

Parables on Legalism - 1

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon explores the conflict between legalism and grace through the lens of Jesus' parables, emphasizing the importance of understanding true righteousness in Christ.

Duration: 1:02:36

Scripture: Luke 10:30

Topics: "Legalism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker tells a parable about a man who thought his own dress was good enough to enter the gate of the king. However, the king saw through his pride and arrogance and cast him out. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not just being stirred emotionally by a message, but also allowing it to penetrate the mind and heart. He warns against the deception of thinking that a mere emotional experience with God is enough, and emphasizes the need for true transformation and a focus on the heart. The speaker also criticizes the preaching of the gospel based on fear of hell, and instead advocates for presenting the gospel in a way that is free and inviting, as seen in the example of the early apostles in the book of Acts.

Transcript

Let's bow before God and in a few moments of silence, prepare our hearts to receive His word. The word of God says, be still, know that I am God, relax, let go, cast your burden upon the Lord for He will sustain you. Let's come to Him with faith this evening.

He delights over us, He sings over us with shouts of joy, He rejoices over us and silently plans for us in love. We are not coming into the presence of fear, someone whom we should fear, but to the presence of our own loving Father, who delights to give us that which we need. So, Father, we come to You, Heavenly Father, let Your Spirit descend upon us.

Yes, Lord, descend upon us right now. Still our hearts with the turmoil of the world and the concerns and anxieties and worries about many things, draw us aside from all that this moment, that we can hear Your voice and become more free than we ever were before. The Holy Spirit of God move in our midst and anoint us as we speak and as we hear.

Be glorified, fill us with the Holy Spirit, Lord Jesus, fill us, O God, and lead us. Be glorified in our midst. Thank You, Father.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Please be seated. So, these three evenings, we're going to have a Bible study, again on the subject of legalism, and looking at ten parables that Jesus spoke on legalism.

And it's very interesting to see how Jesus prepared His disciples, through these parables, for one of the big conflicts that they would face in the early days of the Church, when they began to proclaim the message of free grace. There were so many other people who wanted to bring in the law as well, in addition to the message of grace. And that was the great conflict in the first century, and through the ages, it's gone down even to the 21st century.

We have people today who are also seeking to add law to grace, and it just doesn't work. So it's good for us to look at these parables on legalism, because, as I said in the morning, any sincere Christian who pursues after righteousness, if he does not go according to the teaching of the New Testament, will end up in legalism. Because the tendency of the human heart, ever since the day of Adam, is to go for the tree of knowledge and rules, rather than to the tree of life.

It's like the desire for sex. You don't have to teach anybody that, it's just a bent, as soon as a child grows up, comes to teenage years, it's there. And just like the desire for sex, or the desire for money, it's exactly the same.

The desire to be religious, not just among Christians. Man is a religious creature, just like man is a sexual creature, man is a money-loving creature. The tendency to be religious is there, that's why you find so many religions in the world.

Man is a religious creature, and if you don't recognize that in your flesh, there dwells a tremendous lust for sex, there's a tremendous love of money, and also, a tremendous lust towards religion. If you don't recognize that, you'll deal with sex, and you'll deal with the love of money, but you'll think religion, oh, that's not serious, that's part of Christianity. And that's the reason why a lot of people are not careful in that area, because they think that's Christianity.

It's not Christianity, any more than sexual evil is Christianity, or any more than love of money is Christianity. So we need to recognize that, and that's why Jesus spoke about this. And the first parable we want to look at is in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 22, Matthew's Gospel, chapter 22, and verses 2 to 14, Matthew 22, verses 2 to 14.

Here Jesus spoke about the Kingdom of Heaven, and that is a phrase particularly related to the New Covenant. The Old Covenant was a kingdom of earth. If only our eyes were open to this, that the Old Covenant was a kingdom of earth, and the New Covenant is a kingdom of heaven, I tell you, it would deliver us from the tremendous amount of deceptions that are going on today in the name of the Gospel.

Most of the blessings that are being offered to Christians today in the name of Christ are earthly blessings. You know why? Because those preachers don't have a clue about the New Covenant. They are preaching a kingdom of earth.

You'll be blessed with physical healing, and you'll be blessed with prosperity, and you'll be blessed with houses, and lands, and etc., etc. The whole thing is of earth. They don't teach them that you'll be blessed with overcoming sin, and you'll be free from jealousy, and you'll be free from anger, and you'll be free from bitterness, and you'll be free from selfishness, and you won't be a proud person anymore, and your interests will be in the things above, and you'll be seeking God's kingdom first in everything.

No, they don't teach that. And there's a tremendous deception going on today, and it sounds so nice, but God is using it. God is using it to sift out those believers who are earthly minded, who want these earthly things, and God says, okay, this gospel, this false gospel will sift out from among my people those who are earthly minded.

And I want to say to you, that's exactly what's happening today. The earthly minded are drawn to this gospel, and thereby God is doing a sifting. God allows false teachers to be in Christendom, to do a sifting among God's people.

And a lot of God's people just don't know that. So I just want you to be careful. In Matthew chapter 22, he says, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were not willing to come.

Now the wedding feast is a picture of the gospel. The king is the father who's made a wedding feast for his son, Jesus Christ. He's inviting people to the wedding feast.

And he sent out his servants, and the servants have to go out and proclaim this gospel, saying, I've prepared my dinner. Come. Everything is ready.

You don't have to cook it. You don't have to pay for it. It's all free.

This is the gospel. You don't have to pay for it. You don't have to cook a meal.

It's all free. Come and eat. Now, the first thing we learn here is, this is the way the gospel must be presented.

Now, a lot of people preach the gospel like this. If you don't believe, you'll go to hell. Now, can you show me one place in the Acts of the Apostles where Peter or Paul preached like that? You won't find it.

You hear a lot of it today, but I'm just saying you won't find it in the Acts of the Apostles. In fact, there are hundreds of things going on today which you don't find in the Acts of the Apostles. Then you say, how are so many believers deceived? I'll tell you.

They don't read the Bible. They watch Christian television today more than they read the Bible. No wonder they are deceived.

We have a generation of people growing up today who don't know the scriptures. And that is fertile ground for the devil to do his work. If the devil can get a multitude of Christians who don't read the Bible, who don't know the Bible, oh, he can fool them left, right and center with something which is not the real gospel.

The real gospel must be presented in this way. Come for a wedding feast. That is the message people must hear.

It's a wedding feast, and not just an ordinary wedding feast. You and I know how we love to go for wedding feasts, right? I don't know all of you holy people, but I like to go for wedding feasts. And I'm not ashamed to say it.

A lot of people try to act spiritual, saying they don't want to go for wedding feasts. And if it's a king's wedding feast, boy, I'd certainly like to go for that. I'd enjoy that food.

Well, you know, that's the way the gospel must be presented. And I want to ask you, when you present the gospel to other people, is that the impression they get? This is a fantastic invitation. Or do you present it with all types of rules and regulations and this and that and the other? The poor fellow says, no, thank you, I don't want to come for that.

No. It must be presented as a wedding feast, and still people will reject it. That's true.

These people to whom the gospel was first presented were the Jews. And it says here, when they were invited, God sent his servants to invite them. If they all had some excuse, I've got this, I've got that, I've got the other thing, and they paid no attention, verse 5, and they went their own way.

See, that's the phrase which marks people who reject the gospel. They went their own way. Somebody to his business and somebody to his farm and somebody to his family.

And some people persecuted these preachers of the gospel also. So that's the first thing we need to understand here. That the vast majority of people, even when we presented this glorious message of a wedding feast, the king of heaven has invited people to, they still reject it because their hearts are hard.

But I always say that they should not reject the gospel because of what they see in my life. If they reject the gospel, they must reject the gospel because they don't want Jesus Christ. You often heard me say that India has not rejected Christ.

India has rejected the Christ they have seen in Christians. And I also have rejected that Christ which I have seen in most Christians in India today. I don't want that Christ.

That's not the real Christ of the gospels. And just like when Jesus came, all of Israel hadn't rejected God. They had rejected the God which the Pharisees portrayed, who was like a policeman or a judge.

And Jesus came and revealed that God, that that was not the true God. God was a father, a loving father. And even that people didn't accept it.

It is a wonderful message that God was a loving father. They didn't accept it because man's tendency is to go towards law and to think of God as a judge. Because they like to be judges themselves.

But there were a few people like Peter, James, John who responded. And there are a few people even today who will respond. So that's the first thing we see here.

And then we read that he then got so angry that these first people who didn't hear the gospel, who didn't accept the message, that they rejected it. He said, OK, let's go into the streets and find out and get all the people and fill the wedding hall with guests. And the king came, verse 11, to look at the dinner guests.

See, here is the first step in the message of law versus grace. Of being not under law but being led by the spirit. The first step is here.

When these people came for the wedding feast, many of them were beggars, torn clothes, ragged, dirty. They picked them up off the streets. And the king, it's not mentioned here, but that is implied, I understand, at the gate of the palace.

All these guests were given a brand new robe. And that must have been a fantastic robe. A robe from the king's tailors.

Everyone had this wonderful robe. And when you put the robe on, you didn't know what was underneath. You could have ragged clothes underneath or you could have a brand new suit.

It made no difference. You were equal. See, that's what a legalist does not like.

A legalist wants people to see, I have got a suit under this robe. That fellow has got some ragged clothes under his clothes. He doesn't want to be recognized that he is equal.

Once he has come to Christ, it makes no difference. If you were a little better than him before you were converted. I mean, how many of you sitting here really believe, really I mean really, deep down in your heart, that when you are converted and come to Christ, that you are on the same level, absolutely the same level as a prostitute who got converted and came to Christ.

I don't know whether everybody believes that. I don't know. And that's one result of legalism.

I don't know how many of us here would have been ready to marry Mary Magdalene. Would you have been willing to marry Mary Magdalene? Or would you have said, I don't feel led, brother. You know, we are legalists.

We don't believe that when a person is really born again, the past is blotted out. I think a lot of people don't believe that. And those are the biggest legalists in the church.

They haven't understood the foundation of justification. They are very happy that they are justified themselves, but they don't believe that other people are justified like them. They are very happy that God has blotted out their past and they recognize that justified means just as if I had never sinned in my life.

But they look at another person, well, I'm not so sure whether it is just as if she had never sinned in her whole life. And that attitude makes you a legalist. And it will make you a legalist all your life.

And you will discover how much you have lost in the Christian life when you get into eternity and stand before the Lord and see what tremendous loss you suffered in your days on earth because you were such a legalist. And you could maybe criticize all those other people. You know, in Christendom today, there are a lot of people running after money and preachers who tell lies and make money in the name of religion.

And all your life you gloried in the fact, Oh, I'm not like that person. And you may discover in eternity that you are exactly like that person. Only thing his problem was running after money.

Your problem was legalism. It didn't make a difference. Both of you ended up in the same pit.

What difference does it make? Whether one fellow falls into the pit of the love of money or the other fellow falls into the pit of legalism. Both are pits from which Jesus came to deliver us. So to recognize that to receive this robe of righteousness from Christ freely and to recognize that there is no difference between me and the worst sinner on earth.

That is the message of the gospel. This fundamental message of the gospel many have not understood. That salvation is by grace, not by works.

And that's the message here. Because when the king came to look over the dinner guests and the king is looking over the dinner guests even now. He sees one man who is not dressed in this king's robe.

It's very easy when everybody is dressed in a king's robe. This white king's robe and one fellow sitting there in a grey suit or something. He said, how did this fellow get in here? Somebody says he thought his dress was okay.

He comes to the gate and he sees all these beggars taking this robe and then he said, well they need it. But he is coming in suit and tie and all. He said, I don't need it.

I think this dress is pretty good. And he walks in. The gatekeeper says, well if you don't want it, that's fine.

It's free. But if you think your dress is good enough, go right in. And he walks right in and he sits there and the king spots him.

He says, how in the world did he come here? He thought he was better than those beggars. He thought his dress was a little better. And therefore he could come in his own dress.

And the king said, bind him. Hand and foot and get him out of here. Quick, tie him up and send him to hell.

And make sure that such people never get in here. Many are called but few are chosen. There is a message here for those who can ever think that they can get into God's kingdom by anything other than the pure righteousness of Christ.

You know, if I live and serve God for 60 years wholeheartedly, faithfully, sacrificing, denying myself, and serving the Lord and the Lord bearing witness of my ministry and bringing thousands of people to Christ, establishing churches, doing everything, at the end when I stand before the Lord, I have to say, I'm damned. I'm a sinner. But Jesus died for me.

That's all. And I'm clothed with his righteousness. That's why I can enter God's kingdom.

I wonder whether you recognize that every day of your life. My brothers and sisters, if you live in that recognition every day of your life, you can never, never look down on another brother who is also clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Yeah.

That's the first message that we need to hear. But we can say, well, sometimes the word, people may say to me, sometimes the word you preach is so hard and disturbs people. I'll tell you whom it disturbs.

It doesn't disturb the wicked worldly sinner. It disturbs the Pharisee. And the Pharisees need to be disturbed.

Because when Jesus preached, wicked sinners were comforted, but Pharisees were disturbed. And if your preaching is Christ-like preaching, it won't comfort everybody. It will comfort the wicked worldly sinner that he can turn from his sin and be accepted.

But it will disturb and disturb and disturb the Pharisee who is self-righteous and who is legalistic. It will disturb him till either he gets offended and leaves the church, or perhaps he repents and turns to the Lord. So we don't believe that the message of the gospel, Paul said, when we preach, it's death to somebody, life to somebody else.

That depends on how they respond. So that's the first paragraph of this, the first message in this parable. And you know, on earth, we can never examine everybody to see who is wearing the robe and who is not wearing the robe.

I can't. I'll tell you honestly, that I may be deceived, I'm a human being, and I baptized people who now later on I realize were not believers. I got fooled.

I don't mind admitting that. I'm a human being, but like that illustration I've always said, I'm standing at a check post, you come, I examine your papers, and I say, OK, pass. But there's another check post further ahead where God mans that check post and you won't get past Him.

With your documents, if they are not in order. You may have fooled me, I may have lifted the bar, you went through, you got into my church, but my church may not be God's church. When you get to His check post, He says, sorry, you're not qualified.

And so it's very important that we get clear on this point before we proceed further. Then we go to a second parable, and that's in Luke's Gospel, chapter 6. In Luke's Gospel, chapter 6, again, a very well-known parable, but we got to see here what Jesus was trying to teach about the legalist and the man led by the Holy Spirit. You know, we, children's chorus, we sing like this, the wise man built his house upon the rock, foolish man built his house upon the sand.

Luke 6, verse 46 to 49. So what is the rock? We say, build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, that's okay for children, in one sense it is true, but there's more to it in the parable than that.

Jesus said, why do you call me Lord, Lord? And don't do what I say. Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and acts on them, he's like a man building a house, and this is a very important word, you know, which is not found in Matthew's Gospel. He dug deep.

See, that's not mentioned in the same parable in Matthew 7. He dug deep. That was the difference between him and the other foolish man who built on the sand. I used to think in the early days when I read this parable that these two people decided to build in two different areas, miles apart.

But when I read it here, I realized they were building next door to each other. Right here, and the foolish man was there, and the wise man was there. How is it that man got sand and this man got rock? Here's the answer.

This man dug deep. He also had sand on the top, but he said, hey, I don't want to build on sand, I want to go deep, deep, deep, deep, I don't know how deep he went, till he hit rock. And he got dynamite and blasted that rock and decided to lay his foundation there.

That took a long time. The other person was superficial. He just had a superficial foundation and just built a house, and he built his house much bigger than this person and much quicker.

But Jesus said this man was the wise man who dug deep, and the meaning is, he hears my words and does them. The other person hears my words, that means he goes to the meetings, but he does not do them. Where does he not do them? Deep down.

You know, every house has got two parts. That which is foundation and that which is superstructure, above the foundation. Your life, my life has got two parts.

That which is foundation, which is hidden. You know, when you look at a building, you can't see its foundation. That's underneath, hidden, nobody can see it.

But anybody knows that the strength of that building is in its foundation. Everybody knows that. It's not in the superstructure.

If you want to build a skyscraper, foundation, very important. But the foundation, nobody can see. We never see the foundation when you pass, you see beautiful houses, you don't know the foundation, that's the hidden part.

But the strength of every house that you see is the foundation. And the meaning of that is, the strength of your life is in that part of your life, which nobody can see. The hidden part, not the visible part.

The visible part, which everybody can see, that's just a nice paint on the walls and the curtains and the doors and the windows, that may be great. But if you don't have a hidden life of a deep foundation and you keep building a superstructure higher and higher and higher and try to show everybody that you're very spiritual, it's like trying to build a skyscraper without a foundation. It's just going to collapse.

And that's what happens sometimes. You see believers sometimes who are so zealous, I've seen young people so zealous for a while and then they just fall away. How do they fall away? You sometimes hear of a preacher who suddenly falls into some sin.

How does that happen? There's no foundation. They just try to build a skyscraper on a one foot foundation. How can you build a skyscraper on a one foot foundation? No, this man dug deep.

That means in his hidden life, he obeyed the words of Jesus. And the other man, it says here, like in the Message Bible, it says, if you just use my words, verse 49, to take Bible studies, if you use my word just for Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you're like a dumb man who built his house, skipped the foundation. A lot of people use the Bible for Bible studies.

They are the foolish people. Do you know that a lot of people who do Bible studies are like this foolish man? But the people who work God's word into their life, that means they listen to something and then go and dig deep and make sure it's really done in their hidden life. They are the ones who remain.

So here you have a contrast of two people. One who is concentrating on his inner life, that which people cannot see, which is hidden, and another person who is concentrating on his outer life. We got to get the building up quickly.

We got to paint it a nice color. We got to have nice doors and windows and impress people with this fantastic building that I built so quickly. Who bothers about the foundation? Nobody can see it.

And I want to say that among all believers, we can say there are these two types of people. There are those who are very keen on presenting a good image before others. A good building, good curtains, good doors, windows, nice color, nice architecture and all that.

And there are others who say, well I am not against all that, but the important thing is my hidden life. My private, secret life with God, which is completely underground, the foundation. That must be deep.

And as I listen to these words, these words must be worked into my life, not just taken as Bible studies. Worked into my daily life, I dig deep and that means I examine every area of my life in the light of God's word. And if I haven't obeyed something, I say, Lord, I want to obey it.

I want to obey it. And I'll tell you honestly, in all my experience with Christians of every denomination, I find very few people who are interested in obedience. Obedience is not a very popular word.

If you don't believe me, let me ask you, when was the last time you heard a message outside of this church on obeying God's commandments 100%? Have you ever heard a message like that? Jesus said, teach them to obey everything I commanded you. Obedience, obedience, obedience. It's a word which is not loved.

You know what people say? Oh Lord, I love you. But Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. When we sing songs like, I want to love you more and more, you know what I say? Silently to the Lord, I want to obey you more and more, Lord.

Because I don't want to fool myself. Love can be an emotion. You know, we can say fantastic things.

I heard a story once of a you know, these young boys and girls who fall in love with each other and say fantastic things to each other. So one of these boys wrote a letter to his girlfriend and said, oh I will cross mountains and rivers and cross through barbed wires and all to come and meet you and this, that and the other. If it rains, thunders, everything, etc.

I'll meet you and I'll see you tomorrow evening if it doesn't rain. You think that person really loved that person? But I was reminded of a lot of Christians who sing fantastic things to the Lord. I surrender all, take my silver, my gold, not of mine, will I withhold? Take my voice, I'll only sing always, only for my King and all that.

And you see what they're doing the next week. It's exactly like that person. It's all emotion.

And emotion is a tremendously deceptive thing. I have been in a lot of meetings where they talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit. And I'm not easily fooled.

I know enough of the difference between soul and spirit to know what is emotion and what is Holy Spirit. But a lot of Christians don't know that. They have not discerned between soul and spirit.

That which is soulish appears to be spiritual. And if you don't dig deep, you'll never find out. If you're not a person who is passionate to obey God, you'll never find out.

If your love is all emotion, you'll never find out what real love for God is. And your life won't be stable. Here Jesus speaks about a house that a flood could not destroy.

Flood, rain, storm, nothing could destroy because it had a foundation. And the other person's house began to shake and topple. Why is it some Christians, some little trial comes along, they begin to shake and topple.

It's because they've never taken it seriously to dig a deep foundation in their life. Why is it Christians get upset when some unexpected trial comes into their life? They don't have a deep foundation. That's the only reason.

Jesus was never upset by anything. No matter what people tried to do. There was a solid foundation in His life.

And the way it has come to me is that the wonderful message of the Gospel is that what God did for Jesus, He will do for me. That's the wedding feast for me. Whatever the Father did for Jesus, He will do for me because He loves me.

John 17, 23, as He loved Jesus. And like we read in 1 John chapter 4 verse 18, as Jesus is, so are we in this world. So if nothing could shake Jesus, nothing's going to shake me.

You say that's arrogance. It's not. 1 John 2 verse 6 says, He who says he's a Christian must live like Christ lived.

That's the Gospel. That's not a message of condemnation. That's a message of encouragement.

You go and tell a person who's living in a filthy slum, you know, you can live a 5 star hotel type of life. Is that a bad message? And think of people who are living in filth. Every imaginable sin, and you tell them you can live like Jesus, that's a 5 star life.

Would you like to live that? That's not a message of condemnation. If somebody tells me that you can live a 5 star life, I say great, or a 7 star life. I don't understand how anybody can accept that as a message of condemnation.

But it can come only through emphasizing the hidden part. The main thing here is, the legalist emphasizes the outer part of the building. The godly man, the spiritual man, emphasizes the hidden part.

He digs deep in an area where nobody sees him. He listens to a message, or he reads God's word, and he gets alone with God and says, Lord show me where I need to set something right in my life. And the Lord may say, go and apologize to so and so.

He does it immediately. He doesn't wait. He goes and apologizes.

You owe somebody some money. You borrowed a book that you never returned. Go and return it.

He's quick about those things. He doesn't say, okay, I'll do it when it's convenient. No, it's convenient right now.

He does things immediately. He doesn't wait. He digs deep.

Immediately. He acts immediately. He doesn't hesitate to do what God says immediately.

I've noticed one thing through the years that Christians who act immediately on what God has told them, it goes exceptionally well in their life. And there are other Christians who God speaks to them and they are sluggish. Think if you hurt somebody and you know the Holy Spirit's saying, you need to apologize to that person.

How quickly you apologize will tell me how it will go in your Christian life. If you are the type who immediately goes and does it. I tell you it will go exceptionally well in your life.

If you think about it and after 3-4 days you go and apologize. Yeah, that's good. But you're going to be a very sluggish Christian all your life because that's the way you'll obey God in everything.

This wise man was not like that. He was determined to let these words work in his life. He was not interested in just Bible studies and it went down.

So we can say he dug through the sand till he hit rock. What does that mean in our life? When we hear God's word you know the Bible says man is body soul and spirit. And we can think of it as 3 circles.

Spirit is the innermost circle out of that is soul and out of that is body. So whenever we get God's word, it first goes into our body. Right now through your ears, when you're reading the Bible, through your eyes.

So you need your body. If you don't have a body you can't hear God's word or read God's word. The first thing you need is for God's word to go through your body.

But you know if it only goes through your body and it doesn't enter your mind. For example right now while you're listening to me or thinking what you're going to do tomorrow or what happened yesterday and some of you may be doing that right now. Then of course it's only gone into your body.

It hasn't even gone into your soul. But those of you who are listening carefully, it has gone into your soul. That means it's gone into your mind and you're listening.

And it's very important for God's word to go into the mind. Because that is how it can finally reach the spirit. And that is why I always tell preachers you need to be very careful in preparing a message.

It must go clearly into somebody's mind. If it does not go clearly into his mind if you're vague and you don't know what you're saying well the other fellow will also not know what you're saying. I find a pathetic lack of labor on the part of many people who dare to stand up and preach God's word.

To preach God's word is much more important than cooking a good meal for the governor of your state coming to visit you. How many of you believe that? How many of you believe that there are kings and priests sitting in front of you and you can't just put everything in and say come on eat it. I mean a lot of people, a lot of preachers give food to the God's people just like you give leftovers to a beggar.

They don't treat them like kings and queens. Imagine if the prime minister of the country were coming to visit your home. Would you last minute and last five minutes put something on the fire and slap it all together and say here's the food eat it.

You wouldn't do it. You'd probably prepare for it one week in advance. Marinate the chicken and do everything else that needs to be done well in advance to prepare a good meal.

But if it's a beggar who you know is going to come to the gate in the evening, you're not going to take one week to prepare a meal for a beggar. When a beggar comes and knocks at the gate, you say oh well let's see if there's anything here, let's give it to him. Do you know that the vast majority of preachers, even in our churches, treat God's people like beggars.

They put together something at the last minute and say here it is. No wonder God is angry with such people who dare to take his word and treat his people like that. I want to say to all of you who preach God's word, treat God's people respectfully.

Treat them like kings whom you have to serve. And therefore when you give God's word, make sure it goes clearly into their minds. Which means you got to do a lot of preparation.

I tell you every time I'm invited for a meal somewhere I travel and I preach God's word and somebody prepares a meal and it's usually a very good meal and I sit there and I ask myself have I taken as much trouble as this dear sister took to prepare this meal for me as I took to give God's word to the people and I

say Lord I want to do that. I want to take more trouble than any sister ever takes to prepare a meal. And you brothers and sisters who, brothers particularly who preach God's word, please take some pains otherwise don't preach.

Just sit and listen. Get rid of this lust to preach to get honor. It's a very difficult thing to preach God's word.

You have to get it clearly into their mind. Otherwise it's like supposing you had something written on the screen and it's all out of focus you can't read what's written there on the transparency. It's got to be focused.

The letters must be clear and that's how we must preach God's word. If you want God's word to penetrate it must go clearly into the mind and that's why the Bible says when we read God's word you must meditate not just read through it. You must say what is God trying to tell me here.

That's the wise man but the superficial legalist who's only interested in the superstructure, only interested in impressing others, he just reads. He's not interested in finding out what God is saying. So it must go through the mind.

That's the first thing. But it must not only go through the mind. From the mind it goes to the emotions.

It stirs our emotions. You know you can hear a message and be stirred. Stirred by it.

That's your emotions. You feel something. You feel like doing something.

You feel excited. You feel like you feel full of joy or convicted. It's all good.

But it must not stop even there. That is still sand. You have to dig through the sand.

Dig deep. Go through the mind. Go through the emotions.

Now some people stop with the emotions. When they come into God's presence they feel so happy. You know I've heard people say this.

I've actually heard people say this. After 45 minutes of a time of worshipping God they say boy it's so wonderful. We don't even need to hear God's word now.

We've met with God. We can go home. What have they got in 45 minutes? Emotion.

And they think that's God. That is the deception in Christendom today. Faith comes not by all that.

Faith comes by God's word. By hearing God's word. And when a person thinks his emotion is enough.

He just had a nice feeling. He's no better than the drunkard who goes to the drinking saloon. Has a drink for 45 minutes.

He says I feel great now. Let me go home. His emotions are stirred.

That's all. But we must go deeper than that. This man dug deep.

Mind body, mind emotions. Dig deeper till you hit the will. That's the rock.

Your will. When you blast your will and lay your foundation there you can build a skyscraper. In other words whenever I hear God's word I read it or I hear it it penetrates through my mind clearly.

My emotions are stirred and then I must respond by saying Lord not my will in this area. I want to do your will. 100% I want to do your will.

You tell me to do that I'll do it right now. You know when I read in God's word one simple verse. I'll give you an example.

Luke 16 verse 13 I read you cannot love God and money. You cannot serve both. You must choose your master like Elijah said Jehovah or Baal Christ or money I never heard in my whole life anybody presenting that type of choice to me.

I saw it in scripture I began to cry out with all my heart to God. Lord free me from the love of money because otherwise I'll never be able to love you. That's what Jesus said.

There are multitudes of Christians in the world today who think that they love Jesus Christ and money. It's like worshipping Jehovah and Baal There were people in the Old Testament who worshipped Jehovah and Baal worshipped Jehovah one day and Baal the other day and there are Christians like that today worshipped Christ one day and money the other day and they think they are following Jesus I don't want to live under that deception that's what I mean by digging deep and saying Lord I want to get rid of this love of money. I want to get rid of it completely in my life.

How many of you pray for that? How many of you are digging deep to dig out all this wretched things which don't look evil in the eyes of others adultery looks evil. Love of money does not look evil even in the eyes of Christians and very few people are working on it to get rid of it from their life but I'll tell you those are the ones who lay a solid foundation in their life. Their life will remain solid so it could be many many areas like that where we really need to work so that's the difference between a legalist and being a religious person and a spiritual person.

Now we go to the third third parable we can turn to Luke's gospel in chapter 10 Luke's gospel chapter 10 is the parable where Jesus spoke about the good Samaritan and here again the contrast is between religious people and a spiritual person the religious person is a legalist and the spiritual person is the person who is following Jesus and very often you know we think we look down on people in other denominations because we think they don't have the right doctrine like we have but they may be more spiritual consider that.

It's not always the person who's got the right doctrine who is the most spiritual sometimes the person may be a little wrong in his doctrine and he may be more spiritual because doctrine is a matter of the mind and spirituality is a matter of the heart and when we say we agree in doctrine, all it means is you got a clever mind, I got a clever mind and we study the bible and we agree in our doctrine we believe in water baptism, we believe in speaking in tongues, we believe in breaking of bread, we believe in praise and worship it's all in the mind but heart is what God looks at the bible doesn't say man looks on the outward appearance but God looks at the mind no, man looks on the outward appearance God looks at the heart and sometimes a man who's doctrine may be a little wrong because his

mind is not so sharp as mine, his heart may be better so please remember that, that's one of the things that comes through in this parable, Luke chapter 10 verse 30 onwards to 37 you know it's a story of this

man who was going from Jerusalem to Jericho listen carefully he was going from Jerusalem to Jericho not towards Jerusalem not towards the temple away from the temple ok, he fell among robbers, they stripped him, beat him, left him half dead and a priest was going down by that road, now the priest is a man who knows the scriptures and he he was going towards Jerusalem, he was going for the meeting and he passed, he saw him and he passed by on the other side, he just ignored him because he didn't want to be late for the meeting and he probably thought well this fellow shouldn't have

been going towards Jericho in any case, he should have been in Jerusalem at the meeting and if he didn't go if he didn't stay in the meeting, well I suppose he suffers, he's got to reap what he sown, he had many arguments and he ignored him and went past he didn't do anything wrong, he just he didn't hurt him, he just ignored him and went by, then a Levite, Levite is another type of priest, he also went by and he also passed by on the other side, both of them sinned that's what Jesus was trying to say, they sinned because they had no compassion on a needy person and you can ask what was their sin? can you sin by doing nothing? this is the one parable that taught, teaches us you can sin by doing nothing what did they do? they did nothing they sinned by doing nothing when the Bible says

that sinners are going to hell they've been beaten up by the devil and you do nothing to save them, you're sinning you see I didn't kick them, I didn't hurt them, I just ignored them, that's it when we don't have a sense of compassion for people who are blinded by the devil no compassion for people who are in need spiritually first and in other areas, I say something is wrong and then we see after that a Samaritan comes now the Samaritans were, you know the way we look at people in another denomination the Samaritans were like whichever is the denomination you despise the most, you know all of us despise certain denominations whether you know it or not you wouldn't like to be considered as belonging to that denomination, if somebody said to you do you belong to that denomination, oh no I

belong to CFC or something like that you know, so whichever denomination you despise the most that is the Samaritan and let's assume that it's the Roman Catholic Church let's say, if somebody were to say you're Roman Catholic, oh no I'm not Roman Catholic don't insult me like that ok, let's take that that's the Samaritan and that person comes by and he doesn't have all the doctrines right like you, you got all your doctrines right, he doesn't have it right he's got a lot of wrong doctrines but he had a good heart like Mother Teresa who had her doctrines wrong but who had a good heart and he saw this person and had compassion on him he said never mind if I miss today's praise and worship meeting that's ok, when there's a needy person here it's ok if I I can praise and worship God by

helping a needy person that's a form of worship which many people don't understand, many people think the only type of praise and worship is when I can sing in parts and do all those wonderful things in the meeting and feel nice in the meeting, no you can also worship God by serving people and that's a more difficult way of worshiping God, and people choose the easy way of just feeling nice in the meeting by clapping and raising their hands I'm not against that all I say is, if that does not lead to your helping people who have been beaten up by the devil you're just fooling yourself that you're worshiping God so the Samaritan he wasn't, maybe I don't know where he was going, he probably couldn't have gone to the temple because the Jews despised the Samaritans so he was just on his way

and he saw this man and it's amazing what he did he was going on his beast and donkey perhaps and he stopped, he bandaged his wounds and he had no criticism of that man he didn't criticize saying why are you going away from Jerusalem, he wasn't preaching at him, he just helped him I tell you a lot of people, they don't need anybody to preach to them, they need somebody to put some oil and wine on their

wounds particularly our children, sometimes parents hurt their children with such strong words you're not like this and you're not like that why are you doing like this, why are you doing like that imagine if the good Samaritan came down and knelt down and started preaching at this fellow who was already beaten up by the devil, why in the world are you going towards Jericho, why are you

doing this, that fellow said please leave me alone, I'm lying here peacefully go on your way that's exactly how some of our children feel when the parents harass them with why are you like this and why aren't you doing this and why are you doing that these are these are worse than the Levites and priests the Levites and priests at least left the fellow alone but these mothers and fathers are worse than the Levites and priests but the good Samaritan didn't preach at him I thank God for people who don't preach at others but who just kneel down and pour some oil and wine and have compassion and love them and lift them on to their beast and walk themselves, this man was riding his beast, he decided to walk put this chap on the beast, took him to the inn, it's absolutely amazing this fellow is

a total stranger he took him to the inn and he kept him there and he told the innkeeper, here's a little bit of money to take care of him and I'll be passing this way again, if you spend more tell me, I'll pay him, I'll pay for it for a total stranger here we have, as I said this morning, people who got all their doctrines right, who don't even feel like inviting young people to their home for a meal whom they know in their own church and they think they're spiritual and here's a man who is paying for a total stranger, boy that's Christianity, that's the type of Christianity Jesus preached not this religious Levite and priest going to the meetings to have a time of praise and worship and mingle with, hobnob with all his religious people, it's a deception, I'll tell you there's a lot of

that deception going on in Christendom today and that's why I remember when somebody asked me whether I thought whether I believe that Mother Teresa would be in heaven, I said sure I think she'll be miles ahead of me in the reward she gets do you understand that? do you understand what Jesus said about caring for those who are needy I don't mean just physically, there are so many people around us who are spiritually needy we need to do something for them many places you know where we have our own churches now, I tell those brothers like when I go to different places, I say listen I'm not going to keep coming to our churches now, I'm going to other places I'm not going to distribute the loaves and fishes for the hundredth time to people who are eating and eating and eating are stuffed and

overstuffed I want to go to some of those other places where they haven't got their first serving of loaves and fishes some of those other believers in other churches and that's why gradually, I'm just cutting down cutting down, cutting down going to our churches, because they've had a hundred helpings already, and they're so overstuffed with it, and it doesn't seem to help them, it just makes them bigger legalists more of them, I say okay, let me go to these other people then, perhaps there's some hope for them, that they will be freed from, they won't become legalists like that, and will come to this glorious liberty of the new covenant there's a great danger in our midst there's a saying in English that familiarity breeds content that means you become so familiar with a person or with

truth, that you don't value it anymore, and I really believe that it's happened I'm sorry to say that, but I really believe it's happened, we've heard truth so much truth, so many explanations of the truth, so many illustrations and all that, we've understood right down to the last detail, but we haven't valued it, it hasn't broken us it hasn't brought us in sorrow before God it hasn't made us dig deep it hasn't said, Lord, I've failed you I'm sorry Lord, I'm like the Levite and the priest I have wept before God when I say, Lord, I'm like the Levite and priest, make me like a good Samaritan make me like this Lord, with a greater compassion

for people who have been bashed up by the devil, I want to help them, when people come into our churches what do you do with them? you know, so many

people come to your church, my brother there are people battered by the devil in life's battles they come and sit in your church, what do you do on Sunday morning?

Bash them up some more, with your words or do you pour in some oil, and wine and bandage them up that's what they need they didn't come to church to be bashed up again the devil has already bashed them outside and do what the good Samaritan did give them some medicine and bandage put them in charge of some innkeeper who can take care of them, if you can't take care of them yourself, put them in charge of somebody, that's what we always seek to do yeah, that's a wonderful example here, and Jesus said which of these three proved to be a neighbor? verse 35 verse 36, which is the one who proved to be a neighbor and he said the one who showed mercy towards him the one who was merciful that's the neighbor, you know the man had asked a question how to love my neighbor, he said which of these was

the neighbor, the one who showed mercy I think of, you know we've always got to start in our home because to be a witness for Christ you've got to start in Jerusalem, then go to Judea, then Samaria, then the uttermost parts of the earth, and Jerusalem is our own home here what does it mean to be religious, it means if you're a father and you've got a little child coming to you with a broken toy and you're reading your bible and says dad can you fix this broken toy for me, if you're a good Samaritan, you'll close your bible fix that broken toy for that three year old child and then proceed if you're a Levite and a priest and say don't disturb daddy, I'm having a quiet time with God you know what will happen to that boy, if you keep living like that when he's 18 years old and you want to

talk to him he'll say don't disturb me I'm going to go out with my friends because he you didn't want him to disturb you when he was three years old he doesn't want you to disturb him when he's 18 years old, this is happening to lots of teenagers today why is it so many mothers can't communicate with their teenage daughters why is it so many fathers can't communicate with their grown up sons it's because they had no time for them when they were young I've traveled a lot in the ministry in my life my children were all small when we started the church, my youngest son was not even born and my oldest son was only about 6 years old and in all these 30 years I've traveled a lot, most weekends I was not even at home, but there's one thing I decided that my children will never never be able to

say that daddy was so busy serving the lord that he had no time for us I always always whenever there was anything that involved them in their school or anywhere, I always made sure I was there because my religion did not consist in just preaching to them I wanted to win their heart my goal in life was to win the hearts of my children so that I would draw them to the lord and make them follow Jesus after I'm gone I hope you have that desire you won't do that if you're just a Levite and a priest you'll do that when they are beaten in some way when they are discouraged to pour in oil and wine and encourage them, not criticize them too many parents are criticizing, hammering away, they criticize their wives, they criticize their husbands they criticize their children, these are the Levites

and the priests, they are worse than the Levites and the priests the Levite and priests at least didn't criticize, this is the mark of a legalist the mark of a legalist they either criticize or they ignore their doctrines are all right the spiritual man doesn't probably say much, but he does something to encourage I want to say my brothers and sisters this is the picture of spirituality that Jesus painted in the parables and it breaks our heart to say lord we have failed we have failed in Jerusalem, where are we going to reach the

outermost parts of the earth, let me do something in Jerusalem, in my home I failed with my wife, I failed with my husband I failed with my children, I want to follow the example of the Samaritan, wherever I see a person battered by the devil, I want to pour in

oil and wine and bless that person let's pray God is a good God and he wants to give us his nature so that other people see goodness in us, in all of our contact with them people around us don't need sermons they want to see your goodness, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven, even if you can't preach great sermons to them not everybody can be gifted to preach God's word but all of us can do good to the people whom we come across, every one of us, none of us can say I don't know how to do good, we do and we can do with the little we have, maybe it's only a donkey you have or a little bit of oil or wine you can use that to bless somebody Heavenly Father deliver us from religiosity, from empty words, from knowing doctrine

from being proud of having all our doctrines right deliver us from a superficial life, lead us into a deep life where our inner life is more important than the outward and that from that inner life will come forth a life of compassion and goodness to people whom we meet with on life's road help us each one we pray in Jesus name

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