

The Secret Place

by Vlad Savchuk

This sermon emphasizes the importance of abiding in God's presence, drawing parallels between the practices of monks in the desert and the need for believers to have a 'secret place' with God. It highlights the significance of prioritizing a personal relationship with Jesus over worldly success, focusing on pleasing Him, and being fruitful in every good work.

Scripture: Luke 5:16, John 15:4, Colossians 1:10, Matthew 6:6, James 4:8, Psalm 46:10, Mark 1:35, 1 Thessalonians 4:11, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Abiding in God's Presence", "Prioritizing Personal Relationship with Jesus"

Description

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Transcript

Today I would like to continue and actually finish a series called Breathing Room, where we're talking about margin. First week I talked about the spirit of python, I believe a demonic spirit that wants to squeeze life out of us. Last time I talked about having margin in our life, and that is to have margin in our finances, to have margin in having a day off, and then have margin in our morality, meaning don't do things that cause you to be too close to the life you were delivered from.

And then today I'm going to complete the series, but honestly this message that I'm going to share with you is not a sermon, it's a message. And know the difference between a message and a sermon? A message is somebody, something the pastor says all the time, just changes the title. That's a message.

And every pastor has a message, and I have my message and that's going to be my message. A sermon is just like a sermon, so I will have both a message and a sermon, but within a sermon there is a message. It's a DNA of this house, and that is to love Jesus with all of our heart and to pursue Him with everything we have.

Our name is Hungry Jen. It's not because we're hungry for tacos, it's that we're hungry for God, but we also like tacos. Come on somebody, Taco Tuesday all the way.

Amen. The phrase Potemkin Village is named after Gregory Potemkin, who was a Russian nobleman. He was supposed to colonize Crimea, and due to failure with money issues, he couldn't colonize Crimea.

So in 1787, his queen, Empress Catherine the Great, he tried to hide his failure and actually created fake villages with happy people and farm animals that would be along the road as Catherine the Great would come and see the place. So as she would go further, this fake village would move with her, and to create this image that it's a lot of happy, excited people, prosperity and riches, but in reality it was all a fraud. And once she passed, the villages were quickly moved further down for her to see again, making it look like the area was prosperous and well populated.

Today, this phrase Potemkin Village is actually a term that is used everywhere in the world to describe when somebody has an elaborate facade designed to hide undesirable reality. It's when somebody focuses on their character, and focuses on their reputation more than they focus on their character. It's when somebody shows good sides of them and hides the bad ones behind.

You've seen that, especially maybe some of you young men or young women, you like somebody, you slid into their DMs, and then you went to meet them, and you looked at the photo, and you looked at the person, you're like, man, Photoshop skills are real. You're like, this is not the same person. Because a lot of times we have rottenness inside, but we also have good parts about us, so what we like to do is we like to show the best parts out so that people will like us, and hide the rottenness inside so that people will not see that.

And because of Instagram, because of Facebook, and because of social media, it's easier to do that today, and in fact there's a pressure to do that. And then you come to church. The challenge with church is that when you become a Christian, there is a pressure to change.

Well, first of all, you come to an environment of people who sometimes pretend to be perfect, and people who seem like, I mean, they look great, they don't smoke, they don't drink, they're happy, and so we're like, man, I need to fit in as well, and so everybody quickly becomes conformed on the outside, even when they are not transformed on the inside. I had this story in the Ukraine, um, I'm the oldest of five, so I was like the little, I ran the family when my dad and mom wasn't there, and we had a lot of fun all the time, and one of the things that when you have a large family, one of the fun things that you do is you destroy the house. You destroy everything, everything is a mess, it's just, just that's what's where you have the fun.

More mess, more fun. And so my mom would always tell us when the relatives are coming in to visit us, we had to prepare the house, and my mom, it was very important that the house looked clean to the relatives, so she can show and boast of the fact that her kids are the most cleanest and organized kids on the planet, even though we were not. So to live up to my mom's expectation, what we would do is mom would tell us, hey guys, clean up the house, clean up the house, so and so is coming, and of course we wouldn't clean the house, we would wait until she gets angry and goes, now! You know, all of you had that? And so we don't do anything until she comes in, and now when you see the anger, you see the passion, and you see, I said now! We're like, okay, we got the message, we're cleaning, and then we'll clean the whole house in 60 seconds.

Now I'm going to teach you younger children how to do that. We would take everything that you see that you shouldn't see, and hide it in the places where you can't see, like a couch. So we take all the toys and stuff it under the bed, or the bigger things, we would throw it under the couch, put some kind of a cloth over it, and so the house would be completely, completely clean.

We should actually, we probably should have started that tv show of an extreme home makeover in 60 seconds. There's just only one thing I've learned from that, is that anytime you clean something too fast, you don't actually clean it, you hide it. And many of us who come to church, we clean up our lives really, really fast, but in reality, we didn't get healed from problems, we just hid them better.

And we learn to what we call the hypocrite. In fact, the word hypocrite originally comes from the word actor. It wasn't a negative word, it was just simply a person who acted one way publicly, but was different in reality.

I always said that the best actors are not in Hollywood, they are in churches. Why? Because there's such a pressure to perform, and there is such a pressure to be good on the outside at the expense of being changed on the inside in the church. And so today, what I want to challenge each one of us is this, is that not to live a life where you sacrifice your inner life for the illusion of momentum, change life, and so other people are impressed, but in reality, on the inside, we're like those trees.

You've seen them in tri-cities, when the storm goes through our city, and the trees that are big, but have shallow root system, and they go topple, and you see this long, wide, but very shallow root system, but the tree was so big, it couldn't withstand the storm. And many people live like that, superficial, shallow, inner life, but on the outside, praise God, doing well, doing good, doing good, but all the garbage is behind the couch. All the trauma is under the bed, and then all of this stuff, guess where God lives? Behind the couch.

Guess where God lives? Under the bed. He lives in the secret, the Bible says. And those are the places we neglect first.

Those are the places we stuff with stuff, instead of building the secret place. In the Old Testament, we see the contrast of two personas. One was Rahab, and the other one was Achan.

Rahab was in Jericho, a temple prostitute, most likely, and then Achan, he was a soldier in God's army. Rahab had doom approaching her future, but Achan had a promising future. Rahab decided to hide spies, a salmon and another guy, and Achan was hiding forbidden things from Jericho, that God commended them not to take into their life.

So both were hiding something. Rahab saved her life and her family. Achan destroyed his life and his family.

Let me ask you a question. What are you hiding today? I didn't say if you are hiding, because you are, and so am I. Every person right now is hiding something, and what you're hiding is going to change your life in the next three to five years. What you're hiding today will either become tomorrow's scandal, or tomorrow's success story.

Those who are hiding today, going to school, grinding two jobs, and taking classes. Five years down the road, you see that they have their own clinic. The other person who today, secretly drinking, smoking, partying, cheating.

In five years, you will see a broken relationship. You will see a scandal. You will see a lawsuit.

You will see all of these things that follow their life, and you're like, oh wow, such a bad luck. It's not bad luck, it's bad seeds. Those seeds were put into the ground, day in and day out, and I want to encourage

you today to be like Rahab.

Hide in your secret place, prayer, fasting, and giving. Hide church attendance. Hide living holy and living pure, when nobody's watching, and just because it's not rewarded, it doesn't mean it's forgotten.

God knows every good thing you do in secret and in private, and God in heaven lives in a secret place, and he will reward those that do things in secret. He will reward your prayer life. He will reward your fasting life.

He will reward your purity life. I know nobody's seeing it. Nobody's applauding it, but God in heaven is watching it.

Come on somebody, give God some praise for the faithfulness of God, for the faithful eye of God that sees everything that we do in private. What you are hiding today will change who you will be tomorrow. If you live a secret place, in a secret place with God, your inner world will be taken care of.

If you live in a secret place with God, your roots will be deep, not just your branches will be high. God wants not only for us to be high publicly, green, but also deep privately, mature, anchored, and grounded. Amen.

Somebody say secret place. Let's go to Colossians chapter one. I want you to rise for the reading of God's word.

We're going to read together. I want you to look at the screen right behind me. Colossians 1 and 10.

One, two, three. That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. You may be seated.

That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, and that you may increase in the knowledge of God. To live in a secret place, I'm going to share with you three main things from this verse. The first one is going to be that your walk, our walk, is as important as our work.

It comes from this verse that you may walk worthy of the Lord. It's important to understand that as Christians, our identity doesn't come from our work. It comes from our walk with God.

It comes from Jesus. It comes from God. And Paul is saying that you may walk worthy of the Lord.

In the world, the focus is not on your walk. The focus is on the results you produce from work. You get promoted based on that.

You get rewarded based on that. Your walk doesn't matter in the employer. But the Bible connects our walk to our work.

How you walk affects how you work. Your walk is your life outside of your work. It's your thoughts.

It's your mind. It's who you are at home. A few days ago, as I was meeting with some people, and I told them something that in my prayer, I started to reflect that when I was younger, I was a lot more interested, and in fact, I even prayed for this, for God to make me a great leader and to make me a great preacher.

I wanted to be a great preacher, and I wanted to be a great leader. And as I started to grow in the Lord, I started to recognize that that's work. That's not my walk.

And my prayer changed to, Lord, I want to be a great follower of Jesus, then a great pastor, and I want to be a great husband, a better husband than I am a preacher, because that's my walk. My walk is what people don't see, but it's what my wife sees. And if everybody knows a great preacher, but my wife does not have a good husband, then my walk is not good.

And if my work, my sermon is not flowing from my life, it will impress people, but there will be no impartation. Amen. The Bible says that the hearts of the father be turned to their children, and it's so easy to allow your work to become more important than your walk.

I want us to have a church at Hungry Gen where husbands love their wives, not just husbands who love their work, husbands who treasure their wives, not just husbands who love the stage, because so many of us, we actually have an addiction to the spotlight and an allergy to the altar. We're allergic to home, allergic to be successful at home. We just want to be successful everywhere else instead of home.

And a lot of times we bring our home the scraps, the leftovers, and even when we're there, we're distracted all the time because everything about our life is about our work instead of our walk. And I've realized this, the world has many preachers. My wife only has one husband.

Our church has many pastors, but my wife only has one husband. Jesus has many leaders, but he's looking for followers. And I didn't sign up to be a pastor.

I first signed up to be a disciple. My walk is me being a disciple. It's me being submitted to Jesus.

It's me loving Jesus. The pastoring, the leading, and all of that, that's an outflow. That's a result of following Jesus Christ.

And I want to invite you today, in order to live in a secret place, you have to prioritize your walk more importantly than your work. Your work will give you applause. It will give you a paycheck.

It will give you recognition. Your walk is quiet, is silent. But you know what happens with your walk? It's when you die, people say things about you.

They don't talk about your work. They talk about your walk. It's children.

It's a spouse. They're impacted by your walk with them and with God. As important as our ministries are, our relationships with people that are closest to us, our family, is of prior importance.

What's so beautiful today, right after the first service, one of our young men who's singing right here, and his wife is pregnant, you know, and he's singing, and I see him going, picking up the kids with his wife, walking his wife, because he's serving on the second service, walking his wife to the car and letting her go. As they go into the service, he's coming back to serve here at the second service. And that's the kind of men and women of God we want to build, who love their families, who are walking with God, not just working for God.

Come on somebody. Amen. Let's give the Lord a clap offering.

I want you to see in 1 Corinthians, in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 12, it says, Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw, and you don't have this verse on the screen, but I'm going to read it, each one's work will become clear, for the day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire. So Paul is telling it to workers, people who are working for God. And

everyone in here is a worker for God.

Paul is saying our foundation is Jesus. Somebody say Jesus. He's our foundation.

We build on Jesus. Of course we also build for Jesus. Right? Everything we do is for the Lord.

We don't do it for ourselves. But Paul says something here that's very intriguing. He says that we can build on Jesus, for Jesus, with different materials.

And he gives us six materials, but they're really broken down into two categories. Gold, silver, and precious stones is one category. Wood, hay, and straw is the other category.

Now track with me. Gold, silver, and precious stones are found underground. Somebody say underground.

Meaning you don't see it walking on the street. You don't see gold laying. You have to dig for it.

Wood, hay, and straw is always found on the ground. Gold, silver, and precious stones are always found in large quantities, small quantities. Wood, hay, and straw is found in large quantities.

Gold, silver, and precious stones are extremely expensive. And every husband in here said amen. It's way easier to buy a two by four than a diamond ring.

Ladies, if gold, silver, precious stone will be as cheap as a two by four, we would create a box for you in diamonds. But we can't. That's why those little rings are so tiny and so small.

But our houses have a lot of wood and have a lot of plywood and all of the wood, hay, and straw. Well, the cows probably have straw. I hope you don't have straw in your house.

Gold, silver, and precious stones not only are found in small quantities, they're expensive, but they're also rare. Wood, hay, and straw is extremely common. But there's one more thing that separates gold, silver, and precious stones, wood, hay, and straw.

Is you put gold, silver, and precious stones through the fire and they come out more pure and more expensive. You put wood, hay, and straw through the fire and what you get is an insurance claim. Everything goes into ashes.

So Paul is saying Christians can build on Jesus, for Jesus, without Jesus. Meaning, they're building their life not from things from underground, meaning private devotion to God. They're not building something that costs them.

Like David says, I won't offer anything to God that costs me nothing. They're building things that are just, they come easy, just very casual, superficial Christianity. Yeah, anything that costs me, that's not for me.

That's, that's, that the grace of God took care of that. All I gotta do is just, my life is just easy. They're building their life in such a way that it's very common.

It's very casual. Everybody lives like that. And then this is the big thing.

When the fire comes, they're burned to ashes instead of purified and cleansed by it. If your Christian life is not built, not only on Jesus, but with the secret place, with Jesus, underground, something that's precious,

something that's costly, something that is not common but rare, fire comes and you come out more precious, more pure. Difficulties come and you don't, those things don't throw you out of the church, out of relationship with Jesus.

They actually anchor you deeper. Why? Because your life wasn't built just on Jesus. It was built for Jesus.

But not only for Jesus, it was built with Jesus. Walk is as important as the work we do. You know, there are trees that live off the water from the root, that gets the roots collect.

And there are some that only live from the water that comes from the sky, the rain. And trees, like a palm tree, can survive in the desert when there is no rain because its root system receives water from underground. There are Christians who live like that.

They can come to church service and even if they don't feel anything, they still flourishing in God because they live their life every day connected to Jesus. They don't depend on the pastor's sermon and the worship team because the root system is connected Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, connected to God's word, connected to worship, connected to the presence of Jesus. And it could be a dry wilderness Sahara around them.

Their finances might go through wilderness, their relationship might go through hard stuff, but they are fresh and they are flourishing. Not because there's a lot of rain, but because there's a lot of rivers of water their roots are touching. I don't want our church to be built on Sunday morning experience.

Sunday should be a celebration. Sunday should be a bonus, but every day you're connecting to the water that you have access to. If you live from Sunday to Sunday and that's the only time you connect with God, I want to tell you something, you will make it in the dry seasons of life.

When the fire comes, when the sickness comes, when the challenges come, the devil will take you out. And you will go from church to church to say I'm not getting fed. You know the only time I came to my mom and I said I'm not getting fed is when I was a toddler.

Because when I got older, this is what my mom told me, there is a fridge, do you need directions there? And when you get to the fridge, open it and feed yourself. When you're a spiritual toddler, it's okay to live off of Sundays, but God wants to mature us so that we walk with him every single day and we don't depend. We love Sundays, but we live off of Mondays through Saturdays in our intimacy with God.

I come to Sunday morning not so that I can receive. I receive every day from Sunday morning. I receive when I see people meet Jesus.

I receive when we worship. I receive when somebody's speaking the word even if I'm not preaching. But if I don't receive on Sunday, I receive every single day because my roots are connected to Jesus that lives with me and this Jesus lives with you.

And I want to challenge you to build a secret place so you can walk with God. Somebody say this with me, say my walk is as important as my work. Drop that in the chat right now.

But I want you to notice in Colossians 1 and verse 10, Paul is saying this, that you may walk worthy. Somebody say walk worthy. And secondly, he says fully pleasing.

Somebody say fully pleasing. The second thing is that we have to discover the win God has decided. Discover the win that God had decided.

We don't decide our win. We discover our win. The world wants you to have a win.

Win the world. Win trophies. Win, get a degree.

For some of us grew up in a family where if you're educated, you're a winner. Some of us grew up in the families where you have a position in the community like a principal of a high school, a teacher, or a businessman, you are respectable winner. Some of us grew up in a family where if you're a pastor, you're an evangelist, somewhere that has to do in the church.

What you have in the marketplace doesn't matter. But if you have a position in the church or somewhere in the district, you're the winner. Others of us grew up where it's all about business.

If you're a successful businessman, you have a nice house, a nice boat, an RV, and you got deals and contracts, and every businessman in town knows you. You belong to some kind of a club over here that hangs out and plays golf. That's how you are a winner.

Others of us, we grew up rejected. And maybe our father never saw value in us. So our win is to prove our dad wrong.

Some of us in here, in this room, we had a person who bullied us and made fun of us. So our win is to beat them and be better at them. And therefore we overcompensate by wearing things.

We overcompensate by buying things that are nicer and shinier, not because we like them. It's because of what they mean. They make us a winner.

Your win decides your drive. What is your win? So in basketball to win, you have to score more points than the other team. In football, the win is slightly different.

You wear the pigskin, carry the pigskin across the touchdown, the ball. In other aspects of sports, wins are different. What is your win? What would it mean for you to be a winner? Getting married, is that your win? Healthy kids, is that the win? A good job where they like me and appreciate me and I have more than enough, is that the win? A husband that loves me or a wife that loves me, is that the win? Getting a master's degree and getting a job that is respectable in the community, is that the win? Having a YouTube channel, being a blogger, an author, I have this dream to touch the world, is that the win? What is your win? Have you defined it? Now I know when we go to school, they say, what is your dream? That's really, they're trying to plant the seed so you can have a win in your mind.

Now someone is like, you're just kind of shooting whatever lands anywhere. You're like, I'm just, I'm just a free bird. I just like to have life.

My win, happy. If I can be happy, I'm a winner. Good.

As a human being, as a Christian, what should your win be? Why is that important? It will determine the drive and the pace of your life. And it will determine whether you will go to the secret place out of pastor preaching. Yeah, I haven't been praying.

I got to pray. It's a Christian thing to do. To, without secret place, I actually don't know if I am winning or not winning.

Sometime this year, the Lord challenged me about this, what I'm just sharing with you. And he asked me this question in prayer. He said, what is your win Vlad? And I said, Jesus, my win.

Is to reach the world. I just want to see many people saved. Secondly, I want to reach my potential.

Like you created me with potential, right Lord? It says in your word. I want to maximize the potential. And according to Myles Monroe, I know it's not in the Bible, but one of your servants, he said to die empty.

And that's my win. I want to produce a lot of books. I want to release a lot of videos.

I want to preach many sermons. I want to have a large church. I just want to impact the world.

And I also don't want to forsake my family while doing it. And he said, is that your win? I said, well, that's for you Lord. I'm not asking to build my name.

Just all for you. It's your words just to go and tell the world, my disciples. I mean, how are you planning me to do that if I don't make this my win? And I remember the Lord in prayer challenged me with this.

He said, was that my win when I was underserved? Because he says, if it was, according to your win, I failed. I didn't travel very far. He says, you traveled already further than I did.

I didn't write a book. You already have five. I didn't get married.

You did. I didn't have biological children. And at 33, I died by crucifixion.

One of the worst ways to die at the time. But he says, I was able to tell my father in John chapter 17, where Jesus said this in John chapter 17, that I have glorified you on earth and I have finished the work which you had given me to do. Meaning, I won.

At 33, he didn't get any of the things that I'm thinking I should accomplish. And that prayer, the Lord changed my goalpost. And he said, from now on, I want you to set your win as to fully please me.

Not to reach the world. He says, I will empower you to reach more people than you can. But you can't reach the whole world.

You're going to play a small part. Other people will also play a part. He said, you will never reach the whole world.

You will reach your portion. And then when you finish your assignment, somebody else will come. Other people will come.

Your work will be finishable. But my work will continue. Your win is not to be rich.

Your win is not to be famous. And your win is not to be healthy. Nor is your win to be happy.

Your win is not to be educated. There's nothing wrong with education. I'm currently pursuing bachelors.

It's important. Your win is not to fulfill all of your dreams. I'm not against it.

That's important. But that's not my win. My win is to fully please the Lord.

That takes the pressure off. That's why I need to be in a secret place regularly to keep on checking. Am I pleasing him or not? If my win is to be successful, I don't need a secret place.

Secret place is a distraction. But if my win is to be pleasing to Jesus, guess what begins to happen? I need to check in every single day to see how am I doing on the score. Am I winning or am I losing? Many of us, the reason why we can't live a life of prayer, for this one reason, our win has been decided by us instead of discovered by us and decided by him.

Hebrews chapter 12, verse 1, it says, we're surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. Let us lay aside every weight and sin that easily ensnares us. And then it says, let us run the race.

Somebody say, run the race. Come on, everybody say, run the race. In the second section, say, run the race with endurance.

And you would think it would say, look to Jose who's running next to you. Is he faster? Compare your life with your best friend that you went to college. Look at them.

They already got two kids and you're not even married. Compare to the other person. Look, look at them.

Look at how many followers they have. Look at how many cell groups they have. Look at how spiritual they are.

And you're still in whatever that you're doing. The Bible doesn't say that. The Bible says, we run the race set before us by God, looking, verse 2, looking unto Jesus.

Why I have to have a secret place? Because my win is to please him. And I need to constantly be aware. Am I pleasing him today? Am I not pleasing him today? So it has very little to do, am I winning in the eyes of men? It has very little to do, am I pleasing my dad's desires and dreams to be this kind of a person? It has to do with, am I fully pleasing Jesus? When pleasing Jesus is my win in life, I have to pray every day to know how am I doing and what am I supposed to be doing? If my win is to be successful, prayer will become a hindrance.

Prayer will become a distraction. Why? Because I don't have time. And this prayer thing is just keeping me guilty.

I don't like it. But if my win is to please Jesus, prayer is actually the only way I know how am I doing. It's a scorecard.

I check in with the Lord every day. Lord, how am I doing? Am I fulfilling the assignment you're giving that to me? Are you with me? Number three, abiding leads to abounding. I want you to notice in Colossians, it says that you may walk worthy.

Somebody say walk worthy. Somebody say fully pleasing. And then the third thing I want you to notice is being fruitful.

Somebody say being fruitful and say in every work. So we walk, we are fully pleasing, and lastly is we are fruitful in every good work. Now I want you to notice that work is something that is done by us.

But Paul uses this phrase fruitful in every work. Now fruit is something that is done by living beings. For example, a vineyard produces fruit.

An iPhone cannot produce fruit. An AI cannot produce fruit. They cannot produce because only life produces fruit.

Machines can produce work. Life produces fruit. And what God is in here saying is that you are not a human doing, you are a human being.

That means that you are not someone that does. That's not who you are. You are who God says you are.

You have a human being who does human doings, but not the other way around. Machines are different than humans. We can make machines, but machines don't have life.

Machines have power, need power to operate. Machines do not know seasons and do not have cycles. They work all the time.

We have seasons and cycles. A woman cannot give birth every day, even if she wants to have a lot of children. Why? Because there are cycles.

Trees produce at a particular time and then there's a cold season. There's nothing there and they produce in cycles. Machines find their value from their work.

If a machine stops producing, you don't carry it as some kind of a souvenir. I have an iPhone in my house that doesn't work. I don't carry it with me for emotional support.

I don't carry it with me so that that iPhone will not get hurt. No, I leave that sucker and then when I have creative ideas that involves a hammer and breaking glass, I use that iPhone for breaking stuff and I just break it or toss it somewhere. Why? Because it's worth.

It's connected to its work. If it's not working, it's worthless. Human beings are not like that.

That's why you can have a blind person, deaf person, you can have a person that's paralyzed and they are as worth of value as the one who can see, walk and hear. That's why we don't kill babies just because they are, they have a deformity or just because they are crippled. That's why when a person walks in and whether they are elderly or a young person that is paralyzed, they're as valuable, they're as precious in the eyes of God and in the eyes of human beings as the one that can work, they can walk and they can do that.

Why? Because our worth is not connected to our ability. It's connected to his love. Come on somebody.

Somebody say, I'm not a machine. Come on, say a little louder. Say, I'm not a machine.

I'm a human being. With the rise of AI, we need to remind ourselves. But see some of us live like machines, nonstop.

That's why the Bible doesn't say Colossians 1.10, be successful in every good work. It says be fruitful. Say this, fruitful, fruitful in every good work.

Fruit comes from abiding. Success comes from working. And the Bible connects garden with the factory.

Two worlds combined. That means my work flows from my worship. I am fruitful.

I'm not successful. See people will call it success. I call it fruit.

People say you're lucky. No, I'm fruitful. Oh wow, you're hashtag blessed.

No, hashtag fruitful. Because I abide and therefore I abound. So my abounding is directly connected to my abiding.

And if I'm not abounding, all I have to do is to abide more and then I will have fruit, more fruit, much fruit and the fruit will remain. I will abound in my family. I will abound in my business.

I will abound in my health. I will abound in my ministry. Why? Because I abide in Jesus.

Come on some. Amen. I want to encourage you with that today.

In the beginning when Christianity started, when the new faith, it was called the way started. Christians were persecuted. Christians were thrown to the lions.

First two centuries, the model Christian that everybody honored and inspired to be was a martyr. It was a bishop dragged in the Colosseum to be eaten by lions. Today one of the model Christians, some of us we watch them on TV, read their books, we're like oh this speaker, this pastor, I want to meet him.

That's the man of God. But first and second century, the model Christian was the one that was martyred. The moment the second century ended, the persecution subsided.

It was until Constantine came in. The persecution was still off and on. But at the end of the second century, a shift began to take place.

And because there was less persecutions, Christians become conformed to the culture. Some became popular, some became famous for being Christians. And Christianity took a shift.

The model Christian was no longer a martyr. It was a monk. A person who would leave everyday life, go into the Egyptian desert, live in the cave for years, and seek God.

And in fact, those were the Christians that were viewed as the Christians, the people you want to be like. In Christianity, everybody aspired. Of course, not everybody could do that.

One of them was Abba Arsenius. He was a well-educated Roman who worked in the Senate. He lived in the court of Emperor Theodosius.

He actually was a tutor for the Emperor's sons. One day he prayed this prayer, Lord, lead me in the way of salvation. And the voice came back to him saying, Arsenius, flee from the world and you will be saved.

Having sailed secretly from Rome to Alexandria, having withdrawn to a solitary life in the desert, Arsenius prayed again, Lord, lead me in the way of salvation. And again he heard a voice saying, Arsenius, flee, be silent, pray always, for these are the sources of sinlessness. And from third century onwards, something that morphed into and is still practiced heavily in the Catholic Church of monasteries, monks, and nuns.

They lived by three rules. The wisdom of the wilderness has three simple steps, solitude, silence, and prayer. Now, when Martin Luther came in 16th century, one of the first things that Martin Luther did is he

opposed that.

And as Protestants, we are results of that. He pretty much shut down the idea of monasteries and said, that's just escaping from this world, we're called to be in this world. And Martin Luther had a point.

But I think where the balance is, is somewhere in between two worlds. One of the first Christian monks who was born in 250 in the village of Coma, inherited a large amount of wealth. His name was Anthony the Great.

He is called the Desert Father. He heard the message that Jesus told a young rich ruler to give all his money away and follow Jesus. Anthony the Great takes all of his possessions and gives them away and feels the call of Jesus to go into the desert and starts to live in the cave.

He lived there for years and years. He had physically demons come into the cave trying to torment him and he would fight them. He would experience temptation from wild beasts trying to attack him.

And he would experience all kinds of temptations and purification would come. And then God begins to use Anthony the Great to impact the church. People would come to him to receive wisdom and guidance and prayers, healings and deliverances.

And he actually pioneered this whole thing that if you want to get closer to Jesus, flee the world, meaning drop everything you're doing. You run quickly to a desert or a cave. You be silent there, meaning shut up.

Don't talk until God speaks, until all the impurities come up. And then you pray. And you keep doing this, keep doing this, keep doing this until everything about you dies and everything about God comes back to life.

Now some of you are like, man this is awesome. And others of you are like, this is crazy. What do we do? Well the amazing part is you're already in the desert.

Some of you did not get that. Some of you watching alive is like, what does he mean? We live in the desert. Tri-Cities is like a desert.

What do you do as Christian? I believe that God wants us to live like monks in the marketplace. There's a photo of a happy monk and a nun walking through the streets. That's how God wants us to live.

Where we live like Jesus did. The Bible says he often, in Luke chapter 5, he often withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed. Jesus didn't leave the ministry to be in the desert.

But he would leave the ministry regularly to be in the desert. And there he would receive new assignments, new encouragements. And out of that place he lived.

God wants us to go deep so we can go wide. God wants us to live out of a place of the desert, of the wilderness, where it's quiet, where we hear his voice, where we're alone with God, where there's no notifications and all kinds of bing, bing, bing, bing, bing and all kinds of distractions. And you may say, Vlad, that's not possible in my family.

I do believe that every one of us can make a priority to find our own desert every day or every other day to spend time with God. When one preacher or one author went to Mother Teresa of Kolkata, she said the following, spend one hour a day in adoration of your Lord and never do anything you know is wrong and

you will be all right. If we don't abide, if we don't prioritize our secret place, three things will happen.

Number one, we'll be dying on the inside. Number two, people around us, closest people to us, which is our family, will feel deprived. Something like we're missing from home, we're missing from their lives.

And that's what a lot of times children of people who are businessmen in ministry, just busy in life, will say this, I had a dad, but I also didn't have one. He was there, but he also wasn't there. Why? Because we're not present.

If we don't experience God's presence, it's very difficult to be present. We're always on the go, always never present, because we're not experiencing His presence that can make us be present to our families. And thirdly, is we grieve the Holy Spirit.

Even if you would say, yeah, I don't care about what I feel inside, I could be empty, I'm fine. And maybe you don't have a family, you're just a college student, you're busy with life, running 300 miles per hour, pretty much you live on caffeine and more caffeine. You're trying to finish your school as fast as possible, stay out of debt, all of that is completely fine, I understand that that's a season.

But there is a God who loves you. And love requires, wants fellowship. Love wants a connection.

Love wants to have a communion. For those of you who ever been in love, or you fell in love, do you remember the pain you felt not being able to talk to that person? Just not being able to see them? Or do you remember the rejection you felt when that person didn't reciprocate that love to you? You loved them and they said, the pain, the ache, the hurt is so deep. Imagine God of universe who loves you, wants to spend time with you.

And please don't have this view of God, that God is just this lonely person sitting and nobody will talk to him. He'll come and say, oh daddy God, I just want to talk to you. I know you've been so lonely.

Nobody's talking to you. I'm just here to make you feel good about yourself. No, no, no, no, no.

God is self-existent. He doesn't need us. But God loves us.

And as a loving creator, he enjoys our company, enjoys the fellowship with us. And it has very little to do with God's need. It's with God's love for us.

That's why his first commandment he gave to us is not, thou shall go to church on Sunday, though that's important. He said, thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, all thy mind, and all thy soul. Meaning God says, listen, do you really want to know what's really important to me? Is that you love me because I love you.

And when you love somebody, you spend time with them. You make time for them. Why? Because you love them.

Church, our desire at Hungry Gen that every person loves Jesus, loves to pray because they love Jesus. We take time to fast and pray so that we can be recalibrated to the love of Jesus, to the love for Jesus. Out of that love, our inner world gets filled.

Out of that love, we walk slowly as we lead our families and as we lead businesses and as we are successful, fruitful in every good work. We live our life fully pleasing to him and our walk is as important as

our work because we have a secret place. And as we spend time in a secret place, we begin to abound because we abide.

If this was a blessing to you, would you let me know in the comments below what stood out to you from this message? What are you taking home with you from this message? Also if you enjoy these messages, would you help us and hit thumbs up to this video and subscribe to our channel so you can get new videos every single week delivered to you on your YouTube app. If you go to hungrygen.com forward slash sermons, you'll actually be able to download the transcript, the notes and the quotes of this sermon and the rest of all of our sermons free of charge. Until next time.

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