

Give God The Best

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of putting God first in our lives, offering Him our best like Abel did, and being prepared for the second coming of Christ. It contrasts the attitudes of Cain and Abel in their offerings, highlighting the need for genuine, wholehearted devotion to God. The message warns against compromising convictions for worldly gain and urges believers to align their thinking with God's, seeking righteousness and faithfulness in all aspects of life.

Scripture: Genesis 4:3, Malachi 1:6, Hebrews 11:4, 1 John 2:28, Revelation 9:18

Topics: "Putting God First", "Genuine Devotion"

Description

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Transcript

There's something happening all over the world, which is, in my 80 years of life on this earth, I've never experienced. It's a unique situation, and we need to hear what God is trying to say to us through it, because God didn't send it, but God allows everything that happens on this universe, and he has a special purpose for this world, and especially for his children. It's very important to remember that.

One of the most important things we must remember at this time is the Lord's Prayer. Our Father, who art in heaven, we speak to someone who is our loving Father, who loves us intensely, who is merciful, and who is in heaven, meaning he rules the universe. We never forget that.

Jesus said, all authority in heaven and earth is given to me, and that's never gone away from his hands. He says to those who love him and are called according to his purpose, everything will work together for good, Romans 8, 28. And that is for those who are called according to his purpose, and his purpose is mentioned in Romans 8, 29, as being conformed to the likeness of Christ.

This is what he emphasized in CFC for 45 years, that God has saved us not just to go to heaven. In fact, that is not primary. Jesus never said, I've come to take you to heaven.

The first promise in the New Testament is he has come to save us from our sins, and it's those of us who want to be saved from their sins who are ready to meet with the Lord. And the other thing Jesus has come to do is to build his church. So this is what we have emphasized throughout these years, and those who are gripped by this, who want to be saved from their sin, and who want to be a part of with him in building his church, here is God's promise in Romans 8, 28.

Every single thing will work together for your good because you're called according to his purpose. It's very important to remember. But we also need to think of scripture, especially in relation to the last days.

And there are many things in Revelation chapter 4 to 19, which speak about how things are going to happen before Christ returns. Some of those are in the actual great tribulation, extremely difficult times, times of persecution for the church. But I want to tell you something that's going to happen before Jesus returns.

Turn with me to Revelation chapter 9. In Revelation chapter 9, we read, Then the fifth angel sounded, and a star from heaven fell, which had the key of the bottomless pit, and the bottomless pit was opened. And out of the smoke, verse 3, came locusts upon the earth, and power was given to them as the scorpions that have power. You know, this is all picture language.

I mean, in the first century when it was written, if it was written that viruses came up from the bottomless pit, nobody would have understood what it means. So it's all picture language. Some type of insects came up, and they had the power of scorpions, and they were told to hurt people who did not have the seal of God in their foreheads.

And this is not what I'm talking about. It's not what's happening now, but it's something that is going to happen. And listen to this.

Further down in the same chapter, it says here in verse 18, Revelation 9, 18, One-third of humanity was killed by the three plagues. And the power of these insects or whatever it is in verse 19 was in their tails, which are like scorpions, and they had power like the serpents to kill. One-third of humanity, that's a huge number, more than 2 billion people.

Now, there are people who say that those who are going to die as a result of the present coronavirus is going to be one of the largest destructions of humanity in such a short period of time, more than the Second World War, which lasted six years. So we are moving into times which are mentioned in the book of Revelation. It's going to come.

This is not yet there. It's not yet there. There's something in the future.

But what I say is we must not be afraid. Fear has no place in the life of a wholehearted disciple of Jesus. Because of the verse I just quoted, Romans 8, 28, and also because of another verse, two verses that we must remember very much in this time.

One is Romans 8, 28, and 29. And the other is 1 Corinthians 10, verse 13. There's another verse we must remember at this time.

The middle of that verse, God is faithful. It's got nothing to do with us. It's got to do with God.

God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tested beyond your ability, but with the testing will provide a way of escape that you may be able to endure it. And since that is the case, here is the exhortation. That is what God will do.

God is faithful. There's always, you know, two parts, God's part and man's part. So here is God's part.

God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tested beyond your ability, but with every trial will provide a way of escape that we may be able to endure it, not escape it. It doesn't say God will provide a way to escape it, but God will provide us a way to endure it, which means we'll overcome spiritually, even if you have to suffer.

So what is our part? Listen to this. Therefore, my beloved, verse 14, flee from idolatry. And when a Christian reads that, he'll say, well, we're not idol worshipers.

I've never worshiped an idol in my life. Think again. Let me show you a verse in the book of Colossians.

Colossians chapter 3. Colossians chapter 3. The Holy Spirit says in the last part, greed. Consider the members of your earthly body dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. How many Christians have even read that verse? That to be greedy for something God has not given us is a form of idol worship.

There's no difference between being greedy for something God has not given us and bowing down before an idol of wood or iron or brass and saying, you are my God. And there are numerous Christians I have met who worship this idol of greed. They are not satisfied with what God has given them.

They always covet what God has not given them, what God has given to somebody else. They look at somebody else and say, I want what they have. Greed, which is idolatry.

I hope you'll never forget this verse. Greed equals idolatry. And turn back again to Revelation and Chapter 9. We saw one-third of humanity was destroyed.

Revelation and Chapter 9. And we read this in verse 18. One-third of humanity was killed by these plagues, by these insects that went around the earth. And the rest of humanity who were not killed, verse 20, did not repent of their idolatry, did not repent of worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, did not repent of their greed.

Christians did not repent of their greed, did not repent of their worshiping money, did not repent of their worshiping pleasure. Instead of worshiping Jesus Christ. So this is very, very important for us if we want to be ready for the last days.

You know, many Christians, their attitude is, how can I get the best of both worlds? Get the best in this world and all comfort, money, pleasure, everything, and then also heaven when I die. But it doesn't work like that. And so very often this greed makes us very possessive to think only of ourselves.

God so loved the world that he gave his son. He didn't think of himself. He thought of a needy world.

And that's the nature of God. And when a person says, I've taken part in the nature of Christ, and he thinks only of himself, he hasn't not taken part in the nature of Christ at all. He's deceiving himself.

Because the very nature of Jesus Christ is to think of how I can bless other people. Not just live for myself. If I'm living for myself, then self is in the throne of my life.

If all I can think of is I and my family, that's all. And self is in my heart, and Christ is not ruling in my heart. If Christ had thought only about himself, he would never have left heaven.

I'm not saying he thought of people. He thought of doing his father's will. He didn't put other people in the throne.

He put his father. And when I say I want to remove self from the center of my life, it's not like the psychologists say think of other people. No.

I'm saying put Christ there, not other people. Christ in the center of my heart. There's only one throne in our heart.

Either self rules there or Christ rules there. And many people say I've received Christ. They've not given him the throne in their life.

Turn with me to Revelation and chapter 17. You know the Bible speaks about two types of churches as we come to the end of time. One is called Babylon, Revelation 17.

And the other in Revelation 21 is called Jerusalem. Babylon is the harlot. But beginning with Revelation 21, it says here, worse, Revelation 21, I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

That is a picture of the true church. And is also pictured as a woman in Revelation 19, the bride of Christ. Revelation 19, let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to him for the marriage of the lamb has come.

See, we are not yet married to Christ. You receive Christ as Lord of your life, you're engaged to be married. The marriage is going to take place in the future when Christ returns.

And before Christ returns, it says here the bride has to make herself ready. These are the days in which we are living. Revelation 19, 7, the bride made herself ready.

And that's why she's ready to meet the bridegroom. And she's got a dress. Now listen very carefully to this.

The dress that she's clothing herself with, Revelation 19, verse 8, is fine linen, bright and clean. And the fine linen is not the righteousness of Christ. It is the righteous actions of the believers.

Your righteous action is going to be your dress if you're going to be the bride of Christ. Now, when it comes to our being accepted before God, Isaiah 64, 6, says even our good works, our righteousness is like filthy rags. I'm not talking about acceptance before God.

That is the foundation. The church has got a foundation and a superstructure. In the foundation, by grace are you saved through faith not of works, Ephesians 2, 8 and 9. We cannot do a single work to make ourselves acceptable to God to get our sins forgiven.

A million good works will not erase one sin from our life. Our sins can be erased only through the blood of Jesus Christ. And we can be accepted before God as the foundation of Christianity with the righteousness

of Christ, Christ himself being our righteousness.

That is the foundation. But like Jesus said, the foolish man laid a foundation, but he never built anything on it. You read that in Luke 14 in the midst of the conditions of discipleship.

And the meaning there is this man accepted Christ but never became a disciple. So there was no superstructure above the foundation. The foundation is clear.

No foundation can anyone lay, 1 Corinthians 3, verse 9 and 10, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. It's only the righteousness of Christ that can make the holiest believer acceptable before God. But having been accepted, now he speaks about the dress by which he prepares himself to be ready for the marriage of the Lamb.

Those are his own righteous actions. What James speaks about, faith without works is dead. And he says that if your faith is a real faith, it will produce works.

If a tree is really an apple tree, it will produce apples. It's not just enough saying, well, I planted an apple seed here. That's great.

I don't see any apples on the tree. So an apple tree will produce apples. So here is the righteous acts of the saints, faith that produces works of righteousness.

That is the dress of the bride who's called Jerusalem. She's loyal to her bridegroom, faithful during all the years of absence. Now think of, in practical terms, of a girl who's engaged to be married to a man whom she loves very much.

And he loves her more than she loves him. It's a picture of Christ in the church. And this man has told this girl, I have to go to a far country.

I have very important work. When it is finished, I will come back. It will take a few years.

But I want you to be faithful to me, no matter how long it takes. And she says, yes, I'll do that. And she makes regular phone calls.

That is our prayer. We pray. Phone calls to the bridegroom.

Yes, I want to be faithful to you and all that. Every week we go to church and make phone calls to the Lord. Lord, we praise you.

I'm faithful to you and all that. But then during the week, this bride is fooling around with other men, being interested in things which are contrary to Christ, watching dirty movies, choosing money over God, making no effort to overcome sin which displeases the Lord. Anger, for example, is a terrible sin.

It's okay if you're defeated. The question is, are you really seeking to be free from it? Do you weep before God every time you get angry? That is a proof that you want to get rid of it. If you get angry and say, oh, well, that's my nature.

You're not serious about getting victory over it. You speak rudely to people and say, what to do? That's the way I speak. You have no understanding of holiness.

You don't have the righteous dress of the saints. I'm not talking about total victory over sin. I'm not talking about total Christ-likeness.

I'm talking about a passionate desire to become like Jesus Christ and to be free from every known sin. Forget the unknown sins. There are many unknown sins in all of our lives.

But let's deal with the known ones. Anger, sexually lustful ways of thinking. I'm not asking whether you're free from it.

I'm asking, do you have a passionate longing to be free from these things, number one? And whenever you slip up, do you immediately go before God in repentance? Do you weep before God and say, Lord, I'm sorry I slipped up? When you have bitter thoughts in your heart or wrong attitudes towards others, does that bring a sorrow in your heart before God? Does it bring repentance? When husband and wife yell at each other at home and they take it lightly, and some of these people even get up in the church and preach, without any sense of sorrow for their failure and their defeat. The sad part is not that they get angry. The sad part is they don't weep over it before God.

The sad part is not that they lust in their mind. The sad part is they don't weep over it. Every human being is defeated by anger.

All human beings are tempted by the love of money. And men especially, every man is tempted with lustful thoughts. The question is, the true Christian is different in this way, that he mourns, he confesses every time, not once in a while, but every single time he slips up, he confesses it.

Let me use an example. If a thorn gets into your foot, do you wait until 25 thorns get in before you pull them all out? Do you wait until even two thorns get into your foot before you pull them out? No. If one thorn gets into your foot, you pull it out immediately.

You don't wait for a second thorn. When the second thorn gets in, you pull out that. Now my question is, when you slip up in any of these areas that I mentioned, do you wait or do you immediately confess it? If you hurt your wife or your husband with rude words or angry words, do you immediately confess it? Then you're going to have a righteous dress that will prepare you for the marriage of the Lamb because you're saying thereby, Lord, I'm not perfect.

I slip and fall, but you know the passionate desire of my heart, which makes me weep when I slip up, that I want to be like you. I want to be as pure as you were when you walked on this earth. I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit in every part of my being.

I want to be ready for your coming. So the harlot is one who doesn't take these things seriously. She's unfaithful to her bridegroom and so many things, but on Sundays she'll phone up her bridegroom and say, Oh, Lord, I praise you.

I worship you. You are my God and so many wonderful, wonderful things in their prayer, which I call a phone call. He's phone calling her bridegroom and saying wonderful things, but he's fooling around with other things during the week.

That is the harlot. And you read about the harlot in Revelation 17, Babylon. It's called here Babylon is the great mother of harlots, verse 5. And one day God will destroy Babylon.

And I want you to turn to chapter 18. And it says in chapter 18 about the destruction of Babylon, verse 2, fallen, fallen is Babylon. Fallen is Babylon.

And it goes on in chapter 19 to say in verse 1 and 2. See chapter 19, verse 1, the last part. Hallelujah. Salvation and glory belong to God.

Why? Do you know in heaven whenever they say hallelujah, it's always they have a reason. Hallelujah because on earth people say hallelujah full stop. In heaven they say hallelujah because.

Yes, they say hallelujah because. Yes, judge the harlot, verse 2. Hallelujah, verse 3, because the smoke of the harlot is rising up forever. Verse 6, hallelujah, because the Lord our God is now reigning.

The harlot has been destroyed. Do you know, how many of you know that the word hallelujah comes first time in the New Testament in Revelation 19 when the harlot is destroyed? I'll tell you that's why I say hallelujah. I don't say empty hallelujahs like so many Christians during the meeting.

Oh, hallelujah, hallelujah. I say, what for? I say, I'll tell you why, because the harlot is going to be destroyed. I want to line my hallelujahs in line with scripture.

If you don't believe me, take a concordance and see how many times hallelujah comes in the New Testament. Jesus never said it once. The apostles never said it once.

It's never written in any of the letters. But in Revelation it comes up for the first time saying, oh, Babylon is destroyed, hallelujah. Now, do you think all Christians who say hallelujah are in line with scripture when they say hallelujah? No.

It's become an empty word because they heard other Christians say it, they say it. I say it because I believe Babylon is going to be destroyed and because I believe verse 6, the Lord God Almighty reigns. That's why I say, whenever you say hallelujah, my brothers and sisters, don't say it meaninglessly.

Jesus said don't pray with vain repetitions. Most Christians disobey the command of Jesus. They don't take every word of Jesus seriously.

They've just seen other Christians do something and they follow that. One of the things I decided, you know, I came out from an orthodox, Syrian orthodox church, which in the church they pray to Mary, pray for the dead, all kinds of things. That's the type of church I came out from.

That is 60 years ago when I was born again. I hadn't read the Bible fully then, but I decided one thing when I came out of that church. I was born again and I took baptism and I said, Lord, anything which I don't find in the Bible, I don't care which church preaches it, I'm going to throw it away.

I don't care which preacher preaches it, I'm going to throw it away. I'm going to take something only which I find in scripture, what Jesus taught, which the Holy Spirit taught through the apostles, and that is what has saved my life. And that's what enabled me to grow.

And that's what enabled me to fellowship with my heavenly father and with Jesus in all these 60 years. That's what made my life full of joy. That's what freed me from discouragement permanently.

That's what helps me to live peacefully with my wife without raising my voice one single day in 365 days of the year. It's because I decided to go by scripture. It didn't happen overnight.

It took me many years, but as I discovered what scripture said, I saw so much of Christendom, which is not following scripture, just man's bright ideas, and I threw it all away. Even the way we are to serve God. You read my book, *God's Work Done in God's Way*, and I've explained there how God showed us how we are to serve Him, His way of serving Him.

So I'm just saying these things. Dear brothers and sisters, we want, you know, the bride must align her way of thinking with the bridegroom's way of thinking. A good wife will align her way of thinking to her husband's way of thinking, especially if the husband is perfect.

Here on earth, it's not possible because husbands are imperfect, and sometimes what the wife says is more correct than what the husband says. But when it comes to Jesus being the husband, there's never that question. He is perfect.

And if I'm going to be his bride and his wife one day, I must seek to align my way of thinking 100% with his. And I see that these two streams are there. We see it in the world today.

Babylon, which doesn't care much for God's Word. It goes by rituals and traditions and so many things like that. And Jerusalem, which sticks to God's Word 100%.

If you turn with me back to the beginning of the Bible in Genesis chapter 4, these two streams that end in Babylon and Jerusalem and began with Cain and Abel, these two, we can say they're like two rivers that started out right in Genesis 4. As soon as man was thrown out of the Garden of Eden, these two streams started. One started by Cain and the other started by Abel. It ended up finally in Revelation with Babylon and Jerusalem.

So we need to think of that as we prepare for the second coming of Christ. Babylon and Jerusalem are spoken of most of all in Revelation and in relation to the Lord's second coming. So let's see its beginning.

It began with Cain and Abel bringing an offering to God. Now, this is not an offering for their sin. There were many types of offerings taught in the book of Leviticus.

There were thanksgiving offerings. When a man brought a tithe to God, it was not money. The tithe was grain if he was a farmer.

The tithe was sheep if they were shepherds. They were not business people dealing with money. So Cain brought a thanksgiving offering to God of grain because he was a farmer.

But okay, Abel was a shepherd and brought sheep, an offering to God of thanksgiving. There was no need for blood in a thanksgiving offering because this was not a sin offering. But there was a difference between the two offerings, such a difference that the fire of God fell on Abel's offering, but it did not fall on Cain's offering.

What is the reason? Very important to understand. It says here in Genesis 4, verse 3, Cain brought an offering, A-N, just an offering. He just picked up some grain from his field and brought it.

Oh, I have to bring an offering to God. Here it is. But Abel, when he decided to bring an offering to God, see what it says.

He looked in his flock and he brought the very best of his flock and of their fat portions, the very best. This is the difference between Abel and Cain. Abel went and looked at all his property and said, I've got to give

the very best to God.

Cain went to what he worked with and he said, well, I've got to give something to God. Okay, I'll pick up something and give it. These are two types of Christians.

Yes, they come to church. They both come to the church meetings. They both bring offerings to God, whether it's offering of prayer or service or their life, particularly their life.

There are some who bring the very best. There are others who bring some offering. Oh, we have to bring some offering to God.

Here it is. And there started the two streams, which ended in Babylon and Jerusalem. Cain is the originator of Babylon.

That is, yeah, God is there. We have to give him something. Okay, we pray.

We go a few meetings. I'm going to live for myself. The best is for me.

What's left over is for God. Now, when you come to the end of the Old Testament, in the book of Malachi, you find that the same thing with Israel. The nation of Israel, towards the end of their history, in Malachi in chapter 1, the Lord says to them, in Malachi 1.6, A son honors his father, and a servant his master.

If I'm a father, where's my honor? If I'm a master, where's my respect? You priests who despise my name. If I were to say to some of you, you're despising the Lord's name, you'd say, like the priests, how have we despised the Lord's name? That's what they said, verse Malachi 1.6. How have we despised your name? And the Lord says, I'll tell you how we have despised. Because when you bring a bullock or a sheep to the offering, you pick out, verse 8, a sheep that is blind.

Or you pick out a bullock, verse 8, that is lame. That's a bit of a nuisance for you in your flock in any case. So you say, might as well get rid of it, give it as an offering to God.

That's Cain's offering. Pick up some blind sheep, some lame bull, which is a nuisance to me in any case, give it to God. God wants an ox.

God wants a sheep. Here it is. And the Lord says, you bring the lame and the sick as an offering to me? That's Cain's offering.

Whereas the one with the spirit of Abel will go and take the very best. God's have to have the best. And then he says here, try and offer these type of offerings to your governor.

He's saying, if the governor of your state comes to your home, would you give some third-rate gift to him? Would you give him the leftovers? Would you drink a cup of tea and give him what is left in the cup? You've drunk most of it yourself. You wouldn't even do that to a beggar. You wouldn't drink a cup of tea and give the leftover to a beggar.

But when you use all of your energy and time for yourself and give the leftover to God, you're treating him worse than a beggar. That's what he's saying here. That's the offering of Cain.

That's what ends up in Babylon. And the Lord says to the priests who were receiving these offerings, he says in verse 10, I wish there were at least one of you priests who would close the gates of the temple and

say, we don't want these useless offerings. But there was no priest.

The priests were also backslidden compromisers, like so many preachers today, who will not proclaim the whole truth of God because they want popularity, because they want numbers in their church. Well, one day they'll have to answer to God, and these people who finally miss out on being in the bride of Christ, they will turn around at the judgment seat of Christ to their pastors and preachers and elders and say, you never told me the truth. You're supposed to be preaching God's word, and you never told us the truth.

You gave us a compromising message, and that's why we end up today missing out on God's best. I tell you, a lot of people at the judgment seat of Christ are going to say that to their leaders. That should never happen to us.

I've often told people in my own home church in Bangalore, I said, none of you will ever be able to accuse me of not having told you the whole truth. You may not have obeyed it. You may not have taken me seriously.

That I can't help, but I told you the whole truth, which I practiced in my life for 45 years that CSC was in existence and which I preached. Now whether you did it or not is between you and God. So the Lord says here, he is fed up with Israel, and he is winding down with Israel.

He was telling Malachi was the last prophet. He never sent a prophet after that to Israel. The next one was John the Baptist preparing the way for the coming of the Lord.

But then he prophesied that in verse 11. Look at verse 11. I want to tell you something.

Verse 11 is the verse that the Lord gave us when we started CFC 45 years ago. He took us to the book of Malachi and told us, this is what Christendom is offering. I want you to begin with a new offering.

In August 1975, when CFC started in Bangalore in my home, this is the verse he gave. The phrase here, offering that is pure in the last part of verse 11, a pure offering. And the Lord says, Israel, I've set you aside.

Now, verse 11, from the rising of the sun to the setting all over the world, from east to west. This is what the Lord said, from east to west, my name will be great among all the nations, not just in Israel. And in every one of these countries, there's going to be an offering that is offered to me that is pure, like Abel's offering.

And then my name will be great among the nations. This has been our calling, and this is what we have worked towards in all these years. And we continue to preach the same message today.

The bride has made herself ready with her own righteous actions. The righteous actions are Abel's actions. Turn with me to Hebrews in chapter 11.

Why is Abel called righteous? Listen, Hebrews 11, verse 4. By faith, that means by a total commitment to God, Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain. He offered the best, Cain offered a cheap offering. That was a better sacrifice.

And through that, he obtained a testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts. And through faith, even though Abel is dead, he is still speaking to us today as to how to be ready for the second coming of Christ. Abel's faith was one which believed that God must be first in my life, like the first

words of the Bible.

You know the first words in the Bible, Genesis 1, 1? In the beginning, God. That's how it must be in my life. In everything in my life, in the beginning, God.

Let that be the motto of your life. When you wake up in the morning, as soon as you wake up in your bed, before you get out of your bed, talk to the Lord. He's waiting to hear you.

In the beginning, God. First thing in my life, God. In everything, in every decision I have to make, are you considering a job? Let me put God first.

In everything in your life, when you're considering marriage, put God first. In everything in life, in the beginning, God. And like Abel, say, Lord, I want to give the best to you.

We used to get sometimes letters from, like this, in India, many years ago. Brother Zach, I've retired now from my government service and I've earned quite a bit of money. Now I want to give the remaining years of my life to do something for the Lord.

I said, no, thank you. We don't want you. This is people who have drunk the full cup of tea and they are giving the dregs, saying, God, I'd like to give you the rest of my life.

I said, those are not the people we are looking for. We are looking for people who will give the best part of their life to God. Not to become full-time workers, but for whom God is first right from the time they are 20 years old.

Whatever they do, whichever job they may do, God is first in everything. They would rather lose a job than compromise their convictions. How many people there are who tell lies to get a visa? That visa means more to them than God.

Where will such people be in the Bride of Christ? Not in a million years. If they can tell a lie for such a small little thing, like getting a visa to some country, or tell a lie to get admission into some college with false certificates or false marks, where can you say these are all people who are also Christians, they want to give some offering to God? What type of offering? Corrupt third-rate offerings. God says, where are the priests who will shut the doors and say, we don't want this? Where are the preachers who will tell people that's not what God wants from you? He's not going to accept it.

Forget it. There are very few, and even some preachers who started out well after a period of time, they cool off. They don't preach like they did in the early days because they want numbers.

They want popularity. They want money. We've never been interested in any of those things.

We want to prepare people for the second coming of Christ, just like John the Baptist. John the Baptist has been one of my great heroes because he said, prepare the way of the Lord. And I want to say to all of you, my brothers and sisters, these are days in which we are to be prepared for the second coming of Christ.

I want to tell you when Christ comes again, there are going to be two types of believers. One who will shrink back. Oh, Lord, no, don't come.

I'm not ready. And the others will say, yes, Lord, I'm ready. Turn with me.

We'll look in closing at 1 John chapter 2 and verse 28. 1 John 2, 28. He's writing to God's people.

Listen, take it to yourself. Two types of people when the Lord comes. Which group will you be in? Little children, children of God, abide in Christ.

Remain in Christ. Never compromise. Never seek for some earthly gain by compromising your convictions.

Never give God second place. Let him have the best. Let him have the throne of your heart, the best of your life.

So that when Christ appears, there are the two groups. One who has confidence when he comes. Yes, Lord, we're ready.

We're waiting for you all these years. All our life we're waiting for you. And the others, another group who shrinks away.

These are believers who don't want to meet him, who shrink away in shame because they're not ready. Can you believe that? There are believers who when Christ comes, they say, oh no, Lord, don't come yet. We're not ready.

You know how Jesus said when he comes, you shouldn't have to go down to the ground floor of your house to pick up something or to settle something. If you're out in the field, you shouldn't have to go back to apologize to your wife. No, you should be ready wherever you are.

You're out in the field, out in the office, out on the rooftop. You're ready to go from there because all the time you kept your conscience clear. I hope we're walking like that.

That's the only way we'll be ready for the Lord's coming. So when we see things that are preparing for the day when one day one third of humanity will die of the plagues that are coming on the earth. Not yet.

The people who are dying of the plagues today are not one third of humanity. It's still a huge number. There are thousands and thousands dying every day.

But not yet one third of humanity. It'll come to that. I believe the Bible to be true.

You say, where is God in all this? Well, it says in Revelation 9.20, the rest of humanity did not repent of their idolatry. They still kept on putting other things first in their lives. God was not first in their lives.

So I see here that the plagues came because people didn't put God first in their lives. That is the clear message of Revelation 9.18-20. Read it sometime. One third of humanity was killed because they did not put God first in their lives.

There must be a group of people called Christians, true Christians, who by their life manifest in their office, in their home, in their context with people that in my life, God is first. There is no compromise. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Dear brothers and sisters, please examine your heart. Don't worry about others. Don't think of your neighbor.

Don't think of somebody else. Don't think about your wife or your husband. Think of yourself and are you ready for the second coming of Christ? Are you willing to pay any price? Say, Lord, I want you to be first in my life at any cost.

I want to walk in righteousness. I want to hunger and thirst for righteousness. I want to abide in you every moment.

I want to fight the battle against Satan, against my flesh, against the attractions of the world to be true to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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