

The Spirit of the Harlot and the Spirit of the Bride

by Santosh Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of building a church body that is not focused on size but on a vital commitment to Jesus, not dependent on money but on the power of the Holy Spirit, and not relying on soul power but on resurrection power. It highlights the need for a bridal commitment to Jesus, a reliance on the Holy Spirit, and a focus on resurrection power rather than emotional or intellectual soul power.

Scripture: Revelation 19:1, Revelation 17:4, John 12:24

Topics: "Commitment to Jesus", "Power of the Holy Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

Whenever we meet like this as a church family, we can get some time away on a retreat, I'm always challenged and my thoughts go afresh to why it is that we are a church body. See, if we just liked each other, we could just as easily be friends and assimilate into any one of the churches around us, perhaps the one that's most conveniently located geographically. But there's a reason that God has called us and it's not just because, well, you know, we like to be a church.

Maybe some people have churches because somebody once likes to be a pastor. If we don't, you know, there's a proverb that says, if there's no vision, the people will perish. And God's purpose for RLCF will perish, not because of any lack on his part, but if we lose sight of that vision.

And if we start to be taken up with something else, or if we don't know, perhaps. I wonder how many of us, some of us have been here many years, 10, 12 years, others a few weeks, months. If we don't know what it is that unites our vision, we could easily go astray and that the work here will perish.

Because we get distracted by something or the other, lose sight of the calling that God has given us. Another thought that I've had over the last few weeks, as I've actually been thinking about this time together, is this, is that Jesus spent a lot of his time seemingly facing people away. If you read the Gospels

carefully, you see that whenever he sensed that the church was getting big, now it wasn't the church yet at that time, it was kind of a gathering of people.

But whenever he sensed that the gathering was getting big, he kind of said something that intentionally, because he knew what was in people's hearts, that would allow them to perhaps get offended or go astray. And now I don't believe it was his heart to chase people away. It's never our heart to chase anybody away.

It's never our heart to offend anyone. But Jesus knew that true godliness, the true God, our Heavenly Father, will be offensive to some people. It's just, that's how it is.

And the church that Jesus is building will be offensive to many people. And so Jesus wasn't afraid of that. He didn't let the offending of others cause him to think, oh, maybe I should change my message, or maybe I should open my arms a little wider.

I think of so many that walked away from Jesus. Like that rich young ruler you read about, Matthew 19. And after Jesus, I think from an earthly standpoint, he would have been welcomed into any church.

He was a very righteous man. He had obeyed every single command that was given in the law, at least according to his light. He was rich.

Now the second portion alone would have been a good reason for a lot of people to welcome him. But yeah, a rich man who was also a good Christian, and he's got power. Like he had some authority.

He had maybe a small kingdom, or something like that. Imagine if the ruler of some, you know, like the mayor, or the governor, or the president, some respected person in the world walked into one of our church meetings. How would it change us? That's what Jesus faced when he was building his church.

And the man came to him and said, Jesus, you tell me. You should always be careful when you ask Jesus, tell me what I should do. He'll tell you the truth.

And I pray that we will be such a church. My burden increasingly, our burden as elders, brothers, and I think it's our burden as a church collectively, is this, that when people come into our church, they won't just come and think, oh, what a wonderful place. But God, knowing exactly what is their need from eternity standpoint, will give us, as a church, a revelation of that.

Does it have to be one of us elders? It may not even be through the message. One of you sisters. Afterwards, and God gives you a supernatural revelation.

You probably won't even be aware of the fact that that thought came through a revelation of God. But you say something that speaks into the very need of that person, and they go away changed. Now, they may not accept that.

As we see, when Jesus said that to the rich young ruler, how did he know what to say? Go sell all that you have and come follow me, all your possessions and come follow me. Jesus didn't know much about it. I don't think Jesus had ever met him before.

And was Jesus saying that as God? Or as a man? Now, he's God and man together in one. But was it his power as God that he used when he said, go sell all your possessions and come follow me? Or was it his power as a man? I believe it was his power as a man. Because he emptied himself of his powers as God

when he came down to this earth.

And didn't exercise any of those powers. And the reason I'm saying that is because now you and I have an example. We as the body of Christ, when we get the rich young rulers, or the women caught in adultery.

Or the blind Bartimaeuses. Or the religious leader like Jairus whose daughter is dying and dies. Situations like that, we too as human beings can have access to the same supernatural divine power that Jesus had.

So that we too, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, can know in our heart, say this right now. It's not like some metaphysical Eastern religion type of thing that I'm talking about. No, I'm talking about a genuine witness of the Holy Spirit in our heart of what to say.

And it's just a normal conversation. There's no halo around my head or light shining down from heaven that's giving me something to say. It's the quiet witness of the Holy Spirit that comes as a thought saying, hey say this.

Ask about this thing. And that could open up a conversation that results in you being able to speak into their life exactly what they need. And then they have the choice to say, wow, Lord, I'm going to follow you.

The rich young ruler, sadly, I believe he's in hell today. Do you believe a man who followed the old covenant law exactly according to his light and came to Jesus and said, Lord, you want money? You can have it. I'll give you 10%.

I'll give you 15% even. You want me to come and arrange some meetings for you? Yeah, I can do that. And this is a test for us with what mentality are we coming, are we a part of River of Life Christian Fellowship? Is it Lord, I'll be a part of this church and yeah, you've saved my sins.

Thank you for that. I believe that a Christian who's content with simply being forgiven of his sins or her sins and being taken to heaven is a 10% Christian. It's somebody who says, Lord, I just want to go to heaven.

I don't really want, I want to be able to do whatever I want right now. I want you to bless my business. I want you to take care of my family.

I want you to keep me in good health. Just make my life not too difficult to take me to heaven. It's a 10% Christian and that's not the new covenant.

And to such a person, I believe Jesus would say today, sell all that you're holding on to. Sell all those things that you're not willing to give up. You say, no, Lord, you cannot ask me to give that up.

That's too much. That's the prophetic word that Jesus would speak into every city. So as a church, our mission is to be to the world what Jesus was on this earth.

As the father has sent me, so send I you, he told us right before he left. And so as the father sent Jesus to the rich ruler, the father is sending us to whoever it is that we experience here and encounter here on this earth. I would like you to turn to the book of Revelation.

I've been hearing a lot about the book of Revelation recently. Mostly from people who think we're living in the book of Revelation times because of the orange skies and everything that seems to be going crazy in 2020. Such people haven't really read the book of Revelation.

It's sad, but I believe it's getting close. But the things that are talked about in this are much greater than just fires burning that cause the skies to be temporarily red. The book of Revelation, chapter 19.

We see this is the only place, by the way, that we read about the marriage of the lamb. That's our destination, family. That's our destination.

It's a wedding feast. And when Jesus was here on this earth before he had established his church, then the wedding feast, it is come and be a part of the wedding feast. You know that your calling is not just to sit and say, hey, I got a wedding invitation to the feast.

He does talk about that. Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage of the lamb. But that comes after what he talks about before that, which is, I think of it like this.

You receive two envelopes in the mail. One envelope says, Jesus says, will you marry me? The other envelope says, do you want to come to my wedding? Jesus is also saying, do you want to come to my wedding? Or do you want to marry me? Both envelopes are presented to each of us today. It'll cost you something if you say, I want to marry you, Jesus.

You've got to give up your single life spiritually. You're going to give up all your wants. You've got to give up your father's house, whatever that is, your earthly attachments, your earthly friends, your wants and desires.

And you have to give yourself completely and take on the name of Jesus. You are now Mrs. Jesus. That means where he goes, you go.

And it's not just a song you sing. You actually go where he goes. And if he doesn't go somewhere, you don't go.

And if he doesn't say something, you don't say that. Because you are married to Jesus. And Jesus, you know, because he loves us so much.

On the back of the card, I imagine that he's laid out the conditions of marriage. I don't want to use the prenuptial agreement because that's a false thing in the world. He's given us the conditions of being married to him.

On the back of the card, he says, you have to hate your father, and your mother, and your brother, and your sister, and your wife, and your children, and even your own life. He says, you must take up your cross every day. If you did it yesterday, that's great.

You've got to do it today. If you denied yourself and bore with somebody yesterday, and put up with them, and took up your cross, and denied yourself, guess what? You've got to do it today. And you'll have to do it tomorrow.

You have to give up all your possessions. It doesn't mean you give away all your money. It just means that you're not holding on to what God has given you.

If God has given you money, it's held loosely. You're holding it, but he can take it away at any moment. And you'll say, the Lord gave, the Lord took away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

You're holding on to the house that you live in, or own, part of, perhaps. You're holding on to that. God, don't take that away.

You have to give it up. Lay it on the altar. You're holding on to your job, the thing that you enjoy doing, or some other activity that you have.

Not holding on to it. Your family. That's hard.

I don't know, I don't believe the Lord will take away any of my children in my lifetime. But if he should, what will my response be? If the Lord should allow me to suffer in some way physically, health-wise. Say, Lord, I'm in my health, I'm not holding on to it.

That's the conditions, being Mrs. Jesus. But the reality is, you will be with me. You will be mine.

You can say, yeah, you know what, Lord, that's too much. It says the rich young ruler read the conditions and said, nah, I'll just go to the wedding. What regret.

Now, I don't even think he's in the wedding, actually. But, that's besides the point. Think of the tragedy.

Think of those people. Think of yourself, perhaps, sitting in the audience, and looking back on your life at the wedding feast, and thinking, man, I got the invitation too. I should be up there.

What was I thinking? The thing that he asked me to give up was such a small thing. In light of eternity. In light of being the bride of Christ forever.

I think there will be regret in heaven. I don't know what that's like, but I'll tell you this. I want to believe that there will be regret in heaven while I'm here on this earth, so that it changes the way I live on this earth.

Maybe there's no regret in heaven. I don't know heaven completely. But I do know this.

If there is going to be regret because of how selfishly I live my life now, and I miss out on something in eternity, which I believe is biblical, I want to make sure that I see it now. When I have the opportunity to say, Lord, I give it up. What is it that you want me to give up? It's yours.

Wherever the rich young ruler is today, he is regretting. Because we don't read that he ever came back to Jesus. In Revelation 19, we read about the marriage of the Lamb.

We also read about the word Hallelujah. It's the only place in the Bible where the word Hallelujah comes. Revelation chapter 19.

Now, strictly speaking, it probably shouldn't even be used. I don't know why the translators preserved just that Hebrew word as it is. I don't think personally, in my personal opinion, that in heaven they're actually saying Hallelujah.

Because that's an earthly language. It's Hebrew. It's some other word, which just means praise the Lord.

So whatever the heavenly words for praise the Lord are, that's what we'll be saying. And the reason I say that is a lot of people think that Hallelujah is some sort of magic word. I say Hallelujah, someone's going to turn on a switch.

No, it's not. If it's coming from your heart, then you've turned on the switch. Whatever language you want to say it in.

That's all Hallelujah means, is praise the Lord. So here we read this, praise the Lord. But I want you to see what it is that they shout in heaven.

Praise the Lord. It says in chapter 19, verse 1, I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven say, Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God. Because his judgments are true and righteous.

For he has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and he has avenged the blood of his bondservants on her. You know, in the past I've read that and just kind of, oh, okay, great, Hallelujah. I focused on the praise the Lord or the Hallelujah because it looks like a nice word.

But I missed why there was this suddenly a great shout in heaven saying praise the Lord. I missed it. Have you seen that the praise the Lord in this moment in time that John got a revelation of was because Babylon had been judged.

Now, if Babylon is not, if we don't see Babylon clearly for what it is, it's no wonder that we think Babylon was judged. Okay, what's the big celebration about? The devil thrown into the lake of fire. Yes, that I could totally understand.

But Babylon judged. Babylon is not the devil. What he's talking about here is not the judgment of the devil.

You'll read about that in chapter 20. That's later on. Before the devil is bound, he judges Babylon.

And I think you all have been listening to New Covenant teachings long enough that you know what Babylon is. Babylon is religious Christianity. It's Christianity mixed with a little bit of the world.

It's not really Christianity, but it's got the label of Christianity. It's Christianity that welcomes the rich young ruler and says, yeah, you can have you. Yeah, we'll find a way to fit your ideology and theology and especially your money into our church.

Come, we'll adjust. Yeah, we used to be like this, but we can stretch it a little bit because we really need you, brother, in the church. We need your gift.

We need your money. And we'll adjust. We'll change our convictions a little bit here.

That's a minor command that God says. You only said it once. So, yeah, come.

We need you, Lord. You're a really good administrator. You speak very well.

This is Babylon. And when that religious Christianity, he's not talking about other false religions. He's not talking about atheism.

He's talking about people who took the name of Jesus in vain. He's talking about religious Christianity. When that is judged, heaven rejoices.

And the burden of my heart this morning, dear brothers and sisters, is that God will give us a deeper revelation of what Babylon really is. So that when God judges that here on this earth, in our lives, or in the church, we too can rejoice. And we know that we've become, we've tasted a little bit more of the spirit of

heaven.

Because more of Babylon has been judged in my life. Don't look at somebody else who's got the spirit of Babylon and say, oh, that person. Don't look at some denomination and say, oh, that's Babylon.

That's very easy to do. Label some denomination, check, that's Babylon. Because the devil would love for me to do that.

Because then he knows that I'll never see the Babylon in my own flesh. It's the spirit of Babylon. It's not a person or an entity.

It's the spirit of Babylon. And what makes me part of the system of Babylon, what makes me part of the harlot, is if I've got that. Spirit of Babylon in me.

And we will, and the marriage of the lamb can only happen after this religious Christianity is destroyed. Once the harlot is thrown down, now let's have the wedding feast. And I'll tell you, my dear brothers and sisters.

This is the essence of what I'm trying to say. Is that for you to experience deeper marriage intimacy with Jesus. There must first be a cutting away of the spirit of Babylon in your life.

And if I could think of one sentence to summarize my thoughts this morning. You must destroy your religious club if you want to build a true church. And what I mean by that is you can't just alter that existing structure.

You know, sometimes you can have a building that's so old and so decayed that you can't do anything about it. But imagine if you had this building that's really old and you're too attached to it because you're living in this house. But the structural engineer comes to you and says, man, this is condemned.

You shouldn't even be living here. But you know, my grandparents lived in this house and I've got this wonderful wall. There's some memory there and some memory there.

And we want to expand the house. We want to add another room. So we attach things to this house and we bring new furniture.

We go to our favorite furniture show and buy new furniture to put into this old house. The structural engineer keeps saying, no, man, it doesn't matter that you have a nice couch and wonderful color of paint and beautiful paintings on the wall. The house is condemned.

And there's nothing you can do to make this house better except to completely tear it down and start afresh. The work of God, the true church of Jesus Christ, cannot be built on top of something that is built with the wrong foundation. You can't build the New Jerusalem on the foundation of Babylon.

Babylon must be completely destroyed. You read about the New Jerusalem in chapter 21. But all of that is before, is after Babylon has been destroyed.

So identifying the spirit of Babylon in our hearts, what that really means. And don't be taken up with the word Babylon as much as like, what does that really mean? Here's what it essentially means. Mixing Jesus with the world.

And I'll tell you, it's like the layers of an onion. The more you peel it, the way you realize, man, I thought I was completely devoted to Jesus. I thought I had simple, pure devotion to Jesus.

And then some situation happened, caught me off guard, where I discovered a little bit of the spirit of Babylon. A little bit of a love of this world deep in my flesh. That's the process of sanctification.

Not just that, oh, I used to be defeated with lust of the eyes. I used to be defeated with anger. I used to be defeated with lying.

Now, frankly, I don't see any outward sin, so I must be fully sanctified. But no, sanctification is that freeing of attachment and love of anything else that's mixed in with the love of Jesus. That's why he says in 2 Corinthians 11, it's a simple, pure devotion to Jesus.

And maybe you know right now that according to the light that you have, the circle of light that God has given you, there is a simple, pure devotion to Jesus. But God will now expand his searchlight. You know how you can expand the searchlight by going a little higher.

Now it's showing you more of the darkness around that circle of light. And you realize, hold on, there's a little bit of darkness there. There's a little dark spot there.

A little bit of a mixture of the world with love for Jesus. And true growth in Christianity is increasingly, maybe not every day, but I think we should be at a place, church family, that maybe about every month, and don't get caught up with the number, but maybe at least every month I should have discovered, over the last month, has God shown you a little bit more of unchristlikeness in you? A little bit of the love of the world mixed in with Christ? If not, I want you to take a serious look at your life, like we heard yesterday at the communion meeting. Examine your heart.

It could be there. There could be a love of the world that's mixed in. Now don't condemn yourself.

Just go and ask the Lord to show you. Paul got to the point where he was seeing light every day. Day by day.

Think, when you go to Paul, he's been a Christian. He's been serving the Lord. Planet Church's 60-year-old man.

He's been walking the Lord for 30 years. He says, man, I got light of unchristlikeness in my life for the last 24 hours. Wow.

Now that's a man that I want to follow. Who's following Christ. He's so passionately devoted to Jesus.

He's running so fast that it's like every day he's seeing something new. See, that would be like me saying, between here and there, I should discover something new. But if I'm just trudging along in my Christian life, it takes me a month to get there.

Then it would take a month for me to realize some unchristlikeness in my life. But Paul was running so fast that he got there within a day. Unchristlikeness.

That's a challenge for me, I tell you. Not to condemn anyone, but it's a challenge for me more. I'm not there yet, I'll be honest.

Some days go by where maybe I didn't search myself well enough. And again, I don't say this to bring condemnation or, you know, overanalyze yourself. But examine your hearts.

That's the scriptural word. Test yourself to see if there's any unchristlikeness in you. We heard that verse also, Psalm 139.

Search me, O God. Know my thoughts. There is a grievous way in me.

Something that makes you sad. And I believe, family, if you pray that every day, God will answer your prayer. If he knows that you're sincere about it.

And if he says there is a grievous way, it's a few levels deep. But Antoine was really sincere when he prayed it. I'm going to show it to you.

Oh, I love when he does that. Because it shows me he loves me. He shows me that, man, that way you spoke to your wife or you spoke to your children.

You spoke to that brother or sister. Yeah, you know, maybe there's nothing legally wrong in what you said. But there's a little bit of emotive there.

A little bit of unkindness there. A little bit of a lack of care or thoughtfulness towards that person there. A little bit of wanting to promote yourself, make yourself look good there in a proud way.

That unchristlikeness, he'll show you. And in Revelation 19, it's three times that he says, Hallelujah. The harlot has been judged.

Second time in verse three. And third time, the 24 elders say, Hallelujah. Amen.

It is so. Babylon the Great is fallen. All of this religious Christianity is completely destroyed.

And then you hear the fourth Hallelujah in verse six and seven about the marriage of the wife. And I, for me, this has been a reminder of God saying, for that purity, for you to really be ready. Like he says in Ephesians 5, that he might present her spotless and blameless, without any spot or wrinkle or any such thing, he says in Ephesians 5. And here he says, the bride has made herself ready.

It's time for us to make ourselves ready, family, by identifying the spirit of the world that's in us. I'd like to quickly say three things about this that have helped me. The difference between Babylon and the New Jerusalem.

The difference between building a cultural club. And I think most churches, you probably read the book, the little booklet I wrote on congregation, the club, and the church. But I think about that often.

I see the danger so much, so much in the world today, especially for gatherings of people to start out sincere, but degenerate to simply becoming clubs. So easy. We have to fight it constantly.

Fight it. And it's not up to us elders. We've got to give us the responsibility to be overseers and to be watchmen.

And we'll watch out for the spirit coming into the church. But you must watch out, husbands, in your homes. Fathers, you must watch out for that in your homes.

We don't have authority in your home. You do. Mothers, you have the responsibility.

You spend a lot of time with your children. You must watch out for the spirit of Babylon in your home. Children, you must watch out for the spirit of Babylon that's in the world.

Many of you interact with other people who call themselves Christians, who really, and it's no fault of their own, but really what they're after is money and the things of this world. And the false gospel, which is not gospel because it's bad news, the false message in much of Christendom today is that we can have everything in the world, enjoy everything in the world, and somehow Jesus will still welcome you into heaven. What a tragedy.

So, the true church is not focused on size, but on purity. It's not focused on size, but on purity. Now, we can often say, yeah, we don't care about size, and I honestly, to the best of my knowledge, I don't care about size.

But the test comes when somebody comes to our church, or a new person comes. What is the motive? What is the motive? When you find out, somebody says, hey, I'm thinking about coming to your church, and I want to be a part of your church. There is an excitement we can have.

Okay, you want to be a part of it? Not because you'll be in our church, but because God is doing something in our midst, and you can be a part of that too. The blessing is for you. Not because RLCF will somehow have more people sitting in the chairs or anything like that.

We don't care about that. So, when we find out that somebody wants to come, some new attendee comes to the church, somebody wants to become a member, somebody says, hey, we want to move here and join your church. If there's a carnal excitement about that, then you may have this third abandonment.

But if the desire of your heart, the response of your heart is, are you interested in purity? Are you coming here because you really want to give up everything to follow Jesus? There's no selfish motivation behind it. The New Jerusalem, the church is focused on purity, not on size. And you see in Revelation 14, you know that every time Babylon is mentioned here in chapters 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, it's called Babylon the Great.

Every time. Babylon, Babylon the Great. That's like its name, Babylon the Great.

What would you think if RLCF became known in Lublin as RLCF the Great Church? That church, the big church in town. The church in town that everybody knows of. It's a dangerous thing.

I don't want to be known in the city of Lublin or in Colorado or in the United States as, oh, have you heard, do you know about that church? Let all the other churches focus on their size and their programs and all that. I want to be known in heaven. And I want to be known in hell or in the second heaven where the devil is with his hosts.

I want to be known there. They're talking about us there. They're making plans for how they can come and try to bring division and disunity and friction or false teaching into RLCF because that's the one we need to be worried about.

So Babylon focuses on size. And whereas in the church, we don't care about how many people are sitting in the chairs. It means absolutely nothing.

Do you think that the early church, persecuted as they were in the first century, were worried about how, they didn't even have chairs. They sat on the ground. Did they see an empty floor space and think, man, we need to find somebody to fill that floor space.

Because they're sitting in somebody's house and there's a little gap there. They were just thankful that there was anybody and that God could build unity among them and the spirit of God was in their midst. And sadly today, Christendom has become about these big buildings and chairs and you think about how you need to find somebody to fill that chair.

Then you fill every chair and you think, okay, now we can go to a second service. Now you're looking about filling the second service and the third service and the fourth service. And then you start a money campaign to build a bigger building and guess what, we've got four services.

So we need to start another one where we can all come together. And it's really not about all coming together because then they'll have two of those. And this is what's going on in Christendom today.

It's the spirit of Babylon. It'll creep in if we're not watchful. To know what the spirit of holiness, purity, I said.

What is holiness? I've recently been seeing holiness this way. You know, a lot of people can think holiness is, let's take a trivial example, that women shouldn't wear pants. They should only wear skirts.

Some people say that's holiness. Some people say women should never cut their hair. They should always have long hair.

That's holiness. Other people say holiness is you can never play, you shouldn't play sports because that's a worldly thing. You shouldn't watch sports.

That's a worldly thing. That's holiness. If you don't have a TV, you're holy.

What is holiness essentially? I believe, more recently, I've been thinking of it like this. Holiness is a bridal commitment to Jesus. That's really what it is.

It's such a fervent bridal commitment to Jesus as his bride that I see Jesus and I see that it's not about whether Jesus has a TV or not. The moment that thing comes on on the TV, Jesus walks away. And I'm so committed to him that I walk away because he walks away, not because of what's on the TV.

So my holiness is determined by what Jesus is doing, not some idea of, oh, you know, skirts, pants, really? But it's modest, you know. No, what does Jesus have to say? And, you know, brothers and sisters, Jesus wants to show us through the Holy Spirit what he is like. It's more than just a WWJD bracelet that became popular a few years ago.

It is a conviction of the Holy Spirit, conviction of sin and righteousness and judgment, like we're told in John 16. He will disclose to us the things of Jesus. For what purpose? That we might be holy.

That's why he is the Holy Spirit. So I see Jesus would not say that word, even though it will sound funny and it's a great joke and it comes at somebody else's expense and everybody will laugh at the joke I'm about to say that makes fun of somebody. But you say the Holy Spirit, because you're full of the Holy Spirit, says, Jesus wouldn't say that.

You're like, I am bridally, as a wife, committed to Jesus. The moment I see that he wouldn't do something or would do something or wouldn't go somewhere or would go somewhere, that's what I do. My holiness is my fervent, bridal commitment to Jesus.

Are you committed to Jesus as his bride? Then you will be holy. So no longer is you shall be holy, for I am holy, a command that I'm trying to fulfill and work hard at being. I'm saying, Lord, I'm committed to you.

Show me unholiness, impurity in my life, and I'll follow you. Where you go, I'll go. What you say, I'll say.

What you don't say, I won't say. Where you don't go, I won't go. So the focus of the church, the focus of RFTF, the focus of your home, the focus of your marriage, brothers and sisters, must be a bridal commitment to Jesus.

I'm committed to Jesus. And if you're about to watch a movie as a family or a TV program and you do a little research on it and you see, well, that's pretty good. But at the last line, you see, well, but there's this one scene where immediately what should take over is, I'm committed to Jesus as his bride.

You know what? Not even worth finding out. If the worldly person says it's got this one scene, it's not even worth me trying to find out what it's about. It's not worth it because I'm committed to Jesus.

Now, if you're careless with it, well, you shrug your shoulders at it, especially us men, leaders of the home. If we shrug our shoulders at it, the devil will find a foothold in there. Pretty soon he'll find you have the spirit of Babylon.

So Babylon's not just about size. See, it's not, the issue is not size. God has already allowed us to grow and he'll continue to allow us to grow.

That is up to him. But it must come on the basis of an emphasis on bridal commitment to Jesus. And if God causes growth on the basis of that, like he did in Acts 2, and the chapters after that, let so be it.

Then we say, welcome, here's another brother who is bridally committed to Jesus. And that's why I'm excited. Now, if they say, you know what, actually, but God's calling me to, I came to your conference, but he's calling me to raise up a pure testimony over there in Tennessee somewhere or Arizona somewhere.

Okay, that's wonderful. It's not about, hey, you should all come to Colorado. Raise up a pure testimony wherever you are, brother, sister.

It's about bridal commitment to Jesus. The second thing I want to say is that Babylon is dependent on money. You see in Revelation chapter 19, verse four, that Babylon, sorry, Revelation 17, verse four, the woman, that's Babylon, was clothed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup.

This is Babylon. Babylon's dependent on money. And they will justify it with Christian reasons.

Oluwadjie and I, on our elders mailing list, get about once every couple weeks or so, maybe once every week or so, somebody from somewhere in the world is writing to us about some need they have for the ministry. And they're saying, hey, send us some money. We need money.

And it's not just poor countries. It's rich countries, too. Go to almost any church website, you will find a domain now, prominently in yellow, highlighted.

Give to the church. Babylon's dependent on money. The church is dependent on the Holy Spirit, by contrast.

That's why we have intentionally not made it easy for you to give to RLCF. There's no donate now, use PayPal or this pal or whatever. You want to give, we say, we give you a back of the card checklist that says, what about this? Are you committed to Jesus? Have you forsaken all your possessions? Do you hate your father, mother, have you taken up your cross following the whole heart of me? Have you paid off your debts? That's what it means to follow Jesus.

Then give. I want to build a church. We want to build a church, not Babylon.

Babylon's dependent on money. The church is dependent on the Holy Spirit. Think about it.

If you were running out of money, how much would that be weighing on your mind? If you knew, especially us men, as heads of the home, you know what? I have money to make it and then I don't know. How much would you be sitting even here while I'm talking? Throughout this weekend, while you're playing volleyball or riding on the zip line, you're having fun, but the back of your mind is thinking, I got the clock ticking. I got to October and then I don't know how my kids are going to be.

That would be on your mind constantly. But my dear brothers and sisters, if we don't have that same fervent dependence on the Holy Spirit, then we could just as easily be building Babylon in our homes and in the church. If the Lord told me, your measure of the Holy Spirit is going to run out today or this week, or has run out a month ago.

Many Christians, the anointing of the Holy Spirit has run out years ago. Many pastors, many churches, the anointing of the Holy Spirit has run out a long time ago and they go on because we've got money. Which means more money in the offering.

Look at our bank account. We've got this and we can start this other thing. Parachurch ministry, now we've got coffee shop and you can have breakfast, all this stuff.

But the Holy Spirit, optional. That's Babylon. The true church of Jesus Christ.

This is a burden on my heart for many years now. Lord, if the anointing of the Holy Spirit leaves me even for a second, I want to know if the Holy Spirit departed me because I carelessly said some word, departed from me, the anointing I'm talking about. I'm not talking about being born again.

I'm talking about the anointing, the presence, the fullness of the Holy Spirit in my life has even one drop spilled out or fell out from a hole at the bottom of the bucket because of a careful word that I said. I want to know right away, Lord. I don't want to live even a second without the anointing of the Holy Spirit in my life.

Then we can build a church. Because we're dependent on that. This is a simple test.

If you knew you were running out of money, how much would that be bothering you? And if you know that you're living without the power of the Holy Spirit, how much is that bothering you? That's a simple test. Whether you have the spirit of Babylon or the spirit of Christ. Thirdly, Babylon is dependent on soul power.

Whereas the church is dependent on resurrection power. Soul power, there's two types of soul power. One is what I call emotional soul power.

This is also what a lot of churches emphasize. Long music sessions. Music goes on for an hour or so and there's a lot of great songs and a wonderful band.

Everything's tight. You've got the strobe lights. You've got the smoke coming down.

Everything's perfectly. It's like man, you were just taken up. And this is what sadly many churches are emphasizing and focusing on and using to draw people in.

And the music sounds exactly like what you would hear in a worldly concert. In fact, some of the songs, you can't even tell. The other day, the kids and I were looking at the words of a song supposedly a Christian song.

They play on Christian channels and we're like, you read the words and you think, what? No mention of anything related to Christ or Jesus or God or anything. It's still one of this, you could fit it into the Christian theology if you want, but guess what? You could fit it into the theology of any other religion and atheism just as well. And the churches are saying, well, this is how we'll draw them in.

This is how we'll draw them in. Jesus was not interested in drawing people in with some sort of half gospel and then say, hey, we'll give you half the gospel. Then we'll tell you the whole truth.

No, I'd rather you find out the whole truth right away and decide if it's worth it. But it's not worth it because it'll never be worth it later on. And Babylon, to build a church, we must never be interested in coddling people and making them somehow feel comfortable so that they'll come in, occupy a chair, and now we have to make sure that we never say anything that will offend them.

Jesus presented the whole gospel at the very beginning. He said, am I worth it? Am I worth it to you? When you know that these are the conditions? And if you see Jesus for who he is, you say, yes, Jesus, you are. Soul power is that feeling.

A lot of the music, be watchful, especially for us young people, but I think many of you parents, you're in control of what music plays in your home. Be watchful. Megan and I are very watchful, very watchful over what music plays in our home because we know the power of music to sway the emotions.

I'm thankful that that's something that my dad also raised me in being watchful over the kind of music that we listen to because we recognize the power of music subtly to affect the subconscious and to influence emotions, even if it's supposedly Christian music. Be watchful over it. The other aspect of soul power is intellectual, the intellect.

And there's a lot of churches that, okay, they see the danger of soul power, but now they're taken up with intellect and Bible studies and this cute idea and that cute idea. For at least the last couple of years, I would say us elders have been focused on ensuring that our Bible studies are not just tossing around wonderful ideas. Oh, you say this and you say this.

Oh, I think this is what this word means. This is what I was thinking about today, popcorn Bible studies where everybody says whatever comes to the top of my mind and they think that somehow that's a blessing or somehow that's spirit-filled. No.

Be watchful over the soul power of the intellect. Be watchful over teachers who can sound very fancy with their intellectual words but they lack the power of God. Paul warns about that but they use words, 2

Timothy 2. The church of Jesus Christ is emphasized as only one power and that's resurrection power.

Somebody tell me what must happen first for there to be a resurrection? Some children tell me. What must happen first? What is resurrection first of all? Coming back from the dead. So what must happen first? You must die.

The children get it. Unfortunately, many adult Christians don't. For us to have the resurrection power of God there must be death.

For us to have the resurrection power of Jesus there must be death. That's why Jesus said John 12 verse 24. You know, read John 12 sometimes.

The Greeks were the philosophers of Jesus' day came to him. They didn't come to him actually. They came to Philip and Andrew.

And Philip and Andrew being a little bit like perhaps many preachers of today thought, the Greeks are coming. We're about to get famous now. You know, here we are a small little church 12 of us and Jesus.

The Greeks are coming to us. Maybe they'll invite us to Athens and we'll get a paid trip over there and we'll have some meetings and we'll be sitting on the platform of Jesus. This is the humbug that's going on in Christendom today.

And I put myself in Philip and Andrew's mind. They come to Jesus. They say, guess what? The Greeks.

They want to hear you. Jesus says, you Greeks. He didn't address it that way but he said it to everyone.

You cannot bear fruit unless you fall into the ground and die. I mean, read John chapter 12. Philip and Andrew came and said to the Greeks that Jesus says in verse 24, truly, truly, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. So, Philip, Andrew, I'm not interested in building a gathering of people full of Greeks and so-and-so and so-and-so other person. I know Herod enjoys and wants me to come speak to him.

I'm not going to accept his invitation. But I want people who are willing to fall into the ground and die. Then we will bear fruit.

This is the church that Jesus Christ wants to build today. This is the church that we want to be a part of at RLCM. It's not focused on size but on a vital commitment to Jesus.

Not dependent on money but dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit. Not emphasizing soul power, refusing soul power, but living by resurrection power, the resurrection power of Jesus. I pray to be so.

Let's pray together. Father, I pray that you will build such a church through us here at RLCM and through the different ones listening online. That's the burden of their heart.

I pray that you will build a church through them. It's your desire to have a pure testimony in every place, Lord. And I believe you're doing that already and you will establish your work.

Thank you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/x8Wl4j3qjlo.mp4>

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