

Discerning the Spirit of Babylon

by Zac Poonen

This sermon delves into discerning the spirit of Babylon as depicted in Revelation and the Old Testament, contrasting it with the bride of Christ. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the harlot as one unfaithful to Christ, compared to the faithful bride. The speaker highlights the significance of having God as our Father, being cleansed by the blood of Jesus, valuing God's Word, being filled with the Holy Spirit, dying to self daily, and engaging in fellowship within the body of Christ to truly live as part of the bride of Christ.

Scripture: Revelation 17:5, James 4:4, Matthew 11:28, Hebrews 8:10, Romans 11:36, John 14:16, Philippians 2:13, Genesis 11:4, Daniel 4:35, John 14:18

Topics: "Discerning Spiritual Allegiances", "Faithfulness to Christ"

Description

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Transcript

Our subject is discerning the spirit of Babylon and some people may not know why we use the word Babylon because they're not familiar with scripture. But if you turn to the end of the Bible in Revelation chapter 17, it speaks about Babylon as the great harlot, mother of harlots in Revelation chapter 17 and verse 5. So, it's a scriptural word, we are using a New Testament scriptural word. It has some connection with the old empire of Babylon run by Nebuchadnezzar but the Lord is trying to use that as an example to warn us and it's called a harlot.

The harlot is a prostitute and it's compared in Revelation chapter 21 with the bride in chapter 21 verse 2 is called a new Jerusalem, not the old Jerusalem which is on earth. Babylon is the harlot and the new Jerusalem is the bride and the bride is the disciples of Jesus who follow him wherever he goes. They are described in Revelation chapter 14 as these are the ones who follow the lamb wherever he goes in Revelation chapter 14 and verses 1 to 5. So that's the contrast here and we need to understand what is this harlot or adulteress? A bride is someone who's faithful to the bridegroom the Lord Jesus and the adulteress of the harlot Babylon is one who claims to be the bride but is unfaithful.

I mean if someone is not engaged to Christ, in other words doesn't claim to belong to Christ, they cannot be a part of Babylon. A person who belongs to another religion can never be a part of Babylon. Babylon refers to those who claim to be Christians, claim to accept Jesus as their Lord but are not devoted to him as the bride and this is described in James and chapter 4 if you don't have time to look at these verses you can just jot them down or listen to this message later on but I have to go through it quickly.

James 4 and verse 4 here is how the spiritual adulteress is described here like this James writes to Christians remember he's writing to Christians here in other places he says many of you brethren my brethren in chapter 3 verse 1 chapter 2 verse 1 my brethren he's talking to my brethren and to the believers he says in James 4 verse 4 you adulteresses. Now he's not saying that to the world he's saying that to believers who don't have the spirit of devotion to Christ like a bride should have to the person she's engaged to. The bride of Christ is a picture of a bride who's absolutely faithful to a person she's engaged to who's gone on a distant journey promised to come back and marry her but the harlot is one who is engaged but fools around with others while her bridegroom is away and this is referred to here in James 4 for you adulteresses and here is the other person who is attracting the bride and making her an adulteress it's called here the world.

You adulteresses don't you know that friendship with the world that is spiritual adultery is described so clearly and that is hostility or enmity towards God so whoever makes himself a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Now when it speaks about the world it's not talking about people no the people of the world the Bible says God so loved the people of the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but this is talking about a world system where Satan is called the prince of this world and he confused his aim is to confuse and deceive those who claim to be Christians he's not worried about those who are already in his hands unbelievers he's concerned with those who claim to be the bride of Christ to defile them corrupt them make their witness ineffective make them compromise in some way lose their testimony go after other things and lose their devotion to Christ all types of ways the devil seeks them to seeks to make them a friend of this world system when it says the devil is the prince of this world he's not a physical ruler on earth he's a ruler of this world system which runs what we see in this world so that is what's referred to here and John the apostle also writes like this in 1 John chapter 2 this is we need to understand this Babylon clearly 1 John chapter 2 and verse 15 says do not love the world if anyone I don't care who you are again he's writing to believers chapter 2 verse 1 my little children he's writing to those who are born again he's even writing to spiritual fathers in 1 John 2 14 that means not just there are three types of believers he writes to in verses chapter 2 verse 12 to 14 those who are spiritual babes newly converted those who have progressed a little young men and those who are spiritual fathers 1 John 2 14 some of you may think you're very mature spiritual father you say I'm not a baby Christian I'm not even a young brother I'm a mature spiritual father here is what the Holy Spirit is saying to you and to me do not love the world can a spiritual father love the world can an effective preacher love the world yes anyone can fall into that if you say well I'm beyond that I'm a spiritual father let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall it's behoves us to walk in humility and when the word of God says to spiritual fathers love not the world I want to take it seriously I don't want to imagine that I can be careless Jesus was always alert on this earth when he lived on this earth that's why he never sinned do not love the world if anyone loves the world listen to this don't care you're a new believer or a spiritual father if anyone loves the world the love of the father is not in him and what is the world the lust of the flesh it's not the people it's the lust of the flesh 1 John 2 16 the lust of the eyes and the pride of life all this is not from the father but it's from the world and this is going to pass away verse 17 and the opposite of that is here's the bride in 1 John 2 17 those who do the will of God so the contrast here is between the Babylon those who indulge in

the lusts of the flesh which is usually all types of sinful pleasures and the lust of the eyes which refers to adultery and the boastful pride of life which is seeking honor and this also includes lust of the eyes also includes the love for money we look and see things and we want to buy them all this is going to pass away and the one who does the will of God that's the contrast those are the people who constitute the bride of Christ that's just a little brief introduction now when we trace this back to the beginning uh you'll see it's a very subtle thing way back in the beginning when God created Adam he sent him into a garden and there were two trees mentioned there were thousands of trees in the Garden of Eden but two trees particularly are mentioned one is the knowledge the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the other is the tree of life now there's nothing wrong with knowing good and evil we know that we teach our children from the time they are born to know good and evil why did God forbid that it's very important to understand it because the origin of Babylon is also here here are two trees and one leads on finally to Babylon in a very subtle way this is not obvious sin obvious sin is what we saw in 1 John 2 the lust of the flesh the lust of the eyes and the pride of life but here you see a contrast in the beginning of the Bible the tree of knowledge and the tree of life what do you see at the end of the Bible Babylon Jerusalem how does it end up there the choice is to have knowledge of spiritual things knowledge of the word of God and no life there is a knowledge which just remains in our mind which is part of our soul such a person is a soulish christian not a spiritual christian a spiritual christian concentrates on life that knowledge leads to life see knowledge is like food food is very important we cannot grow without food we don't have life without food but if you eat food and it never gets digested and never gets converted into blood and flesh and bones you die you can eat as much as you like but you die that is what knowledge does knowledge is like food if it's not digested because the if the holy spirit does not break it down and make it part of our inner life of our spirit our heart it ends up as knowledge and we end up in Babylon it doesn't look so dirty as sexual sin it doesn't look so dirty as the love of money it doesn't look so dirty as pride but it leads to Babylon just as much knowledge many christians who are fairly clean morally who are not running after money and who are not seeking honor also end up in Babylon because their christianity is all in their knowledge even those who speak about forgiveness or justification even some who speak about victory over sin it's not in their life they are proud how can a man speak about victory over sin and be proud he's got to be crazy he's full of the greatest sin of all the first sin that came in the universe pride and here he's proud maybe he's not proud of worldly things he's proud of his bible knowledge or perhaps he's proud of his spirituality that is Babylon to have a good moral life and to be proud of it is Babylon we read that in 1 John 2 16 the lust of the flesh the lust of the eyes and the pride of life so knowledge the bible says in 1 Corinthians 8 whereas love builds up the primary mark of life the primary mark of spiritual life is fervent love for God and for Jesus Christ and leading on to loving one another in the church as Jesus loved us and loving everyone in the world as ourselves at least a willingness to love everybody as ourselves we're not it doesn't mean we've got to help everybody but an attitude for example to ensure that there is not a single human being against whom I've got hatred there's not a single human being whom I despise that's knowledge you know knowledge puffs up and whether it's bible knowledge or scientific knowledge or earthly knowledge it can puff up a Christian and he becomes a part of Babylon it's a very subtle thing many Christians think I'm not a part of Babylon I'm in a good church oh yeah it's not a particular church that is Babylon it's a spirit that can be in a person you can be sitting in the best church in the world and be a part of Babylon yeah it's an individual thing you yourself choose whether you want knowledge or you want life for example when you read the bible I'm sure most of you read the bible are you seeking for knowledge or life those are the two trees this book the bible can be a not a tree of knowledge of good and evil or it can be a tree of life to you the choice is yours if you use only your mind to study go to a bible school study study study use a lot of commentaries and this that and the other concordance it is all good I use concordances myself but if it's only going to remain

in the mind I'm going to the tree of knowledge of good and evil not the bible knowledge perhaps the tree of bible knowledge Jesus the Lord so told Adam if you eat of that you'll die and it's true even today the pursuit of knowledge any type of knowledge by itself without life brings death there's nothing wrong in pursuing knowledge I want to pursue knowledge that is essential for me to live on this earth I want to pursue the knowledge of the scripture I've been studying the bible for more than 61 years and even today I say Lord I don't want to study this book to get knowledge I don't want to study this book to preach I want life more than anything else that's what I want to pursue that's how I stay away from Babylon so this is the first thing warn you dear brothers and sisters very lovingly and humbly I would urge you when you read the scriptures when you hear a message don't think of oh I understood something some people think like this especially those who are preachers oh I got a point to preach in my next sermon is that why you're listening to God's word in a sermon or reading the bible to get a point to preach for your next sermon to get honor for yourself that is Babylon when you preach to get honor for yourself that is 100 Babylon we are supposed to preach to point to Christ to draw people away from ourselves to Christ we have to point to him so that people don't see us that's the spirit of the bride pointing away from ourselves so that's the first place where we see this contrast knowledge or life go on to chapter 4 we read about the first sin committed outside the garden of Eden after Adam and Eve were turned out of the garden of Eden we read of Cain and Abel presenting an offering to God and there again you see a contrast and there again you see the spirit of Babylon in Jerusalem the harlot and the bride why did the fire of God fall on Abel's sacrifice and did not fall on Cain's sacrifice that's what disturbed Cain why is God accepting Abel the way God manifested his acceptance in Old Testament times was the physical fire would fall on the sacrifice as you read in Leviticus and other places so here the reason why is not because like some people some preachers teach that Abel brought a lamb a blood offering there were offerings given ordered by God which did not have blood for example grain offering was a thanksgiving offering what Cain and Abel were bringing was not a sin offering they were bringing a thanksgiving offering for the way God blessed their labors Cain was a farmer so he brought the grain absolutely right Abel was a shepherd so he brought the lambs a lamb rather but what was the difference Cain Genesis 4:3 brought an offering a.n. an offering Abel was for brought the best of his flock here again you see Babylon in Jerusalem or the harlot and the bride there are Christians who bring an offering to God a.n. some offering some 10% or whatever it is the question is not the quantity no it's not talking about quantity it's the lamb that Abel brought here may have been very small compared to the huge amount of grain that Cain brought it is not quantity at all it was an offering whereas Abel brought the best so here are two types of Christians some will bring an offering to ease their conscience oh I have to give something to God I call them the minimum Christians by that I mean their whole attitude to Christianity is what is the minimum I have to do to please God what is the minimum I have to do to go to heaven what is the minimum I have to do to have my sins of sins forgiven that is called an offering it always ends up in Babylon the other Christians like Abel who says Lord what is the maximum I can give you in this one earthly life I have you don't have to be a full-time Christian worker the Apostle Paul was a businessman who served the Lord he was a tent maker he was not a full-time Christian worker he earned his own living and supported himself and even supported some of his co-workers he was an amazing man an example he says follow me as I follow Christ he didn't bring an offering he brought the best he gave his life to God and he said I don't want to be one like one of these preachers who are paid by others and look around for somebody to give money these preachers who always send out prayer letters to get money from different places he said I don't want to be like that he never sent out a prayer letter he never asked people for money he supported himself because he wanted to give the best he says as a servant of the God I have the right to be supported because Jesus said the laborer is worthy of his hire but he says I don't use that right he was following a savior Jesus who gave up

all his rights when he came to earth that is the mark of a man who belongs to the bride he doesn't claim rights he doesn't say I have a right to this I'll tell you the bride of Christ has no rights if people take away rights from me he says okay I'm not going to get offended I'm not going to get hurt he may be the most respected person in the church if somebody stands up to his face and insults him he bows his head and forgives him that's a true servant of God he does not seek to exalt himself he doesn't like some of these big preachers nowadays run away from the platform as soon as they finish speaking because they're too big to talk to ordinary people they may be a big preacher in the world but they are part of Babylon don't be deceived by all that Jesus never ran away after he finished preaching so that he could not talk to ordinary people he didn't go around sitting around with the big shots of the chief priests and Herod and all after his message he was mingling with ordinary sinners all the time before speaking after speaking all the time in fact somebody like Nicodemus could come and disturb him in the middle of the night how free do you feel to go to somebody's house in the middle of the night and then knock at the door and say I want to talk to you that's a man of God who's given people the impression you can come and disturb me anytime if I can help you spiritually come in the middle of the night I'll wake up and sit and help you that's the spirit of Christ which Nicodemus sensed and he went to him otherwise he would not have done he was a respectable rabbi he knows that he shouldn't go and disturb other rabbis in the middle of the night but he says Jesus was different he gave people the impression I'm here to serve you anytime you can disturb me that's the spirit of the bride of Christ the same spirit as Christ so we see these two examples knowledge and life and here the you give the minimum what is the minimum I need to do for example what's the minimum I need to do to have a good testimony in the church maybe you want to be a part of a church and you want to find out what is the minimum I have to do to remain as a good member in the church do I have to come to so many two meetings a week okay I'll come for two meetings a week do I have to pay a certain amount of money in the offering box you have to take some small responsibility I'll do that but I'm going to live for myself the rest of the time the fundamental principle of a part of person who's the heart part of the harlot Babylon church is that deep down in his heart self is in the center not Jesus Christ not the kingdom of God but how can I advance myself if I can use religion to advance myself let me do it see let me give you the example of you know that Jesus drove out some money changers and the sellers of sheep and all from the temple why did he do that do you know that they were doing a very good service I don't know whether you realize that they were not there just to make money of course they were making money but they were saying there are all these people Jewish people coming from far places like Galilee and other parts of Israel coming all the way to Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice to God in the Passover time and there was three times they had to come to Jerusalem and instead of bringing their sheep and oxen all the way from their place which is a nuisance I mean to travel all the way bringing your animals which for sacrifice with you these merchants these businessmen said hey you don't have to bring them we'll give them to you here we'll sell you these sheep for sacrifice they were not selling sheep for food they were selling sheep and doves and all for sacrifice for a religious purpose and he says we'll give it to you here the only thing we have to charge a pretty high commission and they were making money in the name of Jehovah in the name of God from those poor people and Jesus said he chased them out he says this my house is the house of prayer not a place for you to make money do you know that Jesus never went to the marketplace in Jerusalem and chased anybody out there's nothing wrong in doing business there's nothing wrong in selling sheep or mutt or goats or anything you like in the marketplace but don't do it in the name of God if you do anything in the name of God is it must be for zero profit that's the principle anything you do in the name of God must be for zero gain for yourself you don't use the power of God to gain something for yourself never that is Babylon when the Lord called me for my to serve him full-time when I was working in the navy in India in 1964 which is a long long time ago 56 years ago one word that the Lord

spoke to me at that time very clearly was from the first temptation that Jesus faced in the wilderness in the first temptation in the wilderness you read in Matthew chapter 4 the devil came to Jesus and told him well you've just been let me paraphrase his words a few days ago 40 days ago you were anointed with the Holy Spirit and power by God in the river Jordan now you've got power now you've been not been eating for 40 days you're really hungry and you can use up your power to turn these stones into bread and satisfy your hunger you know even if you don't eat for three days it's it's tough you feel really hungry imagine going with 40 days without food Jesus was hungry and the devil said you're not stealing anybody's food you're not asking anybody for food you're using the power God gave you not to make money no no no just to make a little bit of bread to eat it sounds such a good thing to do but Jesus said no he said I haven't heard from the father to do that so I won't do it he did not use his power to make bread for himself but at other times we know he made bread for 5,000 people 5,000 men and many women and children 10,000 people another time he made for 4,000 people multiplied the bread he he had the power to make bread and he made it for others for thousands of others but he never made it for himself that's the word the Lord spoke to me and the way the Lord applied it in my life was I have given you an anointing to preach that's not your own ability I know it's not my own ability because I was a very shy young man I've never taken part in any public speaking in school or in the military academy or anywhere I was very reserved and not at all the type of person who could be a preacher but God anointed me with the Holy Spirit and the Lord said I have given you power I'll be with your mouth and I'll give you words to speak but you must never use the gift I gave you that I give you to get anything for yourself Jesus never used the power to make bread for himself you must never use the gift I give you to make money for yourself you must never use the gift I give you to get honor for yourself or anything for yourself it must be all for Christ not 90 percent for Christ all for Christ I'm not saying you cannot receive a gift Jesus received the gifts we read in Luke chapter 8 verse 3 but he was not dependent on them he was not looking for it he was not preaching for money he was not preaching for honor so that is Babylon where you do a right thing and you're doing it for yourself to gain something for yourself this is what the Lord told me when I started writing books in the world people write books to become millionaires they get money royalties Christian preachers write books to make money you must never write a book to make money that's why we publish all our books at Christian Fellowship Center Bangalore and I get zero royalty from it I don't want it the Apostle Paul is my example who said follow me as I follow Christ that's what I've supported myself all these years that I've been serving the Lord so I see very clearly so much of Christendom today is in the spirit of Babylon seeking gain for themselves preaching for honor preaching for money writing books for money this is Babylon but so if you keep this in mind we'll understand a little bit of where this all leads let me just show you another passage in 2nd Timothy and it'll become clearer 2nd Timothy in chapter 3 Paul is speaking here about the last days and you know we're living in the last days and he says here in 2nd Timothy 3 in the last days difficult times will come or as the living Bible paraphrases it it'll be very difficult to be a Christian in the last days not because of persecution no that is also true but here he's referring to the fact that there are people who will have a form of godliness verse 5 this is why it's going to be difficult to be a Christian in the last days listen carefully because around you will be Christians who have an appearance of godliness the form of godliness is the doctrine those who have the right doctrine those who preach the truth we're not talking about people who preach error people who will preach the right form of godliness but lack the power you remember what I said about the two trees in the garden of Eden it's the same thing here these are the two trees 2nd Timothy 3 5 the tree of knowledge the form of godliness Bible knowledge exact correct doctrine but no life no power to live that godly life so that's right here Babylon and Jerusalem are right here in 2nd Timothy 3 5 a form of godliness without power and in other words they'll be talking about Jesus then maybe they are full-time workers preaching about Christ and maybe they become famous in that city or

town or worldwide or whatever it is but they will be they it says there are four types of lovers mentioned in verses 1 to 4 read carefully four types of lovers the only correct one is the lover of God the lover of God is the bride of Christ the other three lovers are part of Babylon and they are verse 4 lovers of pleasure lovers of sinful pleasure of sexual pleasure preachers who fool around with women not their wives and who commit sin but hide it so that nobody knows about it and they get a name as a great preacher but in secret they're living in sin 100 Babylon would be judged by God in the final day God is no respecter of persons God doesn't care whether your world famous or anything like that he looks for purity many who are first will be lost in the final day so lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God this is the contrast Babylon consists of Christians who love sinful pleasure more than they love God who love pleasing themselves more than pleasing Jesus Christ pleasure to love pleasure means to please yourself it could be sexual pleasure it could be any type of thing you know the Bible speaks even about gluttony as a sin Philippians chapter 3 it speaks about those whose God is their stomach people whose God is their stomach have you ever thought of that as a sinful thing to make that gluttony could be a sin to eat to live is right but to live to eat that's completely wrong it says in Philippians 3 about those whose God is their stomach in Philippians 3 19 so that's another type of pleasure we've got to be careful about a true Christian follows Jesus and he's disciplined in his life discipline in the use of his time discipline in the way he spends his mind and discipline in the way he lives his life I'm not saying that he has no time for relaxation it's perfectly all right to relax to play games with our children and to go outdoors to go for a walk to go for a picnic all that is okay provided our aim in everything like it says in 1 Corinthians 10 31 whatever you do do all for the glory of God that's a true disciple of Jesus you say is it a high standard certainly is should we aim for that now Mike I can answer that question when you say you mean all of us Christians should aim to live for the glory of God let me ask you another question you answer that and then you'll get the answer to this one do all of you want to be in perfect health or would you like to have a little bit of sickness I don't mean too much sickness just one percent or five percent sickness how many of you would say yes I love I love five percent sickness not even one I'm 81 years old but I don't love sickness I'll tell you that I don't want to be sick not even one percent I love health I love health a hundred percent if so I want to live for the glory of God a hundred percent I want to do everything for the glory of God why is it that every one of you will love health physical health 100 but not spiritual health 100 what do I mean by that when your conscience convicts you about something it's like a sickness it could be a cancer serious sickness or it could be an injury a broken bone perhaps now whether it's a cancer or a broken bone every one of you will seek to set it right in some way possible nobody says oh I got cancer it's okay let me live with that no you won't say my bone is broken let me leave it like that let me leave my hand hanging around no we fix it immediately we don't wait we go to the doctor we go to the hospital we love health so much that we fix anything even a small injury in our hand we go and put some medicine or a band-aid or something there immediately that is how much we love physical health and I want to urge you my brothers and sisters it's very simple to live the Christian life love spiritual health in exactly the same way is that too much supposing I were to say to you I'm going to give you some instructions on how you can be 100 healthy would you like to listen to that oh yes there's not a single person who does not want to be 100 healthy but I'm sorry I'm not a dietician or a doctor I can't give you that instruction but I can tell you how to be 100 spiritually healthy and if you claim to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and you're not interested in being 100 spiritually healthy I want to say to you you're you've got the spirit of Babylon in it a little bit and you just leave it like that it'll grow you know the giants in Canaan had little children and they would grow up to be giants unless you until you unless you kill them as well that's why the Lord said don't don't only kill the giants kill their little children so the principle there is there are small sins in your life the Bible says in song of Solomon chapter 2 take care of the little foxes get rid of them get the little one not the big ones there's little ones the small little scorpion

crawling around in your house the small serpent small one not big enough to run away fast small one kill it while it is small so what does that mean it means that as soon as you're convicted in your conscience about something you immediately set it right you don't wait what do I mean practically you suddenly realize that you spoke rudely to your wife five minutes ago and you're aware of it maybe your wife is kind enough to ignore it forgive it doesn't say anything smiles at you but you have still hurt her you must ask her forgiveness otherwise don't just go to God and say Lord forgive me that's good but you know what Jesus said in Matthew 5 verse 23-24 he said if you have hurt your brother don't go to God and ask his forgiveness first go to your brother ask his forgiveness first then come and bring your offering to God and if I don't ask forgiveness from another person that verse is teaching me that I should not go to God at all in the same way if somebody has hurt me and I feel in my heart an anger towards him or a bitterness towards him you are sinning forgive him immediately if you don't forgive you are not interested in spiritual health I want to ask you do you want to bring an offering like Cain what's the minimum I have to do to give to God that is Babylon so lovers of pleasure 2nd Timothy 3 another lover chapter 3 2nd Timothy 3-2 lovers of money that's the other lover which is a part of Babylon one who claims to be a Christian but he loves money more than he loves Christ how shall we find out let me use an example supposing you're married to a very lovely woman as your wife and you're married you live in the same house with her everybody knows she is Mrs so-and-so your wife but your mind is always thinking of some other woman not always any most of the time you do think about your wife now and quite a bit of the time maybe 25 percent you think about your wife but 75 percent of the time you're thinking of some other pretty woman somewhere else what do you think of that type of husband don't you think he's an adulterer 100 percent an adulterer even if he's thinking 25 percent of the time or one percent of the time of some other woman now my question is is your mind on money more than on Jesus Christ there's nothing wrong in earning money we have to earn money to live Jesus earned money as a carpenter right up to the age of 30 maybe from the age of 18 to 30 he was earning money because he had to support four brothers and two sisters and a widowed mother at home there's nothing wrong in earning money and when you have seven members at home you have to earn a lot of money and he had to make a lot of stools and tables and benches in order to earn money to support his family there's something wrong in earning a lot of money but Jesus never loved money now if some poor widow wanted something he would make something for her free if some child came into his carpenter shop and broke something he wouldn't get upset with that child he didn't love money but he earned money it's perfectly all right to earn money it's perfectly all right to have a savings account Jesus had a savings account what do you mean by a savings account the savings account means you don't spend everything as soon as you get it that means you get money today you spend it today that's not if you you keep some of it whether you keep it for one day or whether you keep it for 15 years that's not the point if you keep it for use in the future that's a savings account and many people gave money to Jesus in appreciation you read that in Luke 8 verse 3 and Judas Iscariot kept it in a bank the banker was Judas Iscariot of course he was a crooked banker but Jesus kept that money in a bag because he didn't use it the same day that's a savings account it's perfectly all right because he said well I may need it tomorrow I've got 12 disciples and some of them got families I've got to feed them I'm gonna send money to their home perfectly all right to have money perfectly all right to earn a lot of money provided it's earned righteously but if our mind is always on that how to make more money how to make more money how to make more and more and more and more and to the point where Christ is excluded and we have one corner for Christ that is like Cain he brought an offering and you bring your Sunday morning a little offering to God it's a deception you're fooling yourself wholehearted Christianity wholehearted discipleship that is the bride of Christ so lovers of money we have to think about money in order to support our families but I'm talking about where you're so occupied with it that Christ is pushed

out or you do something unrighteous in order to make money maybe a little bit unrighteous just you say that's not so serious it's just a little bit like saying it's like saying I put only a little bit of poison in my food not much but a little bit of poison why do you put a little bit of poison in your food why do you put a little bit of when you do a little bit of unrighteousness with money do you see a little unrighteousness is the same as poison I'm trying to get your conscience more sensitive so lovers of pleasure lovers of money and the third is verse 2nd Timothy through lovers of self that's the greatest of all where pride my honor self sitting on the throne see the essential differences here the harlot is one who has got self sitting on the throne inside the bride is one who's got Christ sitting on the throne inside in other words everything relates to how how will this affect Christ in the kingdom of God he lives an honest life on earth maybe he doesn't make as much money as that crooked Christian that's okay but he earns an honest living but Christ is honored in his life and everything he brings up his children for the glory of God bring them up in a godly way that is also part of Christianity and I remember when I had four sons I have four sons and I when they were a little small I said Lord I want these little children who are now my children to one day grow up to become my brothers in Christ and every one of them is my brother in Christ today I work toward that God worked but my wife and I worked toward we had a goal because God helped us reach there I don't take any credit for it my wife and I don't take any credit for it it was God who did it but my point is you must have a goal even if you have 10 children give them all to God say Lord every one of them must live for you every one of them 100% for you I want to use my home for your glory this is one those are following in the footsteps of Abel let me say a little bit about Christian work as well there's a lot of let me conclude here so here are the three lovers lovers of pleasure lovers of money and lovers of self in contrast to all that is 2nd Timothy 3 for lovers of God so Babylon consists of those who love pleasure those who love money those who love self the bride are those who love God that's the contrast here and it says in verse 5 2nd Timothy 3 5 there'll be people who have the form of godliness who appear to love Jesus Christ but they don't have the power that means they love themselves or they love pleasure or they love money inside so if you can see Babylon here in 2nd Timothy 3 1 to 5 the other place where I want to show you is you know there's a beautiful verse in Romans in chapter 11 it's a very lovely verse I remember God gave me a revelation on this verse many many years ago on what the essence of being the bride of Christ on the essence of the harlot was in Romans 11 the last verse the next verse after that ignore the chapter division it says therefore whenever you see read the word therefore in scripture ask yourself what is it there for why is the word over here it's connected to the previous verse Romans 12 1 is a well-known words present your body as a living sacrifice to God wholly acceptable to God and present your mind verse 2 to be conformed to his the way God thinks but right therefore connects it to Romans 11 36 very important from God and through God and to God are all things that have eternal value to him be the glory listen to that three things from God anything that has eternal value is going to be originate in God done through God's power and done for God's glory from God through God to God the opposite of that is that's the bride of Christ is not that spirit that's why the bride goes on in chapter 12 verse 1 and 2 to present her body and mind to the Lord the opposite of that is Babylon from man through man to man originates in man's mind done through man's power done for man's glory you turn back to the old testament and you'll see that the origin of Babylon is in Genesis chapter 11 turn with me for a moment to Genesis chapter 11 the whole earth was using the same language in the same words they came to the land of Shinar and they said to one another listen carefully come they got a bright idea let us make bricks and build a tower verse 4 that goes all the way up to God man trying to reach God through his own ability is a bright idea from man and how shall we do it let us through man's power let us make the bricks and let us burn them and let us let us let us let us chapter 3 verse 3 and verse 4 this is from man man's idea through man and what is the purpose verse 4 middle make ourselves a name for our glory you see the opposite of Romans 11 36 here there it was from God

through God to God here it is from man through man to man originates in man's mind done with God man's power and done for man's glory okay let's move on many few thousand years later you come to the time of the one of the world's great empires the empire of Babylon and you read about that in the book of Daniel the great leader of Babylon was a man called Nebuchadnezzar and one day Nebuchadnezzar walked on the roof of his palace Babylon was a fantastic city it had a very famous hanging gardens and it had a wall right around it I believe the wall was so thick that our chariots could right go around on that top of that wall anyway it was a fantastic city built by Nebuchadnezzar with all the labor of people in Babylon and see what he says in Daniel chapter 4 and you'll see the spirit of Babylon here also one day the king was verse Daniel chapter 4 verse 29 was walking on the roof of the royal palace and he looked around at this fantastic city that he had built and he said isn't this Babylon the great which I myself have built my bright idea this beautiful building was my bright idea from man I built it with my power through man and I built it for my glory to man the same thing we saw in Genesis 11 you see here from man through man to man that is Babylon and as soon as he said it a voice from heaven said sovereignty has been removed from you and you be reduced to the level of an animal that's what happened he became like an animal eating the grass in the fields that's how God humbled him and he was like that for about seven years or so and finally God restored his health and when God restored his health you see what he says this statement of Daniel's sorry not Daniel's Nebuchadnezzar's is the most thorough statement of the sovereignty of God and the control of God over the whole universe that I've seen anywhere in the Bible listen to me listen to it carefully this is spoken not by a godly Christian is spoken by a heathen man who was humbled by God and who humbled himself as a result of that Daniel 4 verse 35 listen to this description of the sovereign power of God all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as zero this is where I've understood this teaching that man is supposed to be a zero before God see the zero gets a value when there's a one in front of it then it becomes 10 you get a number of zeros say five zeros and you put one in front of it there's not value otherwise it's all zero you put multitudes of men it's all zero till one that is Christ or God is in the beginning so that's what we see here all the inhabitants of the earth are zero it doesn't matter how many people there are in your church you call your church a megachurch all zeros is Christ the center if Christ is not the center it's a bunch of zeros I'm not impressed by megachurches I'm impressed by two or three who are gathered in the name where Jesus is in the middle it's Jesus in the middle that makes a true church all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing and God Almighty does exactly according to his will in the in heaven and he does exactly according to his will among all the inhabitants of the earth and no one can stop his hand no one can strike against him no one can push his hand away and no one can question him saying what have you done no one in heaven or on earth among the demons or in human beings what a fantastic expression of the sovereignty of God it's similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 28 19 all authority in heaven and earth is given to me the bride of Christ recognizes that he the bride of Christ recognizes that everything must be from God through God and to God and so if we have that spirit we can be part of the bride of Jesus Christ and let me tell you how God led us a little bit of our own testimony 50 years ago I was in full-time Christian work as a preacher I was traveling to many countries invited to big conferences but I was defeated in my inner life in my thoughts I'd get angry at home and I didn't have victory over anger my thoughts were not always pure externally I had a good testimony before people it's very easy to have an external good testament but inwardly I was defeated but that was mostly at home and nobody knows how we live at home you don't know that preacher who stands in the pulpit how he lives at home how he talks to his wife and when I stood in the pulpit nobody knew whether I got angry at home or whether my mind was on money or so that's how I was but I got so fed up with my defeated life I didn't know much about bride and harlot and all those things I only knew that I was living a defeated inward life and I got so fed up I'll tell you what I even though God clearly called me to serve him I got so

fed up with this life and when I was around 30 34 years old I said Lord I'm going to quit full-time Christian work I'm going to go and take a secular job and never preach again for the rest of my this is about 57 years ago oh brother 47 years ago nearly 50 years ago unless you do one thing for me that's all I ask I don't want money I don't want honor I don't want fame I want you to do one thing Lord for me make my inner life correspond with what I preach it must be equal it must not be that my one leg is so short my life leg and my knowledge leg is so long many preachers are like that their one leg is one inch the preaching leg is six feet long unstable I said no I don't want it like that I want my inner life I want both my legs to be equal length is anything wrong with the subject request don't you want both your legs to be equal length well this is my inner life must correspond with my external preaching and I said Lord if you don't do that for me I can't do it I've tried so many years I'm just defeated I will just go and do it I won't give up Christianity I love Jesus I'm going to take a secular job and I'll never preach again unless you do that for me and I want to tell you in the mercy of God before I rolled off the cliff into hell he laid a hold of me you know what he did it wasn't some new teaching it was but it began with being filled with the Holy Spirit he filled me with the Holy Spirit and I knew it I had this inner assurance and he began to reveal to me from God's word after that that's what I said Lord if this really fulfills the Holy Spirit the Bible will become a new book for me and God began to open my eyes to different truths and one of the great truths he revealed to me at that time was two things Jesus Christ came to earth as a man exactly like you and he did not sin and he says follow me which means it's possible to follow him to overcome sin and secondly Jesus established a new covenant when he shed his blood you remember the last supper he said he passed the cup around and said this is the new covenant in my blood he used a word he never used at any other time the old covenant was where Moses went up to the mountain and brought a law the new covenant is Hebrews 8 where the law is written inside our heart see the old testament law was written on two tablets of stone and that didn't help people to live a godly life today the Bible can be like two tablets of stone for us I read it I understand it but it is not written inside Hebrews 8 verse 10 to 12 says the new covenant is God writes his law inside my heart and inside my mind the two tablets now are not on rock not on printed paper the two tablets are my mind and my heart God says I will write it in my in your mind meaning I'll give you a desire to do my will I'll write it in your heart which means I'll give you the power to do my will oh lord that's all I want I had a desire make make that desire even more fervent to do your will and give me the power to do it the promise in Hebrews 8 verse 11 is I will write my law Hebrews 10 and 11 I will write my law in your mind and in your heart and that's explained in Philippians 2 verse 13 11 to 13 God gives us the desire and the ability to do his will so God's grace the purpose of God's grace is first of all to give me a desire to do God's will and then the ability and I tell you that changed my life and from that time we started gathering a few people together two or three Jesus said we're two or three gathered together in my name I'm in the midst and we started a church not with a big crowd just two or three some then some people would come and go and come and go and like that God has multiplied multiplied and now planted churches in 10 countries and many many churches scores and scores of churches but he did it all but the point is it began with God bringing me to the place of a zero point bringing me down to show me that with all your effort and with all your knowledge you cannot live a godly life you need the power of my Holy Spirit when I came to that place and I was desperate and I couldn't care less for the opinion of men God met with me I praise the Lord for that and he'll meet with you my brother it's a message of hope so I want to tell you something from this human hand to illustrate one of the great truths that time God revealed to me was that he was my father theoretically I knew he was my father but it's like some people whose father is working in some country 10,000 miles away he gets letters from his father but he never sees his father he never gets a hug from his father there are and I felt I was like that I had a distant father in heaven I don't know I could read his word but I never felt I have a father I never felt his nearness the Bible says when the Holy Spirit fills us

he cries out from our heart saying daddy that cry came in my heart when I was filled with the Holy Spirit daddy you're my dad in heaven I'm not an orphan anymore you remember when Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit in John 14 he said John 14 16 onwards I will not leave you orphans one of the wonderful things the Holy Spirit does is makes us know that God is a real father theoretically we all know that that became real to me so let me quickly conclude with this look at my hand when I want to hold something tight I need a solid grip like this I can hold it with two fingers also but it's not a solid grip right with all my hand I can get a solid grip so I saw there here's how I began to get my grip on my Christian life the palm that was knowing God is the father as a foundation of everything and then the thumb the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin if I confess my sin and then the finger the Word of God meditate on the Word of God blessed is the man who meditates on the Word of God whatever he does will prosper someone then the Holy Spirit the Old Testament they could only have the Holy Spirit upon them to anoint them now I can have the Holy Spirit within to help me within a helper it's like Jesus living right inside helping me to do the right thing giving me the ability to do God's will and then the next point the word of the cross if anyone wants to come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily die to self daily and finally the body of Christ fellowship with other believers so this is how my Christian life changed I came to know God as my father number one I was sure the blood of Jesus had cleansed me from all sin removed the guilt of my whole past I'd never feel condemned about my past at all I came to value God's Word this is God the Bible is God's written word and I believed its promises I obeyed its commands and I wanted to obey its commands I asked God to fill me with the Holy Spirit that's number four knowing God his father cleansed in the blood of Christ receiving God's Word being filled with the Holy Spirit and then I realized every day I must be willing to die to myself in any situation if somebody offends me die so if somebody insults me die to myself if somebody takes advantage of me die to myself don't hit back die a dead person does not respond I used to think of how does a dead man lying here respond if somebody insults him no response what if somebody praises him no response Lord I want to be dead like that dead to criticism dead to praise and then finally I could not live my Christian life without this fellowship with others who are wanting to go the same way even two or three these are the things that changed my life these are the things that helped me to recognize what it means to be a part of the Bride of Christ the Bride of Christ is not one person it's a group of people in the Old Testament you could be one prophet Moses, Noah, Enoch, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah but not in the New Covenant in the New Covenant it's a body Christ is not building outstanding men he's building the body of Jesus Christ of which he is the head he's the only head and the best of us are just members but we must fellowship with other members and I thank God for that even in a ministry like this it's not just me preaching I got my wife there praying for me behind the scenes and she follows me everywhere I go she's my prayer partner that's part of the body it's the heart that pumps the blood so that the tongue can speak and I've got many many brothers in many parts of the world who pray for me that so it's a body ministry the tongue is doing something to be supported by the body so I believe that I'm only a part of the body that's what preserves me that prevents me from going astray it prevents me from being irresponsible I'm responsible to others with whom I work my co-workers they can question me they can challenge me yeah they can they're free to disagree with me I'm not God they can disagree with me I praise God for fellowship God is brought together like this this is my brothers and sisters is what's challenging me and this is how you can build the body of Christ you can build the true Jerusalem the bride of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit where you are and I pray I never feel in any message I preached I never feel I've done full justice to it because I say Lord who can proclaim your word accurately and perfectly not me but I say Lord please make up for my infirmities please make up for my limitations and let your Holy Spirit take what I could not express and explain it to these dear brothers and sisters I love every one of you I don't know all of you but I want to say I love you in Jesus Christ and I seek to be your servant

to help you in any way I can to lead you to a godly life God bless you all I want you to pray with me please bow your head Heavenly Father I pray that you will help everyone who has heard your word today to remember what they heard or remind them by the Holy Spirit at the right time and I pray dear Lord that it will lead to reality in their life they'll go beyond knowledge to life we commit each of them to you every one of them bless them those who are having struggles and difficulties please encourage them those who are sick please bring healing to them Lord physical healing bless those who are struggling with wayward children bring them back to you whatever other needs there are we pray for those who are without job or in poverty in this time of pandemic please provide their need Lord and we pray you'll help us each to be a part of the body of Christ ready for your coming we pray in Jesus name amen

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