

(Beginning a New Year) Looking in Three Directions

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of looking up to Jesus and trusting in His power and sovereignty in order to overcome fears and weaknesses and live a victorious life.

Duration: 54:20

Scripture: Isaiah 35:4, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 11:31, Hebrews 12:1-2, Revelation 4:8

Topics: "Spiritual Reflection", "Godly Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a servant of the Lord who faced opposition from a high official because his family members had embraced a simple lifestyle. The official tried to intimidate the servant by sending a police officer to the church. However, the servant, who was in prayer, told the officer to wait as he was talking to God. The speaker then encourages the listeners to examine themselves in three areas: looking up to God, looking inward to judge themselves, and looking outward to serve others. He emphasizes the importance of keeping our focus on God and being prepared for Christ's return.

Transcript

There is an old statement made by someone which says, I said to the man who stood at the gate of the new year, give me a light by which I can walk safely into the unknown future. And he said, go out, go forth and put your hand in the hand of God and that will be better to you than light and safer than a known way. So it's very lovely to think about that.

So as we look into the future, we remember what Jesus said that as we approach the end, men's hearts will fail them for fear. Luke's gospel, we read that Jesus warned us that men's hearts will fail them for thinking of all the things that are coming upon the earth. Let me get that passage.

First of all in Luke 17, he spoke about the days will come, verse 22, when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man and you will not see it. Days will come when you will long to see the coming of the Lord and it wouldn't yet have come. And he warned us further in chapter 21, verse 26, men's hearts will faint for fear with the expectation of the things which are coming in the world.

It look as if all hell has broken loose and everyone all over the world is in a panic. But then what must you do? Verse 28, when these things begin to happen, straighten up and lift up your heads because your

redemption is drawing. When men's hearts are in a panic, a true child of God, Jesus told us to lift up our heads and know that these are signs that Christ's coming is near.

So it's all a question of where we look. Jesus spoke a lot about how we use our eyes. I want to turn to Isaiah chapter 6. And as we go into the new year, we are to look in the three directions that Isaiah looked at here.

And that is what will help us to be overcomers to make help us to stand straight when men's hearts are in a panic. The first direction that we must look is up. In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne.

We must never lose the sight of that throughout this year. And I want to encourage all of you to every day of this coming year till Jesus comes. Never lose sight of the fact that Jesus sits on the throne, throne of this universe.

There are many things that will seek to take our eyes away from that. But that's what Isaiah saw. And that's what Stephen saw when he was being stoned to death.

Now, none of us may be stoned to death this year. Hope not. Anyway, but even if that happens, it says when Stephen was being stoned to death, he said, I see the heavens open.

And I see the Son of Man standing in the right hand of God. The Bible says he's seated at the right hand of God. It's almost as though he stood up just to receive the first martyr who was dying for the faith.

Imagine Jesus standing up from the throne where he's sitting to receive somebody who was faithful to him unto death. The Bible says in Hebrews 12, in verse one and two, that we are to run the race looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joys set before Him endured the cross and is sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. We are to run the race looking at Jesus who is on the throne of God.

Dear brothers and sisters, never lose sight of that any day of this year. Many of our problems remain problems because we've lost sight of that. We are to see, keep our eyes fixed just like Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on a throne.

And let's learn to worship Him like the angels worship. The angels worship saying, holy, holy, holy. The whole earth is full of His glory.

That's a wonderful thing. You know, when I'm saying that, I'm saying what heaven is saying. I'm not saying what all the people in the world are saying about this confusion and chaos and all that.

Let that be true. But from heaven's viewpoint, the whole earth is full of His glory because God is in control of everything. As far as we're concerned as God's children, everything is going to fulfill God's glorious purpose.

If I love God and I'm called according to His purpose, every single thing that's going happen in the next 366 days is going to glorify God. As far as I'm concerned, it's going to be true. I don't know a single thing about what's going to happen even tomorrow, leave alone the rest of the year.

But as I see the Lord sitting on the throne, I say, Lord Yoli, now I'm your child. The whole earth is full of your glory. Everyone on earth is your servant.

Everything that they do is only going to serve your purposes and further your glory. Remember this confession that Nebuchadnezzar made in Daniel chapter four. In Daniel chapter four, in some way he saw the same throne.

Daniel 4 and 34, he says, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven. Reason returned to me. I love that.

Your reason returns to you when your eyes are set on heavenly things. I raised my eyes toward heaven. My reason returned to me.

And I blessed the most high and praised and honored him who lives forever. His sovereign rule lasts and lasts. His kingdom never declines or falls.

No one can interrupt his work. No one can stop his hand. Verse 35, last part, say, what have you done? He does exactly according to his will in the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, because all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as zero.

You know, when we see the Lord upon the throne, it brings a dignity into our lives. I remember, I'll never forget the story of a servant of the Lord whom I knew, who many years ago, I heard the story, it's probably happened about 60 years ago, when there was a great revival in Madras. And a lot of people were getting converted.

And a lot of the ladies were, started wearing simple clothes and were taking off their jewels and becoming very simple in their way of life. And there was a man who was very disturbed. He was a very high official, because his wife or daughter or somebody began, took out their jewels and began to wear white saris and became very simple in their way of lifestyle.

It really disturbed him. So, he got a police official to try and frighten the servant of the Lord. And so, he sent this police official to the church.

And the guy went there and, you know, the senior police official, he said, I've come here to meet so and so. So, somebody went inside the room to tell this brother, the police officer has come to see you. This brother was in prayer.

He said, tell him that I'm talking to God, and I don't know when I'll finish. So, you can wait. I usually talk to God for three or four hours.

Wait. I'll never forget that story. How many of us would do it? How many of you would do it? There was a man who knew God.

God was more important to him than anybody on earth. All, in the book of Ezekiel, all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing. Remember, I told you the other day of the title of a book which says your God is too small.

That's the trouble with a lot of Christians. They're afraid of some politician, some minister, some police officer. You know why? Because they don't know God.

If you really know God, if you really knew God, the one who rules this universe, how could you be scared of anyone? How could you be scared of anyone? The most powerful person on earth, you wouldn't be scared of. They'd be scared of you. But, I'll tell you there are very few Christians who know God like that.

I want to tell you that you can know him like that. We need to see Jesus on the throne more and more and more clearly in this year. If there's panic and fear in the hearts of people, I'll tell you something, the most influential people in this country will not be able to help you in certain situations.

It's true. Supposing you get a terrible sickness, you can get the best doctor in the country, in the world, he may not be able to heal you. But, it's a different story if you know God.

Most of us, we don't know really know God at all. Jesus said, this is eternal life, that they might know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. So, I want to say to all of you, make this year a year in which you'll have a tremendous passion to know God as Almighty, to know him like Jesus taught us to pray our Father who art in heaven.

What is there he cannot do? Which human being on the face of the earth is anything more than nothing in his eyes? I'm not giving you a pep talk to sort of give you some courage. I'm telling you the truth. No one can stand against Almighty God.

And if you know him, you know the greatest person in the universe. You cannot face a problem in 2008 that he cannot solve. You cannot have a financial difficulty in 2008 that he can't take care of.

You cannot get a sickness in 2008 that he cannot heal. You cannot face a demon who will not run away in fear from you. You're going to be a conqueror.

That's the way God wanted man to be. That's what he wanted Adam to be. When he made Adam, he said, let's make man and let him rule.

And man became a slave. I'll tell you this, most born Christians I have met are slaves. They are afraid of big people in the world.

They go begging for favors from big people in the world. Why? Because they don't know God. If you knew God, you'd go to him.

I mean, if you knew the managing director of an office, would you go to the peon in that office to ask for a favor? Tell me, if you knew the managing director of a company, would you go to a peon in that company to ask for a favor? And if you know the managing director of this universe, would you go to some peon running around here for some favor? That peon may be a chief minister or the DIG of police or the general of the army. It doesn't make a difference. A peon in God's hands.

My father runs this universe. I believe that. I don't just say it here.

I can say it anywhere. My heavenly father runs this universe. No one can harm you or me if we live with our eyes fixed on him.

The harm that people seek to do to me will boomerang on them and destroy them. Yeah, the people who killed Jesus suffered. They suffered like anything.

No one can harm you. Because we have a father who watches over us, who never slumbers nor sleeps. So, let's live 2008 with a dignity.

The dignity becoming of a son of the CEO of the universe. A daughter of the CEO of the universe. I saw the Lord lifted up and his train filled the temple, it says.

The whole earth is full of his glory. And let's also, in order to know him like that, we need to spend time with him. You know, if you just go and visit him for two seconds and say, I've got to rush out and hurry because I've got other things to do.

You're not going to have confidence. It's those who wait upon the Lord, it says, who will exchange their strength. Isaiah 40, 31.

Basically, by myself, I'm a weak person and I'm a coward. I'm a coward. I'm weak.

But because I know that, I decide I'm going to spend time with my father. I'm going to look to him even more. If I were a brave type of person, I wouldn't need God.

I need God because I'm a coward. I need God because I'm weak. And he's going to make me so strong that no demon or human being is going to be stronger than me.

And because I'm such a coward, scared, that I cling to my father, he's going to make me so bold that there'll be nobody bolder than me on the face of the earth. That is what it means. Those who wait upon the Lord shall exchange their strength.

That means I give up my weakness and take his power. I give up my cowardice and take his boldness. God has not given us the spirit of fear and timidity and cowardice, but he's given us his spirit of boldness.

As I look to him and I see him, he fills me with his Holy Spirit. You know, in the apostles, in the early days, they were scared because people were threatening them saying, don't ever talk about Jesus. Don't preach in that name.

What did they say? They didn't say, Lord, destroy these fellows. Do you pray like that? Destroy these fellows. These fellows are attacking the Christians.

Destroy them. The apostles never prayed like that. Today, foolish people pray like that.

Oh, kill these fellows who are killing the Christians. No. God loves them.

He wants to save some of them, but he's going to save them by giving the Christians boldness, not hatred, but boldness. I don't want to have an atom of hatred in my heart towards any human being. I don't want to have an atom of hatred in my heart, even to those who are persecuting Christians in India today.

I want the love of God to fill my heart towards them because they are lost. They need to be saved, but I want to be bold, and I'm not bold in myself. That's why I say the first thing we need to do, the first direction in which we need to look throughout the year 2008 is up.

Every day, I want to see the Lord upon the throne. I see that the whole earth is under his control. I want to know that everyone on earth is nothing.

And the more I see that, the less I'll fear people. In the same way, the events and circumstances that are going to happen. My father is not only one who is almighty.

My father is also one who knows the future. That's more than being almighty. Almighty means power.

Knowing the future, means he's got knowledge of everything that's going to happen. And if he knows that something is going to happen to me day after tomorrow evening, I don't know. It may take me by surprise,

but it won't take him by surprise.

Then he has already made today some provision for that problem that I'm going to face day after tomorrow evening. Why? Because I'm his son. He's my dad.

That's why. And not just day after tomorrow, but in March 2008, or September 2008, or December 2008. I don't know what's going to happen, but there's nothing that's going to happen any one of the coming days that my father doesn't know.

And when I look at him upon the throne, I say, God, my dad, all the inhabitants of the earth are nothing. All the circumstances on earth are, you're going to be in control of all of them. And you're going to work it out all in such a wonderful way that by the end of 2008, I'm going to be a better man.

I'm going to be a stronger man spiritually. And I'm going to be a gentler and a kinder person by the end of the next year. Because of the circumstances God will put me into to crush me and break all the pride in me.

He doesn't want to crush anything good out of me. He crushes me to remove that which is rotten. He puts me into the fire to take away all the hopeless alloys that pollute my gold.

He wants me to come out as pure gold. And I believe he'll take me through trial and testing because he wants me to be absolutely pure. So I'm not looking for a comfortable life in the coming year.

I'm looking for a triumphant life, for victory. The Christian life is not a picnic. It's a battle.

When the Indian soldiers go to Kashmir, they go to fight, not for a picnic. But imagine, those soldiers don't know whether they're going to win a battle or not. They don't know whether they're going to die in that battle or not.

They go with such fear. They go, they're loyal to the country, they fight, but they don't know what will happen. But it's different for us.

We know what's going to happen. We're going to win. Imagine going into a battle and knowing you're going to win.

Imagine going to play a cricket match and I already know I'm going to win. Boy, that would give me a little bit of confidence, right? Imagine going in to write an examination and already know I'm going to come first in this exam. Boy, what a wonderful way to go to the examination room.

This is Christianity. I'm not telling stories. This is really true.

But it all depends on if you keep your eyes on Jesus. And I tell you something, the devil will try everything in his power to take your eyes away from the Lord. Don't let him do it.

What did Isaiah do? It says here, he saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted over everything and everybody worshipping. Let me join that crowd and worship and worship and worship. Let this year be a year of worship where a heavenly father who seeks throughout the earth for people to worship him will find in us worshipers.

So what's the first direction we got to look? Up at Jesus on the throne as one who is absolutely holy. They sing holy, holy, holy. These angels, they cover their faces because God is so holy they can't even look at him.

And I need to see something of that holiness, the absolute holiness of God. As I see that, the second direction that I must look is in. So I look up and then immediately after that I look in.

Now don't ever look in before you look up. That'll lead you to discouragement because to look inside your flesh is like looking inside a stinking garbage bin, right or wrong. And it'll depress you.

But if you have seen Jesus first and his holiness and then you see in and you see that that which you acknowledge he will cleanse. See I look in to see, God sees whether I will acknowledge the impurity I have seen as I have looked up at Jesus' holiness. I look at the life of Jesus and I see oh God I'm so selfish.

I don't speak like you speak. I don't look at the things you look at. I don't read the type of stuff you would have read.

I'm not behaving with people the way you would behave. I'm so selfish self-centered and I just think about myself. I get I get light on so many things in my life because I looked up.

So it's very important. Look up first. Go in the right order and it'll lead to look in and that's what we see the next thing Isaiah says, woe is me.

Verse five, for I am ruined. I'm a man of unclean lips because my eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts. I want to say to you in this coming year, let the Lord give you light on yourself.

I think all of us have spent enough years getting light on sins of other people, right? Or you feel you haven't spent enough years doing that? Anybody feels you still need to spend some more time getting light on the sins of other people? Can we say Lord I have had enough of seeing sins in other people and talking about it and speaking about it. That person is a man of unclean lips and that woman is a woman of unclean lips and that other brother there is a person of unclean lips and the other person is of unclean lips. Let's now look in and say Lord I am a man of unclean lips.

Shall we do that in 2008? That'll be great. Because we saw it in the Lord. We saw his purity.

It may be the way we speak. It may be some other area. I believe the mark of God's blessing upon our life is that he gives us light on ourselves.

It's not money. I'll tell you that my brothers. Something much better than money.

If he can give you light on yourself, God has blessed you. If he gives you light every day of this coming year, he'll bless you every day of this coming year. But if the coming year is going to be like the last one, where every day you discover some new fault in your wife or your mother-in-law or your neighbor or some brother in the church or some sister or then 2008 is going to be no better than 2007.

It'll probably be worse. So once we've looked up, we look in and see our own need. We judge ourselves.

And you know there's something wonderful about this. It says here, as soon as Isaiah confessed his sin, immediately, verse 6, one of the seraphim stopped worshiping God. He got a command from God to do

something.

He took a burning coal, which he took from the altar with tongs. And he touched my mouth with it, verse Isaiah 6, 7 and said, this has touched your lips. Your iniquity is taken away.

Your sin forgiven. It happens immediately. Your sin is forgiven immediately the moment you confess it.

But if you don't confess it, that'll remain. If you keep blaming somebody else, like Adam did, your sin will remain. If you keep looking at other people to see what's wrong with them, your sin will remain.

But if you confess your own sin, God will command the seraphim to cleanse it. The blood of Jesus will cleanse it immediately. And there's something wonderful we see here, that the fire of God is something which the angel could not touch with his hands.

Do you notice that? It says he needed a pair of tongs to take that fire from the altar. But that fire which an angel could not touch, Isaiah could touch. It's wonderful.

The angels can't have the fire of God, but you and I can have it. It touched Isaiah's lips, that which an angel in heaven couldn't touch. Easy.

It's the fire of the Holy Spirit which no angel can have. Many of you have been seeking for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Let's pray that the fire of God will touch us every day of this year.

I want to live the year 2008 as a spirit-filled year, more spirit-filled than any year of my life so far. I want the fire of God to touch my whole being from head to foot, not just my lips. I want the fire of God to purify me, make me just bold, full of zeal for the Lord's house, for purity, not seeking anybody's honor in the world or in the church, completely free from all partiality, having no special friends in the church whose sin I will cover up and set on fire by God.

Do you want that? Do you want the year 2008 to be a spirit-filled year? Not some cheap emotion in some Pentecostal meeting. I don't want that. I want the fire that comes from the altar in heaven, that touches my mind and sets it on fire for God, that touches my eyes and makes it burn with purity, because I confess my sin, but I sin with my eyes.

If you confess, He'll purify you. Whatever you confess, He purifies. Confess what you sin with your eyes.

Confess what you sin with your tongue, what you do with your hands. That's all. Confess what it is I do.

Lord, I am a man of unclean lips. And the fire came. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, 1 Corinthians 11, verse 31.

If we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. You've heard me say that many times here. If we, during 2008, every day, don't judge others, leave them to God.

They are not your servants. They are not your servants. Why do you want to judge them? Do you go judging how some servant is working in somebody else's house? Worry about your own servants.

They are not your servants. That's what Romans 14 says. Romans 14 says, that brother is not your servant.

That sister is not your servant. Why in the world are you judging him? Why in the world are you passing an opinion about him? He is God's servant. Let God deal with him.

Why do you want to be a busybody in God's affairs? Do you know that every time you judge a brother or judge a sister, you're telling God how he should deal with his servants. And that's why it goes so badly with you and so slowly with you, because you're a busybody in God's matters. Just stop judging others.

They are God's servants, not yours. Tell me, which person in this church is your servant? Can you point out one? Not even your wife. Even your children are not your servants.

I hope you know that. They belong to God first. Nobody is your servant.

They're all God's servants. But what a lot of time we have spent judging, speaking evil about this servant, God's servant, God's servants, God's servants here. What a lot of time we have spent in the past.

We're going to finish with it. We're going to judge ourselves rightly. It's just we won't be judged.

Supposing you've done that faithfully throughout 2008. Imagine what an opportunity, my friends. 366 days to clean up your house.

What a clean house you'll have by the end of 2008. Clean up your house. And the Lord will help you through His Holy Spirit.

If you judge others rightly, you know, I mentioned this picture of supposing Christ were to come and He sets up His throne and He calls all His children one by one. And He reads the record of your life. Here's a sin you didn't confess.

Here's somebody you hurt. You didn't apologize to. Here's some money you never repaid.

Here's something else you did. Here's something else you did, and something else you did, and something else you should have done. You just ignored it.

You were too lazy. It goes through the whole list. And then the Lord says, this is your judgment.

And I've often thought of that. One by one by one, and I'm standing in line, three or four people ahead of me. One by one by one by one, and I'm getting all nervous as my turn comes.

And then He calls my name. And I stand there, and He looks at the book and says, oh, there's nothing here. Well done.

Go. Do you believe such a thing can happen? What do you think? If we judge ourselves, what's the rest of the verse? We shall not be judged. Is it possible that it can be like that? Yes, I believe it.

I want it to be like that. When Christ comes again, because I spent 2008 not judging any of you, because you're all God's servants, not mine. But judging myself in the light which God gave me, I want to be wholehearted in cleansing my house, not even judging my wife or my children.

Judging myself is going to be a very good year for me. I prophesy that because I've decided to do this. You can prophesy that about yourself if you decide it and stick to it.

Stick to it. I am going to see myself in the light of God, and I'm going to confess my sin. I'm going to do a thorough house cleaning this year like I've never done before.

I'm going to look up, and then I'm going to look in and cleanse out this garbage can completely. I'm going to clean it out, and God's going to help me. And the fire of God will come and burn up everything that needs to be burnt up there.

That's the way to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And then thirdly, we look up, then we look in, and then we look out at other needy people, not to judge them, but to serve them in the name of Jesus. Freely you have received, freely give.

I remember many years ago when I was trying to earn my own living in the early days, and it was a real struggle. There was a brother who came from Europe, one of the older brothers said to me, Brother Zach, you are doing some labor, publishing a magazine and typing it out and taking it to the printer, and that's how we were doing it those days way back in the early 80s, and writing articles and putting them all together. You're like an editor of a monthly magazine.

Why don't you pay yourself from the church's offering? I was shocked that anybody would tell me such a thing. I should pay myself to serve the Lord? Are you crazy? I will lose my anointing immediately. If I take money to write something for God, if I take money to help somebody spiritually, boy, there would be no fire in my life anymore.

It would be gone, and that's why it went from his life a little later. I'm glad I witnessed that. We look out.

I heard the voice of the Lord, verse 8, saying, Whom shall I send? There's a needy world out there. Whom can I send? Who will go for us? Who will be our representative to go out to this needy world and tell them about the love of God? And Isaiah, now he's cleansed. Now the fire is touched.

He lives here, my Lord. Send me. And he says, It's going to be a difficult job, Isaiah.

I'm not sending you to a comfortable life. I'm sending you to face a lot of opposition. People will oppose you.

You know, tradition tells us that finally the people of the nation of Israel and Judah were so angry with Isaiah that they took a saw and sawed him into two pieces. You read about that in Hebrews 11, about men who were sawn asunder, cut him into two. He paid a price for going out, but he went out.

But you'll see him in heaven getting a reward. So we look up, we look in, and then we don't stop there. A spiritual man looks up, looks in, and looks out.

That's what Isaiah, he looked up, looked in, then he was ready to look out and see the need around him. God says there's a need around there. Whom can I send? You don't have to be capable, but you have to be available.

So let's make 2008 a year in which we're going to say, Lord, I'm available for you this year. I'm not able, I'm not any more capable in 2008 than I was in 2007, but I'm more available this year than I was last year. Lord, I'm sorry, last year, 2007, I was busy with so many of my own programs.

I could have cut some of that down, but I didn't because I was my own boss. I never looked out and saw the need around me. I was too lazy to look out.

Don't stop with looking up and looking in. You'll be terribly imbalanced. If you just spend your life looking up and looking in, you will become a self-centered, miserable, old creature.

When God blesses you, give it out, and God will give you much more. There was a man who wrote a book called, *God Runs My Business*. He was such a successful businessman, his business prospered.

He gave so much of his money to God, he started giving 10% of his business earnings to God. Then he gave 20% of his business earnings to God, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%. Finally, ended up with 90% of his business profits went for God.

And God kept blessing him. And somebody asked him, what's the secret of your life? He said, well, God shovels in and I shovel it out, and God's got a bigger shovel. So, I never sort of seem to keep track with all, I keep shoveling out and he keeps shoveling it in, and he's got a much bigger shovel than I have.

It's wonderful to know God like that. If you look at the need of others around you, and say, Lord, I'm available. I'm available to whatever you want me to do.

Maybe I've not taken much responsibility in the church in 2007, but I'm going to open my eyes in 2008 and look around and see if there's something I can do in the church. Maybe something I can do in my home to help my parents or to help somebody in the home. It always begins at home and then in the church, and then God will widen your circle and show you other people whom you can help.

But keep your eyes open in 2008 and say, Lord, show me where you want me to go and serve you. Maybe somebody in your college, maybe somebody in your school, somebody in your office who is discouraged, who is needy. Just say, Lord, I'm available.

That's all. You just got to say, I'm available. I don't know what to say.

I don't know how to reach out, but I'm available. How many of you will say to the Lord, I'm available in 2008? Lord, I want to keep my eyes open. I don't want to be just occupied with my own problems.

I don't want to think that all the money you give me is for me. I'll think if I can bless others with it. I want to look out and see.

I tell you, your bank account may be less at the end of 2008, but you'll be a much more spiritual person. Which do you want it? You want it the other way around, with a higher bank account and a more carnal person? Or you want a lower bank account and a more spiritual person? God says, choose. It's up to you.

You know, because whenever we think of seeing the need of others, it involves sacrifice. You can never serve God without sacrifice. I remember when I started serving the Lord, the Lord said to me, if you serve me, you have to serve my people.

It goes together. You can't say you want to serve me and not serve my people. I said, okay.

And you have to serve and serve and serve and serve, and most of them will not be grateful to you at all. They won't even say a thank you to you. But you've got to keep serving, because you're serving me, says the Lord.

We're not looking for gratitude from people. We're not looking for people to write us thank you notes saying, oh sister, thank you so much for coming and doing this. No, nobody may write thank you notes,

but you're serving the Lord who did so much for you.

Why are you not expecting a thank you note from that person? Because you're not serving him. You're serving the Lord. Do you want the Lord to write a thank you note to you? I remember years ago, the Lord said to me, don't look for gratitude from people.

If you want thank you, look up to me. I'll tell you thank you. I'm going to serve God.

Dear brothers and sisters, we have a wonderful opportunity ahead of us to look up at God, to look in and see our need, and to look out and see the needs of others, and allow the Holy Spirit to show us the glory of Jesus, show us our own need, and give us the gifts, the supernatural gifts to serve others. Yes, he's got supernatural gifts. We don't serve with our own ability, but with the supernatural gifts that God can give any one of you, men and women.

Claim it from God. Let's bow our heads before God for a few moments now. As we pass over from one year to another, a good time to examine ourselves and see, Lord, in just these three areas, how has it been in 2007, and how will it be in 2008? It's very simple, very easy to remember every day of the year.

I'm going to look up first, and look in, and look out. That's all. And you'll be amazed to see, if you, those of you who really take me seriously today, you'll be amazed to see where you will reach by this time next year.

You yourself will be amazed at the what the Lord has done in you, and what the Lord has done through you. You who thought you were just such a useless, helpless, weak person. You who were despised by everybody else in the church as just a nobody.

That God saw your heart, and saw your sincerity, and said, I don't care if people despise you. God says, I see your sincerity. I saw you looked up to me.

I saw you judged yourself, and nobody else. And I saw that you looked out to see if you could serve others in my name. And you sought me for power and gifts to serve them.

And so you're blessed, my child. Oh, don't miss it. Don't miss it, my brothers and sisters.

Don't rejoice in a bigger bank account at the end of next year. But rejoice in these three areas. In these three areas, if you have lived in the light and served God, then you have accomplished something in 2008.

All the rest will perish. Everything else will perish. Be wise, be wise, Heavenly Father.

Oh, Father, I pray you'll fill us with the Holy Spirit. Yes, Lord, pour out your Spirit upon us as we begin the new year. Fill our hearts with the mighty power of the Holy Spirit.

Help us to see Jesus more clearly, for he's got all authority in heaven and earth. Help us to see our own need, to have the fire of God touch us, purify us, to see the need around us, to lift up our eyes, to make ourselves available to you totally every day of this year, to live for you. Help me, Lord, to be more zealous in this year than in the past, to do more for you than I've ever done before.

Give me health and strength to travel more for you, to live for you, to serve others more than ever before. I pray, Lord, it'll be true for all of us. Oh, God, that your work will be done.

Your name will be glorified. Jesus will be lifted up. The fire of God will be upon us every day of this year.

The living words of God will come through our lips to other people. Do it, Lord, we pray for many, many people here, we ask you. Fill us with the Holy Spirit.

Oh, Father, pour out your spirit upon us, we pray. Jesus, baptize her in the Holy Spirit. You are here, Lord.

Lay your hand upon me, I pray. Lay your hand upon us and baptize us afresh in the Holy Spirit and fire. Praise you, praise you, praise you, Jesus.

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