

(Clearcreek Chapel) Everything Is Missions

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer's sermon emphasizes the necessity of recognizing Christ's lordship in every aspect of life and the call to live out that lordship through missions and obedience to God's will.

Duration: 1:09:02

Scripture: Malachi 1:6-7, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for a complete restructuring of our lives to align everything towards Christ. He uses the analogy of being employees in a plant and challenges the audience to evaluate their job descriptions, goals, and accomplishments. The speaker highlights the fleeting nature of life and the vanity of worldly pursuits, but also emphasizes the purpose found in Christ's resurrection. He urges the audience to prioritize their relationship with God, their families, and their mission to spread the gospel, rather than being consumed by unnecessary debt and worldly ambitions. The sermon also touches on the concept of discipline and chastening from the Lord, explaining that it is not always a result of sin but can be a means of growth and development.

Transcript

Well, let's open up our Bibles to the book of Malachi, chapter one, and I do really want to encourage you to come back tonight, please do, to hear Brother Waleed and hear him speak about the work. Also take a good look at him. Take a very good look.

He may die soon. You get killed for preaching the gospel where he's going. Not where he's going, where he's been for years.

As a matter of fact, I'm rather amazed that he's made it this long. Where he's going, there's more probability of him dying than persevering. We lost a missionary two years ago.

Was poisoned to death by the Hindus. Drug himself home and died on the doorstep. Just wanted to see his children before he died.

It's not a game. Take a good look. You may never see him again.

A little boy associated with our church years ago. We were helping in Nigeria. Because he would not deny Christ was shot through the stomach five times.

By the Muslims. Our dear brothers in Jerusalem were beaten up a while back. But.

Leonid Bansik, Malachi chapter one, verse six. A son honors his father and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my respect? Says the Lord of hosts to you, O priest who despise my name.

But you say, how have we despised your name? You are presenting defiled food upon my altar. But you say, how have we defiled you in that you say the table of the Lord is to be despised? But when you present the blind for sacrifices, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you or would he receive you kindly, says the Lord of hosts? But now, will you not entreat God's favor that he may be gracious to us with such an offering on your part? Will he receive any of you kindly, says the Lord of hosts? Oh, that there were one among you who would shut the gates. That you might not uselessly kindle fire on my altar, I am not pleased with you, says the Lord of hosts, nor will I accept an offering from you.

But from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, my name will be great among the nations and in every place incense is going to be offered to my name and a grain offering that is pure for my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. This passage is something like the message to the church and Laodicea. We hear that the preacher is directing us to this passage and we sort of cringe.

We think, oh, we're in for it today. He's going to he's going to waylay us with the scripture. It's going to beat us to death.

Well, that is not the purpose of the letter to the church and Laodicea, and it is not the purpose of this text. I understand from the testimony I have heard of your church, I understand that there are people here who have been born again and who dearly love the Lord Jesus Christ. And I can count it almost as a certainty that there are people here who love the Lord Jesus Christ and walk with him much closer than I do.

You have to always be aware that the ones who get the public part in the ministry are not always the most noble nor the most godly giftedness does not necessarily mean godliness or maturity. So I am addressing a group of people here, not all of you, but quite many of you who truly love the Lord and you struggle like I struggle with all the things in this world that can confuse us and mesmerize us and get us turned away. I'm not talking about rebellious Christians.

I'm talking about Christians who truly want to follow the Lord. You know who you are. And yet also, you know that you struggle.

If there's any sincerity in you at all, you know that you struggle. You know that you can be distracted. You know that there are things to do and lists to go through just to survive in this day and age.

And sometimes we get so turned around, we get blinded or we just get distracted. From the things that are truly most important to this text is a text written to the people of God, and there are some things in here that I don't believe apply to us as they apply to the church or apply to Israel. But there are many things that we can glean in this text to help clear away the fog in our lives.

And give us a clear view at what we ought to be doing, what we ought to be about. So don't look at this as a beating. It's not.

Look at it as an encouragement, as a help. Those whom he loves. He chastens, he rebukes, and that's so important for us to understand that chastening and disciplining from the Lord is not always because of sin, do you realize that? When I was a young boy, I wanted to be a basketball player and my legs were always weak, so my dad would after we would go about a mile and a half down the farm and feed all the hay to all the cattle.

I put ankle weights on with these big rubber boots and dad would make me run behind the truck. I hadn't done anything wrong. He was helping me.

He was disciplining me, sometimes he corrected me sharply, but it was to help me, not hurt me. And another thing that's very, very important, people always ask, well, what is the difference between God judging those who are not his people and God disciplining his people? Or what is the difference between that great day when we stand before God and all men stand before God and will believers be judged the same way and all these different things? Let's just put it in this perspective. God will never, never, ever come to you as a judge to strike you punitively.

He will always come to you as a father. So even on that day when you stand before him. You will be judged not by a judge.

But by a father, a brother and a friend. So when he speaks to us, even words that seem to just bear down on us so hard, it is for our own good. Now, let's look at this text, verse six, a son honors his father and a servant, his master.

He is drawing from some certainties in society that we have sort of lost. Throughout history, men have understood for the most part, authority, one of the bad things about living in a democracy. And I approve of democracy, I'm glad I'm in a democracy, but one of the drawbacks of a democracy is that we do not understand authority.

No one's going to tell me what to do. I don't have a king. I don't have a leader.

I don't bow down. I'm my own man. And there is some goodness about human freedom, but there are some things in which we have there are some things which we have forgotten.

That God himself has established authority. He said a son honors his father. That's a given.

Now, just as a side note, young person, is that a given for you? Not just obey your father, not just grudgingly do what he says, but honor him. Honor the authority that is over you and a servant, his master. If you don't like your job, quit.

If you don't want to serve your employer from the depth of your heart, quit, do him a favor and do yourself a favor because you're in sin. If you're going to take upon yourself. The act of being an employee, then what does Scripture say, it's a given a servant honors his master, honor him, he's not worthy of it, that's not the point.

You're honoring the authority. That has been placed over you. We do not have in our day and age an idea or a concept of authority, of lordship, of someone being over us.

That's why it's so, so difficult to have biblical elders. Because when biblical elders start functioning biblically, people start saying, who do you think you are? But there is a biblical train of authority and he

refers to it here, a son honors his father and a servant, his master. It'd be absolutely unthinkable for a son to dishonor his father.

Or a man or a servant to dishonor his master would bring punishment, it would bring shame heaped upon them from from outside, from their other from their immediate family, from their extended family, from the society itself. It's a grotesque perversion of the will of God. So then he says, then if I'm a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my respect, says the Lord of hosts.

I heard a preacher say one time, Jesus Christ is the only Lord who can't tell anybody what to do or make anybody do what he wants them to do. That's not true. He, if he is Savior, he is Lord, if he is not your Savior, he is Lord.

We hear these silly remarks, preachers will say you need to make Jesus Lord of your life. I don't recommend it. The only thing you can make is an idol.

Jesus is the Lord of your life. God has seen to it that his son, whom we crucify, be both Lord and Christ. You don't have to make him Lord.

You don't have to set him on the throne of your heart. He's already there. What you have to do is acknowledge his lordship, the lordship that God has given him.

God said, I have set my king upon my holy hill. Whether the nation's rage or not. Makes little difference.

So God is Lord. The scriptures say that he does whatever he chooses to do in the heavens and the earth. If he raises up his hand, no man can pull it down.

If he lays his hand on the table, no man can pry it up. He is Lord over all things. Now, if you acknowledge that your life must be radically different.

It must be. It has to be. One thing I can say about the secular man, he's consistent.

He is consistent. He does not believe there's a God. In any real.

Shape, form or fashion. He does not acknowledge the sovereignty of God in any shape, form or fashion. He does not see there to be any fixed morality in any shape, form or fashion.

And so he lives in a confused mire of purposelessness and lack of morality. He has no guiding light. He has no purpose.

He has nothing. He's like a hamster running around in a wheel, but at least he's consistent. What troubles me.

Is to hear the confession, Jesus is Lord. And then in that statement to survey the life of the one making it and seeing every form of inconsistency. If he is Lord, he is absolute Lord, the word of tyrant is actually used in the New Testament with regard to Jesus Christ.

One who bears absolute authority, absolute lordship over his people. Do you live in that manner? You say, well, I try. How do you try? How? First of all, in order to submit to the will of your Lord, you must know that will.

You must know that will. Let me ask you a question. This is just right off the top.

What's the will of God with regard to your clothing? Well, I've never studied it. Maybe you want to. Now, no, I don't believe that all women should wear dresses.

I don't think that's the issue. The issue is decency and morality. Of course, I do have a problem with men wearing dresses unless they're Scottish.

But have you ever said, all right, he's Lord. All right, then how am I supposed to dress? What are the rules? We're not talking about legalism. We're not talking about nitpicking.

We're just talking about opening up the scripture and say, OK, what does that mean? He is Lord. OK, how should I talk? Should I look at the tongue, what the Bible says about it? He is Lord. OK, what are his rules with regard to me as a husband? And they're not suggestions because he is a lord, their commands, money, time, business, ministry.

You see, we call him Lord, but have you endeavored to discover the will of your Lord? We say so many things in Christianity, and yet he said, teach them to obey everything I commanded you. Someone may ought to do that, write a book on it, just everything Jesus commanded us to do. And notice what it says, I find this rather interesting, teach them to obey everything I commanded you.

He doesn't say teach them to obey everything I commanded them. Because we have a tendency, don't we, to teach people to obey things that we're not even obeying as preachers and as parents. So he says, if I'm Lord, you go to your employer.

And you go to get a job and he hires you and he usually gives you some sort of purpose statement. He will give you a book regarding purposes and procedures of the business. You have certain responsibilities, things you must do, things you must follow to a T. And yet you come to Christianity and you go, Jesus is Lord.

And you truly believe that in your heart. You've truly been converted, but you don't endeavor in the practical life that you live to find out what is his will. He's given you children.

What is what did he tell you about that? How did he tell you regarding how to raise them? Now, what I want to do is point out places where we really get cloudy. Let me just give you an example. I am a doting father.

I just the closest I come to idolatry, I guess, in my life is my children. I love my children. I mean, I just I just they're just great.

I mean, take away anything from me, cut off my arms, whatever you want to do. But don't hurt my children. Many of you, I'm sure, feel the same way.

Let me ask you a question. They're the most important one of the most important things in your life. How many hours have you spent studying the word of God only to know what he says about how you're to raise your children? No, I don't I don't mean going to a class or reading a book.

I mean, this is something I mean, if you got hired at a job and they were going to pay you this phenomenal amount of money, but you had to literally consume this manual and know it backwards and forwards, every rule on every page. I am sure, sir, you've had to do it before. You take that entire manual, you lock yourself away in a room, you study every page until you've got it down.

Why, man, I'm going to get a great job for doing this. What about your children? How often have you locked yourself in a room studying scripture and studying scripture and reading wise men and fellowshiping and asking, what am I? What is the will of our master with regard to this? Or with regard to your wife. Or your husband or knowing that you're going to give an account for every every moment of every day, how does the Lord tell me to spend my time? You see, we talk about lordship.

We really think it's kind of just a general I think that in my mind, in my heart, that he is. But when it comes into the practical way in which you live, what? What's there? You see, this is why I so I don't always agree with the Puritans, but this is why I so admire them. This is what they attempted to do to find out what was God's will in every aspect of their life.

And so this is what he's calling us to do. You see, I can talk about missions and I'm going to. But you see, there's a deeper issue here.

It's not coming to a church and getting fired up about missions. It's not hearing something that will get you excited about missions. It is creating in you a style of life that that just flows over into every other aspect of what God has called you to be and do.

And it begins with lordship. There's a thing about lordship that's absolutely wonderful. And there's a thing about slavery that's absolutely wonderful.

And what is that? If I am a slave, a slave, my concerns are dramatically reduced. They really are. My concerns are dramatically reduced.

You know, really, I only have one concern as a slave. What did my master command me to do? But my master, his concerns are greatly amplified. For he is the one who has to clothe me and feed me and house me and protect me.

Now, we all live in this world and we all have jobs and we go to them and we work and we must be responsible. But is it not true that the great majority of even passionate, sincere Christians, they are more concerned and spend more emotional and physical and spiritual energy on the very things that are the concerns of their lord? Instead of concerning themselves with the one thing their lord told them to do, we think about where will we live? What will we eat? What if we get in trouble? Who will protect us? How do I take care of this and take care of that? Running back and forth, doing all sorts of things. When, in fact, as slaves.

We have one responsibility. And that is the doing of the will of our master. It has all sorts of interesting ramifications.

I remember one time my car broke down and I conveniently prayed, Lord, your car is broke. You must fix it. It is belonging to him.

Don't say he's your lord and then everything in your life depends upon you and you're so busy, concerned with the things of you just to survive that you have no time to concern yourself with the will of God. But press hard into the will of God and let God take care of everything else. You say, well, what are you saying? Don't go to work.

No part of going to work is the will of God. But you don't go to work now just to support yourself. You don't go to work just to take care of your family.

You go to work to do the will of God in the work to advance his kingdom. So the first thing we have to understand about missions is it has all to do with submission to the sovereignty of God. And he says this in verse seven.

Well, he tells the priest, he said, you have despised my name in verse six, but the priest say, how have we despised your name? You are presenting defiled food upon my altar. But you say, how have we defiled you? And that you say the table of the Lord is despised. But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is that not evil? Now, here's some of the things that I want you to notice.

First of all, do you realize that we never realize when we're wrong? Most of the things that we truly recognize in our life to be problem areas, we work at it. But every once in a while, someone will come to us and say, like a wife, my wife will come to me and say, Paul, this, this and this. And I don't see it.

And the moment I don't see it, I have a tendency to dismiss it. No, you're just wrong. But if you study other people, you begin to see that they are blind to the things that are wrong about them.

And if good people, good Christian people, genuinely converted people can walk through this world and be blind to things that are wrong about them, then so can I and so can you. And that is why we need the word of God. And that is why we need the body of Christ to come to us and speak a word to save us from our blind spots.

In Peru, we say salvame de las aguas mansas, de las aguas bravas me salvo yo. And what does that mean to save me from the shallow water? I'll save myself from the deep water. And the whole point is save me from what I cannot see.

Save me from the things that I think are not problems, but you obviously can see the danger. And that's what he's doing here. He's coming to a group of priests who are doing stuff.

I mean, they're they're offering offerings. They've got fires lit. They're baking bread.

They're cleaning the temple. They're doing all sorts of things. And he says, you despise my name.

And they're going, no, wait, wait, just wait a minute. We come to church every Sunday. We mean we despise your name.

I mean, as far as people go, I'm I'm I'm pretty dedicated. There you go again. You judge yourselves by yourselves.

And that's not wise. The standard is not other people, the standard is the word of God and even more powerful, the standard is Jesus Christ. You see, you can fall into a religious lull in which even in this church, you love the Lord, you would die for Christ because he would strengthen you in that trial.

You would die for him. You're serious about following the Lord. But even Sunday and Wednesday begins to be sort of just bare bone, raw obedience, singing things and and not even knowing what you're singing.

You know, I'm not describing you. I'm describing me. These are struggles I have.

So you must have them, too, because I'm not any greater nor any less than you. You see, they were doing a lot of religious stuff. They were doing a lot of right stuff.

But the Lord comes to them and says, you've despised my name. And they're going, you have got to be kidding when someone comes to you like today or someone comes you personally and says. You need to be really careful.

That your religiosity doesn't just become a dead tradition and that coming to this church doesn't just become going through the motions. And that talking about missions isn't just something you do once a year. Don't get offended.

Don't let the hair on your neck stand up to smooth it back down. I'll never forget I was preaching one time and boy, did I preach, man, it was a barn burner. And when I was coming down from the platform, a dear friend of mine was coming up, an older man, and he met me and he said this, Paul, you preach the truth.

Today. You did. And son, you preached it in the flesh and you need to get down on your knees right now and ask God to forgive you and then get back up and ask the people to forgive you.

He saved my life. He saved my life. I was blind when he first said it.

I was angry, but he was right and he saved my life. And that's what's going on here. That is the work of the prophet in the Old Testament.

He doesn't just say mean things because he's got a critical spirit and he wants to be mean. No, he is saving our lives. When Christ came to the church in Laodicea, he did not come to beat them over the head with a rod.

He came to save their church. So listen, when anyone comes to you, listen. But judge wisely, do not believe it just because they say it, because there are a lot of mean spirited, critical people who will say things about you that are not true.

But at the same time, listen, and if you do not agree, go bring bring someone else and ask. Go to the elders, go to someone who knows you best and say, could this be true about me? If it is, then then then help me. I want to repent.

You see, he's coming to a group of priests again. These guys are doing things. But in the end, he's going to tell them, I just wish you'd close the church doors.

I don't like what you're doing in there, that meant, you know, that mentality says we got to keep the church open at all costs. That's not true. Many places that are called churches ought to be closed down.

Because it would keep them from continuing to sin against the Lord. Now, he says, you've despised my name and they say, how? Well, first of all, you call me Lord, but but you don't live as though I was your Lord. And we go back to what I've already said, you call me Lord, but you don't even honor me as you would honor your father.

You call me Lord, but you don't even honor me as you would honor your employer, your master. You would surely discover the things that he most desired. You would surely get to work to do all the things that were his will.

But you call me Lord and you minister to me and you do things in my name, but not according to my will. You see something about the Lord, you know, you read the book of Leviticus, it's the book that keeps everyone from reading through the entire Bible. You just stop there or you go to these some other

descriptions of how he, you know, made the ark.

And you're like, OK, enough of numbers. And then there's the thing over in Revelation measuring Jerusalem. Then there's all the specific things about the temple in the Old Testament.

And I think all of that. Maybe teaching us that God is a God of detail and he has a detailed will. He does, and you need to know his will in detail, not just in general.

Remember one time my father told me, he said, no, we were cutting hay and he was going off to work and he said, I want you to rake a certain field. Now, I didn't hear him right, so I went and raked all the fields, as a matter of fact, I raked every field but the one I was supposed to. Now, I carried out his will.

My heart was going in that direction, but it was not according to the detail he had given me. And it caused great harm because I raked a lot of well, most of you aren't from a farm, but I raked a lot of wet hay up and that's no good. So I want you when you talk about the Lord being Lord, I want you to get specific young people.

You know, Jesus is Lord. What does he talk to you about dating? I can tell you what he talks to you about, absolutely nothing, because dating is unbiblical, but of course, that's another sermon. And you'll hear me say that, young person, you go, well, I never heard of such a thing.

I said, see, I told you, you're doing it. I'm pointing out a blind spot and instead of even going to scripture, you're just backing up all grumpy. Find out what his will is specifically, not in a legalistic sort of manner, not in making inferences and heaping things upon people that God didn't even command, but find out what his will is.

Now, another way in which they did that, verse eight, he says, but when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Now, what's going on here? They simply were not giving him their best. They were giving him leftovers. Leftovers, we do that.

We almost have this mentality of, well, almost no one in the world is serving God and God is almost like this little beggar on a corner with a tin cup and no one's putting any coins in it. So if I go by and at least throw in twenty five cents or fifty cents or a dollar, it's better than everyone else. And you don't realize he owns everything.

You give to him your best. Not as bragging rights, but because he is worthy, but it is so hard to do in this day and age. Why? The psychiatrist, whom I do not agree with on anything except one statement he made, which was wrong, but at least there's some teaching in it.

He said this hurry is not of the devil. Hurry is the devil. Busyness is not of the devil.

It is the devil. And I believe in a personal devil. But the point is this.

Most of you, your lives. Are so filled with unnecessary things that you can't even begin to think about doing missions, you can't even begin to think about serving God in the context of this local church because you are so busy, you wear yourself out doing everything and with your last breath. You serve the Lord.

I was sharing with someone my my little boy, Ian, all my children are little. I have six year old, four year old and a eight month old. I should be their grandfather.

And that's another story. But I prayed, oh, God, when Ian was going to be born, oh, God. Please don't let him be an athlete, please.

So he was he has childhood asthma and flat footed. Now, I don't know if that has anything to do with my praying. Please don't let him be an athlete.

And you say, why athletics builds character. OK, well, let's just follow that through. You know, they don't teach logic anymore in schools, do they? Let's follow that through.

Athletics build character. First premise, second premise. Therefore, those who participate longest in athletics will be the men of most character in our society.

Conclusion, therefore, the men in the NFL and the NBA are the men of greatest character and virtue in our culture. So it doesn't work. Now, I'm not against athletics, but here's the point I'm trying to make.

They go to school, they get out of school, they go to soccer, they go to football, they go to ballet, they go here, they go there, they go everywhere. You're absolutely worn out. Your checkbook is screaming for deliverance.

The kids are all over the place. They're not with their dad. They're not with their mom.

And at the end, no one can be in church and then home debt. Because you didn't realize that when your mom started out and your dad started out, they lived in a little thing and made their own furniture out of truck tires. But you got to start out at least where they're at are farther.

And so you're so in debt and you're working all the time. You can't do missions. Don't talk about missions.

You have got to restructure your entire life under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Then you can start talking about missions and in the context, first of the family and then the home and then the church, the local church, this place right here. And then the world, you see, that's what I'm getting at.

I could come in here today and give you all these stories about missions and get you psyched up about missions. But the fact of the matter is there has to be a restructuring of the entire foundation of your life so that you can constantly be on mission, constantly be free to do the will of your master. Constantly be free to spend time with your wife, constantly be free to care for your children.

Instead of working and working and working because you're under so much debt. Because you've got so many things in your life that are not necessary and do not make you happy and because you're running your children all over the world so that they'll be great in this world and have no time to serve God and they have no example because you're too wore out to serve him yourself. You see, now you understand, like Ravenhill used to say, now you understand why I preach in a lot of churches once because it's calling for an entire restructuring in our life to turn everything toward Christ.

Everything. Now, he says, offer it to your governor, would he be pleased with you? Now, let's say that I'm the boss and you all work for me in my plant. And you're my employees, so I come in today and I hand out a blank sheet of paper to every one of you in this room and I say, now, in the first half of the front sheet, I want you to write out your job description.

And then the second half of the front sheet, I want you to write out the goals you had for this year. The first half of the back page, I want you to explain to me, since we're at the end of the year, how those goals

were accomplished. And then the last part of the page, I want you to write out your goals for this coming year.

And so I come in the next day and I say, OK, let me see your sheet. You hand it to me and it's blank. And I go, well, what's your job description? And you say, well, you know, I really don't know, but I can promise you this, boss, every time the doors of this plant are open, I'm going to be here.

OK, what were your goals this last year? Well, I didn't have any, but I can promise you this, every time the doors of this plant were opened up, I was here. OK, well, what are your plans and goals for next year? I mean, what do you what do you plan on accomplishing? Well, I don't really plan on accomplishing anything, boss, but I promise you this, every time the doors to this plant is open up, I'm going to be here. Do you know that 80 percent of the 20 percent of the people in a typical biblical church do 80 percent of the work and 80 percent of the people do almost nothing? But bless God, every time the doors of the church are open, they're here.

Now, men, as you lead your family, let me ask you a question. What. What are your biblical goals this year? What's your purpose statement? What are you striving towards this year in your Christian life as a slave of God? Well.

What are they? How did last year go? How much time was invested? First of all, men, in your wife, how much time was invested teaching, loving, discipling? How much time was invested in your children? What were the goals? What are your plans for this year? How are you going to overcome obstacles that were last year were a problem? How are you going to keep and in church? What's your gifts? What are they? How are they practically being carried out in the context of this local body? What are you doing? Is are your gifts. So used here in this congregation that if you didn't show up, it would be at a loss. Or could you not show up and it wouldn't matter.

You see, man, this look. I'm not telling you this because I've got it down. I'm telling you this because I need to hear it.

And I suppose if I do, you do. Do you see how generally we just go about serving this great master? If he were to come to us today and say. In my providence, I have given you these gifts.

How have you developed them, fanned the flame and how have you used them this last year? In my providence, I have given you this woman. She is my daughter. Just what have you done with her this year? How has she prospered because of you? I, in my providence, have given you these children.

Tell me the hours you have invested in them. No, I don't care about soccer. Soccer is not going to affect eternity, nor is ballet, nor is straight A's on their card.

Or getting into the best university, talking about higher things, their character, their conformity to godliness. And the man says, well, we homeschool. No, your wife homeschooled.

And you take the credit for it. That hurt, didn't it? And the wife is going, you go, you go, you go. Do you see? Specifically.

Oh, you know, I don't want you to be mission minded. I want you to be biblical. Everything is mission, everything.

And then he says in verse nine, they say, but now will you not entreat God's favor that he may be gracious to us? No, no. No, I won't. So what the prophet is saying, and even if I did, it wouldn't help you.

You see, there is a place where Christians must go and mom can't go with them and dad can't go with them and husband can't go with them and wife can't go with them. Children can't go with them. There is a place, sir.

Sister, young person, child, there's a place you must go and no one can go with you. No one need go with you. There's no room for community in this place where you must go.

You must go before the Lord. Yourself. You must go.

Search my heart, oh, Lord. Show me my ways. It's such a beautiful thing to know, even when as some of you are sensing right now, oh, I have failed in so many things.

Isn't it a wonderful thing to know that you can go be forgiven, start all over again, ask for wisdom and you'll give it without reproach and begin anew. Isn't it exciting to know that the will of God is not just a cloud? It is a detailed thing. And you don't have to just walk around in a fog all your life, not knowing where you're going.

Isn't it neat that you can know how to obey him by following his will and you need to go. You need to be alone with the Lord. You need to get before him.

When I was called to preach, I went in and talked to James Weaver. And as far as I know, I've never met a man with as much power of God on his life in preaching. He was terrifying.

I mean, you didn't want to look at him because you knew when he looked in your eyes, he could read everything that was about you. And I walked in there and I said, Pastor Weaver. And he talked like this, said, yes, boy, you could call someone a boy back then, they didn't get mad.

Yes, boy. And I said, God's called me to preach. He said, can you be alone? And I thought that he meant if I really preach the truth, people are going to hate me and I'll be alone.

Well, that's happened, but that's not what he meant. What he meant was this when everybody else. Is doing a group hug, going on a retreat and singing Kumbaya together, can you be alone with God? Sir, brother in Christ, above everything else, you must be a man alone with God.

You must be a man who belongs to God. You must be a man who tarries with God. Sister, you must be a woman before the God whom you serve.

You must be alone with him, young person. You must get out of all the noise and confusion and get alone with God. And a Bible that has nothing to do with making the Bible clear to teens, don't get a teen Bible, don't read a teen magazine, just get a Bible and be alone with God and allow the word of God to speak to you alone with God.

That's what we need now. He says, oh, that there were one among you who would shut the gates that you would that you might not uselessly kindle fire on my altar. I am not pleased with you, says the Lord of hosts, nor will I accept an offering from you.

He is saying just shut down church. Just shut it off. Why? You're not coming in here with hearts aflame for me.

Now, let's stop right here before the devil starts doing a work. I did not come in here this morning with a heart aflame for him. I do not want to heap upon you something that I myself cannot carry.

I am not saying that if you get in the front doors and your heart is dull, that you just need to go home. No, this is the place you need to be. This is the place you need to be if your heart is dull, but when you come in here, not with some sort of beating yourself, not self-affliction, not a morbid introspection.

But when you come in here and you know, Lord, my heart is dull. Then say, Lord, my heart is dull. Go to a brother in Christ before the service and say, my heart is dull.

You see, there's a sense in which, yes, just as I am, walk in those doors back there just as you are. But when you come in here, just as you are, get some brothers to help you and pray with you and struggle through it and then come in here with a humble and broken heart that he will not despise and say, Lord, my heart is not aflame for you. That is true.

But I struggle with this and I sing to you because you're worthy. Bless me, help me that I might bless thee in return. You see, but don't just come in here just and go through the motions.

You can be as you can be as messed up as anything, but if you'll be broken about it and refuse to go through the motions, God esteems it. Do you see the difference? There's a tremendous difference. I mean, you know, some of you walked in here this morning, look like something the cat drug in.

You got thirty seven feet of snow out there. It's been difficult. It's cold.

The kids, you had to smack them several times and almost dislocated your shoulder reaching in the back seat. You got mad at your husband because he argued with you the entire way to church, and then when they started the praise songs, he went like this and you just started elbowing him, looking at him. You come in and this is the one thing that I hold to more than anything else in my Christian life, a broken and a contrite heart he will not despise.

And so if I'm. Coming into this place. I can go to brothers and sisters in Christ, I can go to my wife, I can go to my elders, not not every week, just dragging on everyone, but just saying, pray with me, I just want my heart.

I want more fire. Pray with your wife, pray with your husband, pray with your children, we are needy people. He's not saying don't come to me unless you're perfect.

What he's saying is don't come and quote my scripture as some blank wrote piece of literature. He's saying, don't come in and just mouth the songs. If you come in and your heart's not come in broken.

And asking me for breath and saying out of obedience. You see, but I want you to look at something, oh, that there were one among you who would shut the gates that you might not uselessly kindle fire on my altar. What is the thing you most despise? I think one of the things that makes makes people more angry than anything else is when they're not appreciated.

I have women come in all the time, office, you know, men. My wife doesn't appreciate me. My husband doesn't appreciate me.

Person does something in the church, they didn't appreciate me. Someone forgot my birthday. They didn't appreciate me.

It hurts. And here's God, you come in. And it's just this.

My son died for you, don't let your religion turn into a tradition, don't let it happen. Be afraid of it because there is some worship God does not receive. So be very careful, he says in verse 11, this is the main point of our text, he says, but from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, my name will be great among the nations.

Now, let's talk about missions for a moment, and this is an exciting thing. This is a privilege and it's a responsibility. I want you to look at something in most mission conferences.

You have a missionary get up there and he talks about how lost the world is and how God wants to save the world and God can't do anything about it because his hands and feet are tied, because we are his hands and we are his feet. And if we don't go, someone, well, it's just not going to hear. Well, I want you to know for someone to hear someone has to go, but I also want you to know.

God will get it done. God is not an impotent deity seated upon some. Paper mache throne with a little crown on his head, wringing his hand, saying, I want to do so much in the world, but no one will help me.

That is not the case, he is Lord, and I can tell you this right now, that the name of God is going to be great among the nations from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, he is going to do it now. Church, he has invited you to participate. In the joy of the harvest, he has invited you to participate in the labor of the sowing.

This is one of the greatest privileges given to the children of God, and you can participate. But I want you to know that if you do not. He will bring deliverance from another means.

But you and your house will be judged. Remember what he told Esther, Esther, for such a time as this, you've been raised up. But if you don't go in there, I want you to know God will bring about the deliverance of his people.

Even if you don't go in there, God will bring about the deliverance of his people. But Esther, you will miss out on the greatest of opportunities to be an instrument of the Lord God Almighty and his redemptive purposes on the earth. In Peru, we have a saying to be this for the light is got this.

The only reason you're alive is because air is free. And what that basically means is you just live without a purpose. We're going to talk about purpose tonight, especially with regard to men and their wives and their families.

We're going to talk about purpose and missions. But look what's happening here. Yesterday, I was nine.

Today, I'm forty six. Tomorrow I will be eighty five. Life goes like a vapor.

Everything that is built is destroyed, everything made straight and turns back to crooked. There is vanity for the sons of men, but then Christ comes, he's risen from the dead, he tears the lid off of the grave and then fills it with light. We now have purpose.

We have a reason to glorify God on the face of the earth by taking the gospel to every creature. He will do it, it is not a vain job, it is not a vain task, he will do it and desires to accomplish it through you. God uses preachers.

Churches and missionaries as a handicap makes it more difficult for him and he gets more glory, but he desires to use you, he desires to use you. I remember after the the terrible war in Peru, civil war, the Maoist, the Shining Path, the Peruvian government, twenty three thousand Peruvians killed, churches destroyed, Christians martyred, bombs blowing up everywhere. It was horrible.

So many times the government told us embassy and things, missionaries need to leave, you got to leave, you got to get out, you got to go, you're going to die, you're going to die. It's bad, it's bad, but you know what? I discovered something through all that, those of us who didn't leave when the war was over. We could rejoice in a way that those who left could not rejoice, we could dance in the streets, we could sing, we have overcome because we stayed and participated in the battle.

On that day when all nations stand before him and we see a redeemed people that almost cannot be numbered. Those men and women and children who have died as martyrs for Jesus Christ, what a day that will be. What a day it will be for those.

Who left houses and lands and this and that and everything to serve their Lord on the foreign field. And what a day it will be. For those like you who helped put them there and cared for them.

And prayed for them. You see, missions is a very simple thing for me, I'm not big on church growth or missiology. Missions is a very simple thing.

It has to do with preaching the gospel, first of all, missions is not about sending missionaries, it's about sending truth through missionaries. Because you can send out missionaries and have nothing but a baptized Peace Corps. Missions is primarily about proclaiming truth through an incarnate witness.

But then this, there are two ministries in missions. Now, you know that Jesus gave the Great Commission, go into all the world and preach the gospel, make disciples of all the nations. Now, do you think that that those commissions in the New Testament, do you think that they have some special thing to do with missionaries? Do you think that those Great Commissions are speaking to missionaries in a special way that they're not speaking to you? That is wrong.

Those Great Commissions have as much to do with you as any missionary that's ever gone out into the field and you will be just as responsible for those commissions as any missionary who was called to go and refused. The only difference, it is not a difference of passion. It is not.

It is a difference of ministry and missions can be divided up in two ways. One, you either go down into the well. Or two, you hold the rope for those who go down.

Those are the two great ministries and missions. Now, I want you to picture this in your mind that we lower a two hundred and twenty five. You lower a two hundred and twenty five pound man down a well.

On a rope. Now, he's hanging on and climbing down with all his might. What are his hands going to look like? They're going to be scarred, they're going to be bruised, they're going to be cut, they're going to be scraped.

But what are your hands going to look like? They're going to have the same bruises, the same cuts, the same scars. It takes just as much sacrifice to lower him down in the well as it is to go down. So you either have one or the other part in the Great Commission.

You either go down in the well yourself as a missionary. Or you hold the rope for those who go down. Either way, there's going to be scars on your hands.

Now, show me your hands. Where are your scars? How much has missions cost you? How much has it hurt you? How much has it taken away from you to see the gospel preached to every nation? Show me your hands. You see, it's not just missionaries who bear scars, it's those who hold them there.

There have been times when I was on the mission field, I'll never forget it one day. I'd heard this before. It had never happened to me.

But one day I was really going through trials and everything. And I woke up, I was a single missionary. I was working with street kids in Lima during the war.

And I was walking down to where I always met with these street kids. And all of a sudden it was like. Infused with power, confidence, joy, strength, it was absolutely phenomenal.

I stopped on the sidewalk and I just was just unbelievable. And I realized at that moment someone has been on their knees much for me today. Someone has asked the Father for a special gift for me by name.

Missionaries. There are missionaries all over the place. There are more missionaries struggling in poverty than there are people who are willing.

To give up their candy bar money for a month and support them. Missionaries, there's missionaries all over the place. Countless.

We've got all the missionaries we need. What's lacking is someone who will lower them down in the well. That's what's lacking.

Now, let me close by saying this, I lived in Peru for about 11 years and the Peruvians used to laugh. They would say this, that they prayed for me and even brought me things at time because I was the only missionary that was actually poorer than they were. I have lived under a legalism that is not recommendable.

A Catholic piety that has nothing to do with scripture. I have lived where I had one, two pairs of blue jeans and both of them had more holes than cloth. Would not buy shoes for myself.

Eat a meager meal, give away everything, absolutely everything, impoverish myself for the sake of Christ. I did that. God used it, part of it was of him, part of it wasn't biblical.

I've lived on both sides of the coin. God has, as Paul said, he has prospered me. I know how to live with prosperity, having a home, a car.

And I know how to live in poverty, having nothing. What am I telling you you need to do? You need to be biblical. And apart from an exceptional, unusual calling of God, now that I live in the United States, this is the way I look at things.

These are the words that I use to control much of my life with regard to my economy. These are the words that are acceptable, simplicity, frugality, quality, excellence, even elegance and beauty. These are the words that I must avoid luxury.

Extravagance and sensuality. And complexity. Now, I want you to think for a moment, whenever we're talking about missions, people usually walk out thinking, you know, I just need to give away everything and we need to do.

You may, if God's telling you to, you may. And if you feel that God's telling you to give away absolutely everything, please first come and talk to your elders. But what if we just lived wisely? What if we just lived wisely? What if we simply did away with all the things that we all recognize don't make us happy anyways? What if we just live biblically? I mean, what if a church just said we're going to have a gigantic garage sale and sell everything that we never use? It probably put a multitude of indigenous missionaries on the field for a year.

What if we stop doing all the crazy things at Christmas and birthdays that we do that ruin our children and cause them not to be able to appreciate anything? Why not live our lives? Not impoverishing ourselves to look like the third world, but living biblically so that the third world might also come to know that those who serve the Lord. I've never seen the righteous forsaken, the seed begging for bread. I'm not calling this church to some wild, pietistic throwing away of everything in your life so that you can talk about how spiritual you are.

I am talking about becoming biblical and living in a spiritual manner, recognizing that God does bless his children. But at the same time, we are called to be good stewards and not waste. And use the surplus for the benefit of extending the gospel throughout the world, beginning with here.

Beginning with here. Let's pray. Father, I come before you and ask that you would work in the hearts of your people, Lord, that they would take truth.

And examine their lives in light of it, the Lord, that they would be wise not to listen to the accusations of the devil. Or to put themselves under man made inferences and interpretations rather than just the simple commandments of God. That they would be free, the freest people in the world, and yet at the same time, slaves to a most perfect, a most perfect master.

In Jesus name, Amen.

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