

# Filled So That We Can be Poured Out for Others

by Santosh Poonen

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**Scripture:** Matthew 23:25, Psalm 139:23, Mark 2:3, Philippians 2:5, 2 Corinthians 8:9

**Topics:** "Embodiment of Christ", "Sacrificial Service"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I thought I would speak today before the children come back and present to us a little bit of something that the Lord's been speaking to my own heart over the last, I would say, a few weeks, I think. I'll begin by looking at a verse in Matthew chapter 23. If you'll turn there with me, Matthew 23.

You know, we speak often about the New Covenant and it would be very easy for us to lose sight of what the purpose of the New Covenant really is. Matthew 23 contrasts the Old Covenant, shows us what the Old Covenant life looks like. A lot of religiosity, a says here, even traveling land and sea.

That's an Old Covenant life. Many people focus on evangelism. You could be a wonderful evangelist and just be an Old Covenant person, like the Pharisees were.

And then this phrase that we hear about often in Matthew 23 verse 25, it says, woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. The mark of being a hypocrite is that you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they're full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, verse 26, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish so that the outside of it may become clean also.

I think we understand this. We know that that's the New Covenant life, cleaning the inside of the cup. That means, very simply, that what other people think about you as a Christian means absolutely nothing.

It's what God thinks about you. Your testimony in the world is important, but the whole world could think of you as a wonderful Christian, a wonderful righteous person and all of that. But if God looks at the inside of the cup and sees filth as clean as it looks on the outside, it's rejected by him.

He says you're a hypocrite. I think we understand that. But what happens next? Why did Jesus use the analogy of a cup? That's what I've been thinking about recently.

What happens when you clean the inside of a cup? Maybe you used to be an outside of the cup kind of person and now you see the New Covenant and you say, okay, I'm going to clean the inside of the cup. I'm going to ask God to rid me of all impurity, all lust, all bitterness, all bad motives, all bad attitudes towards other people. This is the inside of the cup.

All bad ambitions, selfish ambitions, all jealousy, things you can't see on the outside. You might see manifestations of it, but you won't see jealousy on the outside. It's an inside thing.

And as you have the Lord clean that up through the Holy Spirit, what next? What happens when you clean the inside of a cup? It should be obvious. You use it. You fill it.

Now that cup is taken and used to be a blessing to somebody else. And I've been convicted recently of the danger that my New Covenant life could only be blessing myself. What I mean by that is that I'm so introspective perhaps.

That's the danger when we see the danger of an Old Covenant life. We become New Covenant minded and we hear about judging ourselves. Judge yourselves.

That's what the New Testament speaks about often. Now we could spend so much time judging ourselves introspective. Introspective is a big word that just means looking inside.

And you know the Bible never says that that should be where we look. If you look inside, you will become another type of legalist, I believe. And I've seen that danger in my own life.

That's really where the burden of this message is coming from is the danger of going away from that cleaning of the outside of the cup to cleaning the inside now in such a way now that I'm proud of my clean inside. I see that God has set me free from lust, let's say. Or set me free from jealousy.

Or set me free from all these thoughts that used to capture, hold me captive for so long. And I think, yes, thank you Lord that I'm now living in victory. I believe Jesus intentionally used the analogy of a cup.

Having been cleansed, has he filled you? And is that filling resulting in somebody else getting a blessing as a result of it? Are you being poured out? I said that the Bible never says to look inside. It says to look at Jesus. Hebrews 12 verses 1-2 says, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

This is the only way we're supposed to run. And when I look at Jesus, as opposed to looking at myself, you know how we can become so analytical about the inside of the cup now. Where we become, you know, legalists about the New Covenant even.

It was like, oh, that little bitter thought of that little thing there and little thing there. And yes, we don't want to have any spot or wrinkle or any stain in the inside of the cup at all. But that comes through looking at Jesus.

And I've seen more and more that looking unto Jesus means that I do things the way he did them. And because he did them, for the reasons that he did them. Our reading this week, for those of you who are visitors, those online, our church family's been trying to.

We encourage Bible reading. And we seek to do it. We hold ourselves accountable.

And one way to help ourselves, if you turn with me to 2 Timothy 2, one way to help us in Bible reading is that we're following a Bible reading plan. Not all of us may be doing it. I am.

I'm trying to at least. I've been able to stay on track so far. It's a two-year plan.

And it's keeping me accountable in addition to the other reading that you might do for study. This is a good chronological. It's not actually chronological, but going through the entire Bible.

And it's a small passage of Scripture so that you'll get through the whole Bible in two years. A manageable amount. And if you can read more than that, that's great.

And our reading this week happened to be, it's in Ezekiel, wonderful new truths the Lord's showing me there. But also in 2 Timothy 2. And it was these verses in verse 20 that prompted some of the thoughts as well that I have this morning. It says in verse 20, now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from these things, and he talks about these things, sinful things, ungodliness, and bad speech, and he goes on to say later on even of being quarrelsome, verse 24, and not having impurity, youthful lust, verse 22, all sorts of things. When you've been cleansed from these things, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be what? A vessel for honor, sanctified and useful to the master, prepared for every good work. So the purpose of our sanctification is not that God can now put us up on a shelf and say, look at my clean outside and inside child.

The purpose of that cleansing is now that he can send us out into an impure world and pour out through us, pour into us, and pour out through us. We know that the promise of Abraham is given to us through the Holy Spirit, right? And the promise of Abraham was twofold. A lot of people know that first fold, first part of the promise of Abraham, I will bless you.

Ask yourselves, dear brothers and sisters, as I've been asking myself, have I only received that first part of the promise of Abraham? God will bless me? Okay, maybe we're not taken up with the external prosperity gospel, but is it possible that I'm taken up with an internal prosperity gospel? Lord, let me prosper spiritually. Who cares about the other person? Who cares about my wife, or my husband, or my children, or that neighbor, or that co-worker, or that person in need? As long as I prosper spiritually, it's another prosperity gospel. It's a clean inside that's not useful, not prepared for every good work, and this has convicted me.

I've been asking the Lord, Lord, I thank you that you've been cleansing me and cleaning me of so much filth that you've shown me, but now what? Am I still lacking power? Are you still not able to pour me? Because having been cleansed, I'm content for the Lord to just put me on a shelf and use me as a, I'm blanking out on the word, as a trophy. That's the word I was looking for. Are you a trophy? Is that why Jesus died? So you could be a trophy of a New Covenant believer sitting in RLCF, what a wonderful church we have.

No, we're not trophies. We're vessels. Vessels means I get out there where it's dirty and poured out as God pours into me, and I go back and he fills me again, a vessel prepared for every good work.

Turn over to book of Jude. Here's another phrase that recently was a revelation for me. Jude, it's only got one chapter, and in Jude chapter 1, that first chapter, we read in verse 12, it talks about sinful people who have crept into the church unawares.

In the time of Jude, which means that they're doing that even today. Satan's got his agents in churches, sadly. And he warns, Jude warns the people he's writing to, to be careful of these people who might have crept in.

And he says, talks about, compares them to Cain, to Balaam, and Korah. Three horrible examples in the Old Testament, and he's talking about this spirit coming into the church. But one of the characteristics of this spirit, you see in verse 12, he says these are the men, this is Jude verse 12, these are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feast.

That means they come into your midst, and they're there in the gatherings, but they're hidden reefs. Deep down they have an ulterior motive. And what is the characteristic of that hidden reef? When they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves.

That's the phrase I want you to think about. Is it a bad thing to care for yourself? What is the evil spirit? What's so harmful or dangerous that Jude has to write about? In fact, Jude is the one person that I know of who planned to write something else. Maybe Paul did that once, but I can't remember.

Jude certainly says, I plan to write to you about something, but I want to tell you about caring for yourself. That's what I see Jude saying, and then that caused me to stop and say, Lord, what's so dangerous with caring for myself that you would say, this is a hidden reef? The way I look at it is, if I'm one who cares for myself at RLCF, I'm the one that the Holy Spirit's warning the church about. Watch out for Santos, he's a hidden reef because he cares for himself.

Let's look into that a little bit. Caring for themselves. Now I see the contrast later on by somebody who doesn't care for himself.

Somebody who has this other's mindset that we sang about. We always sang that second verse, that old hymn. He left his father's throne above, the spirit of Christ.

He left his father's throne above so free, so infinite his love, and emptied himself of all but love. Emptied himself of all but love. Jesus didn't care for himself.

That's what brought him here to this earth. If Jesus cared for himself, he would have stayed there in heaven, enjoyed the praises of all of creation. He was pure, couldn't be tempted, you can't tempt God, and existing with the Father and the Holy Spirit before all time, and yet he came.

And my dear brothers and sisters, unless we learn the spirit of Christ, we won't have that same mentality that says, I don't want to care for myself here, I want to care for others. This is the spirit of Christ. I've seen it this way, that the real mark that you are filled with the Holy Spirit, we speak about the baptism in the Holy Spirit much in this church as we should, but I've come to see more and more that the essence of being filled with the Holy Spirit is that you do what Christ did, actually.

So if you were in heaven, sanctified, not sanctified, pure, you'd never sinned, and full of purity, and full of everything that's beautiful, and great, and wonderful, would you leave heaven for that co-worker of yours? Now, it's a hypothetical question because we didn't start out there, but now, having been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, having been sanctified, having been cleansed, having been made righteous as Christ is, when the Father sees us, he sees us clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Shouldn't we be living that way? Shouldn't we also have the same spirit that says, Lord, I don't want to sit in my comfort zone that feels like heaven, where I've got my cozy little marriage, and my cozy little family, and my cozy little church. Send me, Lord.

I want to go. Use me for your glory. He contrasts that later on with the exhortation to those who are not hidden wreaths in verse 21, and 22, and 23.

It says, verse 22, Jude verse 22, have mercy on some. You, sitting in this church, Jude is saying, have mercy on some who are doubting. Do you meet doubters? No, there's not really a God.

And the tendency could be just like, ah, he's an atheist. He's an agnostic. I'd like to hang out with my people who think the same way as I do.

Have mercy on some who are doubting. The next time you meet a doubting person who questions your faith, questions your allegiance to Jesus Christ, asks you, is he the only true God, and how can you prove it, and is aggressive about it even? I've met some of them. They're very aggressive about it.

Have mercy. Save others, verse 23, snatching them out of the fire. And on some, have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

This is what it means to not be one who cares only for himself. And it's the mark of the Holy Spirit. I'll show you a verse in Acts chapter 10.

I said just now that the mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit is that God sends us out to do his work, like that vessel, prepared for every good work. And if I was to stand at the end of my life saying, Lord, you set me free from all sin, here I stand clothed in the righteousness of Jesus, and I've been fully cleansed of all sin, would I still be conformed into the image of Jesus? Let me rewind and say that again. Let's say I reach the end of my life battling against sin, God freed me from lust, God freed me from anger, God freed me from bitterness, and God allowed me to be forgiving of others, and God helped me not to be jealous, and God preserved my marriage, and preserved my home, and I had a good testimony, and I gave to the church, and I served in the church, and I preached in the church perhaps.

And that's all I had, and God couldn't fill me, hadn't filled me, and used me. Could you say that I was conformed into the image of Jesus? No. To be conformed into the image of Jesus is to be and to do as he did, to be sent out as he came down to this earth.

Acts 10. Look at what being filled with the Holy Spirit did for Jesus. Acts 10 verse 38.

And now, I'm going to get there, but before you think, okay, therefore, I must go and stand on the street corner, and get a megaphone, and hand out tracts, or I must become a preacher, or go to the seminary, or do this, or do that. Look at what it says about Jesus. Acts 10 verse 38, it says, you know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit.

He had the power of the Holy Spirit in him, and with power, and how, you could say, as a result of that, he went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. Notice, it doesn't say he healed the blind, and the lame, all who were oppressed by the devil, and the physical healing was just a representation of that. So, read that slowly, and take, let the Lord make it a revelation for you, and a challenge for you all as well, as he's doing it for me.

Jesus of Nazareth, because he was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, went about doing good, and setting free any who were oppressed by the devil. Turn back to Luke chapter 4. Remember, this incident happens right after Jesus is baptized. Right after Jesus is baptized.

Luke chapter 4, we read, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, after he is baptized, returned from the Jordan, and look at what it says. I missed this, actually, because I didn't read this verse slowly for many years. Was led around by the Spirit.

I just thought he was led into the wilderness. I think maybe Matthew says that, but notice what Luke says. Led around in the wilderness.

It's kind of like wandering, the sense I get. The Spirit just says, go here, go there. Wilderness wandering, for 40 days being tempted by the devil.

What did the Holy Spirit, after Jesus, at this point, Jesus has lived a 30-year pure life, never having sinned. Nobody's ever come ever close to that. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he lived free from sin.

You could say that, perhaps, would Jesus have completed his course at the age of 30, free of all sin, overcame every temptation he'd faced up to that point, at the age of 30, could he have said, it is finished? No. There was something yet to be done. The Holy Spirit had to lead him to be tempted, so that he could open up a new and living way.

What was the purpose of Jesus being tempted? It wasn't for him. He was already pure. Why did Jesus have to be tempted when he came down here to this earth? It was for me and for you.

If he wasn't tempted, he wouldn't have been a forerunner for you and I. There wouldn't be a new and living way through the veil that is his flesh, that we read about in Hebrews 10. And so, full of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit says, listen, Jesus, I know you've lived a perfect life and all that, but there's a job I have for you. You must open up a new and living way for Santos.

So, I'm going to take you into the wilderness. I'm going to lead you from here to there, to there, to there, and you're going to be tempted, and you're going to be tempted, and you're going to be tempted, and you're going to be tempted, and you're going to be hungry, and you're going to be, everything within you is going to say, just give in, it's too much. For 40 days, he was tempted for you and for I. Hebrews 4, verse 15 says, he was tempted in all points as we are yet without sin.

Now, God is not going to tempt us on behalf of others. We know that. Jesus was the only one who had to be tempted in all points.

But are you willing to be tested? Let me use that word. If you are pure, and you're living in a life of victory, praise God for that, and he's given you, brought you to victory over sin, he's brought you to a life of triumph in different areas, but can the Holy Spirit lead you into a wilderness for somebody else's benefit? To help open up, shine the light a little bit more on the new and living way that Jesus has opened up,

because you're willing to go into that wilderness. This is what it means to follow Jesus.

This is saying, Lord, it's okay, I'll go into that messy situation. I'll humble myself and spend time with that person who irritates me to no end when I have to work with him, because I want to follow you. I want to be one who can shine a light a little bit more for somebody to go follow this new and living way.

This is what it means to follow Jesus. This is what it means to be conformed into his image. It means not just that I have an inside cup that's been cleansed, but that it's been used.

Now others can testify. Paul said, I'm already being poured out as a drink offering. That was another verse.

I think it was a couple of days ago, 2 Timothy 4. I'm already being poured out as a drink offering. Here's another man, like Jesus, who said, Lord, it's great that you've sanctified me. Great that I'm no longer defeated by those old sins I used to be, but are you pouring me out? Can you send me, Lord, to this place and to that place? For Paul, that meant beatings.

That meant swimming around, treading water for 3 days and 3 nights, I think he says, or a day and a night in the open deep. Why? What took Paul on that ship that he said is probably going to sink? I heard there's a prediction of a storm, a hurricane coming, but I've got to go, because there's somebody in Malta, there's somebody over there in Cyprus that needs to know the true Jesus. I'm willing to go, Lord.

Fill me, having cleansed me. This is the spirit of Christ. Let's turn to Matthew 9. We read Matthew 9, verse 36.

Jesus was looking at the people. He ends by saying in verse 37, The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.

This is Matthew 9, verses 37 and 38. But what was it that he was looking for? Just somebody to go and hand out a bunch of tracts or to organize a bunch of meetings or have a little church like this where they have a Sunday meeting and a weekday meeting and all that? Is that what he wanted? No. Thank God for that.

I thank God for RLCF. But what is our mission? What is our goal? It's what Jesus was distressed. It says that he felt compassion for them.

He looked out and he felt sorry. I think of Jesus now looking out at Loveland. He says, yeah, this church is there.

I see people who are reading the Bible and praying. But I have compassion for Loveland or for Northern Colorado, you can say. For other places in the world as well.

Because I see people who are distressed and dispirited. My margin says harassed and thrown down. We know people like that.

We've been there ourselves, I'm sure. But I'm sure you could think of, if you spend two minutes, you could think of somebody in your circle of life, the circle of life that you alone know, the circle of your life, who's harassed by the devil. That may be why he acts out at the job site.

That may be why he cuts you off on the road when you are calmly driving your way. And thrown down by the devil. You hear some other pastor falling into adultery or somebody else, something is exposed and you see sin all around you.

Does it result in a burden? You say, Lord, thank you that I'm not like that. Remember the man who prayed that prayer? I thank you, Lord, that I'm not like that person who was in the news about what evil they did. Or like that mass murderer who just shot up a bunch of people.

I thank you, Lord, that that's not my son. And I'm not trying to guilt anybody here, please understand that. But I want to have the compassion that Jesus had when he looked around and said, Lord, you might not take me there, but take me here.

And use me here in whatever role you want to use me. It says that he felt compassion for them because they were harassed and thrown down like sheep without a shepherd. This is what the Lord is looking for.

He's looking for shepherds. When you think shepherd, I'm almost certain that most of us will think elder. Ah, you want me to be an elder? Sure.

No. You know the work of a shepherd? Cleaning up a lot of poop. Giving sheep baths.

It's stinky. It's not a fun life. That's why Jesus said he's looking for shepherds.

People who will get their hands dirty and say, I'll come alongside you. I'll involve myself in your messy situation if I can help you out. Jude says, like we read, be careful that you don't get stained by the same sin.

That you don't fall in the same ways that they fell, but snatch them. Be willing to go into that fire to snatch them, if you will. A plentiful harvest doesn't need people to go out and do something.

It needs people who are shepherds. I'll just briefly look at some of the characteristics of shepherds. The first thing I want you to see here, first of all, is that shepherds must have spiritual authority.

Shepherds must have spiritual authority. If you don't have spiritual authority, and the only way you can have spiritual authority is if you can say, like Jesus said, John 14, verse 30. Write it down.

You don't have to turn there. John 14, verse 30, Jesus said, The prince of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me. There's absolutely nothing.

He doesn't have even an inch of a foothold in my heart. He hasn't been able to draw me. Now, Jesus had never sinned.

But you know that you and I ought to be able to say the same thing? The prince of the world is coming tomorrow, wherever I go. Whether it's the workplace, or homeschool, or driving on the road, the prince of the world is coming, and he has nothing in me. Why? Because I've been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

I've been justified through the righteousness of Jesus. And God the Father looks at me as if I was righteous all along. And so, I can have spiritual authority over Satan.

Now, if I'm secretly watching pornography, or gossiping here and there, and loving money there, or a little bit of jealousy, a little bit of unforgiving attitude towards others, then I can't say, I cannot say that the prince of the world is coming. The prince of the world will come and say, you can fool others, you can't fool me. You've been allowing me to have a foothold in your heart this last week, with what you've been doing quietly when the doors closed and the lights are off.

But if you can say like Jesus, cleansed, justified, counted righteous before God, and he doesn't have a foothold in me, then you have spiritual authority. And I tell you this, I'm realizing more and more, that the devil laughs, I believe, at a lot of Christian work that goes on. I know he did probably in some of the things that I've done in my own life.

Activity that I did in the name of Jesus. Let me do this. It was well intended.

I meant well for those homeless people in the jail ministry that I was part of, and addiction recovery ministries. I meant well. I wanted them to be free.

But I didn't have spiritual authority. And the devil laughed at me. He says, I see how you live in secret.

What does it mean that you're going to go and tell those people about Jesus when you're not dying to yourself secretly? You're not taking every thought captive. You don't humble yourself in your relationship with your wife and your children, in your relationship with others. I see pride in there.

A little bit of self rising up there. I see that. I believe the devil laughs at a lot of Christian work because he says that you don't have spiritual authority.

And so it's just spinning wheels, not making any progress. Or like to think of it, like a merry-go-round, a carousel. That's not progress.

That's just movement. And I don't want to be a part of a movement. I want to actually be moving, progressing, moving forward.

The only way to do that is if you have spiritual authority. You see what happened in verse 32, a few verses earlier. They were going out.

As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to him. And he didn't say, hold on, hold on, hold on. I got to go fast and pray and all of that.

Jesus, he knew that that demon was probably somewhere in the hierarchical order of demons. And at the very top was the devil himself, who Jesus had never allowed him to have any part in him. And so when that demon came at him, Jesus said, you can't do anything.

This demon, this evil force of darkness has nothing in me. And so they brought it to him. It's just like after the demon was cast out.

There's no show. There's no fanfare. There's no exorcism and yelling and screaming and the demon and the person going back and forth like you see going on in Christendom a lot.

It's just the demon went out. No fanfare. In another place it says, with a word, go.

That's it. Because the prince of the world had nothing in him. When Jesus said a two-letter word like go, whatever number of letter it was, was one word.

Because it's recorded that it was one word. He had to go. And after the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke and the crowds were amazed and were saying, nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.

And of course the Pharisees wanted to put it down. It says, oh, he cast out demons by the ruler of demons. But we must have spiritual authority.

See, Satan and his hosts are already doomed. And you read in Revelation 12 that he knows he has a limited time. Revelation 12 verse 12.

He knows his time is limited. The devil knows that. You know, we're taught to redeem the time.

The devil knows his time is limited. So he's ramping up activity. And if he's ramping up activity, if he's coming at us with more force than he did back in Jesus' day even, I believe, because he knows he's running out of time and he's trying to win as many people as possible, what would we be absolutely certain about? Just one thing, brothers and sisters, that the prince of this world has nothing in me.

That means that temptation you face on Wednesday afternoon when you're all by yourself matters for the kingdom of heaven. It does. That temptation you face on Friday night when you have the opportunity to sin matters for the kingdom of heaven.

For that situation you're about to face that you don't know is coming. When the demon will come at you or the devil himself will come at you. You know, it's not demon-possessed people.

I've seen a few demon-possessed people in my life, but probably can count on a handful, a couple handful of people. It's the devil's authority. He's going to try to get a foothold in my son or my daughter or in my marriage or my home.

And then what? Then when the devil comes at me and tries to get a foothold in somebody that's in my circle of responsibility, how am I going to have that spiritual authority if I've been fooling around with sin in secret? It's like those seven sons of Sceva, remember? They tried to say, ah, the people, the Jesus that Paul preaches about, Brother Zach speaks about. No, the devil says, if Brother Zach was here, maybe he would cast me out. But you, what authority do you have? I see how you treat sin, how lightly you take sin in secret, how you speak to your wife, and you're not burdened and grieved over it.

There's hope, brothers and sisters, there's hope. Today's the day of salvation. Today, if you hear his voice, and he's convicting you about the secret life you've been living, and he now wants to use you, don't harden your heart.

Don't harden your heart. So we must have spiritual authority. And, you know, I thought about it like this, that the demons recognized Jesus as God, even though he was in flesh.

The demons didn't look at the body of Jesus, what his appearance, and think, oh, whoa, that's Jesus. No. They saw the spirit in Jesus, and that's what they were afraid of.

And if some other spirit was in a body that looked like Jesus, just follow my thought here for a second. Let's say there was another body that looked like Jesus' twin, physically. But the spirit of Jesus was not in that body.

Do you think that body could have cast out demons? No. Certainly not. Because they're not afraid of what Jesus looks like, the appearance of Jesus.

Why is that important? Because 2 Corinthians 11 tells us that there are other Jesuses, another Jesus, another Christ, another gospel, that are proclaiming the name of Jesus. They have the appearance of Jesus, but the power is not in it. 2 Timothy 3 says the same thing.

We've been hearing that verse often in this church. Having the form of godliness, but have denied its power. That means it looks like Jesus, uses the same words as Jesus, says in Jesus' name, but doesn't have the spirit of Christ in it.

Because the devil has a foothold. And the devil and Jesus can't live in the same body. If you're allowing the devil to have a foothold, casual attitude towards sin, selfishness, self-centered, what will I get out of this, fighting for your own rights, arguing, and all this stuff, and the devil sees that he has a foothold in you, the Holy Spirit says, go ahead.

Outwardly you might look like a good Christian, you might look like a good RLCF member, but the spirit of Christ is not there. The devil recognizes Christ by the spirit of Christ in us. So the same is true today.

I've seen demons cast out. I'll tell you why. Not because of who was casting them out, but because it was done in the name of Jesus Christ by somebody in whom the devil didn't have a foothold.

That I know. And that's the only way to cast out a demon. But somebody who loves money, casual with sin, they'll bring the cameras and all that, and they can fool gullible, especially Americans, gullible about all these demons that are supposedly cast out.

I tell you this, if you see somebody calling the video camera to point it at somebody who's being cast out, and then cast it out, I can tell you it's fake. Absolutely. It's not the spirit of Christ.

Jesus did quietly. Why? To preserve the dignity of that person, so that afterwards people would know this was the demon-possessed person that was once upon a time. In some cases, you can help it.

Mary Magdalene. They knew it. It was recorded.

But to bring the lights on them and say, yeah, let's look at this, to bring glory to the man, it's not the spirit of Christ. Run from that. Anybody who brags about casting out demons, it's one thing to report on it, to talk about how, to encourage other people's faith, but another thing to draw attention to oneself.

So the devil is afraid of the spirit of Christ, and if you have the spirit of Christ, children, most of them are not here, the older ones are here, young people, teenagers, if you have the spirit of Christ, I want to tell you, you could be 12 years old, the devil's afraid of you. The devil was watching Jesus at the age of 12, and he was afraid of him. I'm afraid of this one person.

All the other Pharisees, they know the Bibles. In fact, they are the ones teaching Jesus the Scriptures at the age of 8, but I don't fear them. I fear the man, that little boy, 8-year-old boy, sitting in the synagogue, because he has the spirit of Christ, and I can't get a foothold into him, and that can be true about us.

Oh, this is the longing I have for my own life, even as a preacher, even as an elder in the church, as a father, as a husband, that the devil would have no place in my life at all. I've battened the hatches, I've closed the door, there's no way for him to get in. The Holy Spirit will help us.

This is also what happens when we're filled with the Holy Spirit, so full of the Holy Spirit. I tell you this, if there's an area of the Holy Spirit, you know, my dad has used the example of being filled with the Holy Spirit as different rooms in a house, all having the lights turned on, and you can think, well, I've got 100 rooms in my heart, 99 are turned on, but that one, really? You want me to give that up too, Lord? What's so bad about that? And that's the thing that's preventing you from being useful to the Kingdom of God, from you sacrificing that pleasure that you get from that thing that you're doing, and giving yourself a little bit more, I tell you, that's the room that the devil will get into, because you keep saying no to the Holy Spirit. Say, Lord, no, not that area.

I'll give you all these other things, but let me just have that one thing that I like to do by myself. I could, you know, if I was to start listing these things, that would be legalism. You know what they are.

Idols are not television or sports, or this or that. Does it have a hold in your heart? Are you not willing to give that up? Then it's an idol, and that's where the devil will have a foothold. And he'll sit there, and he'll bide his time.

He won't make you do crazy things. He'll allow you to sit here at RLCF with that one darkened room, for years even. I've seen it happen.

A little bit of pride, a little bit of jealousy, a little bit of a bad attitude towards others, unforgiving, critical spirit towards others. The lights turned off in that room, and one day, it's a spirit of bitterness that defiles many. The second thing is, in Matthew 9 verse 36, you see that Jesus had compassion.

In order to be a shepherd, you must have what I call desperate compassion. Desperate compassion. In Luke 11, Jesus told a parable, which I want you to see.

I'm sure you all know it. Luke chapter 11, after having taught the disciples about how to pray, Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, this is Luke 11 verse 1, one of the disciples said to him, Jesus, we've been watching you pray, and there's something different about how you pray. I've seen the Pharisees pray on the street corners, and they pray loud, and they ring a bell to make sure everybody knows that they're praying, and they announce their fasting, and they look haggard and all that.

But Jesus, when you pray, there's something else. It's like you're in touch with electricity. It's like, man, can you teach us to pray like that? That's what's happening here.

Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples. But we don't want to, and some of these may have been, were John's disciples, and they said, we don't want to just pray, oh, Father, thank you for this day, in Jesus' name, or all the routine words that we use. They said, Lord, we want to pray with authority, like you prayed.

Things seem to be moving over there when you're praying down here. Can you teach us to pray like that? That's what I hear the disciples saying, and then he tells them these words, and again, you could say the words, as a lot of Christians do, our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, and the devil just laughs. He says, you know, you could say the same words, but if you don't have the spirit of Christ in you, what does it matter that you're using the same words? And then he said in verse five, suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him at midnight and says to him, friend, friend, lend me three loaves.

I'm going to, a little bit of a spoiler. This man wasn't hungry. He had already eaten.

This man goes and bangs on his neighbor. Have you ever banged on a neighbor's door at midnight? I haven't. If I ever had to, I'd be, I think, twice, three times, or four times if I do that.

I like my neighbors, but I'm not going to wake them up in the middle of the night. I don't want to risk my reputation and embarrass myself by going in the middle of the night banging, but if I was desperately hungry and I hadn't eaten in three months and I knew my neighbor had food, I might go. What about if you had a good meal? But somebody came to your house that hadn't eaten in three months.

Now you're going on behalf of somebody else. Would you embarrass yourself? Or would you say, hey, you're the one that's hungry, right? You've got to go ask your neighbor. That's what I would do in my flesh.

Now Jesus ends this parable in verse 13 by saying, so shall my heavenly Father, your heavenly Father, give the Holy Spirit. He's speaking about the fullness of the Holy Spirit. When's the last time you cried out desperately, desperately, desperately for the baptism of the Holy Spirit because you know somebody in need? Not you.

Things are good with you. You're living a life of victory. Your marriage is good.

Your children are going well. You're growing in Christ and all that stuff and you're meditating on His Word. But somebody has just sent you a text message or somebody's written you an email or you're aware of a relative of yours and you're saying, Lord, there's that hungry person that doesn't know you and hasn't come in touch with you that's hungry.

I need you. I need a desperate compassion. That's why this man went and banged on his neighbor's door in the middle of the night.

It's not a real story. But Jesus used this extreme example. It wasn't a 5 o'clock at your convenience.

Yeah, you could go to your neighbor's house at 5 o'clock. Nobody would think too much of it. Midnight.

And the man says, listen, I'm already in bed. My children and I are in bed. And the neighbor knows it.

He says, no, no, I don't care. My friend, my friend is hungry. My friend is hungry.

I'm well fed, but my friend is hungry. I'll be honest, brothers. I don't know the last time I prayed that desperately for the baptism of the Holy Spirit because of somebody else.

I've prayed for other people. They come to me for counseling. They say, I have this need.

They write an email and say, I'm defeated and I pray. And I say, I'll pray for you. And I do.

Right then I pray. But when the Lord puts a burden on your heart for somebody. Now, you may not be able to pray for the whole world like that.

Don't be super spiritual. But there are people that you and I know, and I think we know that God is placing a specific burden on our heart for them. Pray desperately for them.

I pray desperately for myself when I feel helpless or I fall in some area. I speak harshly to Megan or I'm careless with the children or something like that. And I grieve over it.

And I say, Lord, I'm so sorry. I can't believe. I'm still like that.

I'm still so unchrist-like in my motives. But what about somebody else? Otherwise, we're just trophies that God has cleaned the inside of a cup and sitting there on the shelf, useless. Not conformed into the image of Jesus.

Mark Chapter 2. I think you know this parable as well. Look at the desperate compassion that these men have. Mark Chapter 2, we read in verse 1. When he had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that he was at home.

And many were gathered together so that there was no longer room, not even near the door. And he was speaking the word to them. He was having a meeting.

And they, they're not even mentioned, their names. I want to meet them in heaven. I believe they are.

They had the spirit of Christ. They, unnamed, I think it was four men. Four men had a friend who was a paralytic.

And they didn't just go about their business. They didn't say, hey, we're going to the meeting. Oh, sorry, Bob, sorry you can't come for the meeting, but we'll tell you all about it.

And we'll come back and tell you about what Jesus said. No. They said, we've got to take you.

We'll find a way. If it means we've got to carry you on our shoulders. And they get there, and it says in verse 4, they came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.

Now, that's inconvenient as it is. Ask Ryan. He had to carry me once to grab a soccer ball.

He put all my weight on his shoulders. But there, here, these four men are carrying this man, walking this long distance. And then they get to the door, and God is going to do something for our sakes here to show us an example, to tell us how we ought to be for the friends that we know.

And he says, God, this particular time, I've got to make sure that the meeting is completely packed. They can't even get in the door. They've gone through all this effort to carry this man, and they get there, and there's no room.

Sorry. So they're like, nope, we've got to find another way. They didn't say, well, okay, let's come back tomorrow.

No, there's no tomorrow. Desperate compassion. They climb up on the roof, carrying this man up there.

Being unable to get to him because of the crowd, they remove the roof opening. And where they dug an opening. I mean, this is taking time.

Jesus is going on with the sermon, and the Holy Spirit is saying, keep going, Jesus. They've got to break all the way through. Keep going.

Keep the sermon going. I've got to get them through because I've got to teach Santos in 2022 something about desperate compassion here. And when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying, and Jesus saw their faith.

Have you ever seen Jesus, the Lord, do a miracle because of your faith? Read the story of George Miller. Not how the orphans were fed. Yes, that too.

But about the four people that he prayed for, specifically four acquaintances of his, who would give their lives to Jesus. And three of those four, the prayer was answered after George Miller died. Are you willing to pray? I call it prayers that outlive you.

You pray and say, Lord, I don't even have to see the answer. I'm just praying for your sake. I'm going to register the prayer in heaven.

I'm going to pray and pray and pray and pray till my deathbed. I believe George Miller on his deathbed was saying, Lord, you remember those three more people. Lord, I'm going to see you in a few minutes, but those three people, you've got to answer the prayer.

Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, Son, your sins are forgiven. I want to have this kind of faith, a faith that's willing to be inconvenienced. Let me show you in Matthew chapter 8. Matthew 8. We read a very interesting sequence of events.

Matthew 8, it says in verse 18 that Jesus saw a crowd around him. When Jesus saw a crowd around him, what did he say? He says, hold on. Well, if we were today's preachers, they'd say, let's pass the offering bag.

We'll get a little bit of money. Jesus needed money to live. He had an offering bag.

Judas was in charge of it. Judas, I'm sure, if Jesus had consulted Judas, Judas said, hey, Jesus, perfect opportunity. We could get enough for, probably we'll be good for, our budget will be good for two years.

This is how churches of today are thinking. Jesus, when he heard that the crowd around him was listening to the Father, not to the Judases and the other people around him, to the Father, the Holy Spirit says, time to go. So he gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea.

You're going to see that all he does is go there, and the next day he's going to come back. It's a one-day trip. For what purpose? Because there were two men who were bound by demons.

On the other side, in this case, I think it says, yeah, two men who were demon-possessed, verse 28. But the Spirit of Christ is willing to leave the masses, leave the revival meeting, as it were, to go for the sake of those two. Leave the comfort of what I think is a religious activity.

Leave the meeting, perhaps, because God's putting a burden on your heart for somebody. This is the Spirit of Christ. Jesus said in Luke 19 that he's come to seek and save that which is lost.

Anybody know where that was? What was the story in Luke 19? It starts with a Z. Zacchaeus. Jesus was walking. But I want you to turn to Matthew 18.

Matthew 18. I thought about Jesus walking. You'll read it in Luke 19.

Jesus was walking, and it says, he stopped in the place and looked up. Jesus was so in tune with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sending him somewhere, so in tune with his Father.

But at a certain place, the Father said, stop right here, stop right here, look up. Oh, there's a man in the tree. Why? Because the Father could lead Jesus, because Jesus came to seek and to save the lost.

Not to hang out a good time with the disciples and all that, have a fun time. I think you get the analogy, right? We can enjoy. I love our meetings.

I love our fellowship. I love our prayer meetings, our Bible studies, and all of that. But the Holy Spirit says, maybe you're on your way to a meeting, and the Holy Spirit says, stop.

Look there. Do something about it. Or stop.

Your wife just sent you a text, or gave you a call, or something, the Lord prompted you about something. You say, okay, I can't go to the meeting right now because the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost. If you're willing to leave for the Brothers Bible Study, and halfway on the way there, you remember that your wife was sick, and you left home with a pile of dirty dishes in the sink, and you turn around and go back, and you don't have to explain to anybody, you don't have to send a message saying, brother, sorry, I'm going to help my wife out with doing the dishes, you know.

That's religiosity. But you can quietly go back and say, I'll skip the meeting for today. That's where Jesus is.

I remember that happened to me once. I was preparing on a Saturday night, thinking about what I would share on a Sunday, 12 years ago maybe. I was sitting there, and I heard Megan in the kitchen doing the dishes, and I was like, I like to think when I'm studying God's Word that Jesus is sitting across from me, and he's going to reveal himself through me the Word.

But I really got the sense, as I was looking at my Bible, that Jesus got up and left. I was like, what? I was just getting ready to have a Bible study with you, and he left. I realized he was going to go help Megan do the dishes, and I realized what I needed to do.

Do you want to be with your Bible study, or do you want to be with Jesus? You want to be with Jesus, don't you? That's the purpose of the Bible study. If all you got out of the Bible study was a little bit more knowledge, or what does this doctrine mean, and I saw my brothers and all that, but Jesus wasn't there, that's what I want, to be where Jesus is. Matthew 18, there are two places that I know of that Jesus said the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost.

One was Luke 19 that I referred to, I think verse 10 or so. The other is here in Matthew 18 verse 11. It's interesting that these are the two places where Jesus said that.

In this place, He's talking about children. Read the whole context. He says, unless you become like little children, verse 3, whoever humbles himself as a little child, woe to you if you stumble one of these little ones, verse 7, and then see that you don't despise one of these little ones, don't despise the children, verse 10, because there are angels in heaven continually see the face of my Father who is in heaven, and in verse 11 He says, the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.

Some people say the old translations, manuscripts don't have it. That's besides the point, but I tell you this is what the Lord has spoken to me through this. When's the last time, for those of you who are members of RLCF, when's the last time you took some time to talk to a child? Maybe a young 10, 12 year old little boy or girl in this church.

You know 50% of our church is children? If we are neglecting, investing in our children, that's 50% of RLCF that's being neglected. As elders and through our church ministries, we try to have events for them.

You're going to see it in a few minutes what all they've been learning.

But when's the last time you sacrificed sitting at the table, conversing with a bunch of your brothers and having a wonderful conversation with your sisters and says, I'm going to sit with the children over there. And yeah, maybe they're going to talk about UNO or snakes and ladders, but I've come to seek and to save that which is lost. These children could easily be lost because we're neglecting them.

We're neglecting them. It happens in churches where the adults have the wonderful time and the children are sent off to their arcade rooms and do this and do that other activity and all that. We'll never be such a church, God willing, because it is up to us adults to seek and to save the children who would be lost otherwise.

It's up to us. Do you think that the other children must teach each other? Let's sit at their table for a change. You don't have to do it all the time.

You don't have to all rush to the children's table. But that seeking and saving the lost mentality, think of our children there. The third thing I want to say, and then I'll close after this, is that to be a true shepherd, to have the Spirit of Christ, is to be a self-forgetful servant.

He sang that song, Lord, help me live from day to day in such a self-forgetful way. A phrase that stuck with me. That's why I asked that we would sing it today.

A self-forgetful way. Jesus exemplified this. You read in Philippians chapter 2. Jesus forgot about himself.

That's how I would paraphrase Philippians chapter 2, verse 5 onwards. Philippians 2, verse 5. Have this attitude. Let's back up a little bit.

Verse 3. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourselves. This is self-forgetfulness described in detail. Think of others as more important than yourselves.

Don't merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others, because this is the attitude that Jesus Christ had. Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, was not self-centered and became self-forgetful. He says, I don't consider my position as God as something to be grasped.

I'm going to forget about that. I'm going to come down as God, but to empty myself, like we sang in that song, of all but love. All the praise.

All the adoration. All, for me, the ability to not be tempted. He says, I'll come down.

I'll get down there. And when Jesus came down, he knew that he would become sin. 2 Corinthians 5 says that he became sin who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God.

And when Jesus contemplated his life here on this earth, he knew, I'm going to become sin. And I tell you, we don't even know what that means, because we haven't seen sin from God's perspective. For Jesus, as God, pure and holy, it would be like him saying, listen, let's use an earthly analogy, saying, listen, go ahead and put some HIV in me.

Go ahead, I'll take some HIV. No, he didn't have sin. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh.

Let's be clear about that. But on the cross, he became sin. And the Father had to forsake him.

It's like you saying, go ahead, give me some HIV, so that that person can get the benefit of it. This is the spirit of Christ. Now, you and I don't have to take on sin.

Jesus has taken sin for us. But are we willing to go into those places? Are we willing to live in a self-forgetful way where the cry in my heart is, what's going to happen to me? I'm not only thinking of myself. And I tell you, I speak for my own flesh.

I know that any time in a situation of conflict, or I'm trying to deny myself, the temptation that the devil always tries to use is, well, what about you? Is that person going to take advantage of you? And to be like Christ is to be a self-forgetful servant, who although he existed in the form of God, he emptied himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men, being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself. It goes on to say, I'm going to show you one more verse here in this context. That's 2 Corinthians 8. Paul exemplified this life as well.

2 Corinthians chapter 8. He speaks about Christ. 2 Corinthians 8 verse 9. This is what the grace of God did for Jesus. You know, we say often, Lord, I want your grace.

Give me your grace. And if you want the grace of God, it will lead you into a life that looks something like this. Like it was for Jesus.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. Oh, I could spend an hour digging into this. And I don't even know that I fully understand it.

But each of us must go back and say, Lord, show me what 2 Corinthians 8 verse 9 really means. What exactly? How is it? What did that look like for you? We're not told much about how at the age of 23, Jesus did something to choose to become poor, so that I who was poor could become rich through his poverty. He didn't have to make himself poor.

He was there. But he was so self-forgetful. He says, I don't care about the riches of being God and having this position and all that.

That means nothing to me. I care about Santos. I care about, put your name there.

And I care about my father and his will. And he came down to this earth and became poor so that Santos through Jesus' poverty might become rich. I'm a rich man today.

The riches of Jesus Christ are all mine. But you know how it happened? It's because Jesus became poor. There are poor people around us whom God wants to make rich.

Jesus is up in heaven and he is now here in the world in his body, in spirit. And he's looking for us who are willing to be made poor in different circumstances. Thought ill of, bearing the reproach of Christ, making sacrifices, making inconveniences, whatever it might be, so that others might become rich.

Yeah. I think I'll end there. Maybe with this.

Remember the story of Isaiah? Read it sometime. Isaiah chapter 6. You know, for the first five chapters he says, woe is this country, woe is that country, woe is you, woe is you. And then all of a sudden he sees

God.

His eyes were lifted up and he saw the throne of God and the holiness of God. The angels crying, holy, holy, holy. And he sees the holiness of God and he falls on his face and says, woe is me.

All of a sudden the woe is not you, sinful person, you, sinful person, you, sinful person. Me, sinful person. That's what the holiness of God does the moment we see it.

And it starts there. What shall we do? Shall we run out and grab a bunch of tracts and go knock on doors and do that and if the Lord leads you to do that, that's fine. But the first thing is to ask God for a revelation of himself so that I see my own sinful nature, my own sinful flesh.

Those little things that grieve him. Woe is me. And then his lips are touched with the cold of heaven.

And then he says, and then God asks this rhetorical question, whom shall I send? And he says, here I am, send me. That's my attitude today, brothers and sisters. Here I am, send me.

Lord, not because of my strength. I've just seen you. I've seen how sinful I am.

You've cleansed me. I'm a clean vessel now, Lord. Use me.

Here I am. Use me. Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for reminding me afresh even in sharing these words of your call for our lives. That you want to conform us fully into the image of Jesus. So here we are.

Send us, Lord, each of us individually. And so may you build up this church consisting of vessels that are honorable because we're pure. We keep ourselves pure.

And that are useful for every good work that you've planned. Thank you. Bless the children also, Lord, as they speak to us.

I pray that you'll fill them with the Holy Spirit. Let them also be vessels that can pour out into us through what they share in Jesus' name. Amen.

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