

The Great Privilege of Being Part of the Great Commission

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer emphasizes the vital connection between honoring God and effectively participating in the Great Commission through genuine worship and service.

Duration: 36:16

Scripture: Malachi 1:6, Malachi 1:10, Matthew 5:4-7, Revelation 2:5

Topics: "Great Commission", "Sacrificial Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of offering God our best and giving Him the honor and respect He deserves. He challenges the congregation to examine their lives and consider what they have truly sacrificed for their faith and for the mission of spreading the Gospel. The preacher uses the analogy of missions, stating that everyone is called to either go down into the well as a missionary or hold the rope for those who go down. He emphasizes that both roles should leave scars on our hands, symbolizing the cost and sacrifice involved. The sermon also references the book of Malachi, specifically chapter one, verse six, where God questions the priests who have despised His name and not shown Him the honor He deserves.

Transcript

I am absolutely amazed at the things that God is doing among you and just the spirit of God that's here in this church and speaking with pastor and leaders and it's just such a great, great encouragement, a wonderful encouragement to know that God is working around the world and working in this church, in this place. But a warning also, and it's this, you may be in a church where God is working, but is God working in you as an individual? You may be in a place where God is teaching truth to people, but is God teaching truth to you? To you? Well, this is about missions this weekend and I'm teaching on missions. On Friday night I taught on the gospel of Jesus Christ because there are so many conferences dealing with missions and yet I feel that missions has lost its message, that we've become strategists, missiologists, and we have forgotten that first and foremost we are theologians and prophets and that our task is not to do missions, our task is to take the truth, God's truth revealed in God's word to the world, that more than being biblically sensitive or more than being culturally sensitive to the places where we go, we're to be biblically sensitive and rather than being pragmatic and doing what we think will work, we are to do what's right, whether it works or not.

This morning I want to talk about, I want us to go to the book of Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, and in this first service I'm going to teach from Malachi and the second service I'll be teaching from some other place. It will be in 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 respects as 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 sacrifice, 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.

For 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. Let's go the Lord in prayer. Father, I come before you in the name of your son, and I pray that you would get great glory for yourself out of the things that are said here this morning and out of the obedience of your people.

And I pray that Christ would be honored. Lord, I pray that you would work in this place, not now and not simply tomorrow, but throughout all the years that pass, that this church would go to greater and greater truth, greater and greater devotion, always reforming, always changing, always seeking to be more pleasing to you. No, Lord, we're not unaware that even here among us today are those who do not know you, those who do not claim to be Christians and those who do and yet do not know you, those who are not on a church role and yet those who are and both do not know you.

So, Lord, that you would take your word, even this passage and use it in the hearts of men in Jesus name. Amen. You say, Brother Paul, what is this hard, difficult passage have to do with missions? It has to do with missions in absolutely every way, because you see, the problem today in in America and in our churches is not a lack of zeal for missions.

The problem is much greater, a lack of zeal for God and for the glory of God. If you are zealous for the things of God, if you realize what has been done, the purchase that's been made for you in order to save you from your sin and the wrath of God, if you realize the greatness of the one who sits upon the throne who created the earth and one day will bring it to an end, if you realize that absolutely everything in this temporal sphere is dust and rot, then you will begin to have a zeal for God. And when you have a zeal for God, you'll have a zeal for missions.

Our own lives can so easily testify against us. Our own thoughts on the day of judgment, the Bible says, will either defend or accuse us. I don't need to be a prophet or the son of a prophet to know what your God is.

I only have to watch your life. When Jesus Christ is just something you do at the beginning of the week, but yet throughout your life, you're a practical atheist. I know who your God is, and it is not the one who is the one true God.

When you have just enough Christianity to make you moral and comfortable in the South, I know who your God is. And if I could look into your mind and see what occupies your mind, I will know what your God is. Yesterday, many people came to this town to worship a ball.

Many people live in this town that worship cars and things of steel and wheels and horns and whistles. Even people in this congregation today who will praise him here, but not praise him at all throughout the week. This is where you get all your religion done.

Then you ought to be afraid, because what we have here is God exposing the hearts of men and teaching them in order to make them right. Now he goes on in verse six and he says, 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 despised my name.

Now, one of the things that we have to realize, it's very hard for us to understand this passage because so much of the foundations of our society have fallen apart. We as a people show very little respect for authority. We show very little respect as a country for our leaders.

And you can say, well, they deserve little respect, but nonetheless we are called to respect them. We have little respect for all types of authority, little respect for elders, little respect for parents, little respect for those who are placed over us to guide us and lead us. But in a time when this was written, it was a known truth that a son should honor his father.

It is something woven into the fabric of society. It is something that is woven even into our own conscience that we should show respect to the one who gives us life. We should honor him.

And that a servant, the very position that he holds, demands that he honors his master. There is a sense that when you are recipients as a son from the life of your father, or you're a recipient of the good that your master does to you, that you owe something in return. It was well recognized in Israel that these are the way things, this is the way things should be.

Now, he says, knowing all this, then where is my honor? Where is my respect? You see, you will draw your next breath only because God gives it. Your heart will beat only because He gives it its rhythm and its power. Whatever good thing in your life did not come from the sweat of your brow, the brilliance of your mind, or the work of your own hands.

It came from Him. Everything you have, even if you are here today and you are the vilest and most wicked God hating man on the planet, if there is any good whatsoever in your life, it comes from the very one you hate. And so if we are to show honor to a father and we are to show respect to a master, then what about the Lord of hosts, the Lord who is, as the Puritans used to say, he is not the the mayor of some small village or the governor of some tiny province.

This one against whom you are so nonchalant and apathetic is the Lord of hosts who needs nothing from your hand, even at this very moment. Thousands upon thousands and millions upon millions of flaming creatures with such glory, if one of them were to appear in this room right now, it would strike us all dead with its beauty. Millions, countless of them serve Him constantly, praise Him constantly.

He needs nothing from you. So Him calling you to Himself and Him asking you to come and serve is not a need to be fulfilled. He's offering you a privilege, a privilege.

The greatest act of judgment that God can pour out on a people is being poured out on America. And it is this. He's taken away the knowledge of God and He's closed the mouth of those who are supposed to be speaking for Him so that little boys lead us with their silly little ideas.

And we like it that way because we really do want our best life now. But God, the true God, He acknowledges who He is. And so does all of heaven.

And He offers you the privilege to know Him, to enter into a relationship with Him and to follow Him with everything. He goes on and he says this. Notice in verse six that he is speaking to the priests who despise his name.

A priest. What is the purpose of a priest? The priest, the Levitical priesthood, they received the greatest privilege of all of Israel, of all the tribes of Israel. They were granted the greatest privilege of them all.

Sure, let Issachar and others go out and gain great wealth. Let Judah be strong and mighty with muscle and battle and sword and steel. But the Levites were given the greatest of all gift, and that is the presence of God.

But isn't it amazing? We're just like them, aren't we? We would rather have the wealth of Issachar and the muscle of Judah and the prosperity that we know to be our own. We'd even rather have missions and ministry than to have God, just God. They were granted the greatest privilege anyone has ever known prior to you because you have been granted a greater privilege.

For in the New Covenant, they are all priests of God. For in the New Covenant, in every one dwells the Spirit of God. In the New Covenant, everyone is allowed to come as near as he desires.

Now, the priests here say this. They say, how have we despised your name? Isn't it amazing? We never know what's wrong with us. We never know what's wrong with us.

We can so easily spot the tiniest error in the life of another man. But we ourselves can commit the greatest atrocities against God, the most heinous crimes, and be totally, totally ignorant to it. Until one day, God reveals in mercy Himself, His law, His will, and we are struck down in our heart and we realized, oh, what have I done? What have I become? They despised His name and they didn't even know it.

You and I do the same. Whenever anything fills our mind more than God, your houses and your homes, your cars and your land, your clothing with expensive emblems on them that you think about so much, Christmas that has been stolen away by a fat elf called Santa, all the things, your hobbies and golf clubs and guns and bows and tree stands and balls that bounce and wobble, all the things that mean so much to you, only tell everyone one thing. Oh, you priests who have been called to know Him, how you despise His name.

I'm not saying this to hurt you. I'm saying it because it's true. Were you as excited about this missions conference as you were the football game yesterday? They say, how have we despised your name? He said, 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 despised. They said, we never said that. We never said the table of the Lord was despised.

We would never do anything like that. We're good Christian people. We would never say the Lord's not number one.

We would never say that this or that is more important than God. We would never say that. He says, you say it not with your mouth, but with your life.

He says, you say it this way. But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? What does he demand from us? Everything I know about these silly little evangelists that say, give me your hand and give Jesus your heart. I know about these silly little preachers that say, come forward and pray this prayer.

It only take five minutes. They're lying to you. This is what it'll cost you your life, your life.

Jesus promises you two things, a cross to die on and eternal life. He's everything or he's nothing. The saddest place on the earth is the biblical south, where everyone has just enough to religion to send them straight to hell, to soothe their religious conscience and not know that they're despising the Lord and that they have so many idols in their life that the Lord is not even first or second or third or fourth.

It is not giving unto the Lord everything, everything. What would you have me to do, O Lord? Teach me your ways, O Lord. Who do I have in heaven but thee? Who do I have on earth but thee? What am I but a speck of dust, breathing holy breath, if indeed you have converted me? How then shall we live, was the question of Francis Schaeffer.

Knowing who he is, what we were in our filth and our sin, what he has done through the cross of Jesus Christ and what discipleship demands, how then shall we live? I know we are a man-centered people and we think it's all about us, but we are wrong. I love what the old Dutch Reformed theologian Abraham Kuyper used to say. Facing the humanism and the man-centered religion that was so prevalent even in his day, he stood before a group of men and he said this, I want you men to know what Jesus Christ is going to do when he comes back.

He is going to stretch forth his hand and grasp everything that is and he is going to say mine, mine, mine, mine, mine. It's all mine. It's always been mine.

It was created for me, for my glory and for my good pleasure. And the only ones that are going to enter into the heavens are the ones that have realized that from the start. It's all about him.

For a lot in America today, Jesus, if I see one more Southern Baptist church with a sign out front that says salvation, so easy a caveman can do it, I think I'm going to be thrown in jail. Blasphemy! So easy a caveman can do it. So difficult is our salvation that only God can make it possible.

Do you think he's a flu shot? I could talk to most Southern Baptists and talk to them about salvation. They'd say, don't worry about me. I done did that.

You done did what? Well, I took care of that a long time ago. If you're not taking care of it today, you didn't take care of it a long time ago. The evidence that you repented unto salvation one time ago, a long time ago, is you are still repenting today and growing in repentance.

The evidence that you truly believed unto salvation many years ago is that you're still believing today and even more. And the evidence that he changed your life is that he's still doing it. If he's not still doing it, he

didn't do it to start off with.

He says, don't offer me this stuff. We almost believe, since so many people seem to be ignoring the idea of God, that he's like some little beggar with a tin cup standing stranded on a corner somewhere. And if we at least throw our dime in, it's a lot better than anyone else.

God is not poor. Tozer said this, and I agree. If every man on earth became blind, it would not diminish the glory of the sun and the moon and the stars.

And if every person on earth turned atheist, it would not diminish the glory of God. He has no need of you. As a matter of fact, realize this.

Satan and the angels fell and God sent them no savior and they will go to hell. Our father, Adam, fell. And I want you to know if God had never sent us a savior and allowed the whole human race to go straight to hell, he would still be just and still be glorious and still be loving.

You say, well, I've never heard such a thing. Yes, you have in this church. You just haven't been listening.

He says, don't offer me this. And then he says, go offer it to your governor. Basically, in modern day phraseology, it would be this.

Go offer your employer what you offer God. See how long you last. Offer even acquaintances what you offer God and see how long they remain your friends.

Offer God what offer your family what you offer God and see how long you have a family. You see missions. We can get excited about missions, but do you witness to the guy sitting down beside you? Get all excited about doing things in the world, but are you doing what you're supposed to be doing here? Because missions begins here.

If I were to hand out a piece of paper right now and I were to say to each one of you on the first part of that sheet, I want you to write down your calling and your ministry in this church. Then on the second part of the first page, I would want you to write down everything that you've accomplished this year through your local church serving and ministering. And then on the back to write out your plans for next year on how you're going to give your life away in the context of this local church to serve Christ and the nations.

For most of you, I'd have to receive back a blank page because one thing the church growth guys have got right, it's this 20% of the members of a church do 80% of the work and 80% of the people do nothing. They come, they attend. Imagine if I was your employer and you came to me and I said, OK, let me see your sheet of paper.

And I look up there and it says, I said, you've you've done nothing this year, according to you. You have no calling. You said, that's right.

But every time the door of this factory is open, I'll let you know I'm here. I look on the back part. You have no goals.

You have no desire for the next year. You're not going to produce anything. No, I'm not employer.

But I promise you this. Every time the door of this factory is open, I'm going to be here. That's basically the mentality in church today.

Every time those doors are open, I'm going to be here, at least on Sunday morning. You're not called to congregate in order to watch other people minister. You're called to congregate in order to be fed by the word of God and worship and then spend the rest of your week ministering unto the people of God and for the glory of God.

Yeah, but how can I do that with all the other activities I have? If anything gets in the way of serving the kingdom, even your right eye, pluck it out or your right hand, cut it off. But I got so many activities. Look at this.

How are you raising your children to do this right here? You'll carry them all over for soccer and football and this and that lesson in gymnastics and everything else. But you're not teaching them to serve God. You're not preparing them for the day they will stand before him.

You are making them just like you. And that's terrifying. You want them to have educations and titles and this and that.

You want them to play ball and do this and that. Do you not know that your children are going to stand before God and on that day, everything you've taught them is going to burn up in the fire and they'll be left a beggar and it will be because of you. What are you teaching them? Your life is so full of activities.

You can't give him anything. You can't give the church anything. And don't talk to me about world missions unless you're going to talk to me about this local church.

Because God's only got one thing going and it's not a denomination and it's not a program. It's a bride and that bride manifests itself in this church. Oh, my dear friend, every part of your head to your feet is wounded.

Every part of your family is busy and frustrated. How long will you have to do this? Why will you not repent and throw away everything and serve the Lord? He says, verse nine, 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? Look what they're asking. We'll say a prayer for us.

Fix it. That's what most preachers in America are doing today. Peace, peace when there is no peace.

People always ask me a question. They say, you don't have long invitations. I mean, you're an itinerant preacher and you don't even invite people to come up to the front.

I go, no, I don't. And I'll tell you why this has turned into a little psychological, I don't know, release or something. Look what you do.

God begins to move in your heart. Oh, we can get rid of this really quick. Just come up here and lay it all on the altar.

Go back and not be changed. Pray here five minutes. Go back.

You've left it there, but you're still not changed. I tell people, go home and wrestle with this for weeks. Be in the word of God.

Realize what's being said, the gravity of it, the call being made. Don't come here and just pray a little prayer and think everything's OK and go back. Deal with the fact that you are being confronted with a

gospel that demands everything from you, that you're being confronted with who God is.

He doesn't share. He takes everything. But if your heart has truly been regenerate and you're just not a lost carnal church member, if your heart has truly been regenerate, you'll say, amen, let him take it all.

He's worthy. A Christian, a true one, never has a problem with this. To God alone be the glory.

A true Christian never has a problem with take my life and let it be wholly consecrated to thee. And look at verse 10. Oh, that there was 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 your name. One of the greatest needs in America is church planting. Why there are so few churches in America? What do you mean, brother Paul, is the church on every corner? No, there's a really nice brick building with a finely manicured lawn on every corner.

And most of them are apostate and Ichabod could be written across the top of the door for the spirit of God departed from them a long time ago. Their candlestick has been removed. You see, you start believing this book and it can really be radical.

He removes candlesticks. You are no longer a church. And you know why we have a such a need for church growth and church experts and this and that and cultural sensitivity.

It is the gaspings of death. Since there's no longer the power of the Holy Spirit in our ministries, in our churches and in our missionary activity, we have to do all sorts of professional things to keep a dead corpse moving. Because I want you to know God can come to a church and he can come to this one and say, oh, I just wish you'd close the doors.

I'm tired of you uselessly kindling fires on my altar. It is better to be a secularist. It is better to be an atheist, to claim nothing of God and from God than to claim God and enter into that claim half-heartedly.

I were that you were cold or you were hot. Because you are neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth. You say, Brother Paul, what are you saying? I'm just saying.

The application is your own. But I will tell you this. The greatest sign of hope in a church.

Now, mark this down. This will be very helpful for you whenever your pastor comes and preaches a difficult word for you to understand. Listen to me.

One of the greatest signs of hope for a church is when God comes to them and speaks a hard word because it means that they're still His people. The most terrifying thing is when the only thing you hear is good stuff. Good stuff.

Because God has cut the rope and let you go. There's no longer a need for correction. There's no longer a need for anything.

This people is an obstinate people. They will not hear. I'll shut the mouth of my men or send them men that are not my own.

He says, 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. I said, Brother Paul, but I've never been able to offer just out of a pure heart.

I've always battled with sin. I've always struggled. I want to be more.

Even this morning when I was worshiping, I was struggling with thoughts that that were deviant, that were not about God. And it was so difficult to worship. Do you mean God does not receive anything from me from you? He receives much because by your own word, you're acknowledging.

Blessed are those who mourn for. They shall be comforted. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for.

They shall be satisfied with those types of words and with the breaking of your heart. You're showing that you truly belong to him, that you want to be more for him. But those of you who sat out there cold as a stone and had no problem with it, you're the ones that should be afraid.

God does not esteem or look upon the one who does all this right. He looks upon the one who is broken and contrite before his word and trembles at it. So in that, dear saints, those of you who are saints, be encouraged.

Be greatly encouraged. He who began a good work in you will finish it. He who makes you mourn will also comfort you.

Now let's get to the main point here as we close. For 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.

I go to missions conferences sometimes and they literally make me sick. I hear men get up there and they say, if we don't do something, the world is falling apart. And they were so desperate.

And as they keep talking and keep talking, I get this view of Yahweh God upon his throne of the exalted Christ sitting there on a wooden throne with a paper mache crown, wringing his hands, going, I want to do so much in the world, but no one will help me. I want you to know the Southern Baptist Convention could drop dead if it hasn't already and turn to dust and all our missions fly apart and go to the wind and everybody else. And God will still make a great name for himself among the nations.

He doesn't need anybody. He'll do it. But he has ordained to do it through men and through preaching of the gospel.

Now, here's what you need to realize. Don't think for a moment that reaching the people of Indonesia or any other place depends on you, because if it does, I'll write him a letter right now and tell him there's no hope for him. But I'll tell you this, God's going to get it done and he's going to get it done through obedient Christians.

And he's invited you into the privilege of being a part of this great work that he is doing. And if you accept that privilege, praise the Lord, how bountiful and purposeful your life will be if you refuse it and would rather serve gods of gold and football and this and that, then go ahead. But know this, your denial doesn't affect God's plan.

He will raise up a people somewhere and he will send them to Indonesia and those people will hear. But you yourself will suffer loss. Then Mordecai told to his, the little girl, Esther, Esther, you've been raised up for such time as this.

You back out of this calling. God will deliver his people. Even if you decide you don't want the privilege of being an instrument in the plan, he will raise up a people and he will get it done.

But you will suffer loss. The only word that comes to mind here for me is the word privilege. We are so privileged.

One of the most terrifying things about judgment to me as a Christian is this, to have put before me, before my view on Judgment Day, all the great privilege that was granted me and I despised it for trinkets that burned up in the fire. I despised it for the goals of this world and the ideas of this world and the things of this age. I gave more attention to that and yet opportunity after opportunity and privilege upon privilege was laid at my feet and I despised it.

Oh, why are we here? Why do we breathe? Why does that heart of ours beat if not for Him and the advancement of His kingdom? Most people live, we have a statement in Peru, most people are alive only because air is free. They do nothing with their lives. And you say, well, I've done much, but the much that you've done, how much of it is eternal? How much of it will burn up in the fire? But when we talk about the advancement of God's kingdom, first of all, here in Knoxville, don't even think about going on a mission trip or anything else unless you are going to serve God here.

And don't think about serving God here, men, if you're not going to serve Him with regard to your wife and your children. And then think about going out into the world. Missions is very simple.

There's only two ministries in missions. You're either called to go down into the well or you're called to hold the rope for those who go down. Either way, there should be scars on your hands.

You either go as a missionary for the glory of God and for the great privilege He's granted you, you go and die on the mission field or you die here holding the rope for those who have gone down. Where are your scars? What does it cost you to be a Christian? What does it cost you to be a member of this church? What has global missions cost you? Answer for me those three questions right now. Don't leave because you walk out that door, many of you.

There's one waiting out there and he's going to snatch the word right out of your heart and you'll be eating at Denny's and not thinking about one thing I said here. And that in itself will be the judgment of God. How much is being a Christian cost you? How many opportunities in this world have you lost because of your identification with the name of Christ? How much is serving in this issue? How much time, energy, resources has it cost you to be a member of this church? And finally, how much has world missions cost you?

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