

# Sin a Thief of God's Glory

by Richard Owen Roberts

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of personal love for God, the consequences of sin as a thief of God's glory, and the significance of finishing our work for God.*

**Duration:** 1:01:17

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 15:22, 1 Samuel 16:7, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 51:10, Micah 6:8, Matthew 21:13, Mark 12:30, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Gods Glory", "Personal Holiness"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's work in our hearts, asking for a clean heart and a right spirit. It delves into the significance of loving God above all else and the need to focus on personal love for God. The sermon also explores the consequences of sin as a hindrance to God's glory and the importance of seeking God's will and worshiping Him in humility.

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## Transcript

Lord, certainly our prayers should begin in praying for your work in our own hearts, asking you, Lord, to create in us a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit within us. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Lord, may the searchlight of the Word of God, the conviction of the Holy Spirit of God, bring us to the place that you desire in our hearts and lives. Pray your strength to Mr. Roberts as he ministers your word to us tonight. Anoint him with your spirit and teach us from your word.

We pray in Jesus' name, amen. All right, Mr. Roberts, thank you, sir. We began this brief series by looking on Sunday morning at Isaiah 57 and focusing upon verse 15, and I want to remind you of the words of that passage.

Thus saith the high and the lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy. I dwell in the high and lofty place with him also who is broken in heart, contrite in spirit, to revive the heart of the broken one and to revive the spirit of the contrite. Now that, I believe, is key to all of Christianity because everything in Christianity hangs on our view, our understanding, our love of God.

When everything is said and done, there's just one thing really that God requires of all of us, and that is that we love him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. All the other things that are mentioned

which have place and consequence are inconsequential in comparison with loving him. If we do everything else and don't love him, it has no real meaning and significance, but if we love him, everything else will fall into place.

So our great focus at all times must be our own personal love for God. Last evening we were looking at the life of Moses and looked at it from two perspectives. Now I want to mention a couple of matters that will relate both to what was said last night and to the theme of this evening.

Have you ever personally considered the difference between sin as a one-way ticket to hell and sin as a thief of God's glory? And have you ever considered salvation as a ticket to heaven over against salvation as a means of bringing glory to God? Now anyone who has analyzed the American church scene is aware of the fact that a very significant percentage of those who think themselves Christians are in it for themselves. And unfortunately a very small percentage are not in it for themselves at all, but for Christ and his glory. So I want to begin by asking you, what are you in it for? Are you in the kingdom for your sake or his sake? Are you interested in salvation for your sake or his sake? Have you avoided sin for your sake or for his sake? The sad truth is that as the years have marched along, the percentages have reversed.

Early on in the history of our country, the people by and large were interested in Christ and his kingdom for his sake. But now that's reversed itself and the majority seem interested for their own sake. And my dear friend, our pastor, will know quite well what I'm talking about when I speak of the motivational difference that exists in a person who's in it for their sake and the person who's in it for Christ's sake.

Now just think of this. If a person turns to Christ for something they hope to get from Christ, how far toward Christ will they turn? They'll turn as far as they have to to get what they want. But the person who turns toward Christ because of who he is, his excellency, his worthiness, how far toward Christ will that person turn? They'll keep turning and turning and turning and turning and going and going and going and going and going because one who's in it for Christ's sake can never get close enough to Christ.

There's always the drive to move closer to him. So just for the sake of easing his load, any good pastor knows that his task is to get people focused on Christ and not focused on themselves. But let's think just a little further about what I said concerning sin as a ticket to hell and sin as a thief of God's glory.

You see what has happened to a great many people in our country and in our churches is that they turn to Christ for their own sake as an escape from hell to avoid its penalty. And that's as far as they've turned. They think that by some action on their part, they will not have to face the penalty for their sin, but Christ has assumed that penalty.

So for them, sin is a ticket to hell, which they want to avoid, and so their interest in Christ is already explained, is self-centered, it's for their own sake. But instead of thinking of sin as a way to hell, think about sin as a thief of God's glory. Now last night we looked at two passages concerning Moses.

In the first place, if you can recall what was said last night, or perhaps you were not here for some reason or another, then perhaps I ought to say that we were looking first at Exodus chapters 32 and 33, the portion of scripture that discusses Aaron's building the golden calf and the people worshiping and pretending that the golden calf that just emerged out of the fire was the very God that brought them out of Egypt. That is one of the most astonishing statements in all of scripture as far as I can see. Can you imagine people who know perfectly well that they were brought out of Egypt by the strong arm of God, then saying that it was a golden calf just created by Aaron out of their own jewelry.

But on that occasion, Moses acted with great wisdom and acted in a way that God was well pleased with, and when he interceded with God concerning the threatened final judgment that God had proposed, God reversed that final judgment to a remedial judgment. Remember he said, now go on, get moving, I'll not go with you, you're a stiff-necked people. If I went with you, I'd destroy you on the way, but I'll send an angel before you.

And Moses was not even willing to move on that basis and said, if you don't go with us, we're not going anywhere. And that of course is at the very heart of all revival concern. Church without the manifest presence of Christ is just not worthwhile.

And when we sense his absence, then we ought to set our hearts to seek his face until indeed he manifests himself among us. So in that first instance, Moses acted as a man of God, and the glory of God returned to the camp through the experience that Moses had on the mountain when God covered him with his hand, and all of God's goodness passed before Moses. But in the second instance, and again just the briefest review, Deuteronomy 32, Numbers 20, Deuteronomy 1, Deuteronomy 3, several passages, five in total, we read together, Moses was irritated by the mean-spiritedness and the murmuring of the people, and he lost his temper.

And instead of speaking to the rock as God commanded, he struck the rock in anger. And the critical thing that I tried to help you to sense last night was because Moses did not maintain God's holiness before the people, it became mandatory for God to maintain his own holiness at Moses' expense. So Moses was commanded to go up on the mountain, to look across into the land of promise, and to lie down on that mountain and die, never finishing his life work.

And I don't know whether you felt this last night, but I feel it deeply. Finishing the work that God has given each of us to do is of incredible importance. If I don't finish my work, I will rob God of his glory.

If you don't finish your work, you'll rob God of his glory. And as I indicated last night, citing the Westminster Shorter Catechism, asking the question, what is man's chief end? Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. So I want to stop now and ask, what is your chief end? Can you honestly say that you are in the kingdom of God for Christ's sake? That what happens to you is neither here nor there, but it's the glory of Christ that is your great ambition, your goal, your commitment.

So in Moses' case, in the first instance, he did splendidly. In the second instance, he did very badly. It's not that he lost his salvation, but he lost the wonderful joy of bringing glory to God by finishing his work.

Now tonight, we're going to take up a second Old Testament character, and again, two separate passages, and looking at similar issues and get altogether different information, but information that I believe has incredible potential of helping each of us. So will you turn with me in the biblical text, please, to 2 Samuel chapter 6. 2 Samuel chapter 6. Now let me repeat again while you're turning to the passage. We're thinking last night and tonight about sin as a ticket to hell over against sin as a thief of God's glory, and salvation as a means of gaining heaven over against salvation as a means of bringing glory to God.

Are you ready then at 2 Samuel chapter 6? Verse 1. Now David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, 30,000. Now note that number, 30,000. Keep that in mind as we read the passage.

And Daniel arose, and he went with all the people who were with him to Baal Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name, the very name of the Lord of hosts, who is enthroned above

the cherubim. And they placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart.

So they brought it with the ark of God from the home of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Ahio was walking ahead of the ark. Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord with all kinds of instruments made of wood, and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals.

But when they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God, and he took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence. And he died there by the ark of God.

And David became angry because of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-Uzzah to this day. So David was afraid of the Lord that day, and he said, how can the ark of the Lord come to me? And David was unwilling to move the ark of the Lord into the city of David with him.

And David took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom-Begittit. Then the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom-Begittit three months. And the Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

Now it was told King David saying, the Lord has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him on account of the ark of God. And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom into the city of David with gladness. And so it was that when the bearers of the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling.

And David was dancing before the Lord with all of his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouting and the sound of the trumpet.

Then it happened as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David that Saul, the daughter of Saul, looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord. And she despised him in her heart. So they brought in the ark of the Lord and sat it in its place inside the tent which David had pitched for it.

And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts. Furthermore, he distributed to all the people, to all the multitude of Israel, both to men and women, a cake of bread and one of dates and one of raisins to each one.

Then all the people departed each to his house. But when David returned to bless his household, Meshua, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet David. And she said, Ah, the king of Israel distinguished himself today.

He uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants, maids, as one of the foolish ones shamelessly uncovers himself. And David said to Meshua, It was before the Lord who chose me above your father and above all his house to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord over Israel. Therefore, I will celebrate before the Lord and I will be more lightly esteemed than this and will be humble in my own eyes.

But with the maids of whom you have spoken, with them I will be distinguished. And Meshua, the daughter of Saul, had no child to the day of her death. A good number of years ago, when my parents were still alive, a person of some means in our family purchased a condominium in Jupiter, Florida, and

commanded my parents to leave their home in upper New York and to spend the winters in Florida.

An incredible benefit to them, which they could not have possibly afforded had it not been for that kindness. The second or third year they went to Florida, my father called and he said, Dick, mother and I insist that you bring your family and come to Jupiter for a week's vacation in the middle of the winter. I said, Dad, that sounds wonderful, but it's quite impossible.

He said, I told you it was a command. I said, Dad, the schedule is much too heavy to permit the luxury of that sort. He said, you have no option.

I have commanded you to come. And out of sheer love and respect for my parents, I was forced to look over the calendar to see if there was any possible way to accomplish that. I conferred with my dear wife, Maggie.

Excuse me. And what we decided was I was finished with a conference in one city in a distant place on Friday, and the next series didn't begin till Sunday of the week following. And whereas there would not have been time for me to go home and then to drive with the family to Florida and then back again and then fly to the next place of meeting, my wife could drive the children and herself to Florida, pick me up at the airport, and we could have a few days with my parents, which included a Sunday.

So we did precisely that. On Saturday night, my dad said, now, Mother and I have been attending the Baptist church here in Jupiter. Of course, you can do whatever you please, but we would be grateful if you would come with us.

Oh, by all means, Dad, we'll be glad to. So we went to the first Baptist church in Jupiter, and the pastor read the chapter that I have just read to you. When he finished reading the chapter, he said, I don't understand this chapter.

And then a few minutes later, he preached a sermon that proved he didn't understand it. And as we left and were walking to the car, my dad on my right turned to me and said, Dick, I don't understand the chapter either. And I kept my lips sealed, hoping to avoid this particular matter.

And then he turned again and said, do you? And I had to answer, yes, Dad, I understand it. He said, when we get back to our condo, you and I are going to sit down, and you're going to explain it to me. And the explanation I gave my dear father that Sunday afternoon, I want to give you tonight.

But strangely, only a few weeks after that, the week when I was at home, we lived at that time in a very long home. I had my study on one end of the home. My wife had her study on the other end of the home, and we had one of those unwritten rules, that I would rise first, go to my study, and she would not even think of disturbing me.

I had two hours and a half before breakfast to spend time in prayer and the Word. And after I was up, she went to her study for her season alone. But one morning, she came into my study way, way before the acceptable hour, wagging her finger in my face and saying to you, I'm telling you, if you ever do what David did, you're in greater trouble with me than was Meshach.

I said, whatever are you talking about? She said, I know you. You get all excited about things, and I can just see you doing what David did. What did David do that was so awful? He danced naked in the street.

Now, I said, Maggie, I'm going to overlook your breach of our understanding. But you go back to your study and re-read the passage. And when we gather for breakfast, we'll discuss it together.

And the discussion we had at the table that morning, I'll share with you after a while. You see, there are two great issues in this passage which can readily be misunderstood. The issue of the farm boy accompanying the ark who is struck dead, and the rage that King David had and expressed in connection with the death of that young fellow.

And then as well, the rage of Meshach toward her husband. And what was that all about? Now, let's think in terms of this passage, for it is incredibly helpful for the times in which we live and the circumstances in which we each find ourselves. You understand, I hope, that the ark of the covenant had been absent from its rightful place for a very long season of time.

Some of you will remember that Eli, that unfaithful priest, that man who was grossly overweight and who was so heavy he couldn't stand regularly on his feet, but he sat on a stool. And you'll remember that a woman came in in a great state of consternation and concern, and he interpreted her weeping and her immense distress as drunkenness. Whereas in truth, poor Hannah was without a child and was being taunted by her husband's other wife because she had been productive of children.

So Hannah was in the temple weeping and crying unto God for a child. And that miserable priest totally misinterpreted what she was doing. But you remember, don't you, that his sons were sleeping with the women who came to the place of worship and also were stealing the choicest portions of the sacrifices that the people brought.

And their father, it was as if this is the priest, thank God he's not, but the father was saying, shame, shame, shame, shame, shame. Hey, that's a beautiful piece of meat, give me that. And he grew fat eating what his sons stole.

And then you remember that a battle ensued, and the two sons were killed, and the ark of the Lord was taken by the Philistines. And when Eli heard the news of his son's death and the taking of the ark, he fell off his stool backward and broke his fat neck. Now I know some folk don't like the emphasis upon fat, but fat is fat.

There's more against fat in Scripture than there is against drunkenness. And we would all be wise to keep that ever in mind. Now that is during the time when Samuel, the prophet, presided over Israel.

So we have the remainder of Samuel's career when the ark of God is absent from its rightful place. Then we have the entire reign of King Saul, 32 years. And then we have approximately 10 years into the reign of David before the incident of which we've read occurred.

So we're dealing with a period of somewhere in the range of 60 years in which the ark of the covenant has been missing from its rightful place. And I hardly need to tell you how significant the ark of the covenant was to their worship and service of the Lord. Now we don't have a communion table in its normal place, but here is the communion table, I think.

And imagine now, and this perhaps is but a poor comparison, but imagine now, Abingdon Bible Church totally without the Lord's Supper for 60 years. It's not an identical comparison, but at least it's helpful to get the feel of the seriousness of this situation. So David rightly is burdened about bringing the ark of the covenant back to where it belongs.

When we began the reading, I asked you to notice the number mentioned in verse 1, 30,000. Now friends, think carefully of what happened. David has the burden to return the ark of the covenant.

He takes his band of 30,000, and they rush down into the territory where this ark has been held. And they began to bring it home, but they bring it home on a new cart. Now with your finger in place here at Samuel chapter 6, turn back, if you will, to the book of Numbers chapter 4. And let me read a portion, Numbers chapter 4, please.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, take a census of the descendants of Kohath from among the sons of Levi by their families, by their fathers' households, from 30,000 years and upward, even to 50 years old, all who enter the service to do the work of the Lord in the tent of meeting. This is the work of the descendants of Kohath in the tent of meeting concerning the most holy things. When the camp set out, Aaron and his son shall go in, and they shall take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it.

And they shall lay a covering of porpoise on it and shall spread over it a cloth of pure blue and shall insert in its poles over the table of the bread of the presence. They shall also spread a cloth of blue and put on it the dishes and the spoons and the sacrificial bowls and the jars for the libation, and the continual bread shall be on it. And they shall spread over them a cloth of scarlet material and cover the same with the covering of dolphin skin, and they shall insert its poles.

Then they shall take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand for the light along with its lamps and its snuffers and the trays and all the vessels by which they serve it, and they shall put it. The first time I read that passage in public, I got about that far and I said to myself, what a lot of picky detail. Who can stand it? And suddenly like that, I understood 2 Samuel chapter 6. Some of us hate detail, and some don't necessarily hate it, but they're just too much in haste to get something done, to pay any attention to the detail.

If we were to read through the rest of the numbers passage, you would see that there was only one way, that the ark was to be moved. All those details in preparation for the moving, and then the ark of the Lord was to be placed on the shoulders of the cohorts, and they were to carry the ark of the Lord. And when that passage opened up to me, I understood something about the American church that I had not understood before.

And I want to remind you, if God is big enough to be worshipped, he's big enough to be worshipped when he wants worship, where he wants worship, how he wants worship, and by whom. And the American church has chucked that aside. Now, there's a certain sense in which what David did was to ask the Philistines, when you move the ark, how do you do it? Because it was the Philistines who suggested a new cart.

And for several decades, the American church has spent more time asking the world how to do church than asking God. And a great deal of what goes on in churches of every stripe across the land has nothing whatsoever to do with God and his word and his clear-cut ordinances and statutes, but it's merely asking what will work, what will attract the world, what will be accepted. Now, let's for a moment think about the farm boy.

The passage is crystal clear. The ark being drawn by the selected animals reached that rough place in the road where perhaps some deep rock or perhaps stones in the road threatened the security of the ark, and it looked as if it would be flipped off the cart. And the farm boy, in what might appear to have been an

innocent act, reached out to steady it, and God struck him dead.

That's what puzzled the Baptist pastor in Jupiter, Florida. That's what threw my saintly father for a loop. Why did God strike that fellow dead? But friends, we need to get the picture that is so clear in this passage.

First, let's ask the question, who was really guilty? Was it the farm boy? Well, now, friends, maybe you've heard the old Southern saying, when you throw stones at a pack of dogs, the dog that yelps is the dog that got hit. Now, who does the yelping in this passage? Obviously, David. David is in a rage, so much so he leaves the ark just there, refuses to take it on home, and names a place.

God has made a breach among us. Fortunately, the rage didn't stop there. Just for a jiffy, I'm going to turn over to the parallel passage in Chronicles.

There are several chapters, chapters 13 to 18, that deal with the same incident in 1 Chronicles. But let me read these words from chapter 15, 12, and 13. I'll pick it up at verse 11, chapter 15, verse 11.

Then David called Verzadek and several other men, and he said to them, you are the heads of the father's households, of the Levites. Consecrate yourselves, both you and your relatives, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel to the place that I have prepared for it. Because you did not carry it at the first, the Lord our God made an outburst on us, and we did not seek him according to the ordinances.

So, a nearly innocent farm boy dies because the priests and the king did not seek the Lord. Now, there's an awful lot more that needs to be felt in that passage. Right now, we are in the most precarious position as a nation in our entire history.

I hope you all understand that there is nothing wrong in America that was not first wrong in the church. All the troubles we now face began among professed Christians. We have been called, haven't we, to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

And we have become almost entirely incapable of salting anything and lighting anywhere. The darkness in the world is the same as the darkness in the bulk of the church. Now, we have in this passage a more or less innocent person punished because of the failure of the responsible person.

And we have a lot of innocent so-called children and adult sinners who will suffer in the destruction of our nation. Whereas, in truth, the problem in America is the same sort of a problem that David created. By getting in a hurry to accomplish something he thought was necessary without asking the right questions of the Lord himself and without searching the scriptures to know the right way to do something.

I believe if the church would get serious and begin to ask, is this right? Is this right? What would the Lord have us do here? What about that? We would discontinue a great deal of what we're doing. And we get back to the basics and do a few things right rather than a multitude of things according to the advice of the world. But that may not, in your mind, yet explain why the farm boy died.

Now, listen, friends. I find this amazing. Perhaps you do, too.

But God has his divine purposes. And often the most guilty is spared because God has a divine purpose for that guilty one. Without any question, David as the king is the most guilty in this passage.

As I pointed out, he's the one that yelps when he gets hit. The priests are also obviously responsible. The whole crowd that rushed down there, the crowd of 30,000, were all in the wrong.

What the farm boy did was just a natural thing for an ignorant person to do. But the ignorant one dies and the others are spared because God has a divine purpose. God had made it clear David was to be the father of the Messiah.

And David's life was spared in order that God's purpose might be fulfilled. But I want to speak to you very plainly now. If we don't get right with God, if we don't turn things around, by going back to the scripture and getting everything exactly right, there are many who may die as a result even though God and his mercy may spare us.

Now, if our focus is not upon heaven but upon Christ, if our longing is not merely to escape the wrath of God but to bring glory to our God and Savior Jesus Christ, we will not go on living as we are in self-pleasing ventures, in activities that are dishonoring to the Lord and bring grief to the kingdom of God. I believe we need to pay close attention to that first lesson of this passage. Let me repeat something I said a few moments ago.

If God is worthy of worship, he is worthy to be worshipped when he calls for worship, where he calls for worship, how he calls for worship, and by whom. The second lesson concerning the wife is loaded with instruction for us and we mustn't miss it. When my wife came raging into my study, wagging her finger, and I said, Maggie, dear, go back to your end of the house and reread the passage.

She did, and she came back and at the breakfast table, so she said, all right, Dick, I was wrong. He was wearing a linen ephod, but I don't understand the significance of that. Why was his wife so angry then? I said, Maggie, the key is in these words, verse 21, 2 Samuel 6. So David said to his wife, it was before the Lord who chose me above your father and above all his house to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel.

Therefore, I will celebrate before the Lord. So Maggie and I discussed those words. What did David do that Saul would not? Well, you remember the account of Saul.

You remember what a modest young man he was. You remember when some of his father's animals had disappeared, that he took a servant and they went searching very extensively for these lost animals, and eventually they became aware the father would become more concerned about them because of their long absence than over the lost animals. And as they were ready to turn back and go home and defeat, the servant suggested there's a prophet in this neighborhood.

Let's consult him. And when they sought out the prophet, the prophet told Saul that his presence was demanded at the banquet. And he went to the banquet and discovered he was the guest of honor.

And he was named the king. At the time that the people discovered who their king was to be, they called family by family. And eventually the name of Saul came forth and he was nowhere to be found.

And you remember, don't you, that unusual phrase that he was hiding among the stuff or the baggage. A very humble fellow in the early days, but soon he was given a direct command from the Lord, go and utterly destroy all of the Malachites. And instead he kept alive the king and the best of the sheep and the goats.

And he lied and pretended that he was afraid of the people. A man head and shoulders above all the rest, pretending he's afraid of the people. And then he said, well, we saved the best to make a wonderful sacrifice to the Lord.

And he was plainly told to obey is better than sacrifice, to hearken better than the fat of ram. And when Samuel the prophet confronted him, he said, well, you know I sinned and God knows I sinned, but don't tell the elders. Clearly the heart of Saul had become arrogant.

He would not humble himself. Now David made a terrible error and it meant the death of the farm boy. But David had the grace to admit he was wrong.

And when he danced in the street in a linen ephod, surely you know what that meant. He took off his royal crown and laid it aside. He took off his royal robe and he laid it aside.

He danced in the street as a common man among common men. And that's what his wife loved. She was used to her father's arrogant way, the sham and the pretense of a man disobedient to God.

But where are you in the world of humility? Do you have what it takes to humble yourself before the whole nation? Thus far the American church has refused to humble itself. Everywhere I go I hear people blaming what's wrong with America on somebody else. The politicians, the educational system, the rotten media.

But the root of the problem is a backslidden church. Have you faced that? And by backslidden church we mean individual Christians who are not where they belong with God. Two great lessons, everything done according to the word of God.

And everything done with the utmost humility. And when you're a church leader, and you have to admit to the whole church that you've been wrong, it costs. But it's always costly to admit you're wrong.

And what's needed is not just a verbal admission of wrong, but a turnaround. So that instead of persisting in the error, we do what is right from now on. And I close simply by emphasizing at the heart of what's wrong is Jesus said his house is to be a house of prayer.

But by and large prayer is disregarded by today's church. And activity is much more urgent and important than prayer. What if a real spirit of repentance were to grip this place? And every one of you were to commit yourself to do everything from now on according to the word of God and with the utmost humility.

Would it not be a day of wonderful hope that stood before us when we get these lessons right? Oh God, we thank you that the word of God is piercing. We thank you, Lord, that it shows the needs of our hearts. They must be repented.

First of all, Lord, we're blaming, blaming the

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