

Christ's Plan for the Church - Part 4

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and applying the two ordinances of the Christian church, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the significance of worship in the Christian life.

Duration: 43:53

Scripture: Romans 6:1-6

Topics: "Church"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of preparing for the Lord's Supper by meditating on the Lord and not appearing before God empty. The worship meeting should be focused on the Lord Jesus and the wonder of his cross. The speaker also discusses the concept of being changed into the image of Christ, which happens gradually through the work of the Holy Spirit. The sermon concludes with a story about a prayer meeting that was transformed when a believer spoke up and prayed for life in the dead atmosphere.

Transcript

Please turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 6, 6th chapter of Romans, beginning at verse 1, Romans 6, verse 1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not. How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death. But just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted, united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Tonight we're going to think first of all about the two ordinances of the Christian church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Some also believe that foot washing is an ordinance of the church and very fine Christians practice that. However, we feel that the scriptures do not exactly bear that baptism instituted by the Lord Jesus when he gave the great commission to his disciples.

Go into all the world, preach the gospel, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism instituted in the gospel practiced in the book of Acts. You see it all the way through the book of Acts that those who trusted in the Lord Jesus were baptized in his name.

And then expounded in the epistles. Here you have the spiritual, the scriptural explanation of baptism and what it means. And what does it mean? Well, I like to use the three letters A, B, C. Baptism means allegiance.

It's a pledge of allegiance to the Lord Jesus. I think we all know what that means. Pledge allegiance to the flag, pledging our loyalty to the flag and to the republic for which it stands.

When you're baptized, you're taking your public place, pledging your allegiance to Jesus Christ. Say, I belong to Christ and Christ belongs to me. Baptism is burial.

We read that here. If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. And it pictures the death of the old man.

It pictures the death of the old nature. Now we're new creatures in Christ Jesus. And in type, at least, the old man is being buried.

When the Lord Jesus died at Calvary, he died not only as my substitute, he died as my representative. He not only died for me, he died as me. When he died, I died in him.

When he was buried, I was buried in him. When he rose again, I rose again in him as well. Allegiance, burial, see, commitment.

It's a commitment to walk in newness of life. It's just not a matter of ritually going under water, being immersed in water, but the public statement that I intend by the strength and grace of God to live a new life, to be committed to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I think this is very important.

A lot of people think that when they're baptized, well, they've jumped that hurdle, and that's the end of that. But it really isn't the end of that. It's the beginning of something.

It's not enough to be baptized in water. We should go out from there to live the baptized life. So it should be a daily matter, our baptism.

It's a continuum from that day that we took our place with Christ in the waters of baptism. Now we go out to live as those who have died with Christ, who have died to sin, who have died to sin as master. I don't know if you noticed that.

It says in one of the verses of chapter six, we've died to sin. Let me get it. He who has died has been freed from sin.

Freed from sin? I sin every day in thought, word, and deed. It might help you in understanding a verse like that to think, if you don't want to write them in your Bible, freed from sin as master. Because that's really what it means, and it goes on to explain that in the rest of the chapter.

Sin no longer has dominion over the child of God. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you're not under law, you're under grace. When man is under law, he's in a state of bondage.

But when he's under grace, he's in a state of freedom and liberty. He can do what he wants to do, because what he wants to do is what Christ wants him to do. That's the will of God.

It's the most agreeable thing to the new nature. So I'd just like to leave that thought with you. Don't think that ritual baptism in water is the end of anything.

It's not the end. It's just a beginning where you take your stand for the Lord Jesus, and where you go out to live that kind of a life. A life of separation from sin and the world to God.

Very, very important. Is baptism important? Well, it really is important. Do you have to be baptized to be saved? No, you don't have to be baptized to be saved.

But you do have to be baptized to be obedient. And I like to remind people that if they're saved by the grace of God and have resisted baptism and refuse to be baptized, they will be unbaptized for all eternity. Because there's no baptismal tanks in heaven.

I think Presbyterians think they might have a second chance in the river of life in heaven, but there's no scripture that would warrant that. No, if you go to heaven, you can go to heaven through the merits of Christ without being baptized, but as I say, you'll be unbaptized for all eternity. It's one of those wonderful things that you can do down here to please the heart of Christ.

You won't be able to do in eternity. When you trust Christ as your Savior, I don't think the devil necessarily sees it. The devil is not omniscient.

He's not omnipresent, not omnipotent, and he doesn't know everything that's going on. But you know, when you're baptized, he knows it, because he can see that. That's open to the public.

And that's why in many cultures and nations of the world today, in other religions, that is, in countries where other religions hold sway, you can trust Christ and not suffer persecution. But when you're baptized, the persecution begins. And oftentimes, it ends in death.

But even in this country, parents of children who've been saved tell them they'll have to get out of the house if they're baptized. There is that measure of persecution in this country as well, an anti-Christian bigotry. So, when you think of baptism, think of three letters, A, B, C, Allegiance, Baptism, Commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The other ordinance of the Christian Church is the Lord's Supper. And this is the central act of the Church's worship, the central act of the Church's worship. It was instituted by the Lord, as you know, in Luke chapter 22.

On the night in which he was betrayed, he gathered the disciples together. They had the last Passover, and then he instituted the Lord's Supper. He took the bread as the emblem of his body, which was to be given on the cross of Calvary.

And he took the cup, which contained the wine, a symbol of the blood that he would shed for you and for me. I reproach myself for being able to stand here and say something and not be amazed, not be startled, not be dumbfounded. Do you realize what I just said? I said that Christ, God manifest in the flesh, went to the cross and gave his body and poured out his life for you and for me.

Or to put it in a more startling way, your God died for you. I tell you, if that truth would grip us, our lives would never be the same, never be the same. It's because we can take it and become casual about it, that we can go on in our ordinary way of life.

Paul, speaking to the Ephesian elders in Acts chapter 20, says, shepherd the flock of God, which he purchased with his own blood. And I think that verse was put in the Bible to shock us into an awareness of what really happened at Calvary. Shepherd the flock of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

That's what the Bible says. I must confess that one of my favorite hymns of the Christian faith is that one I started to quote in our previous session by Charles Westing. Can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood? Died he for me who caused him pain? For me who him to death pursued amazing love? How can it be that thou, my God, should die for me? We sing it, but we don't realize what we're singing.

I've heard of people dying for their God, but I never before heard of a God dying for his people. That's what happened at Calvary. And he asks that we should gather together and remember him in the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup.

Instituted by the Lord and practiced in the book of Acts. Practiced in the book of Acts. Acts 20, 27.

Paul's traveling. He knows where to go, where the disciples are going to be remembering the Lord on the first day of the week. And then, of course, expounded in the epistles, 1 Corinthians chapter 11, as often as you do this, you show forth the Lord's death until he comes.

Once again, it's just not a ritual that you do and that's the end of it. When we come together to break bread, we hear him say to us, through the word, this is my body given for you. Dear friends, it's total disrespect to leave the breaking of bread without looking up and saying to the Lord Jesus, Lord, this is my body given for you.

It's the only proper response you can make to a love so amazing, so divine. And yet we hold back. We live our little lives the way we think they should be lived and fail to find out what his will for them is.

Two ordinances of the Christian faith, baptism and the Lord's Supper. And that leads us in a very even transition to the subject of worship. Worship is absolutely central.

You read in John chapter 4, the Father seeks worshippers. You look at that verse carefully, it doesn't say the Father seeks workers. The Father seeks worshippers.

I've heard people raise questions about that. Isn't that kind of selfish of God to want people to worship him? How would you answer that? Well, let me say this. Every command in the scripture is given more for our good than it is for his.

Do you ever think of that? Every command of scripture, I don't care what it is, even if you go back to the ten commands that are given for our good rather than for his. You say, well, what's our good when the Father seeks worshippers? I'll tell you what's for our good. You become in life what you worship.

That's why it's good for us. It's absolutely a principle of the word of God. You become in life what you worship.

And the more you worship the Lord Jesus, the more you become like him. Does it say that in the Bible? Yes, it certainly does. Second Let me go over that verse just item by item.

But we are all Christians. Beholding as in a mirror, the mirror is the word of God. Beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord.

We go and we read not only about his glory as a man here on earth, but his glory at the right hand of God just now. The glory of the risen, ascended Lord Jesus Christ. We sing gazing on the Lord in glory while our hearts in worship bow.

There we read the story of his cross, shame and woe. Beholding as a glass, the glory of the Lord. We are changed into the same image.

A marvelous transformation takes place as we worship the Lord. We are changed into the same image. What does it mean? It becomes more Christ-like.

From glory to glory. That means from one stage of glory. It's not all just an instant transformation.

It takes place in stages. From one stage of glory to another. How does this take place? Even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

He works it in our lives. And this is one of the great foundational verses of the Christian life. 2 Corinthians 3, 18.

Changed by beholding. I've read of couples and they lived together so long that actually they began to look like one another. I don't know if it's true in the natural realm but it's certainly true in the spiritual realm.

Worship is simple. What worship is not? Worship is not listening to a sermon. Today in the Christian world, and I don't feel harshly about this, generally speaking in churches today the 11 o'clock service on Sunday morning is called the worship service where you go and listen to a man give a message.

Well, I think that's teaching, don't you? I think that's preaching. I don't think it's worship. Now don't misunderstand me.

I don't deny that somebody sitting in that audience could be lifting his or her heart to the Lord during that time. I don't doubt that. I'm not saying there can't be remnants of worship but the service itself is not a worship service.

What is a worship service? It's when God's people come together and pour out the overflow of their hearts as they muse on the Lord Jesus Christ. As they lift their hearts in worship and adoration to him. It's expressing love for Jesus.

Sometimes I hear a young fellow get up in a meeting and just tell the Lord he loves him. I say, well, that's the purest form of worship, isn't it? Just to be able to say that. Spurgeon said, no joy on earth is equal to the bliss of being all taken up with love to Christ.

No joy on earth is equal to that. If I had my choice of all the lives that I could live, I certainly would not choose to be an emperor, nor to be a millionaire, nor to be a philosopher, for power and wealth and knowledge bring with them sorrow. But I would choose to have nothing to do but to love my Lord Jesus.

Nothing, I mean, but to do all things for his sake and out of love to him. Spurgeon had the heart of a worshiper. Incidentally, you can tell a worshiper when you meet him, can't you? I love to meet young people, fellows and girls, and they open their mouths and the Lord Jesus comes out.

Do you know what I mean? They speak about the Lord Jesus. I think that's good. It tells you what kind of pastures they've been feeding in.

In worship we gather to Christ. I spoke about that previously. I believe that's true.

We gather together to worship the Lord Jesus. He is the attraction there. He is the center of our affections.

And I want to say this, dear friends, and it wasn't original with me either. If you don't like worship, you won't like heaven, because that's going to be the great activity of heaven. You go through the book of Revelation and from beginning to end you hear the hosts of heaven raising their voices in a great crescendo of praise.

It starts off and it increases all the way through the book of Revelation until the very final scene. Some of us can look back in our lives to a time when in our local assemblies there was only one service on Lord's Day morning. It was a worship service, and it would begin maybe at 10.30 and continue to 12.

And that whole morning was just dedicated to worshipping the Lord Jesus. You may not agree with me. I oftentimes wish we could go back to then.

I really do. I oftentimes wish we could go back to that. Just reserve that section of the week.

What has come in is a preaching service has come in at the 11 o'clock service, and then worship has been downgraded. But I personally feel it's too bad that that happened. There are a lot of meetings I don't like.

I don't like business meetings. I oftentimes think that business meetings are an enormous waste of time, don't you? Not much is accomplished by them. There are a lot of other meetings I don't like, but I want to tell you this meeting I really love, the worship meeting.

When we gather together to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God is moving and heaven comes very low, I tell you, I don't want to miss it. I don't want to miss it. I remember hearing about a meeting in Philadelphia years ago.

It came time for the breaking of bread and passing of the cup. And this dear old godly man, he got up to give thanks for the bread, and he walked forward to the table, and he fell down to his knees to pray. And people who were there that day, they thought, they'll never forget the awe of that moment when the Lord was not visibly present, but very present, just the same, and the hearts of God's people were lifted up in praise to him.

Now, he never did that again. You know, if he ever did that again, it probably would have been phony, but that's the way the Spirit of God led him. It's wonderful to be available to the Spirit of God in worship to do as he would have us to do.

It's very good for us to be preparing for worship, for the worship meeting on the Lord's Day. I don't know if you ever think about this. Maybe the thought is just to go there and share what thoughts come to your mind.

I think it's a very good thing to prepare for worship during the week, meditating on the Word of God. And then Saturday night's a wonderful time to take your hymn book and your Bible and read some of those hymns. They say what you might feel, but you could never put them in those words.

On Calvary we've adoring stood, and gazed on that wondrous cross where holy, spotless Lamb of God was slain in his love for us. How our hearts have stirred at that solemn cry. While the sun was enwrapped in night, Eli, Eli, Lama sebachthani, most blessed, most awful sight.

I recommend the good use of Saturday night, preparing for the Lord's Supper with your hymn book and your Bible. God said in the Old Testament, none shall appear before me empty. He doesn't want us to come to that meeting with empty baskets, but to be meditating on the Lord.

And then we come to the meeting and we see how the Holy Spirit is leading in the meeting. And then if he's leading in a certain trend, and our meditation has been on that, certainly it's a wonderful time for brothers to share that. In the worship meeting, ministry should be all about the Lord Jesus.

He should be the center. It's not really the time to give a testimony or to share some bizarre events that betook you over the week. In fact, I think it'd be a very good thing for us in our worship to try to keep the perpendicular pronoun out of our worship altogether.

Keep I, me, my, our, and just talk about the Lord Jesus. That would be a great discipline of grace to do that. Remember me, he said.

Show forth my death till I come. You say, what do you do if somebody in the meeting gives out a hymn that's not in the Spirit? Well, you've been in a meeting like that, haven't you? Where the Spirit of God seems to be moving along a certain direction, and somebody gets out the hymn on the Jericho Road, there's room for just two. But that has nothing to do with the purpose of the meeting, does it? So what do you do? Well, they asked an old brother that.

They said, what do you do when somebody gives out a hymn that's not in the Spirit? He said, I sing it in the Spirit. And I like that. Rather than rebuking the young brother for his immaturity or something like that, just sing it in the Spirit and hope that with the passing of time that he'll be able to correct that.

In public worship, when a brother, and I say this, especially for the young brothers, in public worship, it's good to speak we. We, thank you, instead of I. You say, why? Because when you're getting up to worship, you're speaking for the assembly. And when you close and say amen, the assembly says amen, and that's it.

We have made that worship our own. So I think it's good. That's why in the little flock hymn book, all of the hymns were changed to use the pronoun we, because in collective worship, that is the way to do it.

Now we want to move on to another subject that's related to all of this, and that's the subject of prayer. Is prayer important in an assembly? Well, first of all, I'm going to tell you a story. Years ago in an eastern city, the assembly was having a prayer meeting upstairs.

And I don't want to be irreverent, but it was dull. It was dullsville. And there were long, awkward pauses when nobody was saying anything.

It was more like a morgue than it was like a prayer meeting. And all of a sudden, there was a clop, clop, clop, somebody was coming up the stairs. And with measured tread, she entered the room.

She was a dear African American believer. And she went into the prayer meeting. She was strange.

She had never been there before. And nobody said a word. For the longest time they sat there, not a word was spoken.

And finally, she couldn't stand it any longer. She lifted up her voice and prayed, Lord, this place is dead. You know this place is dead.

It's the deadest place either of us has been in for a long time. And after that, there were no silent moments in the meeting. Was she an angel? I think God had sent her along that night as an angel to wake up that assembly.

So I say you can go through the routine. You can announce a prayer meeting for Wednesday night. It's not it.

It's not enough. You've got to be there and be doing business for God in great waters. I like to remind our hearts that we human beings never come closer to omnipotence than when we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus.

You and I will never be omnipotent. We will never have all power, but we never come closer to it than when we pray in his name. Because when we pray in his name, it's the same as if he was presenting that prayer to the Father.

That's really what it means. We're praying according to his will. We're praying by his authority.

And he presents those prayers to the Father. And when they get to the Father, they're absolutely perfect. This is a motivation for me to pray.

An old bishop in England said, when I pray, things happen. When I don't pray, they don't happen. Good to remember.

He had learned to move men through God by prayer. Christians hold the balance of power in the world through prayer. See, what do you mean by that? I mean that we can change the destiny of nations through prayer.

You know, one day you sit and you read the newspaper and what has happened? Well, the Berlin Wall has fallen. Why did the Berlin fall? Through the prayers of God. Through the prayers of God.

We don't relate those things together, but it's there just the same. For many, many years, Christians have been praying for the overthrow of that cruel regime. God, in his own time, answered those prayers.

I've told maybe some of you of a prayer meeting we had some years ago, or 20 years ago, actually, at Fairhaven. At this time, it was an all-night prayer meeting, young people. It was a missionary prayer meeting.

At that time, probably connected with Operation Mobilization. At two o'clock in the morning, Saturday morning, we started to pray for the Chad Republic. The Chad Republic in Africa had a very wicked ruler at that time.

His name was Tombaubai, and he was killing the Christians. He ordered one Christian to be buried and sanded up to his neck, and the ants killed him. He ordered another Christian to be placed in a drum, and they beat on the drum until he starved to death.

Dick Sanders, who was a missionary in the Chad at that time, wrote to us. We read this letter at two o'clock Saturday morning. Don't feel sorry for the Christians who've gone home, but pray for the Christians right now.

Our dear young people, they got down on their knees, and they cried to God for the Christian people in the Chad Republic. That was Saturday morning, between two and three. On Sunday morning, I was driving to Bethany that day, and I turned the radio on to get the news.

Special report. Military coup in the Chad Republic. Tombaубai killed.

A new ruler rises to power, and this ruler happened to be favorable to the evangelistic enterprise. I tell you, the young people who were there that night, if you say, do you believe that your prayers there that night affected the Chad Republic, they say, absolutely. They do.

And some of them are still living. And this last year, on the anniversary of that, I got a call from Dick Sanders, reminding me, it was 20 years ago to that day, when we prayed in San Leandro, and God answered out in the Chad Republic. We control the balance of power through prayer in the world.

We really do. And we can change the destiny of nations through prayer. The best prayer that we can send up comes from a strong inward necessity.

You know that, don't you? You know that when things are going smoothly, your prayer life can be dull. But when there's a crisis in your life, it's easy to pray with opportunity, isn't it? It's easy to pray perfectly. The best arrows come from a taut bow, Spurgeon said.

And that's true with the arrows of prayer. The best prayers come from a strong inward necessity. I'd like to suggest to you tonight that God seldom, if ever, does anything except in answer to prayer.

I know that'll shock you, but I believe it's true. I believe the word of God bears it out. Somebody wrote this, prayer is the forerunner of mercy.

Turn to sacred history, you'll find that seldom ever did a great mercy come to this world unheralded by supplication. Prayer is always the preface of blessing that somebody with Spurgeon, he said that. And I think it's true.

God seldom, if ever, does anything except in answer to prayer. It's a wonder we don't pray more. God has limited certain of his activities to responding to the prayers of his people.

Unless they pray, he won't act. That's what accounts for the crate boxes and crates in the warehouses of heaven, filled with all kinds of blessings. The reason they're there unopened is nobody ever asked for them.

Nobody ever asked for them. Prayer moves God to do things that he otherwise wouldn't have done. It's common to hear in even angelical circles today that prayer conditions you to God's will.

What God has willed is going to happen anyway, and when you pray, that brings you into line with God's predetermined will. I don't believe that. Prayer moves the hand of God to do things he otherwise wouldn't have done.

How do you know? It doesn't change you, have not, because you ask not. That's what it says. You have not, because you ask not.

That's good enough for me. God always answers prayer in exactly the same way you would answer it if you had his wisdom, love, and power. Some of you have had great disappointments in your life.

You've prayed, you've cried to the Lord, and the thing you prayed for didn't happen. Listen, if you had his wisdom, love, and power, you would have acted in exactly the same way, because whatever he does is absolutely perfect. His wisdom guarantees it.

His love guarantees it. His power guarantees it. Actually, the work of God is done more in prayer than in any other way.

Prayer is the cutting edge of the work of God, somebody said. It should be the central thrust. The spiritual history of a church is written in its prayer life.

That's good. We're talking about the New Testament assembly. The spiritual history of a church is written in its prayer life.

God helps churches and assemblies that don't have a prayer meeting, that's all I can say. Whatever happened to the prayer meeting? It's missing today, I would guess, in most churches in the United States. There are mysteries in connection with prayer.

You can come to me after, you can ask me questions about prayer. Listen, I'd rather pray than solve all the mysteries of prayer. Just get down on my knees and cry to God in simple faith, I'd rather do that.

I like this paragraph, somebody said, Prayer has divided seas, rolled up flowing rivers, made flinty rocks gush into fountains, quenched flames of fire, muzzled lions, disarmed vipers and poisons, marshalled the stars against the wicked, stopped the course of the moon, arrested the rapid sun in its great rays, burst open iron gates, recalled souls from eternity, conquered the strongest devils, commanded legions of angels down from heaven. Prayer has bridled and changed the raging passions of men and routed and destroyed vast armies of proud, daring, blustering atheists. Prayer has brought one man from the bottom of the sea and carried another in a chariot to heaven.

What has not prayer done? It's all in the word. All of those things that I read to you, they're all found in the word of God. Prayer leads you to heights that makes reason dizzy.

It's fervent prayer. I mentioned before, it's really fervent prayer that reaches the gates of heaven. This is good.

Cold prayers always freeze before they get to heaven. Fervency of spirit is that which avails much. Somebody said this, I measure my effectiveness by the number of people I pray for and the number of people who pray for me.

I measure my effectiveness by the number of people I pray for and the number of people who pray for me. We honor God by the greatness of our prayers. I like the story of Alexander the Great who used to have open court one day in a month when the people could come and present any request they wanted to him.

One day a man came and he asked for an education for his son, all expenses paid, and a dowry for his daughter. He just went on and on and on. Alexander the Great said, your requests are granted.

Some of his courtiers came up to him and said, why did you give all of those things to that beggar that came to you? He said, he treated me like a king. He asked big. I'm tired of these people who come and ask for a golden coin.

God is honored by big prayers. If you had been living when Christ was on earth and had met the Savior kind, what would you have asked him to do for you? Suppose you were stone blind? The child considered and then replied, I suppose that without doubt I'd have asked the Lord for a dog with a chain to lead me daily about. How often thus in our faithless prayers we acknowledge with shame surprise we've only asked for a dog and a chain when we might have had opened eyes.

Ask big. He's a big God and he loves to be honored by the bigness of our prayers. Prayer is more important than service.

That isn't the emphasis you get today so often, but it's true. Prayer is more important than service. The heavenly bridegroom is wooing a bride, not seeking a servant.

The heavenly bridegroom is wooing a bride, not hiring a servant. Thou art coming to a king. Large petitions with thee bring, for his love and power are such, we can never ask too much.

When we get to heaven, dear friends, we're going to wish we had prayed more. And I hope this assembly will always be assembly that's given to prayer. All honor God by the bigness of your prayers and the fervency of your prayers and the love in your hearts to him.

Just a few thoughts at the close here. The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative in the assembly and he should guide in the government of the assembly. I know the Lord's will should be done, but he uses the Holy Spirit to convey that will by the word of God to the elders and to the assembly.

The Holy Spirit should guide in the worship of the assembly. That's a wonderful thing to be in a meeting and to sense the moving of the Holy Spirit in a certain direction where the hymns and the ministry all may be on the blood of Christ or in his coming again, some aspect of his person or work. The Holy Spirit is the one who guides in the goals of the assembly.

It would be easy to sit down and say, well, our goal for the next year is to see 25 people, one for the Lord. This is very nice, but how do you know? How do you know? How do you know that that's what the Lord wants for us? We can manufacture these things, but we want to get our guidance from the Lord. The Holy Spirit should guide us in the dispersing of our funds.

It's a wonderful thing to get a letter from somebody and say the money which your assembly sent was an exact fulfillment of a need which we had at that time. Do you mean to say that God can convey to an assembly to send a certain amount of money to meet a specific need? Yes, that's exactly what I mean to say. It's happening all the time and blessed are those who have a part in that.

That's one of the great thrills of life. The Holy Spirit guides in public worship, in arranging meetings, in speakers, and he must not be quenched. Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesying.

We must be ready to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't always do things the same way. In fact, he seldom repeats himself.

He's so original that we want to be sure that we don't quench him, that he can have his way unhindered in the meetings of our assembly. Shall we look to the Lord? Father, we thank you for all those here tonight who have followed the Savior in the waters of baptism. We pray that each one might go forth to live a life that is consonant with that, to walk worthy of this profession of faith.

And we thank you for the wonderful privilege we have of gathering to remember the Savior in his death for us. Teach us to be better worshipers than we've ever been before. Bring before our hearts the reality of Calvary.

Teach me what it means. Oh, blessed Lord Jesus Christ, open our eyes to see the immensity of it all. May we be men and women of prayer.

May we really learn a closer walk with you in a life of prayer, as we seek to do your will day by day. We ask it in the Savior's name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27935.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/christs-plan-for-the-church-part-4/>

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