

(Atlanta 2013) 5. the Church - the Pillar of Truth

by Zac Poonen

The church is the pillar and support of the truth and is a corporate body of Christ that is united by the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 44:18

Scripture: Matthew 25:1

Topics: "True Worship", "Inner Life"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having a deep, intimate relationship with God, symbolized by the oil in the lampstand. It highlights the distinction between external works and the hidden life before God, stressing the need for true worship and fellowship with God. The ultimate goal is to build a church of individuals who are gripped by the challenge of inner life, coming together as a corporate testimony for the Lord.

Transcript

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is pictured as oil, the oil that made the lampstand burn in the tabernacle. And the priests had to make sure that the oil was always there. You know, in the parable that Jesus spoke about his second coming, it was the lack of oil in the lamp, in a vessel, that prevented some virgins from being ready for his coming.

There were virgins, but the difference between the wise virgins and the foolish virgins was just this. There were two or three things that were common about all ten virgins. They were all virgins, first of all, which means it's not five virgins and five harlots, ten virgins.

And all ten had a lamp that was burning. We know that all ten lamps were burning because when the bridegroom came at midnight, what the foolish, five foolish virgins said is, our lamps are dying out. It's not that they were never burning.

They were burning, but they were dying out. And that external light speaks of what Jesus said, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, your external works, and glorify your father in heaven. So the lamp speaks about our external testimony.

So here were virgins, all of whom had a good external testimony, like most people in the church. But virgins who have a good external testimony, five of them were not ready for the coming of Christ, because

they lacked something. Five of them, in their garments, maybe in a pocket in their garments, they had a hidden flask of oil.

That was the only difference. They had a hidden light, which the other five didn't have. And that's what ensured that their lamps would still be burning when the bridegroom came.

So what the Lord was emphasizing there was, again, the hidden light before God, not just the external testimony. That your external testimony does not necessarily make you ready for the coming of the Lord. He answered and said to those five virgins in Matthew 25, 12, I do not know you.

What does that mean? I do not have that intimate, personal relationship with you. See, knowing is a word used in the Old Testament for the most intimate relationship in marriage. Adam knew his wife.

It's speaking of that close intimate relationship between a husband and wife. And spiritually it speaks of a close intimate relationship with Jesus. In secret.

Adam knew his wife. We read of different people who knew their wives. It's always in private, in secret.

It's that secret Jesus knowing me, spiritually, very intimately. He says, I didn't know you that way. You did a lot of things for me.

But I didn't know you intimately. You didn't have an intimate walk with me in secret. So Jesus said, be on the alert.

And this light is also described in Revelation 1. The lamp stand, he said, is the church. So the ultimate goal of the Lord, of the Holy Spirit, is to bring together a whole lot of people who are gripped by this challenge of this inner life. Who want to have a vessel, a flask full of oil.

To bring them together and make them one in a church. And not just individuals who have an inner life. I think that's part of what is meant in five virgins and not just one virgin.

It's not just two virgins, one mystic. There were five wise virgins and they were meant to be one. A picture to me of a church, of people, of a number of people who had this inner life.

Who were together ready for the coming of the Lord. And that is God's ultimate goal. The ultimate goal of God in this day and age is to build a church.

Not a bunch of holy individuals, even if they have an inner life floating around here and there. But holy individuals who come together, five of them or ten of them. Wise virgins with flasks of oil in their hidden life.

Who come together and are a corporate testimony for the Lord. And this is where many people haven't understood what the church is all about. The main thing that the church needs is that flow of oil that keeps it burning all the time.

Turn with me to Luke's Gospel chapter 11. This is a description of what the church is supposed to be. Luke 11, 36.

If your whole body is full of light with no dark part in it, it shall be holy illumined as when the lamp illumines it with its rays. And he said this in connection with verse 33. No one after lighting a lamp puts it away in a

cellar or under a peck measure, but on the lampstand in order that all those who enter in may see the light.

And Revelation 1 says that lampstand is the church. So, after all that you've heard, even if you're gripped by the truth of an inner life and you want the secret areas of your life to be as genuine as your external life, you still haven't come to God's full purpose if you're not part of a local church. And just like you can't come to inner life without having a passion for that inner life, and you can't build a local church if you don't have a passion for a local church.

It's only God who can do it. It's only the Holy Spirit of reality who can bring reality into your personal inner life. And it's only the Holy Spirit who can build the church.

On the day of Pentecost, it was that immersion in the Holy Spirit that formed the first body of Christ for those 120 people. They weren't just coming together to sing songs and to listen to a service and go home. They were forged into one body.

I picture it like 120 pieces of iron who were thrown into the furnace and came out as one piece. They became the body of Christ that day. And this is what God desires in every place.

Many little pockets of light, something like when you travel in an airplane at night over a dark area here and there, you see a house with light on it. That's how God sees the earth here and there, the church that's manifesting his light. We can come to an individual holy life and think we've accomplished something.

That is itself a great thing because most people don't even have that. But I want to say that you have to go beyond that. Let me turn to 1 Timothy and chapter 3. In 1 Timothy and chapter 3, we read these words.

Paul is writing to Timothy again. In verse 15, 1 Timothy 3.15, he says, In case I am delayed, I write to you that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the family of God or the household of God, which is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and support of the truth, the truth that sets people free. The pillar and support of this truth is not an individual, however holy he may be.

It's a church of people who have this inner life. There's like a pillar and support of the truth of God. And you know in the Old Testament days when they built houses, everything depended on the pillar.

You remember how Samson just pushed two pillars down and the whole building collapsed. And so when it says the church is the pillar and support of the truth, this is what a local church must be. And it goes on to say what that truth is in the next verse.

By common confession, great is the secret of godliness, the mystery of godliness. The word mystery is another New Covenant word. It's not found in the Old Covenant.

The Old Covenant, everything was open. All you had to do was to be a scribe, study the scriptures, and you would know what the law said, and you could explain it to others. But the New Testament, any amount of study, will not help you to understand God's truth.

It has to come by revelation. And mystery is connected with revelation. Blessed are you, Simon, because flesh and blood has not given you this revelation.

How much emphasis is there in the church you attend on getting revelation on the mysteries of the scriptures? We think we can understand everything by intellectual study, but that's because most pastors

have got their information by intellectual study in a Bible college. It's not by intellectual study. The truths of God are revealed to the spirit, and the spirit is deeper than the mind.

The mind is a part of our soul. The spirit is deeper than that. And it's in the spirit that God gives revelation.

You know, like the Old Testament tabernacle had three parts. The outer court that everybody could see, and the two covered areas of the tent. Holy place, most holy place, corresponding to the outer court is the body.

Everybody can see. And inside is a little tent. Many people think there's only one compartment in that tent.

Soul. Body and soul. No.

It looks like that. Tent and an outer court. But those who go inside the tent discover there are two compartments there.

And those who go deeper discover that inside there is soul and spirit. Not just soul. And God did not dwell in the outer court.

He did not dwell in the holy place. He dwelt in the most holy place. God dwells in man's spirit, not in his soul.

My mind is part of my soul. And you think that you understand God with your mind, and you haven't really understood. You need to know him in your spirit.

It's that type of knowledge which the Lord told the foolish virgins, I don't know you. I don't know you in your spirit. You're not one with me in your spirit.

You just have a lot of knowledge about me, accurate knowledge perhaps. You don't know me. I don't know you.

So that comes by revelation. The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him. There are things which we speak about openly, and there are things which we whisper in secret.

There are things you share with your wife in secret you will not proclaim publicly. And there are things that the Lord reveals to his bride in secret which are not public knowledge. Forgiveness of sins that everybody knows.

Immersion in the Holy Spirit. Everybody knows that it's open. But there are secrets of godliness.

The Bible speaks in Ephesians about the mystery of the church. The mystery of godliness and the mystery of church. And these are called great mysteries.

One is how to live a godly life, and that is through seeing Jesus in our flesh, tempted like us, but yet pure in his spirit. And the other great mystery is Ephesians 5.32, where it says the great mystery of Christ is one flesh with his church. That's another great mystery.

He says in Ephesians 5.31, A man shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And Paul, are you talking about husband and wife? He says, oh no, I'm not talking about husband and wife. That's not a mystery.

Husband and wife are one flesh. This mystery is a great mystery. I'm speaking about Christ and the church.

Not Christ and the individual, Christ and the church. That's also a mystery. How can two people become one? It was impossible under the old covenant.

The great prophets and the greatest men of God in the old covenant were lone individuals. No doubt they were great men. Noah was a lone man.

So was Samuel, one lone prophet. Moses, Joshua, Jeremiah, Isaiah. You never find two people working together until you come pretty close to the New Testament age when you have Haggai and Zechariah building a temple, which is a picture of the new covenant church.

But otherwise all those prophets were, they never worked with anybody else. There were other prophets and prophetesses in Jeremiah's time. I think Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Huldah were all in his time, but they never worked together.

They could not work together because they'd fight. I mean the disciples who walked with Jesus for three and a half years were fighting with each other even after walking with the Lord for three and a half years and listening to the greatest sermons ever preached by any human being. God knew that.

Without the power of the Holy Spirit, without this inner life, you cannot work with anybody else. You'll be a loner. And the greatest prophet in the Old Testament time, John the Baptist, was a loner.

He was a mighty man. And there are mighty men like that today who have a great ministry. But they won't build a church because they cannot work with anybody else.

They are too big to work with anybody else. They are too powerful and so spiritual that others are like little mushrooms growing under this big oak tree. The mushrooms will never see the sunlight.

But under this mighty oak tree, they are there and the oak tree delights in these little mushrooms growing underneath who have no contact with God. And the great oak tree has a sense of accomplishment and a sense of importance. This is how a lot of churches are, big ones and small ones.

It's not the church of Jesus Christ. As soon as the New Testament starts, you find Jesus changing that system. He sent his disciples out two by two.

The whole system has changed. This is not the Old Covenant age where you have the lone prophet standing up and proclaiming. It sounds great.

Today in most churches, it's the lone prophet, mighty man of God, who builds a mega church and when he dies, that's the end of the mega church. There's no body because the man is too big. And Jesus began the New Covenant ministry.

That's why as soon as you come to the Acts of the Apostles, you see Peter and John going together. It's true. You see Paul and Barnabas, separate to me Saul and Barnabas, the Holy Spirit says.

It's not Saul alone. It's not Barnabas alone. It's Saul and Barnabas.

Two completely different people in temperament and personality. God brings them together. It's very difficult for two to be one.

If you don't believe me, go and ask any husband and wife how difficult it is for two people to be one. It's not easy. Even born again, so-called spirit-filled, tongue-speaking husband and wife, they find it very difficult to be one.

They go to church together. They can speak in tongues together, read the Bible together, pray together, but they can't be one. It's a mystery.

It really is a mystery. To be one with Christ in the Spirit, you can be one with another person who's also one in Christ in the Spirit. And it all depends on whether the other person is also interested in inner life.

Think of our... Why is the church called the Body of Christ? How is it you see a person playing the piano with ten fingers all functioning so perfectly, split-second timing? How do they function so perfectly? It's not because they're always hanging around with each other and fellowshiping with each other, these ten fingers. No. How much time do you find a pianist holding his hands together so that they can work together? That's not the secret.

The secret is every one of those fingers has a hidden inner connection to the brain. And when the Bible speaks about the head, Christ being the head, in more scientific terms, we'd be saying Christ is the brain, not this head. Because in 1 Corinthians 12, it says Christ is the head.

And it says the eye is a member of the body. The ear is another member of the body. That's what it says in 1 Corinthians 12.

One is the eye, one is the ear, and then the head. So the head is not what we know the head is. It's the brain.

It's the brain that controls the eye, controls the ear, controls the hand. So it's because the brain, every one of these fingers, have got a very inner, it's not external, there are no wires going on the outside. It's all inward, hidden, an inner connection with the perfect connection with the brain that they function perfectly.

This is a New Covenant Church. They may not be spending much time together. That is psychology, and you know, to spend time together.

That's a club, not a church. Club, people get to know each other by spending a lot of time together. If you don't spend time with others, you don't become one with them.

But clubs are united on a common interest in golf or tennis or something like that. Or it could be an interest in singing or music or Christ or the Bible. But it's a club.

Bible study clubs. It's not a church. Because they don't become one.

Very soon, they stop functioning together. And it's possible, you know, that this hand can stop functioning because its connection with the head is gone. And that's what we call having a stroke.

It's paralyzed. What happens? The inner connection is gone no matter how much this hand now holds this hand and says, let's spend time together. The hand is not able to cooperate when playing the piano.

I've noticed this in India when I meet sometimes in our conferences which we have every year. I may not have seen a brother for a long, long time. And then I see him at a conference and it's almost as though we've been together every single day.

It's immediate, intimate fellowship. Now what's the secret? There, 800 miles away from where I live, he's been walking in the light with the head, according to the light he has had. And I have been walking in the light I've had all those months.

And then we meet together. Immediately the fingers can work together because the connection with the head is perfect. But somebody who may be sitting in my own church who's not walking in the light, whom I see every Sunday, they can't work together with him because he's not walking in the light.

It requires cooperation from both sides. One hand can be perfect and the other can be paralyzed. So it's not easy to build a church.

It's easy to build a ministry. Oh, a ministry, all you need is a gift and a little organizing ability and nowadays a little computer knowledge and you can have a ministry. And you can reach the world with your ministry nowadays.

Look at the multitudes of Christian websites reaching the world with this message and that message and the reports of what we're doing here and what we're doing there. But you go and see these things and I live in India and I see many of these things. There's no body.

There's no body. It's just one great man who's maybe very gifted and who's conducting a ministry and you go and it's not come and see. You can't, they're scared to ask people to come and see.

They can only see, come in here, go to our website and listen to this. But don't, please don't come here and see what's happening here in our church. There's a lot of difference.

The new covenant ministry has come and seen. And is it possible? The devil says no. Throughout human history the devil has always said the commands of God are impossible to be fulfilled.

And Adam and Eve agreed with the devil. Yes, even a small thing like don't eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It's impossible to be fulfilled.

Throughout history it's been like that. And then finally Jesus came and exposed the lie of the devil and said God's commands can be fulfilled. Every one of them.

Every single one of them. And he lived to demonstrate it and he could say come and see. And then on the day of Pentecost that was the first body of Christ.

And then on the day of Pentecost another body of Christ was formed. And those who not everyone but those who walked in the light had fellowship with God. And they had fellowship with one another like John says in 1 John chapter 1. If we walk in the light we have fellowship with God.

And the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. And we have fellowship with one another. If you turn with me to 1 John chapter 1 John had seen the decay of Christendom in his day.

Christendom that believed in forgiveness by the blood. Christendom that believed in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the early 1st century everybody believed in it.

The first Christendom that believed in speaking in tongues and healing and prophecy and everything. But in spite of all that John saw the corruption that was in the churches around him. As you see in Revelation 2 and 3 5 out of the 7 churches were corrupt and backslidden and one was so backslidden that the Lord himself says he's outside the church standing at the door and knocking in the church in Laodicea.

You're wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked you don't even know that and I'm standing at the door and knocking. Where is he? Outside. But what were they saying inside the church? Lord we thank you where 2 or 3 are gathered together in your name.

There you are in the midst. He wasn't in the midst at all. It was just a verse they were quoting.

Exactly like in a lot of churches today. He was outside. There were big men there inside.

Great men of God. Mega church pastors and the Lord was outside. They were rich and increased with goods.

Plenty of people having need of nothing as they thought. And they did not know that they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Perfect description of a lot of churches today that look so nice on the outside.

And John was burdened about this as the last living apostle. And he wrote a message to the Christians of his time. And it's very interesting when you read 1 John.

This burdened apostle writing to that condition of the churches in his day. Very similar to churches in our day. He does not speak one word about the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

He does not speak one word about healing. He does not speak one word about wealth or supernatural miracles. Nothing.

He speaks about the life of Jesus. He says so many times, remember Jesus came in the flesh. He lived here like us.

And if you say you're a Christian, 1 John 2.6, you must walk as he walked. Even if you'd never do the miracles he did, you must walk as he walked. Live as he lived.

And what does he speak about in his introduction to 1 John? He says, folks, there's a life that we saw. I saw it. I touched it.

I handled it. My eyes saw it. My ears heard it.

It was a life which was eternal. Which had been with the Father from all eternity. And it was manifested in human flesh.

And I touched it. And we can bear witness, 1 John 1.2, to that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. And that which you have seen and heard, we proclaim to you that you also may have fellowship with us.

That we can function together because our fellowship is with the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. So there are two words that come through in those three verses. Life and fellowship.

Eternal life and fellowship. So you see, John is talking about something that happened before Genesis 1, verse 1. Long before Genesis 1, verse 1, long before the angels were created, there was only God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

There was no tongues, no healing, no doctrine, nothing there. But there was life. Eternal life.

And there was fellowship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He said, that's what we need today in the church to solve the problems in today's church. He's saying at the end of the first century.

That life which was with the Father, all the other things subsequently were temporary, but the ultimate goal is that we might have that life and all those who have that life will have fellowship. There's no other way. It's not by forming ecumenical councils that we have fellowship.

It's not by having a committee to resolve our differences that we have fellowship. That's all superficial. It'll die out pretty soon.

But it's that life. If you have that life and another brother has that life and you're gripped by that life as the most important thing. If you see that all of Hebrews 11, God has provided something better, which is the life of Jesus.

Then you will discover that what John says in 1 John 5, 3, His commandments are not a burden. He also exposed the lie of the devil. As I said, the devil said for so many years, you can't keep the commandments of God.

It's impossible. Look at the number of believers today who say that. Rejoice in the Lord always.

It says that in Philippians 4, 4, but you can't do it. Nobody can do it. It's impossible.

That's what the devil's been saying since Eden. Be anxious for nothing? Impossible. 2 Corinthians 2, 14 Thanks be to God who always leads us, always leads us in triumph? Impossible.

1 Thessalonians 5, 18 In every situation, give thanks. Some situations, yes. Every situation.

Impossible. Philippians 2, 14 Do everything in your life without ever grumbling, without ever complaining? Everything without complaining, grumbling? Impossible. John, you don't know the realities of 21st century life.

It's an old tale the devil's been telling man since the Garden of Eden. Jesus came and said, it's a lie. God's commandments are not a burden.

And he had people like John who also said, I've walked with God 65 years, John says. He was 95 when he wrote that letter. It wasn't just a young upstart who got all excited after one week of being converted and saying God's commands are not a burden.

This is a man who's walked with God for 65 years as a spirit-filled man and says God's commands are not a burden. And I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, that is the testimony God is looking for. And where God finds individuals like that who are gripped that what God has said in the word is true, we can form them together into a church.

A living church. A body of Christ. It may not be very large.

God may make it large, but it'll be. And what happens when a living church forms like that and we have discovered that through the years in India? Just like the devil got into Judas Iscariot, there was one corrupt person in Jesus' church. We can say that out of 12 members, one was a hypocrite.

8% of Jesus' church were hypocrites. That's 1 out of 12. You can't make a church better than that.

The devil will infiltrate your church, and I've seen that happen in our churches too. The devil will bring along somebody, somebody's brother, somebody's sister, and someone else who are not gripped by the same truth. They come to us and say, hey, this is a good church to be a part of.

They're not gripped by the life of Jesus, and we can't drive them out. So what I've discovered through the years is in the midst of this congregation called the church, there will be the church in the church. And I've come to see that churches today are like, I mean, I've seen that in our own midst.

There's an outer court. There are people who are interested in two things in the outer court. The altar and the labor.

Calvary and water baptism. That's it. We've got it.

We're on our way to heaven. Then there are some people who go a little further into the holy place where it's a picture of a life baptized in the Holy Spirit, where the light is burning. We want to be witness to others about Christ.

We want to be witnesses to Christ, to bring people to Christ. And there's an altar of incense. We want to pray.

We want to get people to pray and pray and pray. And then there's the altar of showbread. There are three things in that holy court.

We've got to preach the word, brother. We've got to teach the word, teach the word, and we must pray, and we must witness for Christ. But there's another life inside the veil, which comes only through the rending of the veil where God dwells.

And there, it's a lonely, it's a lonely life. It's one with God. There we worship.

We're not busy with activity, you know, lighting the lamp and burning the incense and putting the bread on the table. It's worshiping God. And people who are bored with God would like to get back into the outer court and do something for him.

You know, people say, what are you doing, man? Do something for God. Jesus taught us to pray, Father, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. What do you think the, how do you think the will of God is done in heaven? Do you think the angels are running around trying to do something for God? I don't think so.

They're waiting on God. They're worshiping him. And when God tells them to do something, they do it.

Gabriel, go down to Nazareth and give this message to that young girl Mary there. Or earlier than that, go down to Zachariah down there in the temple and give him this message and come back. They do that work and come back and continue to worship him until he tells them the next thing to do.

And with those little obediences to small commands of God, they accomplish a lot more than all the hectic activity of carnal Christians. That's what I discovered very early in my life. I saw very few people in my life, just two or three I had seen.

When I looked at their ministry, how they planted churches, I said, Lord, there seems to be something about them. They just don't run around doing something or the other. They listen.

And they do what you say. And wherever they go, there's a church planted. I said, Lord, this is the way to do your work in these days.

To listen, to be a worshipper. Thou shalt worship Matthew 4 10 and then thou shalt serve. Today a lot of people are serving who don't worship.

And most people don't even know what worship is. What we call worship in our Sunday morning, by the way, is not worship at all. It's praise and thanksgiving.

If you don't believe me, look at the words. Thanking God for what he's done, praising him for who he is. That's great.

I'm not against it. But there are four steps in our fellowship with God. The first is prayer.

Asking God for something. The second is thanksgiving, thanking him for what he's done for us. And the third is praise, praising him for who he is.

And almost all our singing is in these three areas. Worship. That's an altogether different thing which most Christians don't know anything about.

I think one of the last Christians who spoke about it in evangelical circles was A.W. Tozer. Hardly anybody speaks about worship after that. It's all activity, activity, activity.

You've got to reach the heathen and you've got to help the downcast and go here and go there. Thou shalt worship and then thou shalt serve. That was the order Jesus gave in Matthew 4.10. And worship is going through the veil into the most holy place.

That veil symbolized Hebrews 10.20 says the veil symbolized the flesh of Jesus that was rent when his will was constantly denied. As he denied his will, denied his will, denied his will for 33 years. The veil was rent and the Lord said this is the way.

This is the new and living way, Hebrews 10.20 that Jesus inaugurated for us. And there in the most holy place, those who get there and want to live there, build the church of Jesus Christ. There'll be very few.

That's the real church that shines as a light. Now I know a lot of people think that this is all very exclusive teaching. Fine, you can say what you like.

But look at the condition around so much of Christian work today and you see that is not what God wants. God wants something far more. If you think God is... He accepts everybody.

He loves people. I'm not talking about people who just want to go to heaven when they die. Many years ago I said, Lord, I don't want to go around India collecting people who want to go to heaven when they die.

All of India wants to go to heaven when they die. I want to collect people who want to be a witness for Christ on this earth, who walk the way of the cross before they go to heaven. Those are the only ones I want.

And then Jesus said, well, the way to life is narrow and few there be that find it. I said, Lord, I want to find that few wherever I go. I want to find the few.

I know a lot of people will be offended when I preach. That's fine. But if I can find the few who will be together a corporate light as a church, a local church, small groups meeting here and there who really are willing to lay down their lives for one another and who can tell people, come and see what the Lord has done in our midst.

There may be gifted people there but they're just ordinary brothers along with others who have other gifts. And that is what the Lord is seeking to do in our day. But like I said, you will never come to this inner life if you don't have a passion for it.

Many people say, anybody can come to Jesus. I say, no. Jesus said, if any man thirsts, let him come to me.

Not any Tom, Dick and Harry. If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and believe. Then rivers of living water will flow from him.

So if I have a thirst for this inner life, I can come to Christ. If I have a thirst to see a living church of people who dwell in the most holy place, who are worshippers first of all. And a worshipper is one who falls down before God and says, he may not be able to sing well, he may not be able to play any instrument well, but he knows how to fall down on his face and say, Lord Jesus, I desire nothing on earth but you.

And he means it. And when I get to heaven, I need no one but you. Psalm 73, 25.

That is a worshipper. And such people dwell only in the most holy place. They're not interested in the petty things that go on in the outer court and outside the camp and all that.

They are worshippers. And the end result is, you say, are you going to produce a lot of monks who sit in monasteries and just do that? No. From that inner most holy place, they will come out and in a short time, do a greater work than so many people are doing with all their activities.

This is a mystery. But we will discover in the day Christ comes back, a lot of what we see today is wood, hay, and straw painted to look like gold and impresses people. And there's very little of gold, silver, and precious stones.

But in the day when God judges everything, we will discover what remains. Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you. Don't listen to me.

Just go to the Scriptures. Be like the Bereans and check up from Scripture whether what I'm saying is true or not. And search the Scriptures and say, Lord, show me.

Is this all some pie in the sky type of theory? Or is this really what matters in these last days? I want to count for you in these days. And you place me in this particular town or village. What do you think God wants there? Why has he kept you there? I used to ask myself, why did God allow me to be born in India? Why did he give me the education I got? Why did he allow me to learn the English language? Why did he

allow me to know the Bible? That was a purpose.

I hope you discover that purpose. Why did he bring you here to hear something? Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you like Paul would say, I beseech you, brethren. Seek God and find out.

Maybe you haven't taken these things seriously in the past. There's a great verse in Acts 17.30. God overlooks the times of ignorance. He says, all your past, you were ignorant.

Okay, I'll forget it. Blot it out. But now, will you turn around and be gripped by the truth that you have heard after checking it in Scripture? If you're only convinced by what I have said, your faith will rest on the wisdom of men.

It'll be sad. It'll collapse. But if you didn't go and check in the Scriptures whether what I said is true or not, and if you see it in Scripture and God opens your eyes to see this revelation, God may do something in your life which you've never experienced so far.

I plead with you not to believe what I say till you have checked it in Scriptures and believe it. See the Holy Spirit. Let Him show it to you.

But take pains. Take time. There's no hurry.

Take time to go to the Scriptures and say, Lord, is there some truth in this which I'm missing, which I haven't been taken up with? Maybe I'm not wholehearted enough. Maybe I'm not eager enough to be free from the love of money. And that's what's blinding my eyes.

You know the saying that you can take a little a one dollar coin and put it close enough to your eye you won't even see the sun. That's how it is. That's how blinding money can be.

Is there something we are blind to? Because there's something else other than Jesus we are occupied with. We cannot say to Jesus, there is nothing I desire on earth but you. There's no one on earth I desire but you.

I am willing to offend my father and my mother and my wife and my children and my brothers and my sisters in the church and my pastors and my elders. I want to please you, Lord, 100%. They will discover the truth.

I pray that you'll be one of them. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, as we bow before you, we know that you are calling us to radical discipleship and to build a church.

You said, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Lord, we pray that you will really build and plant local churches in many parts of this land from which these dear brothers have come, taken all the trouble to come here and here. I pray that you will give them the faith in their heart that weak as they are, you can do it through them because of your word which says, my strength is made perfect in weak people.

Help us all to experience that, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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