

# How the Altar of God is Defiled

by Santosh Poonen

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**Scripture:** Acts 2:17, Matthew 11:28, Mark 12:41, Malachi 1:6, Revelation 2:4, John 6:5

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## Description

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## Transcript

It's timely that the primary class has memorized that verse this past week, that their old men will dream dreams, their young men and women will see visions, it talks about sons and daughters, God wants to pour out His Holy Spirit irrespective of gender, irrespective of class or rank in society, old people. When Peter quoted that verse, I imagine that there may have been an old Jew, a God-fearing Jew who thought, I'm at the end of my life. I wish I could go back 50 years and the day of Pentecost could happen when I was 20 and I could be filled with the Holy Spirit or 30.

He could have looked at Peter and said, Peter, you're about 30 years old and you've got a whole life ahead of you and you can be filled with the Holy Spirit, but what about me? I'm 90. What good is it for me now at the end of my life to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Peter said, the promise is for old men and women too. Because God is not limited by time and if you have wasted a lot of your life or even you haven't known, God hasn't opened your eyes to see the truth until later in your life, that's okay.

Today is the day of salvation. Today if you hear His voice and don't harden your heart, He can do a miracle that you could end up far ahead spiritually in eternity than somebody else who had the privilege of knowing Christ from a very young age. I believe that there will be some tremendous things in heaven that

we won't expect.

Have you thought about that? What things won't you expect that you get to heaven? I was like, I wasn't expecting that. There'll be lots of it. You know, you could think about the physical beauty of heaven will be far beyond what we could have ever imagined.

I'm almost certain 99.99999% of what I actually see in heaven will be like not unexpected, completely unexpected. We can understand to some extent what heaven is like, but we're going to be, our socks are going to be blown off like the idiom goes, just completely mind blowing what heaven is going to be like. But among many other things in heaven, what we will realize is that the first are last and the last are first.

It's a mystery that we don't fully understand now. On earth, the first are first and the last are last, and it tends to stay that way. And, you know, you do hear success stories of people who work their way up, but in eternity, have you thought about what Jesus said? The first shall be last and the last shall be first.

And I think one of the ways in which that is true is that there will be people in heaven who maybe grew up in a Christian home and had the privilege of knowing Jesus from a young age, gave their life to Jesus at a young age, but it was sort of this, I haven't really done that much bad, not that bad of a person, so they kind of coast through life. Somebody else who didn't have the privilege of growing up in a Christian home, but came to know the Lord at some point and was so grieved over their sin, maybe they committed a lot of sinful things in their life, but they were so grieved over it that they turned around and ran 100% after Jesus and finished way ahead. There's a parable, an old, it's called a fable, Aesop's fable, it talks about the tortoise and the hare.

At the beginning of the race, everybody would have put their money on the hare, the rabbit. He's definitely going to win. They know the tortoise, his maximum speed, been tested and proven, and they know the maximum speed of the hare.

And you know how the story goes, that the hare got complacent and his speed was a hindrance to him. His capabilities were a hindrance to him because he had confidence in them and so he took it easy and took a nap, slowed down, and that tortoise that was just slow and steady won the race. So many who are last will be first, many who are first will be last.

I've been thinking this last few weeks about something that I thought I would share with you about how God wants to manifest His glory. And if you turn with me to John chapter 2, God's glory has always existed from the beginning of time. He hasn't needed, His glory is self-contained as it were.

He doesn't need anything to show His glory, His glory is just there, it is. But it's a wonderful thing to think, to see that His plan has been for us to be partakers of His glory. You know, He says, I am God, I will share my glory with no other.

That's what they heard in the Old Testament. And then under the New Covenant He says, I want you to partake of my divine nature, to see my glory, and to experience it in a way that nobody else could experience. But when you think about the glory of God being manifest on earth, when John says in chapter 1, you'll read that we have beheld His glory, verse 14.

We saw His glory, John 1 verse 14. Glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. Why did Jesus have to come down to this earth to show His glory? Couldn't He have done it from there? Couldn't He have somehow shined, shone His light so bright and His glory so bright from heaven, that

here on earth we can look up and see, wow, I see the glory.

But when God actually chose to manifest His glory and show His glory, He came down to this earth to show it. And there's something really wonderful there. And now we'll look at John chapter 2, verse 11, it says that this beginning of His signs, this beginning of His signs, or things which point, the literal word there, my margin shows me, is attesting miracles.

And it explains that by saying it's that which points to the supernatural power of God in redeeming grace. So these miracles were a pointer to the glory of God, and we'll keep reading. The beginning, this beginning of His signs, Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and manifested His glory.

So when John says in chapter 1, we saw His glory, he says then in chapter 2, how did we see it? He did it, he said it was through these signs and His disciples believed in Him. So what I see there, and you know the context, is that it's at the miracle in Cana where somebody didn't plan right, somebody made some other mistake, there wasn't enough wine at the wedding, and instead of just looking at each other and blaming each other, somebody actually, and that was his mother, was able to go to Jesus and say we've got a problem. So what I see, God's glory, the manifesting of God's glory under the new covenant begins with a problem.

Not with everything being good. Are you waiting for God to manifest His glory in your marriage? It must begin with a problem. Is there a problem in your marriage? Then God can manifest His glory.

If there's no problem in your marriage, I want to tell you, God can't manifest His glory in there. He's going to bypass that home where the marriage says, oh Lord, we have no problem, we're good. I can tell you somebody who has a problem, I know that other brother and sister in the church, their marriage looks like it's struggling, they have a problem.

God will say, okay, I'll manifest my glory there. I'll do a miracle there. For God to manifest His glory in the new covenant, it starts with a problem, a mistake, a sin, a helpless situation where we have no hope, then He says, okay.

So I look at it like this, problem, miracle, God's glory. Problem, miracle, God's glory. And because we spend so much time trying to fix our lives before we come to God and say, Lord, I've kind of cleaned up my act a little bit, here I am, manifest your glory.

He says, no, I'm waiting for you to come to the place where you're helpless, where you have a problem. You turn back to Matthew chapter 13. There's a verse which I've often said here in this church is perhaps the saddest verse in the Bible, Matthew 13 verse 58.

Matthew 13 verse 58, the saddest verse in the Bible is not John 11, 35, which is the shortest verse in the Bible, Jesus wept. I think the saddest verse in this Bible is this, that not even, you know, for example, and I'm not trying to be silly with this, but not even, for example, that, you know, it says in, for example, 2 Corinthians 5, it says, He who, He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might be the righteousness of God. That's a really, that brings me much grief to my heart when I meditate on it, that the Father made Jesus who knew no sin to be my sin so that I could be the righteousness of God.

It's a powerful verse, but it's not a sad verse, it's a verse of hope. It ends with me being the righteousness of God and I weep at what Jesus had to suffer and I'm thankful for it, I'm grateful for it. I give my life completely to Him because He suffered for me, but it ends with me being the righteousness of God.

So it's a hope, it's a verse of hope, but this verse, verse 58, it says that Jesus did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief. Jesus did not do, He wanted to show His glory. They had a problem, but they thought, no, I have a problem.

You can't manifest your glory in my problem. I've tried many times and I've failed. You can't manifest your glory in me.

And Jesus said, okay, unfortunately, according to your faith, be it unto you. He did not do many miracles there. You know, Jesus chooses not to do certain miracles.

Why? It's not because He can't, not because it's too difficult, but it's because of the unbelief. So the miracle is, the beautiful thing about God's miracles and His glory is, it's the creator involving His creation in His work. That's how God manifests His glory in the New Covenant.

Under the Old Covenant, He just manifested His glory. He said, you just create the ark, create the tabernacle and all that, my glory will descend. But now under the New Covenant, He says, I want you to be a partaker with me in manifesting my glory.

So Jesus could have easily just looked at those empty jars of clay and said, let there be wine, and there would have been wine. That was the Old Covenant, let there be light, there was light. Don't need any human involvement.

But He said, I'm under the New Covenant, I've come to manifest my glory in a way that you can understand. So you slaves, come fill this with water. Does God need, think about this, does the all-powerful God who spoke into the universe and said, let there be light, does He need people to fill the jar with water before He can turn it into wine? Of course not.

But He chooses to. And this is His way in the New Covenant. He says, I want you to fill it, I want you to be a part of the work, I want you to hold hands with me.

And I imagine that those slaves look back and say, I got to fill that pot. Did you fill it with wine? No. I filled it with water.

I did what I could do. I gave water to God, and I made sure it was filled, and He turned it into wine. Meanwhile, there would have been another slave perhaps who said, what do you mean, fill it with water? There's no wine, why should I fill it? What good is water when they're looking for wine? The Master didn't ask for wine, or water, He asked for wine.

What good is my water when I give it to Him? And that man would have not experienced the blessing. I'll show you another example in Mark chapter 12, if you turn there with me. Mark 12, there's a small little incident that happened in Jesus' life, and He was sitting near the offering box in the temple or the synagogue, and He saw how people were putting money.

Notice that verse very carefully. Matthew 12, Mark 12, sorry, Mark 12, verse 41. Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury.

And I think about that, we're all here to give an offering. It's not money, it may be money, but it's primarily our lives. And Jesus is not looking at the fact and say, here, Lord, I give my life as an offering.

We're all singing the same. We all sang the same songs this morning. We all prayed similar prayers.

We all have a similar desire, but God is looking at how, He's observing how the people were giving. Under the Old Testament, under the Old Covenant, it was give. Did you give 9.9%? Nope, not enough.

It's got to be 10%. Did you give 1%? Nope, it's got to be 10%. Did you give 12%? That's great.

It counts as good as 10%. There was no command to give more, but some did. But as long as you gave the 10%, it was okay.

It was how much. And then it says that there were many rich people putting large sums. Now, some of them may have been proud of the fact that they were putting large sums, but there may have been some rich people who said, Lord, I've got plenty.

I'll give you 15%. How about that? I know the law says 10%. I've got enough, Lord.

I can give you 15. I'll be good to you. And this man is proud of the fact that he put 15%.

And then it says in verse 42, there was a poor widow who came and put in two small copper coins which amounted to a cent. Back then, they had a half a cent coin. And this woman, all she had, all she had was two half cents.

I mean, imagine sometimes you walk in the road, you see a little penny sitting there. And you ever think, man, that's a valuable amount? No, it's nothing. You might not even stop and pick it up because it's only a penny.

What can you get? You can get absolutely nothing with a penny these days. You can get absolutely nothing with a penny. But you know what? This woman, that's all she had, and she gave it to God.

And he says in verse 43, he said, truly, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury. How is it that in God's eyes, these two coins, which adds up to one cent, is worth more than all the other amount that was put in the treasury? How is that? Because it says, verse 44, they all put out of their abundance or surplus. They all had a lot, and they could afford to give some of that.

But she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on. And this is the secret of manifesting God's glory. God was glorified in that meeting.

I assume that all those people came to have a meeting, and all those people came and put a lot of money in it. There was a sermon, probably. They probably sang some songs.

They had some good fellowship. But the one thing that manifested the glory of God in that meeting, and this is where I want us to take away something today. If you think about how the glory of God will be manifested in a church meeting, it's not by whether the sermon is all good, whether the singing is right, was there a lot of prayer, were we moved and stirred emotionally? No, the glory of God is manifested through poor widows who give everything.

And if you're sitting there, never opening... I mean, this widow didn't even open her mouth. We don't know her name. I assume she sat in the back and just quietly, didn't want to be greeted or welcomed, didn't matter if nobody talked to her.

She was there for one reason only, to give everything I have to the God I love. And the glory of God was manifest there. I long for the glory of God to be manifest in my life, my marriage, my home, in the church.

I tell you, it's a simple thing. God doesn't need gifted people. The world is looking for gifted people.

Churches are looking for gifted people. Can you preach? Can you sing? Oh, yeah, the glory of God was manifest because the song leader was so good or the preacher was so good. No, it has nothing to do with that.

It's the maximum mentality that manifests the glory of God. And for that, we're all on equal level. There's no one more qualified or more gifted.

In fact, the gifts are often a hindrance to that. If you want to manifest the glory of God in his church, seek to be that widow who gives everything. There was a verse in Malachi chapter 1, I'd like us to see.

At this time, the temple had been built. The city had been rebuilt in Israel after they'd come back from captivity. And then God sends Malachi, the last prophet under the Old Testament, in the Old Testament, before there was about 400 years of no prophetic word, you can say, no prophets until John the Baptist who came to prepare the way for Jesus.

But the condition of the people of Israel at that time was very interesting. It is a lesson for us in that because I think there's a danger for us also in that. They didn't know that this was sort of the last prophet, but God had sent them this man with a specific word.

And I want you to see the verse here, verse six. There's a little, I will start in the middle of verse six. He addresses the leaders of God's people, which means that was true about the people as well.

But even the leaders from the top down, this was the condition. All priests who despise my name. Imagine if we say, Lord, speak to us.

You said you would speak to us. Our memory verse for this week is he will speak to us. And God says, okay, I'm gonna speak to you.

I'm gonna tell you. You are a people who despise my name. You say, what, Lord? I despise your name? No.

I know people who use your name as a swear word. My co-worker or that other person on the street. In the world, they use your name as a swear word.

He says, no, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about you sitting in churches, perhaps even sitting at RLCF, despising my name. And so, like our response would be, their response also is, how have we despised your name? The end of verse six.

And God says, here's how you're despising my name. You're putting food on my altar. You're giving me an offering.

But it's a defiled offering. So God says, I know to everybody else, it looks like you're also giving an offering. Yeah, there's so and so giving an offering.

There's so and so giving an offering. There's so and so giving an offering. You look at all the others at RLCF are coming and they're members of this church.

And they're all saying, yeah, we love you, Lord. We wanna be wholehearted disciples. We believe in the new covenant.

But what nobody else knows is that offering that you're giving is defiled. And they say, how have we defiled you? God was to say, and I tell you, my brother said, even this morning, I read this verse again. It was like the Lord was asking me, I asked the Lord, Lord, have I defiled you? Search me, O God, try my actions.

Have I defiled you? Have I done something by my words, my deeds, my actions, my thoughts, my motives and my attitudes that defiled you? And then God says, the table of the Lord is, you say the table of the Lord is to be despised. When you present the blind for sacrifice and when you present the lame and sick. And so what was happening there was that these people said, okay, I guess we're in a church where we're supposed to give also.

Let's give an offering to the Lord. And they're like, yeah, but it's gonna cost me something. So let me find that sheep that's blind.

It's good for nothing, no good to me. I'll give it to the Lord. Nobody will know.

Once it's dead, what does it matter, right? If it couldn't see and I'm gonna kill it anyway, what does it matter if it was a blind sheep or a nice sheep? That one that's lame, I'll carry it. Nobody will know that it's lame. I'll cover it up and then I'll put it on the altar and outwardly it will look like just all the other lambs.

And I'll sit there with my offering and I'll look good. God says, you think I can't see where your heart is? I'm looking at how you give your offering, not what you give. And so the secret is this life of giving the maximum to the Lord.

I've been thinking recently, if you turn with me to Revelation chapter two, the warning to the church in Ephesus and also the warning to the church in Corinth in second Corinthians 11, the Holy Spirit warns the church in Corinth through Paul that his fear for them is that they will lose their simple, pure devotion to Christ, that the devil will be able to distract them. They lose a simple, pure devotion to Christ. And there was another church to whom Paul didn't write that specific word.

In that same time, the church in Ephesus, for which that actually happened. And I have a feeling that the church in Corinth fell away even sooner, didn't even last as long as the church in Ephesus. The church in Ephesus was a little bit better, but they too fell into the same trap.

They left their first love. They lost that simple, pure devotion to Christ. And the Holy Spirit says through John in Revelation two, verse two, I know your deeds and your toil and your perseverance.

Now I want you to imagine the time there in those days. I think that for most of the Christian world, which wasn't that large, there were only a certain number of churches. I think they would have considered the church in Ephesus as the best church of their time.

Because it's a church that Paul himself lived there for three years. And they've got toil, they've got perseverance. If there's an evil man, they won't tolerate them.

There are people who call themselves apostles, and it says, we're gonna test you. You call yourself an apostle? Okay, we're gonna test it. And you prove them to be false.

Verse three, your perseverance. This church has been around for a long time. Many other churches have fallen away, but this church is still standing.

You've endured for my sake, and you have not grown weary. Verse six, there are people who are practicing a false practice of Christianity, and you hate that, the deeds of the Nicolaitans. You would think, wow, this is a great church.

All the other churches, that church, they've got that false doctrine. That other church, it fell away. That other pastor, he fell into adultery.

That other church, they love money, but the church in Ephesus, holding to the truth, standing firm, looks like a good offering. But what nobody else could see, and what God alone could see in the heart, says, you've left your first love. Everything looks good on the outside.

The ministry's great. Children, you know, children saying their memory verses, even perhaps, and I love that they do that. Children will do their presentations.

The family lives are good. Marriages seem to be good. But you've left your first love.

And I thought about, what does this first love? You know, it's not, it was a little bit of a revelation for me. I don't know if it's original, it doesn't matter, but I thought about this first love, like the love, the first love that a child sees. What is the first love that a child sees? It's the love of their mother.

You know, even before they can realize it, when the child is inside their mother's womb, they're experiencing that love. There's a bond that's being built between the mother and that child inside the womb without the mother even knowing it, I think. To some extent, the mother does.

The child definitely doesn't even know. Think about that little fetus growing in the mother's womb. That little fetus is there, and it's experiencing the love of a mother, experiencing the love of a mother.

And as it grows, it knows, maybe it starts to realize that, but it's still kind of fully contained within the mother's womb. It doesn't know anything except the mother. Its whole world revolves around the mother, and the mother is everything to it.

If that baby was to be taken out of the mother's womb, especially early on, no chance of survival. The mother is everything to this little child. And then the child comes out, and the mother's affections are for this child.

The first love that it receives is from its mother. And yes, you can think about how we, as children, in the mother's womb, must know God and love him in such a way that he's everything to us. Our whole world is God, like the whole world for our child is inside the mother's womb.

You know, when Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again, he must become like a little child. And what Nicodemus says, if you read there in John 3, he said, what must I do? Go back into my mother's womb? And I think, in a sense, I thought that that's really what should happen. I must go back into the father's womb, as it were, where he's everything to me, that I'm as unaware and unattached and disinterested in the world outside of this womb, because God is everything to me, just like the mother is everything to that little child inside the womb.

But on the other side as well, you think about the mother's love for the child. This first love. What is the first love that God wants me to have towards him, like the love of a mother towards her child? You know, the mother doesn't think, look at the child and think, man, I've been feeding you, little boy, little child.

I've been giving you this and giving you that. You want more milk again, really? It's two o'clock in the morning, I need sleep. You know what the mother thinks? I think a true mother thinks as they look at that child, what else can I give you? What else can you get out of me? Is there something else you can get out of me to nourish you? I've thought about my first love.

When I first came to Jesus, I'll tell you, I told Jesus, Lord, I want you to get everything out of me. What can I give you? I've seen how much I've sinned against you. I've seen the seriousness of what I've done, and I want to give you everything.

But you know what's happened at times as I've gone on in my Christian life? I've lost that first love. I've said, Lord, I've given you quite a bit, right? Now, when are you gonna bless me? What can I get out of you? I had lost, I've lost at times in the past that mentality that says, what else can you get out of me? And this is the first love that God wants us to come back to, where I'm not giving him something because I have to. I'm not coming here on a Sunday morning because I guess I should.

I want him to bless me, I want him to bless my work, I want him to bless my family. When I talk to people who are interested in RLCF, whether it's local or people who come from elsewhere or are interested in local church, I'm curious to know, why do you want to be a part of this church? Is it because you'll get some benefit out of it? It's a nice place for your children? It's a good, the children are well-behaved, and the other families that are raising their children in a good way, that's a good thing. Yeah, that's part of the reason why I'm here.

But I'll tell you, that's not the main reason. I'm here for one reason, one reason alone. I want to give the maximum to Jesus Christ.

And that's much more than I've given him yet, that's for sure. I haven't even come close to giving everything to Jesus. And I want to give him everything.

And this is a church where I'm taught to give everything to Jesus, that's why I'm here. I'm not given a gospel that sort of pats me on the back, says, yeah, you've given enough, God will take care of you, all is well, go back to sleep. The devil loves it if he can continue to put people to sleep over how much they think they've given to God.

I've given him enough, I gave my 10%, I went to the church meeting, that's good enough. And get a reality check, a wake-up call when Jesus comes. So our goal as a church is to give that wake-up call now, before it's too late.

The whole world will get a wake-up call when Jesus returns. Our job as a church, not just the preachers, but everybody, is to provide that wake-up call to everybody, saying, Jesus is coming soon. So return to your first love, that love that says, Lord, I love you, I give myself to you, I offer this to you, whether it's my time, my money, my children, my family, my future, it's all in your hands, Lord, I give it to you.

Why? Because you love me first. I wanna have that maximum mentality. At the end of our lives, you know this verse in Luke 17.

Imagine if somebody, if you were to give everything to God, maximum mentality, you give everything to God, you have that maximum mentality, and you live to the end of your life, and God says, hey, there's no reward for you when you get to heaven. Imagine, hypothetically, that you give maximum to God, you give your most to God, and you get there, and God says, nope, there's no reward for you. What will your response be? I even thought about this, and I wanna be very careful how I say it.

If I gave my life to Jesus, and from the day I gave my life to him, I lived for him and gave myself, poured out myself for him, served him, loved him, because he loved me, and it just was a continual path of giving more to him, and at the end of it, he still sent me to hell. What should I say? Will it have changed somewhat? You know, when I came to Christ, I knew I deserved hell. I was a wretched sinner.

I knew I deserved hell, and if he'd cast me into hell at that moment, I would've said, yep, I deserve it. But after being a Christian for some period of time, and serving him, and giving him everything, and I think back on all the sacrifices I made, all the times I denied myself, and took up my cross, and resisted sin, and humbled myself, and was crushed, and after all that, you still send me to hell? Or will my response be, Lord, I'm just as unworthy today as when I first came to you. All my giving to you, and denying myself, and taking up my cross was not to make myself more worthy.

I can never make myself more worthy. And the reality is, I sit here today in front of you as unworthy, in fact, I feel more unworthy as when I first came to Christ. I don't deserve a reward in heaven.

I still deserve hell just as much as I did before Christ cleansed me. And that's the attitude of somebody who's really given the maximum mentality. See, we're talking about God testing my motive.

It's my motive, I'm gonna give the maximum to Christ so that I can get a big reward in heaven. There's a false motive in that too. I'd say, Lord, I'm gonna give the maximum to you because you deserve it, it's yours.

My life is yours. And Luke 17, you know this story. It says, imagine that a slave, it begins in verse seven.

Imagine that a man is sitting there in his house, and a slave's out there plowing and working hard for him in the hot sun. And then the slave comes in. Will the master, who's sitting there with his feet up in a lazy boy, say to the slave, hey, you've been working so hard, come sit in the lazy boy.

I'll go get you something to drink and something to eat because you've been working so hard, no. But the attitude of the slave is what's the purpose of this parable. The attitude of the slave is not, oh, look at my master, he's sitting there so comfortably.

Why doesn't he get up for a change and let me sit, take a break? No, the attitude of the slave, he sees, for example, the master's cup is empty. His glass of cold water is empty, so he comes to the master, and he's the one that needs a cup to drink. He's been out there slaving in the hot sun, but he sees his master's cup is empty and says, master, can I fill your cup? This is the maximum mentality of a true Christian.

It's not, Lord, I've been serving you long enough. Aren't you going to pay me back now a little bit? When's the reward, Lord? The maximum mentality, first love, it's the love of a mother towards a child. What else can you get out of me? You're my child.

I want to give you everything. Is there more that I can get you? Do you need your diaper changed? Do you need a little bit more milk? Are you cold, are you warm, are you too hot? What can I get you, child? And

the child can't even respond. But the heart of the mother is, what else can you get out of me, my child? And this is what it means to love Jesus Christ with a first love.

And I think if I could search back into all of your lives, every one of you sitting here and listening online, there was a time when you had that attitude towards Christ. There was a time, if you think back, if you could go back to that moment, there was a time when you saw, even if it was a brief moment, you saw the reality of what Jesus suffered for you, what he went through, what he gave up, that you might be pure and holy, accepted. You would never be worthy in your own right, but he called you worthy as you are.

If you could go back to that moment and that love you felt for Jesus, that first love and say, Lord, I wanna go back to my first love. The love that said, Lord, I'm undeserving of it. And even a few days ago, I was on the plane flying back from my trip and I thought, Lord, if I was to end up away from you for all eternity, I would have to say I'm unworthy.

I deserve it, that's the reality. But thank you that you've accepted me unworthy as you are, as I am. And I wanna tell you, God is not, I've said this many times, he's not looking to throw you into hell.

He's not against you. He's not out to punish you. He is long suffering and he's patient and he's delaying the day of his return so that one more person will repent.

So that one more day, perhaps, so that you will repent. You'll come back to that maximum mentality with Christ. I'll close with this story in John five.

Have faith, dear family, dear brothers, sisters, children, friends. Have faith. Is there an impossible situation? Do you feel helpless? Do you feel in some way distant from God or that you're unworthy? Have faith.

If you think that the situation's too far broken, too far hopeless, too hopeless, have faith. Because you read in John chapter six that there was a situation where there wasn't enough food. There was about 5,000 men plus women and children.

If you do the math, what's that, about 15,000? Even all of them had only one child. Husbands and men and women and one child at least. 10, 15,000, you know, even 5,000 is a big enough problem.

They didn't have enough food. And the first thing you see is that Jesus, here's you again, we're talking about problem, miracle manifesting the glory of God. This is a few months or years after what we read in John two.

There's a problem. And Jesus could have instantly dropped, the same Jesus who sent bread from heaven thousands of years ago on that same land, oh no, it wasn't the same land, in the wilderness, but to the same people, to their ancestors, could have said, let there be food from heaven and manna would have dropped down on those 5,000 people and they would have eaten. Heavenly bread.

But he says, no, this is the new covenant. I want to involve my people. I want to find a hopeless situation and somebody who's willing to trust me with that hopeless situation in order for me to do the miracle.

And so he turns to his disciples and says, hey, let's get some bread for them. It says verse five, John six, verse five, where can we buy bread so that these may eat? Does Jesus, the ruler of the universe, need money to buy bread? Can't he just say, let there be bread? But it says, verse six, he was saying this to test

Philip because he himself knew what he was intending to do. God knew what he was doing.

Jesus knew what he was doing. Now, Philip goes into calculation mode, says, okay, 5,000 people plus women and children. Let me do the math.

Maybe Philip was really good at math and he called Matthew the tax collector he can do in his head, multiplication tables and all that. He says, okay, Lord, even if we had 200 days worth of wages, imagine how much you've earned in 200 days of work, right? Typically, you work about 200 days a year, maybe something like that, a year's worth of wages, let's say, if you had that much money and Philip is doing the math and he says, even if we had a year's worth of money, that wouldn't be enough. Verse seven, he's calculating.

But then there was a little boy, as you know, he had five loaves and two fish. You probably could get that for free almost, but it costs very little to buy five loaves and two fish. Imagine that little boy sitting there thinking, looking at his five loaves and two fish and the need, and he's aware that there's a need around him.

He hears Jesus is asking for food. They're about to go look for food, to buy food. And all the others are calculating in this head, can we go, can we send people in 12 different directions to go to all the different stores, buy them out, bring it here, and do we have enough money for that? And then there's the little boy thinking, well, I've got five loaves and two fish.

And I see that Jesus, I hear he can do great things. And he brings his five loaves and two fish. And I've thought about another man, another boy perhaps, or another man in the same multitude who had 10 loaves and four fish, double what this little boy had.

He had more than this little boy. He had 10 loaves and two fish, but he saw the problem and his 10 loaves and two fish, and he thought, that's too small. He calculated like Philip.

And there was this little boy who had five loaves and two fish. Is it the quantity that mattered to God? No, it was the heart of that little boy who says, this is all I've got, it's five loaves and two fish, but it's all I've got, and you can have all of it. And I thought about that as a picture of the problems that you and I may be facing today all over the world, people facing problems.

And those problems are not because God is an unjust God or an unmerciful God, but simply because he wants to manifest his glory. And he's allowed these difficulties, allowed these circumstances, allowed these perplexings and doubts and anxieties and worries and things that you don't fully understand for you to trust him one more time so that he can do a miracle. And don't be among the others who looked at their little 10 loaves and four fish and thought, no, I can't do it.

Be like the little boy who said, Lord, I'll give you five loaves and two fish. And I think heaven in eternity will be full of stories of people who gave all that they had and God did the miracle, and others who had more, but held it back because they doubted that God could actually use it. And God will say, if only you could have seen what I could have done through you.

God is looking for those with the maximum mentality, those who say, Lord, this is all I have. It's not much. I'm not looking at how you're going to solve this problem through what I have, but it's what I have.

It's what you've allowed me to have. And here it is for you. You all know about Jim Elliot, famous quote of his.

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot earn. Whatever you have, whatever you're holding onto, I want to tell you, with all your efforts to keep it, whether it's to savings and this and that, and you're scheming and all that, you're trying to keep something. I want to tell you now itself, God will prove me true.

Not because it's my words, because it's his words. You cannot keep it. That thing that you're fighting to keep, you won't be able to keep.

To the world, it looks like you're a fool when you give that which you cannot keep. You give it away anyway, because you've seen. Your eyes have been opened to see, one day I won't be able to hold onto this, so I'm going to give it freely.

He's not a fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot earn. This week, there will be something in which you will have the choice to hold onto it, or to give it freely to the Lord. Some way of living, or some word, or some action, or some thought, some ambition.

Give it, because you can't keep it anyway. God will give you that which nobody can steal from you. You can't earn it.

Nobody can steal it from you. Let's pray. Father, I thank you for challenging my heart fresh this week, Lord, through your plans for my life.

You love me so much, Lord. You've suffered so much for me, and I want you to get the most out of my life. My life could end today, I don't know.

I want to be ready for eternity that's coming very, very soon. Whenever my life ends, Lord, I want to have lived my life in view of eternity, so that I'll have no regret in eternity. So that in eternity, when it's too late to try to set right the things that I should have set right, to live the life that's pleasing to you that I should have lived, Lord, I pray that I'll have no regret.

Help me now, while I still have life and breath, to give you everything. I do give you everything afresh today. I don't know how you'll resolve it, Lord.

I don't understand it all. My feelings even might betray me, but I know your word is true. And you who began a good work in me, you will complete it.

I want to trust you more today for that. Help me. Help us all, Lord.

I pray for anyone here who's feeling hopeless or feeling helpless, unsure yet, Lord, that you will come through your Holy Spirit and shine a light into all of our dark hearts. Let there be light, a light that lives for eternity, for your glory, the maximum mentality here on this earth, in Jesus' name, amen.

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