

A Christ Like Character

by William MacDonald

The Holy Spirit is grieved by individual Christians making improper choices, not by things like music, and true healing is of God, not satanic or demonic.

Duration: 41:00

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 16:14, Acts 5:16, James 5:14

Topics: "Christ Likeness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a powerful story about a man who led the attack on Pearl Harbor but later became a follower of Jesus. The preacher emphasizes the transformative power of love and how it conquers all. He also discusses the importance of joy and peace that come from a relationship with God, regardless of earthly circumstances. The preacher highlights the ministry of the Holy Spirit in glorifying Jesus and contrasts it with the prevalent focus on self in today's evangelical world.

Transcript

We have a couple of questions that we don't want to miss. I see there are more here than I knew about, so we might leave some for tomorrow. Here's a question, does contemporary Christian music grieve the Holy Spirit? I've asked Brother Jeff if he would speak to this.

I value his judgment on it, and I think you will too. So Jeff, do you want to handle that? Well, I was thinking about it. Let me very quickly and incompletely try to address that question.

First of all, you've got to ask, what does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit? Well, I'll tell you, it doesn't mean that you just don't like it, because there's a difference between man's spirit and God's spirit, and the spirit we're grieving is God's spirit, not our own. So if you just don't like it for one reason or the other, that's not grieving the Holy Spirit. That may be grieving your spirit.

And in view of that, I think you all should examine your motives for rejecting certain types of music. Maybe it's bias, okay? That's something just to think about. I could go into that.

Now, the Holy Spirit is grieved by people, not by things. Music is a thing, if I can call it that, an art form, but it's not a person. The Holy Spirit is grieved by individual Christians making improper choices in their Christian life.

That's what grieves the Holy Spirit. And the place it's mentioned in Scripture is Ephesians 4, verse 30. Verse 29 says, Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification, according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath, etc. So there it mentions unwholesome words as things that grieve the Holy Spirit.

And I'm sure there are many other things as well, wouldn't there be, that grieve the Holy Spirit? So music doesn't grieve the Holy Spirit, but Christians listening to the wrong types of music grieve the Holy Spirit. Does that make sense? There's a distinction there I think we need to make. Okay, now the next question you'd have to ask is whether certain musical styles are inherently evil, and hence should never be listened to.

That question is tossed around all over the place. I'm not going to answer it, because I don't think you can back any answer scripturally. I don't feel that it's mentioned.

So I have a tendency to lean towards the area where certain are, only because they were written for certain purposes. Like I was talking to Brother MacDonald about jitterbug music. Well you couldn't take a jitterbug music and put Christian lyrics to it, because it's still jitterbug music.

You know I'm speaking maybe to, I don't even know what jitterbug music is. But any kind of music that is associated with some secular something, whatever it might be. So there are many things like that.

So I don't think styles are inherently evil, although some through association might be off limits for Christian adaptation, if that makes sense. So I think what you need to look at is the lyrics, because you can't really come up with any conclusions from music. So lyrics are the heart of the matter.

And I think a lyric which is not true, or which treats you, he would grieve the Holy Spirit. Why? Because the Holy Spirit wants truth in the innermost being. He wants us to walk uprightly as a witness to the world.

So those types of music would grieve the Holy Spirit, I think so. And for instance, just to bring it home, there's a group that's very popular by the name of Stryper. They're a heavy metal Christian band.

A very popular band. And there's a lyric in one of their songs that says, no matter how we look, we'll always praise his name. If you can hear it.

You really have to listen for a while to get it. But it does say that, no matter how we look, we'll always praise his name. And of course they dress up in tight outfits and have the garb and the look of any secular heavy metal band.

Well, that sounds real good with freedom and all of that. But in the Bible it says, Paul writing to Timothy, it says, let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example to those who believe. So it does matter how you look, doesn't it? So that verse is untrue.

You need to look a certain way. No matter how we look, we'll always praise the famous Paul. If you're listening to that music, you may be grieving the Holy Spirit.

I hope that helps answer the question. There's another question here. Actually, it's twofold.

What about praying in tongues in the privacy of your own home? Well, I feel what happens in the privacy of a man's home is really none of my business. And I think that there are constitutional guarantees of his rights. Jim is just grimacing.

But it says, in the laying on of hands to receive the fullness of the Spirit. What about the laying on of hands to receive the fullness of the Spirit? Well, I try to emphasize in a previous meeting that the fullness of the Spirit is a command to be obeyed and there are conditions to be met. It isn't something that you get by the laying on of hands or even by praying for it.

Although you don't hurt yourself by praying. But, you remember we said that you wanted to be filled with the word of Christ. If you wanted to be filled with the Spirit, if you wanted to know the fullness of the Spirit, you had to keep short accounts with God, confessing and forsaking sin.

You had to live in a state of yielding to the Lord. The fullness of the Spirit is a moment-by-moment walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not something you get by the laying on of hands or even by praying for it.

Well, there are a couple of more questions, but I think we'll leave them for tomorrow. We're not trying to avoid them. They're just thinking of the time.

I'd like to review the material I went over on healing this morning. This is the last part of our discussion on gifts of the Spirit. We'll be finishing gifts of the Spirit and moving on to other ministries of the Holy Spirit.

A balanced biblical view on healing. We mentioned that in a general way, all sickness in the world is a result of sin coming into the world. We mentioned that there would be no sickness in the world if sin had never entered.

We're not quite ready for that yet. Sometimes sickness is a direct result of sin in a person's life. We mentioned the passage in 1 Corinthians 11:30 where people coming to the Lord suffer with unjudged sin in their lives and are subject to the discipline of God.

We mentioned that alcoholism produces disease, smoking, sexual immorality, and even emotional stress. Worry. Worry is a sin.

Did you know that? A mother up in Lake Geneva said, I say to my family, why don't you share the worrying with me? I have to do it all myself. Worry is a sin. It denies the love of God.

It says He doesn't care. It denies the wisdom of God. It says He doesn't know what He's doing.

It denies the power of God. It says He's not able to deliver me from the thing that causes me to worry. You will never get delivered from worry if you get down on your knees and confess it as sin.

And worry affects you physically. It doesn't solve problems, but it sure creates them. A British medical journal said once that there's not a tissue in the human body wholly removed from the spirit.

Think of that. There's not a tissue in the human body wholly removed from the spirit. What affects your spirit? What affects your soul? It affects your body as well.

It has to do with your general health. Sometimes sickness is a direct result of sin in a person's life. But not all sickness is.

And we gave six examples from the scripture where sickness was not a result of sin. The woman who had the curvature of the spine, it was attributed to Satan, bowed down to Satan by Satan all these 18 years. Paul's thorn in the flesh was certainly not the result of his sins.

It was the messenger of Satan to buffet him. Job's illness. If ever there was a man whose illness was not the result of sin, it was Job testified by God to be the most righteous man on the earth at that time.

The blind man, the man born blind. It wasn't because of his sins that he was born blind. It couldn't have been before he was born.

The Jews didn't believe in a previous incarnation. The papadigus, he was critically ill, nigh unto death. Why? For the work of the ministry.

Pouring himself out for the work of the ministry and gave in 3 John 2. Spiritually healthy, but not physically. Then we mentioned that God healed. God can and does heal.

And all true healing is of God. Notice I say, all true healing is of God. There is demonic healing.

There is satanic healing. I remember Trifon Tellier-Dugu coming back from France and telling us that more people go to spiritist healers in France than go to medical doctors. And a mother went to one of these spirit healers one time and he noticed a spot on the child's eye.

And he said to her, your boy has a spot on his eye. And she said, I know. He said, would you like me to remove it? She said, OK.

He removed it. He went through his incantations, whatever he did, and the spot disappeared. A little while later, the little fellow developed cancer of the eye.

The cancer was up in the back of the eye. She went to a doctor this time and he said, did you go to a spiritist healer? And she said, yes. Well, he said he didn't heal it.

The spot went around to the back of his eye and became a cancer and there's nothing he can do. So there is such a thing as satanic healing in the world today. If you don't believe it, go to France.

But all true healing is by God. Sometimes he heals by natural bodily processes. The body itself has marvelous recuperative powers.

Sometimes he heals through physicians, medicine, and surgery. Some of you have experienced that this week here at the camp. And sometimes he heals miraculously.

And there are illustrations and instances of this going on all the time. But it's not always God's will to heal. We mentioned that Paul left Trophimus at Miletus sick.

God didn't remove Paul's thorn in the flesh. And even today, if he healed all the time, some people would never die. But everybody dies sooner or later if the Lord doesn't come.

Healing is not something we can demand from God. We are entitled to go before him and ask him to heal. But it must be in his will.

While it is true that healing was in the atonement, not all benefits of the atonement are ours yet. The glorified body isn't ours, and complete bodily healing is not ours yet either. It's not fair to say that when we

fail to get healed that it's because of our lack of faith.

I should just pause to say this. People don't understand. People think if you just believe a thing strong enough, it will come to pass.

There's no biblical basis for that. Faith must be founded upon some word of God, some promise of God, some revelation of God. I don't know how I can emphasize that strongly enough.

Faith isn't just believing on your own that something is going to happen without having some word from God to rest on. Faith demands the surest evidence and finds it in the word of God. In a particular situation, God may convey a promise to you maybe that a loved one is going to get well.

If God really conveys it, the loved one will get well. And you can have faith, but you can't have faith in every case and think that if you just believe hard enough, it will come to pass. We mentioned the passage in James chapter 5 where the prayer of faith saves the sick.

The prayer of faith there is based upon the promise of God that if the man confesses his sin to the elders, they anoint him with oil and pray over him, he will get well. That's the prayer of faith. It's based upon a promise of God.

We close this morning by asking the question, Are the modern faith healing campaigns scriptural? Let me point out six differences between New Testament experience and the modern faith healing campaign. First of all, the Lord Jesus healed all that were brought to him. Matthew chapter 8 verse 16.

Matthew chapter 8 verse 16. When even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with demons, and he cast out the spirits with the word and healed all that were sick. My, that's wonderful, isn't it? Just think of the Lord Jesus coming into a district and sickness in that district was abolished while he was there.

And on one occasion in the book of Acts, Acts chapter 5 verse 16, the apostles healed all that were brought to them. Acts chapter 5 verse 16. There came also a multitude out of the cities round unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folk and them that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they healed every one.

Marvelous, isn't it? That's the first thing. Secondly, Christ's cures were instantaneous, not gradual, in all but one case. In one case of the healing of the blind man, it was gradual.

But generally speaking, Christ's cures were instantaneous, not gradual. They were complete, not partial, and they were permanent, not temporary. There was a real cure.

Three, when the Lord Jesus sent forth his disciples, he asked them to heal freely. Freely ye have received, freely give. There was no dollar sign in his healing campaigns or in the disciples' healing campaigns.

One of the curses of the modern evangelical world is the terrible scramble for money. One faith healer was recently exposed on television. The man who exposed him would ask, how much did he get? The answer was \$11 million a year, and most of it tax exempt.

Doesn't read like the New Testament to me. I often say this, it would be interesting to see how much Christian work would go on tomorrow if the dollar could somehow be taken out of it. It would be very interesting.

It's really bringing reproach on the name of the Lord Jesus. You hear the world say, all the church wants is your money. And they've got every right in the world to say it, don't they? Because the church certainly gives that impression to the world today.

Jesus said, freely ye have received, freely give. Matthew 10, verse 8. Faith healers do not live longer on the average than any other people. They wear eyeglasses, dentures, and even hearing aids.

I don't know how many of you watched on television recently when a faith healer was exposed. First of all, you saw him leaving. And he said, as much as I have a revelation from the Lord, there's a man named Harry here tonight.

Harry, are you here, Harry? Harry, you live at 3644 Foothill Boulevard, don't you? And Mrs. Harry starts to weep at this marvelous revelation. How did he know where they lived? And he says, you have eye trouble, and your wife has eye trouble too. So the dear couple come and he puts his hands on their eyes and pushes them down into a chair.

I do not know the significance of the latter part, but it was actually a push. He pushed them down into the chair. Healed.

Exposed. Then the expose. The man exposing them had gone to visit this man privately and noticed he had a hearing aid in his ear.

Well, that's funny for a healer to be deaf. Why does he have a hearing aid in his ear? And then they bring it all out on TV. Before the meeting, Mrs. Faith Healer goes throughout the audience.

And she meets the man and she says, did you come here for healing? Yes. What is your name? My name is Harry. Please fill out this card for me.

The card asks for his name and address and other details. What's the trouble with him? She goes through the audience and gets all this information. When the meeting starts, Mrs. Faith Healer is behind the scenes broadcasting on 38 megahertz.

And he's picking it up in the earphone, in the ear hearing aid. And she says, the next man is Harry. And he says, there's a man here tonight named Harry.

And she says, he lives at 3644 Foothill. And he says, you live at 3644 Foothill, don't you? And the whole thing is exposed as a fake. And it's all done in the name of Jesus.

Bringing reproach on the name of the Lord. Is that what you read in the New Testament? It's not what I read in the New Testament. Another difference, Faith Healers call for the sick to come.

In James 5.14, the sick person is to call for the elders. Very obvious. And finally, more is demanded from the patients today and less from the healer than in the days of the Lord.

Incidentally, the Lord was always saying to the disciples, those around him, Oh ye of little faith, of little faith. So we might ask the question, is there any harm in the modern healing campaign? And I just told you the harm. On the same program it told about an Australian healer.

And he had a van, and he carried around in the van 50 wheelchairs. And they would go to this great healing campaign, and here's a man coming in with a cane. And they take his cane and tell him to sit in a

wheelchair, and they wheel him in the wheelchair.

Another lady comes in, and she's on crutches. And they take away her crutches and put her in a wheelchair and wheel her in. When the healing starts, he says to the man who had the cane, stand up on your feet.

And the man stands up on his feet. He was standing on his feet when he came in, before they sat him down in the wheelchair. He carried 50 wheelchairs around in his own van.

But if a mechanized wheelchair comes in, they don't touch it. If a person comes in with a mechanized wheelchair, it's a very serious case. They don't do anything with him.

Reproach brought on the name of the Lord. Of course, some have been told to throw away their crutches, and medicines have suffered irreparable injury, and in some cases have died, leading to million-dollar lawsuits. And thousands who go to be healed and don't get healed judge the Lord by that failure and their turn from the faith.

Is all healing divine? And the answer is no, not all healing is divine. There is satanic healing. One of Satan's deceptions is to imitate the work of God.

And he has power to heal and to perform other miracles. Notice Matthew 7, 21-23. Matthew 7, 21 says, Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? Notice, And then will I prophesy unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, depart from me that work iniquity. In other words, these people have performed miracles in the name of Jesus, but not by the power of Jesus.

They have done it by satanic power, and he says to me, depart from me, I never knew you. So much for healing. Let's go on to some of the other ministries of the Lord Jesus.

He not only gives gifts, he produces the fruit of holiness, the Holy Spirit. He produces the fruit of holiness. Galatians chapter 5. Galatians chapter 5, verses 22 to 23.

It says, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law. This is the fruit of the Spirit.

Do you know what it is? It's a Christlike character. This is a ministry of the Holy Spirit to produce a Christlike character in the believers. Somebody has said, God is so pleased with the Lord Jesus, he wants to fill heaven with people just like him.

That's true, and that's the work of the Spirit of God in this connection. Now, I would like to mention to you that all of these things in this list are not natural. They're supernatural.

It's easy to read them and think of somebody who was born with a placid disposition and think, well, he has the fruit of the Spirit. Not necessarily so. All of these things are supernatural.

For instance, love. It's not a natural love. Any parent loves his child, loves her child.

It doesn't take divine life to love your child. This is the kind of love where you love your enemy. And only by the power of the Spirit of God can anybody do that.

I don't know if the last time I was here I told you the story about the Japanese man who led the attack on Pearl Harbor. His name was Mitsuo Fushida. And, of course, he was really exulting the day of that successful attack.

He had dealt a crippling blow to the United States. But, of course, as the tides of war changed, the United States was on the upper side, and, as you know, Japan suffered a defeat. And Mitsuo Fushida was so furious that his country had been defeated that he decided to spend the rest of his life taking the United States before a world tribunal to try it for war crimes.

In order to do that, he had to get witnesses. So he started interviewing men who had been held in this country as prisoners of war. He wanted to get stories of atrocities, of cruelty, of how they had been tortured.

And as he interviewed these men, he heard a story kept recurring about a dear lady who used to come and visit the prisoners. She used to bring them cookies. She gave them a little book that was called the New Testament.

She showed them all kinds of kindness. And they would say to her, Look, we're your enemies. Why do you show kindness to us like this? And she said, It was because of a prayer that my parents prayed before they were killed.

Her parents had been missionaries in the Philippines, and they had been executed by the Japanese. And she'd say that every time. The reason I'm showing you this love is because of a prayer my parents prayed before they were executed.

But she never told them what the prayer was. Well, this wasn't the kind of evidence that Mr. Oshida wanted to get. He wanted to get atrocities.

He wanted to get cruelties. He wanted to get tortured. And here he's getting the story of this woman.

In the providence of God in time, a New Testament came into his hands. And he started to read it. He read the Gospel of Matthew, but it didn't do anything for him.

He read the Gospel of Mark, and he became interested. He read the Gospel of Luke, and when he came to the story of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, he came to these words, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And without anybody telling him, he knew the prayer.

Those missionaries had prayed before they had been put to death. He bowed the knee, received the Lord Jesus as his Lord and Savior, and he spent the rest of his life traveling throughout the world, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. That was the man who led the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Listen, that was love. That woman going and visiting. And love conquers.

That's the love which is the fruit of the Spirit. Joy, a supernatural joy. The scaffolding can be crumbling down around you, and you can still have a joy in the Lord.

This is a joy that's independent of earthly circumstances. Have you ever known it? When everything was adverse, and yet the joy of the Lord was your strength. Peace, again, a supernatural peace.

Yesterday, Brother Henrich was telling that story of a dear woman in the East who had three crushing tragedies in her family in a short space of time. And she stood at the grave of a loved one, and she said, We know that all things work together for good for those who love God. That's peace.

The peace that passes all understanding. Long-suffering. What is long-suffering? Bearing up under the trials and difficulties and afflictions of life.

I love that story of dear Corrie Ten Boom and her sister in the concentration camp. Really suffering. Oh, the treatment that they endured.

Corrie and Betsy. And one day Betsy said to Corrie, She said, Corrie, when we get out of here, we've got to do something for these people. And Corrie naturally thought she meant the other prisoners like themselves.

She didn't mean that at all. She meant their Nazi overlords. We've got to do something.

Corrie said, and I wondered what kind of a sister I had, the sister of mine. There she was walking in fellowship with the Lord on a high plane, and I was trudging along on the earthly level. Long-suffering.

Be in a concentration camp and act like that. Gentleness means kindness. Kindness.

It's not just kindness. No, supernatural kindness. It means showing a kindness when somebody has shown you a discourtesy.

Turning the other cheek. Going the second mile. That's what it means.

And we shouldn't be satisfied with anything less. Goodness. I think goodness is associated with the word God.

Like God. Doing, responding, reacting in the situations of life the way the Lord would. Faith means faithfulness.

Once again, a supernatural faithfulness to all of the exigencies of life. Neatness. Jesus said, I am neat and lowly in heart.

Follow me and you'll find rest unto your soul. And temperance means self-control. That might seem like a contradiction.

Self-control. Spirit control. But it means self-control by the power of the Spirit.

Self-control under the Spirit's control. When you put all of those words together, you have a full-length portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you have a description of what he wants us to be like.

The Spirit of God produces the fruit of holiness in our lives. Next, he glorifies Christ. He glorifies Christ.

John chapter 16, verse 14. John chapter 16, verse 14. It says, He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you.

One of the great ministries of the Holy Spirit of God is to glorify the Savior. Not self, not ourselves, but to glorify him. In his book, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, J. I. Packer tells a lovely story.

One night he was going to go to a meeting and he was going to speak on that verse, John 16, verse 14. And as he came up to the church building, it was floodlit. He couldn't see the floodlight.

They were behind the bushes. But he could see the church illuminated. He said, I have my message.

That's the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He glorifies Christ. You don't see the Holy Spirit, but he glorifies Christ.

Or, he changes the figure. Picture yourself standing here, facing the Lord Jesus here, and the Holy Spirit back of you, shining on the Savior. He glorifies the Lord Jesus.

Now, is this what we hear in the evangelical world today? If you'll stop and think, you'll find that most of the emphasis on ministry, on radio, in books today, is on self, not on Jesus. One day when I was feeling a little more naughty than on other days, I went into our local Christian bookstore, and I had my little pad of paper with me, and I wrote down some of the titles on the best-selling list. Here they are.

Love Yourself. I said, OK, but it won't be easy. *The Art of Learning to Love Yourself*.

I learned that art from Adam. I'm OK, You're OK. To which I said, no way, Jose, I'm OK, you're so-so.

Another one, *Who Says I'm OK?* I don't know, I sure didn't. *A True View of You*. I'm serious.

These are titles of books. *A True View of You*. *True View of You*.

I'm afraid that would be a little bit yucky. *Make Friends With Your Shadow*. Boy, am I that hard up for friends? *The Art of Understanding Yourself*.

I can only stand so much to myself. *Understanding Your Past, the Key to Your Future*. If I understood my past, I wouldn't be in the mess I'm in.

My Beautiful Feeling. Get it? All self. *My Beautiful Feeling*.

At the moment, my beautiful feeling is nausea. *You Can Feel Good About Yourself*. I can? *30 Days to a Less Stressful You*.

Don't take away my stress, that's what's holding me together. Here's another one. *You're Someone Special*.

I wanted six copies of that one. Here's another one. *Do I Have to Be Me?* Or the subtitle was, *Living With Yourself and Liking It*.

Well, you don't have to be you, but who else would you be? Look out for number one. *How to Be Your Own Best Friend*. Some of you are getting weary, I don't blame you.

Self-Esteem, the New Reformation. Did you notice how many times Jesus' name was used? How many? All about self. Dear Friends, that's what Christians are being said today.

That's not the ministry about. If you want Holy Spirit ministry, you go where Jesus is exalted. I was brought up under the teaching of men who said, a sanctified self is a poor substitute for a glorified Christ.

A sanctified self is a poor substitute for a glorified Christ. When you think you need to know more about yourself, what you really need to know more about is Jesus. It's just as easy.

I think that's one of the most precious ministries of the Holy Spirit of God. He loves to exalt the Lord Jesus, to make him precious in the eyes of his people, and to put down self. Dear Friends, you can't be filled with the Holy Spirit and be filled with self.

You've got to be emptied of self to be filled with the Spirit. We'll go on tomorrow, Lord willing. Shall we pray? Father, we thank you for the clarity with which your word speaks.

We thank you that it's so very up-to-date, speaking to us here in the 20th century. And, O Lord, we pray that you will take our eyes off self and fix them on the Lord Jesus. We might look full in his wonderful face, that the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory.

We ask it in his worthy name and for his sake. Amen.

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