there's a different language used sometimes in church.

Of course some of it is because it's a mother tongue but at the same time they don't care at all that the people can't really understand what they're reading. Because you see they're afraid it will go to your head. Or that you might read so much that you might learn more than the preacher knows and then they're in trouble.

And that happened to me when I was about 16 or 15 years of age and I got born again. My grandfather noticed there was something different about me. He sat me down one Sunday night and he said, you're reading too much.

It's going for your head. And he was telling me to quit it. He thought I was reading the Bible too much.

And I thought I hadn't done nothing yet as far as really witnessing was concerned. I barely said a word. I was too timid and too young.

I don't know what he'd say if he'd hear me now. But I've added a few words to my vocabulary and my explanation of Scripture since then. Praise God by His grace He has given us that.

But I hardly said anything and it's happened numerous times. In our community, I tell you, men were drugged to psychiatric wards left and right and hoped to get shock treatments to get it out of their brain. When they got those funny ideas and wanted to read their Bible and attend a prayer meeting or a Bible study or thought it wasn't right to have sin in the church or didn't want to smoke anymore or drink or what have you, men got up and would have rather had beer bottles under their boys' arms than a Bible.

And said so. I tell you, it's time God comes! It's high time God comes when we even hear anybody thinking such things. We are so far off the track when we are in those situations.

And then you can drink your beer and your whiskey and your wine and your young people can be in immorality and fornication and we wink and look the other way and let it all happen. It's sad, I tell you. They clean up the outside of the cup.

And I know many a tourist that comes in from New York and New Jersey into our community. They just think, my, this is such a nice, easy lifestyle. You know, you just trot along behind the horse and everything would be so nice and natural and all that.

And they watch that thing until once they see a big fat cigar sticking out of a man's mouth and they are shocked and they wonder what in the world is this. They thought it would be a pure and a holy and a right life. And they scratch their heads and say, what? I didn't think you would smoke.

What's going on here? Clean up the outside of the cup. Attend church. Get baptized.

Take communion. But inside is full of sin. All manner of sin.

They cannot love their wives. They cannot love their children. Even in these meetings already, we've heard, my dad was never able to tell me he loves me.

And I realize that was part of the culture. It wasn't in their vocabulary. Even though they loved their children, many of them, they didn't know how to say it.

But we have separation. We have in the home, divorce without divorce. You know what I mean? Separation.

High walls between mom and dad. Cannot communicate right. We have secret abortions from fornication.

We have moral issues a mile long. All kinds of them. Some ungodly, unmentionable that come out.

Men are in prison because of it tonight. In Canada, in the U.S., in Pennsylvania and Ohio, because of sin, unrestrained passions and lust and perversions. And yet, the outside of the cup looks fine.

It's hypocrisy. It's hypocrisy. But here comes the worst one and sadder one yet.

Number seven. They shut up the kingdom of heaven. They shut up the kingdom of heaven.

They won't go in themselves and neither do they want anyone else to go in. That is the heartbreaking one. If they don't have the answer for the drinking problem, if they don't have the answer for the immorality, then for all sakes send them somewhere where they might get some help.

But they can't do it. Down here in Napanee, not too long ago, there was a man who was bewitched with witchcraft. He had been to one of those powwow doctors.

He got totally messed up and he used to lay flat out on the ground in a spell where he couldn't move a finger, couldn't move a muscle. And the people would gather around him, you know, and little by little by little he would be able to move and get up again and go home again. And this kept happening to him.

It kept happening to him when all of a sudden they decided we've got to get help for this man. So they sent him to an institution in Ohio here that had some spirituality and was able to preach the Gospel. And he wasn't there very long.

Sure enough, the old spell happened again and he laid flat out. Well, those men knew what to do and they gathered around him and they started praying around him and praying over him in the name of Jesus Christ and telling the devil to get off of him. And then when he got to that time, they preached to him the Gospel and invited him to accept Jesus Christ as the Lord of his life and that's what he did.

Guess what? He got silenced before he got home. Can't have that. We wanted you to get straightened out from your spells, from whatever was happening to you, but we didn't want you to get that changed.

We didn't want you to get that new religion. And so he's out of the church today because of it and had to go find another one. God have mercy.

It's hypocrisy to the core. And when God comes, God will not come in those scenes and just sanction that whole thing and just tweak it up a little bit. There has to be a radical departure from that kind of cultism and that kind of hypocrisy.

You're not going to reform that one a little when they play into the hands of the devil like that. Hinder conversions. Threaten people to throw out.

If you go to that meeting, thus and thus will happen to you. You're going to have to give up your farm. We're going to take it away from you again because of loaning money to the sun.

You know, all those kind of threats and all those kind of things are thrown at them and all of that. And many, many are excommunicated be they Catholic, Jew, or Amish. All three of them will do that.

I met a Jew here some time ago and he said, you know what happens in our situation? They have a funeral for us. They actually bring in a coffin and have it there in the front. And I'm supposed to be in it.

I'm a dead man as far as my family is concerned. And they actually had a funeral for me at the synagogue when I got converted and found Jesus Christ as my Lord. Can you imagine that? This is nothing new in Allen County or in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

This is old hat for religion through the ages. And you know, a lot of people struggle with what that means in Hebrews chapter 6. Hebrews chapter 6 where it talks about... And chapter 10, both of them talk about the unpardonable sin where a man crucifies Jesus Christ afresh and puts Him to an open shame and all of that. You know what a Jew had to do? You know what a Jew had to do to get back into the synagogue after he believed in Jesus? I mean, it's almost unmentionable the blasphemous things he had to do.

But one of the things he had to do was believe and make a statement that he believes that Jesus Christ went to hell. And there were such blasphemous words had to come out of his mouth and such renunciation of Jesus Christ that it doesn't wonder me a bit of the words that are spoken in Hebrews to the Hebrews concerning turning back and crucifying afresh the Son of God and putting Him to an open shame. And then he says to us, the Hebrew writer says, and he talks about if a man had tasted of the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come and has been partaker of the Holy Ghost, if he shall fall back in that setting, to renew him again to repentance is impossible.

And that's where I believe it comes to. And under a Jewish setting, it was that radical. But may God help us to see the seriousness of this.

Another thing we have here. They read long prayers and stand in the street. No reflection on my father.

He didn't know better. There's a day to come when that prayer book was put away for good. And he began to pray out of the freeness of his own heart when he got born again, shortly after I did.

But when I grew up, I fell asleep in the long prayers that we prayed on Sunday nights out of the prayer book. Ring a bell when I read that these men made long prayers standing in the streets. My father wouldn't stand in the streets, but the long prayers were similar.

Let's turn to Luke 13. Verse 26. Well, I think I'm going to pass that and come back to that a little later.

I want to give another point here and then we'll come back to Luke 13. The next point, they loved their ancestors. They loved their ancestors.

Right away from John the Baptist come on the scene. And he opened his mouth and began to preach repentance to Israel, trying to bring every valley up and bringing every high place down and making a crooked straight. That's what his mission was, to prepare in the wilderness a way of the Lord.

And he was to make his path straight. And that's exactly what he did. But he told them in Matthew 3 that they are not to say we have Abraham to our father, because God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

And he says, henceforth the ax is laid to the root of the tree. And he begged them, don't put stock in your ancestors or in your heritage. Now I had a lot of good things in my upbringing and I am very grateful for.

One of the big ones is that I was kept from running into the world. And I know I would have gotten into a heap more trouble, although probably not a lot more trouble than I would have if I had got converted five years later and would have went for the young folks. But I am grateful for the fear of God and numerous things that were put into me.

But we cannot glory in our heritage and cannot glory in our ancestors and say we have an individual back there called Felix Muntz or Conrad Grebel or some other man, Calvin or Zwingli or who have you, and believe that that is going to make us go the right way or has anything to do with our relationship with Jesus Christ today. But you go into these systems and in these orders and they love their ancestors. Look at the museums they build and the tens of thousands they spend to keep their old Bibles and their old books and the old artifacts and the old articles of clothing and the hoes and the plows and the wagons and all that and put them on display for generations to come.

Well, I must say for myself, I love history and it is very interesting. But at the same time, don't you bank on it for your religion. There's nothing in it to look back and claim any merits from it for your religion.

Now let us go to Luke 13. You want to spend a little time in our closing message on these verses here. Hypocrisy.

When God comes, the religion of man has to go. And we must have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Now I want you to get the heart of Christ.

And I want you to get the context in which this is written. We'll look over enough of verses where I can show you the context in a little bit here. Verse 24 of chapter 13 of Luke.

Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up and has shut the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are. Now this is one of the most pitiful two verses in the entire New Testament.

These were people that thought when they knocked, they should have had an answer and should have had the knob turned and opened up and invited them in. This is not talking about heathens. This is not talking about devil worshippers.

This is not talking about Maharaji Mahishyogis. This is talking about religious people of the day who believed in the existence and Creator God. And they believed that they should have had an open door when they would knock and go in.

And this is the seriousness, my friend, tonight, where you and I have to decide and know whether we have religion tonight or whether we have an encounter personally with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of our lives, and whether we are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, or whether we are hanging into a framework of some kind of a framework of religion, and we have never known the Lord Jesus Christ in a personal manner. And therefore He says here, strive to enter at the straight gate, and that word puts earnest effort forth. And it says, many shall seek.

Listen to that. Many shall seek and shall not find. And I think it's speaking about those that nonchalantly, as I said the other night, would kind of like to go to heaven.

Of course, they'd like to go to heaven, but they can't go to heaven because they have only, you know, had kind of a desire to go and kind of weakly, you know, just laid there and thought, yeah, sure, I want to go to heaven. And maybe did a few things and adjusted a few things in your life to think maybe you're going to get there. But the multitude of people, according to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, that will think that they get a knock, if they knock on that door, it will open unto them.

And it simply says here, once God has had enough of this half-hearted hypocrisy of religion and will raise up and shut the door, you can stand out all night and knock and ask to come in. And He will say, I never knew you. I have no idea who you are.

Because you have never talked to Me in a personal way. You have never been born again by My Spirit. You have never invited Me into your life, into your whole life, into your hearts, into every area of life.

I don't know who you are. I have no idea, no clue who you are. And He's talking to a Jewish people where the multitudes of Jews were like that.

And in a few short months or years, they had Him crucified on a cruel cross. And He was the most righteous, godly, holy man that ever set foot on the earth and never did one thing wrong. If He had crucified you and I, they could find some fault, but they could find no fault in Him.

And even Pilate said that when they were trying to judge Him. I find no fault in Him at all. And yet, as a mad crowd wanted to crucify Him, no wonder He said, when once the master of the house has risen up and shut the door, you're going to stand on the outside and knock and the door will not be opened.

And that's my cry to you tonight. And that's a burden on my heart. Because I know, not too many months or years hence, God is going to rise up some night and He's going to shut the door.

God said so. He's going to shut the door. And if the people have not known Jesus Christ in a real way, they're going to stand on the outside and they're going to knock on that door until our Lord opened to us.

And He's going to come and say, I have no idea who you are. I've never had a relationship with you. You've never honored me.

You've honored me with your lips, but your heart was far from me. And I have no idea who you are. Then shall you begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

Oh Lord, don't you remember? Remember? We had a sign out in front of our church that said, believe in God. In fact, there was a tent meeting in our town one time. We knew of you.

We actually believed that you created the world. We were creationists, not an evolutionist. There are men who say those kind of things.

There are men that are of all kinds of parts of religion. They have all kinds of things that they humanly do with their own strength and with their own volition, you know, to try to appear religious. But they don't know Jesus Christ.

And to know Him is to obey Him and to follow Him, not to know Him up here. So many people are missing God by about 18 inches. They have Him here, but they don't have Him here.

And that's so sad. Look at what he says. But he shall say, I tell you, verse 27, I know you not whence you are.

Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. And these very people who thought the door should open to them, they shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets.

You'll see your ancestors there in the Kingdom of God. And you yourselves thrust out. And that is exactly what happened.

Abraham and Isaac and Jacob will be there. I believe that. They were God-honoring believers and they were righteous men.

But the people who claimed that they were their fathers were wicked, wicked hypocrites and they were far, far away from God. And then he says in verse 29, They shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God. And behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first that shall be last.

And then he had a discussion there concerning Herod. I'm just going to go on with that. It seems like that was a trick to try to get Jesus to leave, to threaten Him.

A Pharisee trying to threaten Him that Herod was going to kill Him. And it didn't bother the Lord at all. But He goes on with His heart-broken burden.

Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto Thee, how often I would have taken You under My wings like a hen does her chick. And You wouldn't do it. You would not do it.

And the picture there is one of the most beautiful natural pictures for those of us who are old enough or country enough to understand how this all works. I well remember as a boy when a thunderstorm would come up and the wind would begin to blow. It all had to happen.

The first clap of thunder and the wind started getting windy. And them little chicks would run up there and run up inside those wings and cuddle up and snuggle in there. And that old crook would sit there in the beating down rain of about an inch, an inch and a half thunderstorm and wouldn't budge and wouldn't flinch.

She'd weather the whole thing. And when the whole thing was over, those little chicks came out of there dry. I tell you, it was an incredible picture.

But in that picture is the picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's what He would have done to the Jewish people. That's what He would do to the Catholics.

That's what He would do to the Amish. But they won't do it. They won't do it for the most part.

I'm not saying there are not individuals in those settings that are crying out to God and are coming to God. And I find them here and there and I thank God there's a remnant that is coming out for His name. And praise God for that.

And some of them are here tonight and I'm thankful for it. God be praised. But God is saying, Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem.

Oh, Allen County and Adams County and Lancaster County and Napanee and Elkhart and what have you. If only you would have known that you could have come to me and I would have taken you in like a hen does her chicks. And you would not do it.

In fact, you excommunicated those that would. And that is the heart of God tonight. Religion is not going to cut it.

We have religion up to our ears, but we don't have true Christianity that are filled with the love of God and that things make sense according to the Word of God and based their living on the Word of God and walk with Him and obey Him and love Him and love each other. So much strife and animosity in the church where they tear each other to pieces and shreds and keep building new ones and the old ones have a couple of people left in them. This happens all across America in many different denominations because of the strife.

Because men have not dealt with their anger and with their animosities and with hatred and with all these things in their hearts. Their heart is far away from God. And if you follow this through in the order that is given over in chapter 14, you will notice a little bit of the chronological order.

Let me finish on chapter 13. It says, And therefore your house is left unto you desolate. Your house is left unto you desolate.

And verily I say unto you, you shall not see Me until the time come when you shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Oh, what a true word He said that night, that day. I tell you, no truer word was spoken to those Jewish people.

Your temple, your house is empty. And about 35 years later, after He spoke these words, that's when Titus got around with his soldier and shut in the city. And they ran out of food and they had about 800 to a million people, 800,000 to a million people inside.

And you know, they ran out of food and they began to starve and they began to eat their children. It was the most deplorable scene in time in history. And about 700,000 plus people died in that whole siege as the Roman army was gathered around them.

You talk about a house being empty. That house was absolutely empty. Your house is desolate.

There's nothing in it, Christ was telling them. I would have taken you in. I would have saved you.

I would have taught you the truth. And that's exactly how He came. He came to His own, but His own received Him not.

But to them that received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. Hallelujah. Your house is empty.

You're desolate. But look at this. He says unto them, You're not going to see Me henceforth from now on.

You're not going to see Me until you see, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. You know religionists can't say that. And I have to say that whether you be Catholic, Amish, or Jew, or Hutterite, or any otherites on the face of the earth, you will not see Him until you say, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

You see what's happening today? Thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee. That is exactly what they're doing. If they don't kill Him with a sword, or kill Him with stones, then they kill Him with their tongue, or they root Him out of there, or they try to close the Canadian border so they can't come to Canada and preach the Gospel anymore.

All these kind of things they will talk of doing and try to do to stop the prophets to come that are sent unto them with the Word of the Lord. And I'm telling you, God isn't going to come to any of them anymore until they get it right enough and get to their own senses and begin to cry out. And then they will say to the prophets and to the preachers, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

And they're not afraid of that name, Lord Jesus, then. But right now, you know, they don't want to talk about that name. You drop that name in a religious family gathering and you think it said a curse word.

It just don't go. Everything gets tense and everybody doesn't know what to do when you mention Jesus Christ. Try it sometime.

But I say all those that are born again by the Spirit of God, they can say, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. They're not ashamed of that name because His name is Jesus and He has found out that that name saves people from their sins. Well, my closing comments to you tonight are do you have Christ or do you have religion? That's a question you must answer.

You need to answer. Do you have Jesus Christ living within? Do you have a personal relationship with Him? Or do you only have religion? An empty house. A framework.

A system. A code of ethics. A high standard.

Good morals. Nice clothing. Beautiful church houses.

Nice benches and seats in them. Ministers that you look up to and honor. But you don't know my Lord Jesus.

You don't have Him in your heart. You have never, never been born again. You only got religion.

You only got religion. You might be baptized. You might be a member of the church.

You might speak in tongues. You might do signs and wonders, you think, and have seen others do them. You may dance in the Lord and shiver and shake and quiver and beat your drums and think that God comes down in your service.

But if it don't change your life, you don't have it. I don't believe you have it. If it don't make you righteous, if it don't help you to live godly in Christ Jesus, if it don't give you victory over your sin, if you don't rise above the standard of this old world in which you are living in and give you a hope beyond the grave, assurance of salvation, don't consider yourself to have it.

Don't consider yourself to have it. Strive to enter in at the straight gate. Strive to enter in at the straight gate.

Don't just have a little wishful thought that you want to go to heaven too. But you put all the effort forth. You search this matter out.

You get the heartbeat of God. You know what His commandments are, and His commandments are not grievous. And you, first of all, get the inside of the cup.

I love that when Jesus gives that answer. Cleanse first the inside of the cup that the outside may be clean. Like I said the other night, He didn't say the outside didn't matter.

He said just get it in proper order. Get the inside right, or the outside may be clean. He wants the clean outside, but He doesn't want a clean outside versus a dirty inside.

So I invite you tonight to come to the Lord Jesus Christ and settle this matter once and for all in your heart and your life. Oh, I don't know. How can I make it any plainer? It's so plain.

This afternoon I opened this Bible and I just looked at these verses and these parables and all these things. I just wanted to mention, you know, in chapter 14, that it says there, For if any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, in his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

And this chapter 13 that I expounded to you is in the context of that verse. And now we understand what it means, don't we? Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, won't you come and learn of Me? Won't you take My yoke which is easy and My burden is light and find rest for your souls tonight? It's the kind of Gospel, it's the

kind of experience that is able to make you to stand up against the strongest of family, friends, relatives, jobs, houses, land, even if your wife throws you out of the house, do it for Jesus' sake. That's what the Bible says.

You even need to be willing to separate from your wife for the sake of the Gospel. That's how important this decision is tonight. Let nothing stop you, let nothing turn you away.

What's the song tonight? Let's stand and sing number 22 tonight. And again, we're going to give an invitation as we do. You need help, you get help one way or another.

You get ahold of a Christian friend close to you and say, come help me, go pray with me. Come up here to the front, make a public statement and kneel at the altar. If you have religion tonight and you don't have Jesus Christ, a living reality in your life, you come forward, repent of your sins, and turn to God and give Him everything tonight.

That's my invitation. If you once were a Christian, you have backslidden and fallen back and you're messed up and sinning in the night, you come. As we sing this song, you just come forward.

Come. Don't harden your heart. Give your heart to the Lord tonight.

He wants to come tonight and get everything clear with God. Shall we sing another one?

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