

Authority and Unbelief Part 3

by Phil Beach Jr.

To bring God's will to earth, we must be available to Him, discern His will, and pray with faith and patience.

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Scripture: Matthew 6:10, Matthew 17:14

Topics: "Unbelief", "Overcoming Unbelief", "Authority of the Church"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the significance of understanding the authority given to the church through Jesus Christ while addressing the critical issue of unbelief that hinders the manifestation of that authority. He encourages believers to cultivate a heart of availability to God, stressing that true relationship with Him requires constant openness and readiness to respond to His voice. The sermon explores the causes of unbelief, such as fear of man and lack of servitude, and offers cures including prayer, confession, and a deep craving for God's Word. Ultimately, Beach calls the church to recognize its role in bringing God's will to earth through faith and action, urging a commitment to overcome unbelief in order to fulfill God's purposes.

Transcript

Praise the Lord. Let's just open our hearts before the Lord and have a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for your presence.

We thank you, Lord, that we have come through Jesus Christ this morning and that it is so wonderful, Lord, to be given ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church, to the churches. And Lord, I pray that you'll grant to us ears to hear, that we might be able, Lord, to sense what your Spirit is saying to us, Lord, and then be able to respond and receive the fullness of all that you're doing and all that you're saying, Lord. We want to affirm, Lord, that we're standing together with the Holy Spirit for the full intention of your heart to be realized in our lives, in the lives of our children, in the lives of our family, and in the lives of the community that we live in.

And so, Lord, we want to acknowledge that this morning. And we pray, Lord, that you'll grant to us ever-increasing love for you, knowing that it is only as we are moved by love that we are able to serve you with pleasure and with joy. So we commit this time of your word into the hands of the Holy Spirit.

We pray for enlightenment to come to us. The first thing I'd like to say is that we're going to continue, I believe this is part three, of the message entitled, Authority and Unbelief. It is very imperative that we

understand that the Lord Jesus has been given all authority, and that the church, by virtue of her relationship with Jesus, is a recipient of that authority.

But that there is a dreadful, dreadful problem that can hinder that authority. And that's what we want to look at today. But before we do, I want to invite you to consider a few words that I want to read.

I believe it's appropriate, as Alan mentioned particularly with the teenagers, that God wants you to hear His voice. And this is something that the Lord put on my own heart this morning to share. Listen closely.

I want to read a section from a book entitled, Surprised by the Voice of God. And the particular chapter that I'm reading from is entitled, The Kind of People Who Hear the Voice of God. Do you want to be the kind of person that hears the voice of God? Well, let me just say this real quickly.

If you want to be the kind of person that hears the voice of God, you must pray that God will make you available. Listen closely. Availability.

The kind of people who hear the voice of God. If you study the life of Jesus, who heard the voice of the Father better than anyone else, one of the first things that will impress you is His unreserved availability for God. I had been a Christian for only about a year when I first noticed this characteristic in Jesus' life.

I was reading the first chapter of Mark when Jesus stayed up late into the night healing the sick and the demon-possessed. After staying up half the night ministering to people, Mark tells us that very early in the morning while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left His house, and went off to a solitary place where He prayed. If anyone ever had an excuse for sleeping in, Jesus certainly had one that morning.

But nevertheless, He followed His daily habit of seeking solitude with God. Early in my Christian life, I used to use this passage to say that Jesus always found time for God. I don't see it that way at all now.

When I look at the life of Jesus, I never see Him finding time for God now. Rather, I see a Son whose time belongs completely to the Father. This is because He looked on His time as His Father's time.

He was completely available for His Father's desires. He only did what He saw His Father doing, and He was always in the right place at the right time in order to fulfill the desires of His Father. In a real friendship, availability is reciprocal.

The people who have unrestricted access to me also give me unrestricted access to them. It works the same way with our Heavenly Father. He is most available to those who are most available to Him.

To many Christians, this idea won't sound fair. It may even sound like a works version of Christianity. They like to picture God being equally available to all Christians at all times.

It's almost as if they conceive God as a cosmic bellboy who exists to meet their needs and can be dismissed when they have no conscious need of Him. But this is both a misunderstanding of grace and of the nature of personal relationships. God doesn't throw His pearls before swine.

The ones who find Him are those who seek Him with all their hearts. If we want a deep friendship with God, it is important to cultivate a state of mind where we view all our time as God's time. A state of mind where we are totally available to Him.

It is necessary to do this because God speaks to us at the most inconvenient times so often. And it goes on, which I'm not going to read. Very, very thought-provoking and edifying reading from Jack Deere and his book entitled, Surprised by the Voice of God.

Let me encourage you before we go into our study this morning that if you are intent on hearing the voice of God and you're intent on following the voice of God, you have to make yourself available to God. You have to make your life available to God. To make your life available to God is not to say, Lord, I'm going to give you from 5 until 7 in the morning and then I'm going to give you from 12 to 1 in the afternoon and then I'm going to give you from 9 to 10 at night.

That's not making your life available to God. That's departmentalizing your life and saying, God, you can have it now during these times, but the rest of the time it's my life. And there is a subtle way of doing this in our lives if we're not careful.

And so what we must do is ask God to help us offer our lives to Him that we might be available to Him all the time. It's costly to be available to the Lord all the time. But it's the only way that we can come into a posture where our heart is prepared to listen and hear His voice at all times.

Ask yourself this question now. Have you found that your life has been made available to God 24-7? Or do you find that there is a tendency to tell God when He has access to you and when He doesn't? Now, you might not consciously be telling that to the Lord. And what determines whether or not that's true is the heart posture, our heart attitude.

And that's the purpose of this chapter. He's talking about friendships. And the deeper the friendship, the more there is for availability.

And of course, the ultimate is husband and wife. There's always availability at any time. A husband doesn't make it a practice to say, Sweetheart, I'm not available to you now.

I know you have a great need, but that's just too bad. The idea with husband and wife is that there's an availability there 24-7. There's an availability there.

Because there's a deep friendship, there's a deep closeness. And the Lord wants us to be His friend. But if we are His friend, then we must draw close to Him and we must be available for Him at any time.

And so perhaps maybe consider the thought this morning, Lord. Could it be that You would help me to make myself available to You at all times? Being sensitive to Your heart. Sensitive to Your voice.

Not wanting to run my own life at certain times and then give You a certain religious devotion during which time I say, Alright Lord, now You can have me. But as soon as I'm done, Lord, it's over with. I'll meet You in six hours.

We miss the excitement and thrill of serving God when we do that. Because when you're available to God, that means God can do something at any time no matter what you're doing. He can do it at work.

To make yourself available to God doesn't mean you sell everything you have and you quit your job and you say, Alright Lord, I'm ready. Send me around the world. That's not making yourself available to God.

Making yourself available to God is, Lord, this is my life. This is where I'm at. This is what I'm doing.

And Lord, my life belongs to You. I'm available to You. I'm listening to You at any time.

If you accept this challenge from the Lord this morning and pray it into your spirit and ask God to make it real, you will find the excitement of fellowship with God that you've never known. Listen carefully as we continue on in this message. We're going to continue now.

Point number six. We talked about this a little bit last week, but because the tape was destroyed as a result of some technical difficulties, we're going to go through this quite quickly. In our last message, we saw that the church, being in union with Jesus Christ, you being in union with Jesus Christ, now share His life.

It is so important for you to understand that as a true Christian, you no longer are dedicated to serve your own desires. As a true Christian, I have died to myself. It's not a matter of trying to die to myself.

It is a fact. By union of my marriage with Christ, I have been divorced from the flesh. My union with the living Christ has divorced me from the flesh and the desires thereof.

And as I affirm my union with Christ, and as I affirm and daily am filled with the Holy Spirit, I am empowered to live a life in Christ which enables me to be free from the tyranny and dominion of sin and selfishness and the allurements of this world. You say, brother, I just don't know how I can overcome the world. The power of sin is so strong that the temptations in the world are so great.

I feel at times that I'm being overwhelmed. Well, brothers and sisters, greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. The secret to victory as a Christian is not mustering up the power to overcome sin, but by immersing ourselves into the life of the Son of God.

The Bible says if we abide in Him, we will not sin. It doesn't say if you muster up the willpower and the strength and you just work up all your religious energy. No.

The secret to victory as a Christian is relationship with Jesus Christ, the sinless One. And so by virtue of our union with Christ, the authority that has been given to Him is now to be executed through the church. And we saw in point number six that the church is able to bring the will of God, which has already been decreed in heaven to earth through a number of different ways.

Matthew 6.10, by praying to know God's will. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. It is imperative for us to understand as Christians that we are called to discern what God's will is.

Christ having been raised from the dead and now sat at the right hand of the Father, Jesus in the heavens is representing to the church what God's will is. The fact that He's there in heaven represents that it's God's will for what? For many things. It's God's will, first of all, to declare to all men that Christ has conquered death.

It's God's will that the church would see that Christ conquered all the powers of darkness. It's God's will for us to see that because Jesus has been raised from the dead, we have been delivered from the domain of Satan. And when we see conditions upon earth that do not correspond with the decreed will that we know is in heaven, we don't just simply passively sit back and say, well, praise God, if the Lord wanted it to change, then He would change it.

Well, now, there's truth to that, but there's a danger of missing why we're the church. A lot of people that Jesus met and healed could have been healed before Jesus came, right? But they weren't. Why? Because it was God's will to heal them through Jesus Christ.

And there's a lot of things going on now in our lives, in our homes, in our communities, and in our nation that is not the will of God, and the reason it's continuing is because God's waiting for the church to recognize that it is their place to discern what God's will is and then pray and seek God and believe God and see God change the situation. It's not that God is not sovereign. It's not that God couldn't do it apart from the church, but He has chosen not to do certain things except it be through His people.

And that is the awesome mystery of the participation that we have now been brought into with God. And so God's will, which has been decreed in heaven, that's the key. It is not that we arbitrarily begin to speak things that we want to happen, but it must come from heaven.

We must discern what the will of God is in heaven before we have the authority and the Holy Ghost unction to decree it on earth. You can't just speak to a mountain and say, Mountain, be thou removed, unless you have first come to see by revelation of the Holy Spirit that it's God's will for that mountain to be removed. Once you have discerned that it's God's will that that mountain be moved, brothers and sisters, then you speak to that mountain, and you continue to speak to it.

And I don't care if it doesn't move the first day. I don't care if it doesn't move the second day. I don't care if it doesn't move in six months.

If you know that you know that it is God's will for that mountain to move, then keep speaking to it, and golly gee, it'll move! It'll move! You remember when God commanded Moses to speak to Pharaoh and say, I set my people free, what happened? They were set free after Pharaoh got angry and made the burdens worse. Many times when you discern the will of God about a certain matter and start praying about it and start asking God to fulfill His will, the situation might get worse. And it's then that the enemy sometimes intimidates us and we back off.

We get discouraged. That's no time to back off. That's time to continue to pray.

So in Matthew 6, verse 10, the will of God is brought about on the earth through the church, praying to know God's will. Secondly, Colossians 1, 15-17, by reclaiming that which was created by God and for God. God forbid if one of my children went astray and they began to live the prodigal lifestyle, I wouldn't just passively sit back and say, Oh well, Lord, I guess I'll just have to accept that to be Your will.

No way, Jose. I would begin to pray and fast and seek God because I know that my children have been created by God and for God. They're not created for the devil.

They're not created to be vessels in whom sin is to be expressed. But they've been created by God. I've dedicated them to God.

I've given them to God. And they might go astray, but if they go astray, I'm going to stand against that prodigal spirit until the day comes when they come and bow down and say, Daddy, I'm giving my life back to the One to whom it belongs. I'm reclaiming God.

I'm reclaiming God's possession on their life. This is the tenacity that we need in the spiritual battles, beloved. You just roll over and play dead and you're going to live a life of spiritual infancy.

Colossians 1. All things were created by God and for God. Whether they be thrones, principalities, dominions, they were for God and by God. And it is time for us to begin to pray, Lord, there are a lot of things going on, but all things were created by You and for You.

We need to discern the things that Satan has come in to and he's using them for his purposes. He's true to his name, isn't he? He's a thief. He's a robber.

He's a murderer. He usurps. Man was created by God and for God.

But what happened in the garden? Satan through deception took man who was created by God and for God and seduced him, and now man is walking around for himself expressing the nature of Satan. Do you think we should just sit back and say, well, praise God, there's nothing we can do? By all means, no. You know why the early church turned the world upside down? Because they knew there was a God in Heaven who raised up His Son.

He was the Lord of all. He was the King of kings. And they proclaimed it everywhere they went.

And they said, God has commanded all men everywhere to repent. It's time to turn to the Lord. It's time to make a way for God.

They didn't just allow the world to go to hell. They proclaimed the message of a living Savior. And as we get the revelation that Jesus Christ is now in the heavens and He has reclaimed back for God that which the devil took, we need to proclaim that message now.

Mark 11, verses 20-26 By speaking to mountains in faith, these are ways that the church brings the will of God that has been decreed in Heaven down to earth. By speaking to mountains. In this portion of Scripture, Jesus teaches us about having the faith of God.

And that when we discern that it's God's will for a particular mountain to be removed, then we are to speak to that mountain under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and believe God to take that mountain and remove it. Let me tell you about it, beloved. There's some things that you pray about and there's other things that you speak to.

There's no law, as I had mentioned during these series of messages. These are not principles to be followed, but these are spiritual dynamics that grow out of relationship with God. We can't lay hold of these principles and then try to apply them.

I don't want to get ahead of myself. That's Christian witchcraft. We're going to get into that a little bit this morning.

God help us. Stop the clock. He stopped the sun, didn't He? What would you do if we had a big outage now in the town of Hackettstown? The electricity went out for 30 minutes, huh? Wouldn't that be something? So, there is a place in relationship with God that we have prayed about a thing, we've come to know what God's will is, and we speak to a situation commanding it in the name of Jesus to conform to the will of God.

Do you believe this? Another reference to that is Matthew 21. You can write these down. You say, well, when do I know to speak? Well, the Bible says, My sheep know My voice.

That's what Jesus said. It's a matter of relationship, you see? It's a matter of growing in your relationship with God. You come to learn His voice.

Luke 18, v. 1-7 Another way that the will of God is accomplished on earth that has been decreed in heaven is by long-term intercessory prayer. Luke 18, v. 1-7 speaks of the widow woman who implored the unjust judge that she would be avenged of her adversary. And after a long period of time, the Bible says this unjust judge who neither regarded man or God said to himself, I don't really care about this woman, and I don't care about her God, and I don't care about her problem, but because she is wearying me, I am going to grant her her request.

Hallelujah. God says how much more will God avenge His very elect that cry out to Him day and night? Are you prepared at times regarding a certain situation once you have understood the will of God about a situation? Are you prepared to engage in a long-term intercessory prayer? Beloved, if you're prepared to engage in a long-term intercessory prayer about a certain matter, I assure you by the authority of the Word of God that if you endure and faint not, you're going to see the very thing that God has put in your heart come to pass. You're going to see it.

Some things you can't just speak to. Some things require long-term intercessory prayer. We're going to see that as we go on.

Next, Matthew 7, 7-11. Continuous seeking. This dovetails with the previous reference, but nevertheless, it's one that needs our attention.

Matthew 7. Ask and keep asking. Seek and keep seeking. Knock and keep knocking.

Let me tell you a little bit about the problem in the church today. We have become a spoiled group of saints. We want everything real quick.

We want it instantly. We want a hamburger. We go to McDonald's and we get it quick.

We have forgotten how to wait for things. Instant gratification. Turn the music on.

Turn the TV on. This mentality has to be stripped from the church when they enter into a relationship with God. Because when we serve the Lord, there is need for patience.

There is need to be able to endure long-term spiritual battles. If we get easily discouraged, if we want something immediately and don't get it, and we have the tendency to give up, then we're going to shortchange ourselves of the inheritance that rightfully belongs to us. You think about this.

You ask yourself, if you have a tendency to give up easily, you're going to have to pray that God will help develop in you a perseverance. Lastly, Matthew 16-19 and Matthew 18-20. 16-19 and Matthew 18-20.

This teaches us the power of the prayer of agreement. The power of the prayer of agreement. It is an awesome thing when two or more believers come into a posture where they, by revelation of the Holy Spirit, are in mutual agreement about the will of God that needs to be done on earth about a given situation.

And when that prayer of agreement is prayed by the Holy Ghost, incredible things can happen. The prayer of agreement. Now, point number seven.

What stops this great work of the church? What stops this great work in you? What is hindering us from seeing these spiritual dynamics being exercised in our lives, resulting in profound demonstrations of the will of God manifesting on earth? What is it? I'd like to invite you to turn your Bibles to Matthew 17. I want to point out Matthew 17, beginning in verse 14. And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man nailing down to him and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic and sore-vexed, for oftentimes he falleth into the fire and often into the water.

And I brought him to Thy disciples, listen, and they could not cure him. We are talking about disciples who had been given power by Jesus to cure the sick. And now the Bible says they could not cure him.

What happened? Did God's power run out? They were anointed to heal and they failed to heal. Verse 17, And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him here to Me. Jesus rebuked the devil and he departed out of him.

And the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart and said, Why could we not cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief. Now you can imagine the disciples now.

They were in a difficult situation. This man was a lunatic. He had a strong devil.

They were around skeptical people. Jesus said that they were part of a generation that was faithless and perverse. Let me tell you something.

Don't think the generation that you and I live in is not affecting us. It is. And I'll tell you the truth.

This generation that we're living in right now is a perverse and faithless generation. And because we are in this generation, we have to battle that spirit of perversity and unbelief. We are prone to fall into the sin of unbelief simply because we live in a world and in a generation that is immersed in it.

And that is even more the reason why we must encourage one another daily and find ourselves often in the Word of God, in the presence of Jesus. Lest we too fall to the sin of unbelief. The Bible says that unbelief was the cause of why these disciples could not execute the authority of Christ on a given situation.

They knew the will of God was to cure them. But they couldn't do it. My question, and I believe it's the very words of our loving Savior that stands in our midst right now, is this.

How much of the will of God that pertains to our personal lives, our families, our communities, and our church is not being done because of unbelief? Now, some people don't like this. It makes them uncomfortable. And they say, well, you make it as if I have something to do with it.

Well, you do. Just like they did. Unbelief prevented the works of Jesus from being manifest on a man who was in need.

Listen, the reason why this man was not cured was not because it wasn't God's will to cure him. Too many times the church will look at a situation and they'll say, well, if it was God's will to do something, He would. So, since nothing's happening, it mustn't be God's will.

That's irresponsible of the church. That's like going to an area in a city that's full of homeless people and slums and say, well, if God wanted to help these people, He would be doing something. So, since He's

not, it must not be God's will.

You know, Times Square Church back in 1987 was raised up by the Lord who used a man, David Wilkerson. You know the history behind that. Wilkerson was living in Texas.

And every year he'd go to the city and do street meetings. And every year he'd say, oh, God, why don't you raise up a church in Manhattan? Why don't you raise up a church? And, I mean, he said this himself. I heard him testify about it when he first opened it up.

And he got angry at God. He finally got angry at the Lord. And it was, I believe, in 1986, a year before.

And he said, God, why don't you raise up a church? And he heard the voice of God and God said, well, you've got such a burden for it. Why don't you let me use you? And his mouth dropped. He was apprehended by God.

And he suddenly realized right then, God was looking for somebody who would be a willing vessel through whom the power of God could work to raise up a work. Profound, huh? Profound. Okay, listen carefully.

Write this down. Get the tape. Meditate upon it.

What we're going to do now that we have discovered unbelief is what is preventing a lot of what God wants to do from being done. We're going to look for the remaining 20 minutes, we're going to look at the causes of unbelief and the cure of unbelief right from the Word of God. And so I pray that God will open up our hearts.

And I'm asking the Holy Spirit to shine light because I believe the intention of this whole discourse for the last three weeks was God wants to awaken us to the incredible authority that's in Jesus Christ and then awaken us to unbelief the cause of why much of what God wants to do is not being done, but then heal us so that we can be children filled with faith to see God perform His work in our lives so that He can be praised and glorified. Are you prepared to let the Holy Spirit search your heart right now? Are you prepared to let God speak into your life? I hope you are because He will. The cause of unbelief.

Firstly, John 5, verse 44. This is when we have to listen to the still, small voice of God. As the Word is being preached, let God speak to you.

John 5, verse 44. How can you believe? In other words, Jesus was saying you are bound in unbelief. But now listen to what He said.

Which receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that comes from God alone. One cause of unbelief is the fear of man and the seeking of the honor of man above the honor that comes from God. Fearing what people think about you.

Overly concerned about people and you and your relationship with them to the point where you are inclined to do things to please people rather than God. Let me tell you, Paul said, if I was a people pleaser, I would no longer be what? If you become a people pleaser, you will not serve Christ the way God has called you to serve Him. So may God, first of all, help us to see there is an undue concern in most every one of our hearts right here today about what people think of us.

And that undue concern is the root of an area of unbelief in your life. And so the thing to do is to pray that God will deliver you from that undue concern. You say, well, how can I be delivered from that? The way

you're delivered from the fear of man is by seeking the Lord and seeking His mercy and His grace.

These are the roots of unbelief. This is why the church is a sleeping giant right now. The church is so concerned about what people think of her.

So concerned about the impression that she makes on unbelievers. She creates services that are palatable in some ways to sinners. She's doing all kinds of things in order to hope people accept her.

Beloved, our mission in life is not to be accepted by people, but to be accepted by God. Number two, Luke 17. Another root cause of unbelief.

The Apostle said unto the Lord, increase our faith. Listen carefully. It is very important that we understand the connection between the request of the Apostles and the following story that Jesus told.

I believe the Apostles said, Lord, increase our faith, because in the presence of Jesus, they saw their unbelief. And that is a natural response to do when you see your unbelief. You say, Lord, increase my faith.

They felt that they were so little in their faith. But what did Jesus do? I believe these words spoke into the root of why these Apostles were yet, for the most part, unbelieving. Jesus revealed something in their life.

And only as this thing that He revealed was dealt with, would their faith then blossom. Watch what Jesus said. If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed... In other words, Jesus was saying, you guys only need a little kernel.

And look what you can do. You can say to this sycamore tree, be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you. Now watch this.

But which of you having a servant... Watch out. He's getting to the root of their unbelief. You know what He's saying? This is why you guys don't have any faith.

Increase our faith. You only need a little kernel. But He was Jesus.

He said, I think I'll tell them a little parable. Perhaps the Father will open their eyes and show them the root of their unbelief. Watch this little parable.

But which one of you having a servant, plowing or feeding cattle, will say to him by and by, when he has come from the field, go and sit down to me. And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may eat, and gird thyself. Ain't the servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

So likewise you, when you have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants and we have done that which was our duty to do. Jesus loved His apostles very much and respected their request to increase their faith and told them all they needed was a kernel of faith. But then He's the faithful Savior.

He went right into their heart and revealed their problem. They were faithless because they had not perceived themselves to simply be servants yet. Who, if they happened to have done their Master's will, they needed to simply say, Oh, look at me! Look at how wonderful I am! No, no, no.

You need to realize that even though you've done My will, apart from Me, you can do nothing and you are useless. My second point, the cause of unbelief is the lack of being a servant. Treat heart before God and before each other.

Now listen closely to what I am about to read. While getting this from the Lord, I felt the Lord put in my heart some information here. Listen carefully.

How do you know if you have a servant's heart? Are you ready? When it does not bother you when people treat you like one. I'll say that again. How do you know you have a servant's heart? When it doesn't bother you when people treat you like one.

You see, we have a version of being a servant in Christianity that's quite perverse. And basically it's this. I read in the Bible that I'm supposed to be a servant.

So therefore, I decide when I'm going to serve, who I'm going to serve, how I'm going to serve, and the conditions upon my service. I fulfill all that, and then I think that I'm being a servant. Beloved, that is simply not true.

You don't set the conditions of being a servant and who you're going to serve, and when you're going to serve, and how you're going to serve, and how long you're going to serve. That's the servant making his own decisions. A true servant is a servant to the Master and is bound to His wishes.

We must be delivered from the spirit of this wicked world that controls the thinking of this age by causing people to be addicted to serving their own interests with no real deep sacrifice in serving the interests of others outside of their immediate world. One of the greatest signs of spiritual blindness in the church is the failure within the church to aspire after being a servant, seeking to dedicate their lives for the upbuilding and helping of other people. Causes of unbelief.

The lack of being a servant. Next, Mark 4, verse 35. Jesus calms a storm and He says, let us pass over the other side.

A great storm came and the disciples became afraid. Jesus was sleeping. Verse 38, they arose and rebuked the wind and the wind ceased.

And Jesus said, be still to the wind. And then in verse 40, He said unto them, why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? A third cause of unbelief that is directly connected to unbelief is fear that blinds us from the Savior and focuses our attention on the circumstance. Blinding fear blinds us from the Savior and magnifies the circumstance.

Mark 8, verse 11. Another cause for unbelief. And the Pharisees came forth and began to question Him, seeking of Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him.

And He sighed deeply in His spirit and said, why does this generation seek after a sign? Truly I say unto you, there shall no sign be given to this generation. Another cause of unbelief is seeking after a sign rather than the Savior. Seeking a sign rather than a Savior.

We must beware that we don't find ourselves asking for signs that our faith might grow. We don't ask for signs that our faith might grow. We seek the Savior who is the author of our faith.

And so beware when you find yourself compelled to seek after signs. It may be a sign that there is unbelief in the heart. Unbelief in the heart.

Mark 9. I know there's quite a bit of these, but I am trusting the Holy Spirit is operating as the sharp two-edged sword that He is piercing into our hearts and awakening us and speaking to us, and that by this we will hear Him and we will find faith rise up in our heart. Another reason or cause of unbelief is found in Mark 9. Verse 28. This has to do with Jesus healing a boy with an unclean spirit.

Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up and He rose. And when He was come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, why could we not cast Him out? And Jesus said this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting. Another cause of unbelief based on the words of Jesus Christ here is a failure to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in seasons of prayer and fasting.

Prayer and fasting is something that the early church, along with Jesus Himself, were engaged in on a regular basis. There needs to be a revival of prayer and a revival of fasting in the church. There needs to be a revival of pursuit after God to the point where that pursuit is freeing us from the desire to eat for seasons.

Where we engage in solitude before God and seek Him that He might fill our hearts with faith and with passion for Him. Next, Mark 10. Mark 10.

Verse 35. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto Him saying, Master, we would that Thou shouldest do for us whatever we shall desire. And He said unto them, What should I do for you? What do you want Me to do? And they said, Grant unto us that we may sit one on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left hand in Thy glory.

Another cause of unbelief is serving the Lord with impure motives. Serving the Lord with impure motives. The disciples were constantly arguing among themselves who was the greatest.

And until the Lord Jesus can uproot that tendency within our hearts to want the place of power, the place of authority, the place of perceived authority, there is a root of unbelief that hangs on in that heart attitude that the Lord has to wash us from. And so as the Holy Spirit shines light, may God help us to be delivered from desiring of the Lord something that we ought not to be desiring. We ought to desire Him and leave it to Him to place us where He chooses.

Don't ask Him to sit at His right hand. Ask Him if you could have a place at His feet. Don't be wanting authority and power for wrong motives.

Want it so that you can become like Jesus. We need authority and power to be servants, not to be kings ruling. Another cause of unbelief is what I've called magic, ritual, and religious charms in Christianity.

Magic, ritual, and religious charms in Christianity. Here's what that is. Here, follow these biblical principles and your life will be happy and successful.

The root of religious magic in the church causes unbelief. When we fall out of love with Jesus but continue to use the principles of the Bible in order to try and make our lives successful, we enter the realm of magic. I'll say that again.

When we fall out of love, out of relationship with Jesus, but continue to use the principles of the Bible in order to try and make our lives successful, we enter into the realm of magic. We were saved to serve a person, not principles. It is easy to fall in love with biblical principles that promise success and fall out of love with the person of Jesus, the one that we personally are accountable to.

Beware. When a form of Christianity creeps into your life that gets you following principles and procedures and methods guaranteeing you success, that has removed the person of Jesus and a love relationship with Him from the equation, it is nothing more than Christian sorcery. And it is running rapid in the church today.

And it is a source of great unbelief. You can fill an auditorium if you teach them biblical principles to be successful. But it's a little more difficult when you preach, Jesus, you die to yourself and you let Him become your life.

But you can fill an auditorium if you guarantee that if you learn ten principles from the Bible, it's the Word of God, ten principles, you will be successful. That's magic. Jesus never came representing a principle.

He didn't come to teach principles. He came to reveal what God was like and the cost of following God was His own blood and we dying to ourself. It's 1225.

I've got five more points on the last issue. The cure of unbelief. We've seen the causes of unbelief, the root causes.

What is the cure of unbelief? Number one, Hebrews 12, verses 1 and 2. Looking unto Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. The cure of unbelief. The first point is establishing a proper heart relationship with God.

A proper heart relationship with God. That includes looking to Jesus Christ. Laying aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets us.

That's verse 1. Again, these are not principles, but they are spiritual realities that we can engage in as we are pursuing after the Lord. Number two, James 5, verses 16 and 17. The second cure of unbelief is confess our faults one to another and pray for one another that we might be healed.

A willingness to confess your faults. A willingness to be transparent with one another is a vital heart posture if we are to be filled with faith. You cannot be like Stephen, filled with faith and the Holy Ghost and be unwilling to confess your faults and hold grudges and be bitter and angry and not be transparent.

Number three, cure for unbelief. 1 Peter 2, 1-3 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby. A third cure of unbelief is praying that God will give you a passionate craving for His Word and His presence and that you will learn to meditate upon it day and night.

You will learn to seek God. You will learn to love His Word. You will learn to crave after God's Word more than silver and gold.

There is a craving in the church of God for money and riches that exceeds the craving for the true wealth and that is a thought in our midst. And until the church repents of her love for money and materialism and her love to want to be successful and be like the world and place God on the side, we're not going to prosper spiritually. We're not going to prosper.

If the church spent as much time and effort seeking after God as she is seeking after material prosperity, the whole world would probably be converted by now or close to it. The next cure of unbelief is found in Galatians 5.22. One of the fruit of the Spirit is faith. The next cure of unbelief is the process of character being grown in our life will help cure our unbelief.

As we grow closer to Jesus, faith grows in our life. And it's also 1 Corinthians 12. The gift of faith.

Looking to the Holy Spirit to impart faith to us. Another cure of unbelief, Romans 10.17. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Romans 10.17 It does not say faith comes by listening to the Word of God.

It says faith comes by hearing. And that hearing does not mean the hearing of your ear. It means the hearing of the Word of God in your heart of hearts.

When you hear like Samuel. When Samuel heard the Lord speak and it awakened him and he said, yes, Lord, Thy servant hears You. That's when faith comes alive.

You can listen ten hours a day to the Bible tapes and be an unchanged person if you don't hear the Word in your spirit and respond to it. Hebrews 3.12 One more. Hebrews 3.12 A cure for unbelief is call it what it is.

It's an evil sin. Call unbelief what it is. A sin.

And ask God to forgive you and strengthen your heart. Forgive me for being lengthy this morning. I know this was much.

We'll go over parts of this and more in subsequent gatherings. But I wanted to get it on the tape and in your notes so that you can begin to meditate on these things. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Word of God.

We thank You, Lord, for the excitement that we sense in our hearts. And Lord, we commit Your Word into Your hands and pray that You'll give us good hearts, fertile soil, that we might hear Your Word throughout the week now and be changed and grow in faith. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen and Amen.

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