

(Texas 2009) the Holy Spirit Reveals God's Thoughts to Us

by Zac Poonen

The Holy Spirit is given to us to understand God's thoughts and reveal His secrets to those who fear Him.

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Scripture: Luke 16:28

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the topic of worship and how it is often misunderstood in churches. He emphasizes that what is commonly referred to as praise and worship is actually thanksgiving and praise, which are important but not the same as true worship. The speaker believes that many young people are turning away from churches because they are not experiencing the presence of Christ. He criticizes preachers who conduct boring church services and suggests that true worship is the key to building a genuine church of Jesus Christ. The speaker also highlights the importance of dedicating our minds and time to studying the word of God and bringing our best to Him. He concludes by pointing out the difference between God's way of thinking and man's way of thinking, and encourages listeners to seek understanding of God's ways.

Transcript

Praise the Lord. It's good to be together again this morning. Yesterday I mentioned how God sent His Holy Spirit to bring Heaven down into our hearts and our homes and our churches.

And you can imagine how disappointed God is when He doesn't find Heaven in our home or our heart or our church. And there we can see what a work the devil has done. Another reason God has given us the Holy Spirit is so that we can understand His thoughts.

I want to read in 1 Corinthians 2. It says here, Who among men knows the thoughts of a man? 1 Corinthians 2:11. Except the spirit of the man which is in him. Our thoughts are the most private parts of our being. The most private area of our life is our thought life.

And we preserve it very carefully. A husband doesn't know what his wife thinks even after 50 years of marriage. And vice versa.

We could have all types of thoughts in our mind. And one of the things I've discovered is it's our thought life that proves to us whether we fear God or not. And if any of you want to know whether you fear God really, there's a lot of superficial, counterfeit fear of God.

But if you really want to know whether you fear God, like all Christians say they do, just examine how careful you are with your thoughts. Because that's the one area of your life which only God can see and hear. Nobody else can see and hear.

Everything else that we do, we could be doing because we want a good testimony before men. We want the approval of men. All human beings like to appear good before men, even ungodly atheists.

So the fact that we have a good testimony in the church or as Christians proves zero about whether we fear God or not. We could be just like other men who seek approval in their own circle. Businessmen seek approval among businessmen.

And politicians seek approval among politicians. And Christians seek approval among Christians. It doesn't prove the fear of God at all.

But if a man is very careful in his thoughts not to be impure, not to be unloving, not to be judgmental, selfish, proud, in his thoughts, that's a pretty good indication that that man fears God. Because he's not getting any credit from men for that. The only credit he gets is from God.

And the areas of our life which nobody can see and nobody can ever find out, where we seek to be upright and pure and honest and humble and unselfish, are the areas that prove whether we fear God or not. And there's very little of the fear of God among Christians. And it's because of the lack of this, there's so little wisdom.

The fear of God is the ABC of wisdom, the beginning of wisdom. Knowledge, we have such an abundance of knowledge, Bible knowledge today, in the world of two thousand years of Christian history, we have not had so much knowledge of the Bible. Abundance of commentaries, books on the Bible, and with the internet you can get information on almost anything in the Bible.

And if Bible knowledge could produce holy people, we should be having the holiest people in the history of Christianity today. But it's not true. I think we've got one of the most carnal groups of Christians in the world today, that ever lived, because of the lack of the fear of God.

So, the secret of the Lord, the Bible says in Psalm 25, is that those who fear him, Psalm 25, 14, that means there are certain secrets that God has in his mind, which he doesn't tell everybody. Forgiveness of sins is not a secret. It's an open truth.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit, that's not a secret. It's an open truth, I mean, there's a lot of counterfeit, but the genuine baptism in the Holy Spirit is not a secret. But there are other things that God reveals only to some.

And the secret of the Lord is with those who fear him. And if you want to know God's thoughts, the way to it is to develop the fear of God. David once said, I think it's in Psalm 34, Come, my children, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

Every true servant of God is one who should be able to teach other people the fear of God. And if you don't have the fear of God, maybe you didn't have a good teacher. And if you didn't have a good teacher,

in my younger days, I never learned the fear of God in the church I went to.

It was a good assembly. It taught me a lot about the Bible, but it never taught me the fear of God, so I had to learn it myself. So if you don't have a good teacher who teaches you the fear of God, you can learn it yourself.

Now in 1 Corinthians 2, it says in verse 11, Who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? And even so, verse 11, the thoughts of God, no one knows except the spirit of God. Now we don't like to let anybody know all of our thoughts. We filter and decide how much of our thoughts we're going to share with others for various reasons.

But God is so good, He wants us to know all His thoughts. And when you're filled with the Holy Spirit, you'll begin to understand the thoughts of God if you open up your whole being to Him. And it says here in verse 12, We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God.

Now, I want you to look back at verse 9. Now, things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, which have not entered into the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him. Now, most people think of that as things we're going to discover in heaven. It's a verse quoted saying, you know, there are wonderful things God's prepared in heaven for us, which human eye has not seen, ear has not heard, and has not entered into man's heart.

But that's not what's written here. It says here in verse 10, But God has revealed them to us through the Spirit. Now, this is a quotation from Isaiah 64 in verse 4. In the Old Testament, it is written that God would reveal this to those who wait for Him.

And they had to wait 700 years from the time Isaiah wrote that before God revealed it. But today, we don't have to wait. It says here in verse 9, If we love Him, He will reveal these things which are hidden from all the people of the world to us.

To understand the thoughts of God, what does God think about 101 areas in our life? What does He think about Christian work going on today? What does He think about everything, about things in the world? I want to know. Because a lot that we hear from preachers is not necessarily what God thinks. And certainly what we hear on the news is not what God thinks.

But to know what God thinks about every situation is the most wonderful thing of all, and that's why He's given us the Holy Spirit. So, I want to know what does God want to do with my life? I want to know what does what does God want Christians to do in this day and age? Where you live, what does God want you to do? You can know through the Holy Spirit. That's why it's so important to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

To be immersed or baptized in the Holy Spirit. And I'm not talking about a Pentecostal experience. I remember when I was a young man, I read about this.

And then I was in a church that didn't preach baptism in the Holy Spirit. And they said, you've got to go to the Pentecostals to learn it. So, I was only 23.

I didn't know much about the Bible. I went to a Pentecostal church. And what I saw there didn't attract me, to tell you honestly.

So I came back to my room, disappointed. And I said, Lord, I don't want what I saw there. I'm not interested.

I want the baptism in the Holy Spirit that Peter, James and John got on the day of Pentecost. The real one. I don't want any cheap counterfeit.

I don't want to boast that I've joined the club, the speaking in tongues club. That's not what I'm interested in. I'm interested in receiving the power that made mighty rivers of living water flow out through simple ordinary fishermen like Peter, James and John who could influence the world even though they were such unknown people.

I sent that to God when? 46 years ago. I said, that's what I want. And I'm willing to pay any price for it.

So I've never in my life been a part of a member of a Pentecostal or charismatic church. But God baptized me in the Holy Spirit, gave me the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including speaking in tongues and prophesying. But I would never join a church which mixed the real with the counterfeit.

It's very difficult to find a church where it was only the real. There was so much of counterfeit in the gifts of the Spirit. And that's why I stayed away from a lot of churches.

And I went to the Bible to see what has God given us the Holy Spirit for? And I discovered that it was to bring heaven into my life. That if I opened up my being to the Holy Spirit, I could have a heavenly life. My home could become a heavenly home.

I could build a heavenly church without strife or competition. And I could understand the thoughts of God, what God wants me to do with my life. See, that's very important to me because I believe that like all of us, we're going to stand before the Lord in the final day.

And as I review my life, I believe that God places us, each of us, on earth with a specific purpose. One of the great truths that changed my life was when I realized that God loved me as he loved Jesus. And so, Jesus himself said that in John 17, 23.

And so, I discovered one thing that if he loved me as he loved Jesus, then he would have had a specific plan for every part of my life like he had for Jesus. And at the end of Jesus' life, he could say, Jesus could say, I've finished the work you gave me to do. And I wanted to be able to say at the end of my life, I have finished the work God gave me to do.

I didn't want to say that I wasted so many years pursuing things which would have no value in eternity. And in God's plan for Jesus' life, there was no room for failure. But in my life, God allowed for failure.

In all of our lives, he he makes an allowance for years of failure. And we can still fulfill God's plan for our life. Paul could say at the end of his life, I have finished my course.

I've finished the plan God had for me, even though Paul spent 30 years pursuing the wrong path, persecuting Christians. God made allowance for that period of failure. And that's a very encouraging thing.

That the years of your ignorance, you don't have to be discouraged about. God's made allowance for it. But he brings you to an awareness of the truth now, so that you don't waste any more of your life.

You need to understand the thoughts of God. To open yourself to the genuine Holy Spirit. And I want to tell you in Jesus' name, there's a lot of counterfeit today in this realm.

The Holy Spirit, the ministry of the Holy Spirit's been counterfeited by psychology. Actually, a lot of Christian preaching in evangelical circles today, charismatic circles, Pentecostal circles, in the big mega-churches of the United States, is psychology. Makes everybody feel good.

Never tells them to die to themselves every day, to give up the love of money. You won't hear such things in mega-churches. Jesus preached such stuff.

He said, you cannot serve God in mammon. To me, it's like Elijah standing up on Mount Carmel and saying, you cannot serve Jehovah and Baal. But, there were 450 false prophets who said, you can.

And it's like that today. There are here and there a few Elijahs who stand up and say, you cannot serve God in mammon. And for every one Elijah, there will be 450 other false prophets in Christendom who've got all their doctrines right, except their doctrine on money and holiness, who will say, yes, you can.

Make people feel good. And I believe many of those people are on their way to hell without knowing it. It's possible that some of you may be listening to such stuff and you're being deceived.

And, I can't save you from going to hell, but I can tell you the truth. That, if you don't deny yourself every day and take up the cross, you cannot follow Jesus. It is impossible.

And, Jesus said in John 10, 27, 28, my sheep hear my voice and follow me and I give them eternal life. He gives eternal life to those who follow him. And in Jesus' way of thinking, there is no difference between believing in him and following him.

Christendom today has made a difference. But in Jesus' thinking, there is no difference. If you believe him, then you follow him.

And he said, my sheep hear my voice and follow me and I give them eternal life. They shall never perish. I believe there's eternal security for those who follow Jesus, who hear his voice and obey him.

So, when it comes to understanding the thoughts of God and the Holy Spirit reveals to us, I want you to turn to Isaiah 55. Isaiah 55, the Lord says in verse 8, my thoughts are not your thoughts. If we don't recognize that, that our human way of thinking is not God's way of thinking.

Psychology is a human way of thinking. And God says, that is not my way of thinking. And your ways are not my ways.

And if you want to know how much difference there is between God's way of thinking and man's way of thinking, it says in verse 9, as high as the heavens are above the earth. I mean, the heavens are way beyond billions of light years away. That's the difference between God's way of thinking and man's way of thinking.

God's way of working and man's way of working. We may not understand why God does things in a certain way. In God's way of thinking, when a man like Uzzah tries to steady an ark which is about to fall, he kills him.

In man's way of thinking, he'd say, well, the man was sincerely trying to stop the ark from falling. Why should he kill him? Be merciful to him. There are many things like this which if we use our human way of thinking, we'll just not understand God at all.

We think God is very hard. And at the same time, here we find Jesus using a woman who was divorced five times and was now sleeping with a man who was not even her husband. Using her to bring a revival in Samaria.

I mean, if you went to Samaria, that'd be the last person you'd ever think of to use to bring a revival there. Can you understand God's ways? On one hand, killing Uzzah. On the other hand, using a woman like that to bring revival.

There is no way we can explain all this with human logic. We have to come to God and say, Lord, I don't understand your ways. I want to be open to the Holy Spirit.

I want to know what you want to accomplish on earth at this time. I want to turn to Malachi chapter 1. In Malachi chapter 1, it says, you know, Malachi was the last prophet that God sent to Israel. And Israel had backslidden tremendously.

The whole history of Israel is one of up and down and up and down and up and down backsliding and God would send a prophet raise them up and come up for a while and go down again. It's the history of most Christians an up and down experience. It's a mark of an old covenant life.

And finally God sent the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to Babylon and we thought they'd learned a lesson. They came back. For a while they had.

They built a temple and a wall and it was sort of a revival in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. People wept and did many things. But about 100 years later or 150 years later things were back to square one.

They were backslidden and God sent one last prophet Malachi. And he said, okay, I'm finished with Israel. No more.

This is going to be the last prophet. And so see what he says. He says in Malachi in chapter 1 You despise my name.

The last part of verse 6. And you say, how have we despised your name? Because you're presenting you're not presenting your best to me. You present on the altar that which is defiled. Verse 8 You present the blind and the lame and the sick.

Isn't that evil? See, they were still going through the ritual of offering their sacrifices. They knew according to the Old Testament law that they had to make certain sacrifices. They had to offer lambs and bullocks et cetera at certain times.

But they would pick out from their flock some diseased lamb that was about to die and say, oh well, before it dies we might as well offer it as a sacrifice. And some bullock that was blind and lame, they'd pick that up and say, let's offer this as a sacrifice. They were offering to God that which was which cost them nothing.

And the Lord said, you know the priests were supposed to examine. The priests were in league with these guys. Maybe taking bribes from them.

And the Lord says in verse 10, I wish there were even one of you priests who would shut the gates and say, I'm not going to receive that sacrifice. I'm not going to kindle a fire on the altar with that type of third-rate sacrifice. He said, I wish there were one priest who would stand up against all this.

But there wasn't one. I think the Lord looks at a lot of Christendom today. He said, I wish there were a few preachers who would stand up and expose all this nonsense that goes on in the name of the Holy Spirit.

Psychology has replaced the Holy Spirit. Music has replaced the Holy Spirit. Money has replaced the Holy Spirit.

There's such an emphasis on money today in Christendom, which you never read in the Acts of the Apostles. So much emphasis is given to music. I'm not against it.

But it's become a substitute for the Holy Spirit's power. These are the things and very few recognize it. They think the moving of the emotions is the moving of the Holy Spirit.

Probably the greatest deceptions of the devil. You can be moved emotionally at a rock music concert and it's got nothing to do with the Holy Spirit at all. We need to discern what is of God and what is not.

So Malachi says, you offer that which is evil. I don't know whether you know the difference between Cain's offering and Abel's offering if you turn back to Genesis 4. I'm sure all of you have read Genesis 4. Many of you have probably been brainwashed by evangelical teaching that it was because Abel offered blood that God accepted him. And because Cain didn't offer blood he was not accepted.

And then your preachers have told you that if you offer the blood of Jesus you'll be accepted. It doesn't matter how you live. The important thing is to offer the blood of Jesus.

Okay? Let's check if that's what the Bible says. Not in my version in your version. In your Bible.

I want you to follow with me and see what it says there. And see whether what you have heard from all these evangelical preachers is true or not. The first thing I want to tell you is Cain and Abel were not offering a sin offering.

The law concerning sin offerings came years later in the time of Moses. But even in that time Moses, if you read the book of Leviticus there were thank offerings which required no blood. Grain offerings which required no blood.

When a man brought 10% of his crops to God there was no blood in it. But if a man was a keeper of the sheep he'd bring 10% of the sheep. Both were thank offerings.

One had blood and one didn't have blood. Both were acceptable. Cain was a tiller of the ground.

He brought a thank offering naturally from the ground. Abel in Genesis 4-2 was a keeper of the sheep. So he brought a thank offering from the sheep.

That was only natural. It was a thank offering and it did not require blood. And it says here he doesn't say the Lord accepted Abel because of his offering like we have heard for so many years.

You know I believed that for about 16 years of my Christian life because I heard it from reputed teachers till I had the guts to believe that reputed teachers could be wrong and started reading the Bible more

carefully. And I saw in Genesis 4-4 that the Lord had regard for Abel first and therefore accepted his offering. Isn't that how it is in your version? Read it.

The last part of verse 4. The Lord had regard or accepted Abel and therefore had regard for his offering. So it was not because of his offering that Abel was accepted. His offering was accepted because Abel was accepted.

There is a lot of difference between the two. It's like Jesus once said when you come and bring an offering to God and you know that your brother has got something against you God won't accept your offering even if it's blood. Even if it's the blood of Jesus.

Leave your offering there. Go and be reconciled with your brother. Set matters right with him.

Then come back and God will accept your offering. So in that situation why does God reject a man's offering even if he comes with the blood of Jesus? Can you imagine a man coming with the blood of Jesus and being rejected? Sure. Jesus said that in Matthew 5. You've got something against your brother.

Go and settle that and then come. But God won't accept your offering. God says my ways are not your ways.

My thoughts are not your thoughts. And Cain verse 5 the Lord had no regard for Cain or for his offering. It wasn't the offering that was rejected.

It was the man. And when the man is rejected the offering is rejected. Then we need to ask ourselves why did God accept Abel and his offering? It was because of the heart behind the offering.

You know two people can sing to God a song. God accepts one and he doesn't accept the other and yet they may be singing the same song. It's very important to know whether what I offer to God is accepted or not.

I've taught people in our church that if you don't reconcile with God and if you don't reconcile to a brother or sister and you put an offering in the offering box God won't accept it. We used to have a verse in front of our offering box saying are you reconciled with your brother and sister? Think of that before you put in an offering here. We were actually stopping people from putting offerings in because we were more interested in their soul than their money.

And I said listen if you put an offering into that box there without being reconciled to a brother you might as well put your offering into the toilet and flush it out. It's just the same thing. It won't accomplish anything.

God won't accept it. God's not going to go looking in the toilet for your offering and he won't look in that box either because he sees your heart. Why did God accept Abel's offering and didn't accept Cain's? I want you to notice here.

You read this many times but you probably haven't noticed it. Now I'll read it to you slowly and you'll notice it immediately. Verse 4 Abel brought the very best, the firstlings of his flock.

Cain brought verse 5 an offering. You see the difference? One brought the very best. The other brought an offering.

I believe that all of us sitting here could be divided into the Cain category and the Abel category. We all bring an offering. The very fact that you come here is an offering to God.

Are you sure it's Abel's offering? Are you living in that category? Would God categorize you with Abel or with Cain? Now remember Cain is not an Atheist. He wasn't worshipping Baal. He brought his offering to Jehovah, to the true God.

He wasn't an idol worshipper and you're not. He believed in the true God and so do you. But you may not be bringing the best of your life and your time and your energy and your mind.

I've often had to say to people in our church, I said, that brilliant mind which God gave you, you have used to make money in business. You've used to study your profession and advance and get a high degree. How much have you used that brilliant mind to study the Word of God and make it clear to a whole lot of people who don't know the Word? Are you bringing your best to God? I know you give a little portion of your time and a little portion of your mind to God, but your mind is mainly set on your business and advancing in the world and making money and getting on and becoming somebody.

And because you want to go to heaven when you die, you give a little portion to God. You really believe you're in Abel's category? You're a million miles away from that, brother, sister. And if you've never heard any preacher tell you that before, you're hearing it today.

God's looking for those who will give Him their best. This word worship is one of the most misunderstood words in Christendom. What does worship really mean? I looked for years to find out what worship meant.

And everybody talks about praise and worship, praise and worship, praise and worship. Most churches don't have praise and worship. This church has got good praise and worship.

I said, okay, let me find out what the Bible says. And all you've got to do is take a concordance, especially in the New Testament. There are only about, I think, less than 50 times the word worship comes in the New Testament.

Very easy to look through it. Very easy to look through all the verses if you're serious about knowing God's thoughts. And I'll tell you something, there is only one book in the world that will tell you God's thoughts, only one.

Today people are arguing about, shall I use the King James Version or some other version? I say, brother, you use any version you like. Every version will tell you that you can't love God and money. And every version will tell you that if you don't take up the cross, you can't follow Jesus.

And every verse will tell you that Cain didn't give his best and Abel gave his best. That's why God accepted it. And the devil's got you sidetracked onto analyzing some verse here and there in the Greek and Hebrew here and there, majoring on minors.

That's exactly what the devil wants you to do. Spend your life majoring on minors and waste your life. Yeah, it's good to see.

What does worship mean? So I took a concordance and decided to study what the New Testament said about worship. And it opened my eyes and I discovered that nothing of what churches call praise and worship was worship at all. What they were doing was good.

It was thanksgiving and praise that they were doing. But they didn't call it by the right name. Thanksgiving and praise is very good.

There are four steps in our relationship with God. The first is prayer. Next is thanksgiving, praise, and worship.

Prayer, all of them are needed. Everyone, Jesus prayed, Jesus prayed, Jesus thanked, Jesus worshipped, and so must we. But if you don't know the distinction between these, you can miss out something completely because you call something else worship.

For example, if you don't know the difference between prayer and thanksgiving, you can pray and pray and pray and never thank God. Prayer is asking God for something. Thanksgiving is thanking Him for what He's done for us.

It's very simple. Praise, it's a little higher, is admiring, praising God for who He is. Totally irrespective of what He's done for us.

You know, God's almighty, He's holy, He's loving, He's pure. Even if He's done nothing for us, I still need to praise Him. Worship is beyond all that.

And if you look at the words that we sing, a lot of, all of them are good. All the songs we sing are excellent and needed. But we need to identify what they are.

That's a song of prayer. I'm asking God to do something for me. Of course we need to do that.

That's a song of thanksgiving. Thank you, Lord, for all this you've done for me. Very needed.

That's a song of praise. It's got nothing to do with thanksgiving. It's praising God for who He is.

Where does worship come in? Worship is to, whenever you read in the Bible about people worshiping, they always fell down with their face down before God. It was the total surrender of everything. It was giving our very best, like Abel's offering, giving our very best to God, saying, God, you can have my whole life.

You are everything to me. John did that in the Isle of Patmos when he was 95 years old. Fell down flat before Jesus and said, Lord, it says he fell as a dead man.

That's worship. Abraham would fall down like that. Job would fall down like that.

in worship. And very often these people who worship, they never said anything. Worship is not necessarily with a lot of words.

We can worship with words, words like, for example, Psalm 73, verse 25, one of the finest words expressing worship. Whom you're a worshiper. If you can honestly say to the Lord Jesus, Lord, I want to tell you honestly, I desire nothing on earth but you.

I don't want anything this world offers. I don't want any position in the church. I don't want any acceptance by anybody.

I don't want a position in the church. want a position in I don't position in I don't position in the church. I don't want a position in the church.

I don't want a position in the church. I don't want a position in inside every church in the world. I And if there's one left, there's still not a worshiper.

Imagine going through all that and leaving one little thing and missing out completely. That's what the Lord asked the rich young ruler. The rich young ruler had the opportunity to become a worshiper and therefore a tremendous servant of God.

And he went through many, many doors. You know, honor your father and mother. He'd gone through that.

And don't murder, don't kill, don't don't commit adultery, don't bear false witness. He'd gone through all that and there was only one more door left. You must love me more than you love your money.

He turned back. And because he turned back, it was as good as his not having fulfilled any of the commandments. He ended up in the same boat as the unconverted thief.

The unconverted thief hadn't kept the commandment. But this guy who had kept all the commandments was in the same boat because there was one last thing he was not willing to yield. And if there's some area in your life, some one last thing you don't yield to the Lord, there's not really much difference between you and somebody else who hasn't yielded a hundred things, who has not yielded a hundred things to the Lord.

You may think you're better. God doesn't think so. But in a vessel, if you have one hole or a hundred holes, it's just the same.

Both are useless. We don't understand that. But that's God's way.

So worship is when you can honestly say to the Lord, Lord, I desire nothing and no one on earth but you. It's the language of lovers. My world would collapse if you are not there.

You can say to Jesus, say that to Jesus. That's amazing. That's real love.

And I want to link that with what I said, what we saw in 1 Corinthians 2. I have not seen, neither has ear heard, 1 Corinthians 2.9, neither has entered into the heart of man the wonderful things which God has prepared for one category of people alone. You know that? He's prepared it for one category of people, those who love Him supremely. They get things which a whole lot of others never get.

They see things, they look into the heavens and see things that other people on earth never see. They hear things which people sitting next to them in the church never hear. It's a wonderful thing to be able to hear God.

It's reserved for those who love Him. And love means, Lord, I desire nothing but you and I desire no one but you. Everything else is extra.

If I have it, well and good. If I don't have it, that's perfectly okay. And when I get to heaven, whom am I in heaven but you? I'm not interested in mansions.

I'm not waiting for God to wipe tears from my eyes. I'm not longing for heaven because, oh, I'll finally be rid of this weary world. No.

If you can say, Lord, the only person I desire in heaven is you, I don't care if heaven is a place of suffering if I have you. You're a real worshipper. If you can say to the Lord, Lord, I'm ready to be in hell for eternity.

If you're there, that'll be my heaven. Then you have understood what worship is. Many Christians who are longing for heaven are not longing for Jesus.

They're longing for comfort and ease and to be rid of this problems and trials of this world. You know, you have the wonderful opportunity to be a worshipper here on this earth. And I want to be a worshipper because the Bible says, Jesus said to the woman Samaria, the Father is searching all over the world for worshippers.

John 4 and verse 23. When I read that, it really touched my heart. My heavenly Father, who did so much for me, sent his Son to die for me on the cross.

He's now searching all over the world for those who will worship him. I said, Lord, I don't want to disappoint you. I don't want to be a preacher.

I want to be a worshipper till the end of my life. And if I'm a worshipper, I'll be good in any service that I do for you. Because you shall worship, and then you will serve.

If I'm a worshipper, there'll be a touch of heaven in everything I do, in every word I say, in every sermon I preach, in everything I do for the Lord. There'll be a touch of heaven. There'll be the fragrance of heaven.

And that's what I want. There's so little of it in Christian service today. There's a lot of clever preaching.

There's a lot of feel-good type of preaching. There's a lot of deceptive preaching. But the touch of heaven is missing.

So many young people are turned away from our churches. We wonder, why are they turning away? And churches try to attract them with rock music and all types of other gimmicks, when the real reason is that Christ is not there. They're turning away from boring church services to interesting television programs.

I don't blame them. Those television programs are a hundred times more interesting than these boring church services. Why should I tell them to sit in a boring church? And I don't blame them at all.

I blame all these preachers who conduct these boring church services, with all their long lectures. We're called to draw people to Christ. Jesus said, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me.

I believe that, if we are worshippers. And it's only thus that we can build a true church of Jesus Christ. You know, in the Old Testament tabernacle, there were three parts.

And it's very important to understand what those three parts were. There was the outer court in the tabernacle, which a lot of people crowded in. And then there were two parts that were enclosed in a little tent called the holy place, the most holy place.

And into the most, in the holy place, which is the first compartment, a few people could go in the priests. But in the most holy place, nobody could go. There was a thick veil.

Even the high priest was allowed to go there once, just to indicate that actually nobody can go there. And that is the veil that was torn when Jesus died. And it is as if we're saying, now you can go in.

The people who went in there were the true worshippers. In the outer court, there was a lot of activity. There were basically two things in the outer court.

One was the altar, which signified Calvary. And then there was a washing place called a laver, which symbolized baptism. And so many Christians are just occupied with these two things, the cross and baptism.

My sins are forgiven. I'm baptized. I'm okay.

But then there are some others who go beyond that. They say, I'm not happy with this. I want something more in the Christian life.

And they're going to the holy place. The holy place is a little compartment with a lampstand that burns with oil, symbolizing being a witness for Christ through the fire of the Holy Spirit. That's what the oil symbolizes.

There's a table of bread, symbolizing occupation with the Word of God, the bread of life. And then there was an altar with incense, signifying a life of prayer, and thanksgiving, and praise, which came through the baptism in the Holy Spirit. So some of these people went, wanted something more, and were baptized in the Holy Spirit, came into a life in Christ, wanted to be witnesses for Christ, wanted to evangelize, and read the Word of God, and pray, and all that.

But then there was another compartment beyond that, where there were only worshipers. There was no activity there. I mean, people who are interested in activity had to be either in the outer court or in the holy place.

In the most holy place, it was only you and God. And if you were bored with God, you'd either go back to meet with people in the holy place. A lot of people are bored with God.

They like to meet with people. There are no people in the most holy place. It's only God.

I'll tell you honestly, many Christians do not want to spend time alone with Jesus. They'd rather sit and talk to people than talk to Jesus. They are bored with Jesus.

They're not worshipers. And that's why they have so many problems in their Christian life. That's why they believe that you cannot rejoice in the Lord 24 hours a day, seven days a week, even though the Bible says you're supposed to do it.

They do not believe that you can be anxious for nothing. They say, how in the world can you live that life? You see, when you don't go into the most holy place, a lot of things written in the New Testament become impossible. I remember once somebody telling me, well, Brother Zach, the life described in Matthew 5 to 7 is a very difficult life.

I said, no, it's not difficult. It's impossible. Who said it's difficult? You haven't taken it seriously.

That's why you think it's difficult. It's impossible to live that life. You need the power of the Holy Spirit.

You think it's difficult to rejoice in the Lord always? Be honest. It's not difficult to rejoice in the Lord always. It's impossible.

24 7. You either take, I mean, you can take any version you like and see whether it says there you've got to rejoice in the Lord always or not. Don't be preoccupied with versions. Be preoccupied with obedience to the things that you know, which are written there.

Don't get sidetracked. And so, the purpose of the Holy Spirit coming is to enable us to come to this life. And God wants to make us worshipers, for Jesus is everything to us.

And I want to say this, my brothers and sisters, that ultimately God's goal is to bring together people who are worshipers and build them into a church. And the reason we don't have heavenly churches is because we have tried to make churches out of people who only want forgiveness of sins. We've tried to build churches with people who want better houses, better cars, to live a decent life, and don't want to take up the cross and die to themselves.

Well, you can't build the true Church of Christ with that. You can build one of these mega Babylon's that we see in the world today, but not the true Church of Jesus Christ. That you can build only with worshipers.

I want to turn back to Malachi and want to show you this. So, when the Lord says through Malachi, I'm sick and tired of all this, you know, cheap type of offerings that people are bringing. So, I finished with Israel and then the Lord says in Malachi chapter 1 verse 11, something new is going to happen from the east to the west, from the rising of the sun to its setting.

My name will be great among all the nations of the world. You Israelites thought it's only going to be you. Well, it's not going to be you.

It's going to be all the nations of the world now. You know, he's predicting the age of the new covenant. In every nation, Israel thought it's only us.

God's going to only use us. A lot of Christians will think like that. God's going to be going to use us.

But he says, no, you're not a worshiper. My name is going to be great among all the nations and in every place. Instance, I'm going to find worshipers.

People are going to bring me an offering which is pure. That's the point. It's going to be a pure offering and I believe that's what the church is supposed to be.

To me, Malachi 1:11 is a church. I remember when we started our work in India about 34 years ago. This is the verse that the Lord showed us.

That he wants a pure offering in every nation on the face of the earth. And pure means more than just having a good conscience. To have a clean conscience is different from having a pure heart.

A clear conscience is one that has not aware of any unconfessed sin. If you've confessed every sin and forsaken every sin that you know, you've got a clear conscience. But you may have a clear conscience and not a pure heart.

A pure heart is a heart that desires nothing but Jesus. You know you can have a clear conscience and not have a pure heart. A pure heart is one that obeys the first commandment.

Jesus said, the first commandment is, I shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. If you can honestly say, Lord there's no place in my heart for anyone or anything but Jesus Christ, then you've kept the first commandment. Then you've got a pure heart.

It's legitimate things, legitimate things that seek to occupy our heart along with Jesus that make our heart impure. And that's why we have problems with the circumstances and situations of life. Think of that verse that Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5, verse 8, blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

And the way I've understood that verse is that when my heart is filled with love for God and there's no place in my heart even for my wife, you know that I love my wife a hundred times better if I don't have any place in my heart for her. It's true. If you give you all your heart to God, you'll love your wife much better than if you try to love her.

The world's full of people who talk about love for their partner and they fight with them. But when you love God with all your heart, you'll never lose your temper with your wife one single day in a whole year. I'll tell you, I've proved it.

The secret is not to love her first, but to love God with all your heart and keep her in second place. The second commandment is love your neighbor or your wife. So if we keep that in the second place, we'll be able to love her faithfully till the end of our life.

Never be bitter against her. So that's the pure offering the Lord's looking for when it says pure here. It's people who will keep that first commandment.

Worshippers have gone through into the most holy place who put God first for whom Jesus is everything. Only such people can build a true church. The rest will be a mixed multitude.

And that's what we see in a lot of places. The main difference between different churches is actually doctrine. It's not life.

It's like that old French atheist said, I never forget his words. There was an atheist who lived in France, a philosopher, 250 years ago called Voltaire. And he looked around at all the denominations, the Catholic ones and the Protestant ones, and he was a very shrewd observer.

He said, all these people have got different doctrines. But when it comes to money, they all have the same doctrine. Every one of them.

I believe that can be said of a lot of Christians today. There are differences in doctrine. One believes in infant baptism.

One believes in water baptism. One believes in speaking in tongues. One believes doesn't speak in tongues.

When it comes to love of money, they all love money just the same. And if they love money, they're worshipping Baal. And the devils fool them.

You're better than that group because you got the right baptism. You're better than that group because you speak in tongues. You're better than that group because you understand the New Testament.

But brother, what's your attitude to money and material things? That's the test of your Christianity. And you may be no better than the Hindu and the Muslim. I mean, if Christ has not delivered you from the love of money, how are you better than the Hindu or Muslim? What right have you to say to the Lord that he should take you to heaven if you worship Baal? I have absolutely no doubt in my mind, Baal is money today.

That guy worships Allah. The other person worships Krishna. Somebody else Buddha.

And you worship Christ and money. Are you any less an idolater than those other people? Not at all. Or you worship Christ in your own honor.

So, I want to invite you to be among those the Lord is seeking for now around the world. The Father seeks for worshippers. And when he can get worshippers, he can build a church.

A church which the gates of hell will never prevail. Can you imagine the heart of God longing to build such a church in these last days before Christ comes again? The Lord said, the last verse in the Old Testament in Malachi 4 is like this, verse 5, second last verse. I'm going to send Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord.

And that Elijah is the new covenant church, the body of Christ that's going to proclaim like Elijah did on Mount Carmel. Choose you this day whom you will serve. If Jehovah is God, worship him.

If Baal is God, follow him. If Christ is God, serve him. If money and material things are God, serve them.

But you cannot serve both. There's no question. If you can't give your best to God, he's not going to accept anything.

And don't let any preacher fool you that God's accepting you. He hasn't. And it's better to know these things now than to get a rude shock when Christ comes again and discover that some preacher fooled us and we missed what God had.

And that if you had read the Bible, you would not have been deceived. You know once when a rich man went to hell, it's a true story. Jesus said in Luke 16, and he said to Abraham, Father Abraham, would you please send Lazarus down to warn my five brothers to repent? It's in Luke 16, verse 28.

And Abraham said in reply, this is the thing I want you to notice, verse 29 of Luke 16. They don't need somebody to go from heaven. They have the Bible.

Moses and the prophets is an expression for the Bible. They have the Bible. Let them read it.

You know what heaven is saying today? Lord, why are so many Christians being deceived? Why don't you send somebody from heaven to tell them this is all deception? This is counterfeit. This is not the Holy Spirit. This is psychology.

This is not the Holy Spirit. This is just musical emotion. This is just hypnosis.

It's not the power of the Holy Spirit pushing people down. Jesus never pushed people down. He always lifted people up.

And you know what God is saying? They've got the Bible. They've got the Bible in 26 versions. Let them read any of them.

They'll know. But if they don't read the Bible, they deserve to be deceived, because they say with their mouth, there's only one book that Almighty God has written, and they don't read it. They spend more time watching television than reading God's Word, and they expect to know the truth.

No, such people will be deceived by false preachers, by megachurches, and everything else there is in the world today. They deserve to be deceived, because they give more honor to the God of this world, and to television, than to Almighty God and His Word. Such people deserve to be deceived, and to get a rude shock when Christ comes again, to know that they missed what God wanted them to have.

And the ignorant heathen who never had the Bible in their own language, there are many millions like that in the world today, they will enter into God's kingdom before many who have the Bible in their own language. I believe that. You can call me a heretic if you like.

God is a righteous God, and to whom more is given, more is required. Jesus told a crowd of religious people once, prostitutes and thieves will get into God's kingdom before you, because they hadn't studied the Scriptures, and the people sitting in front of them were studying the Scriptures. So, dear brothers and sisters, these are serious words, and we're living in momentous times.

We need to understand the mind of God. It's very, very important. I hope you will believe that I've spoken in love.

Love has some hard words sometimes. God loves us, that's for sure. And if the scan report says there's something serious, don't ask the doctor to touch it up, so that it doesn't look so serious.

You've got to face up to it. Let's pray. Let's bow our heads before God and say, Lord, I want to respond to the word you've spoken to me.

I want to know the mind of God. I want to be a worshipper. I want my life to count for God in these last days.

I want to offer a pure offering. I want to gather together with people who are offering a pure offering to you, Lord. I pray you'll open my eyes so that I can know the truth, so that I can be sold out to you in these closing moments of time.

Thank you, Father. In Jesus' name, amen.

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