

The Spirit of the Bride and the Spirit of the Harlot

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of offering ourselves as a pure sacrifice to the Lord, highlighting the contrast between the spirit of Babylon, seeking personal gain, and the spirit of Jerusalem, characterized by sacrificial devotion. It challenges individuals to examine their motives in serving God and being part of a church, urging them to seek only to glorify God and not to gain anything for themselves.

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Scripture: Malachi 1:6, 2 Samuel 24:24, Revelation 18:2, Acts 5:1, 2 Chronicles 3:1, Revelation 19:1, Zechariah 14:9, Matthew 22:21, Acts 4:34

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Description

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Transcript

I want to turn to a verse in the book of Malachi. You know, CFC started in our home, the first church, about 44 and a half years ago, and came out of some of us getting fed up with what we saw in a lot of Christendom around us. Not that they were evil, but it was all old covenant.

You know, you can live a very good life under the old covenant. I mean think of John the Baptist. Supposing you had a church full of John the Baptists.

You'd think that's a wonderful church, right? Everybody of the quality of John the Baptist. But yet Jesus said, the least person in the new covenant in the kingdom of God is greater than him. And I wonder whether Christendom has understood that.

And that's why I find even in many who come to a CFC church, they're not really gripped by the calling to be way higher than anyone in the old covenant. Those are the words of Jesus. Why don't we take it seriously? And I'll tell you why, because we don't want to pay the price.

So Malachi was the last prophet before John the Baptist in the old covenant. It was the end of the old covenant. And the children of Israel had already been taught a lesson by being sent into captivity for 70 years.

And they came back and Zechariah and Haggai, the previous two prophets had challenged them to build the temple. Nehemiah had challenged them to build the wall. So there was some type of revival and they'd learned a lesson from 70 years of captivity.

But very soon they backslid again. Within about 100 years, they came to such a condition that Malachi, the Lord spoke to Malachi. And this is the passage that the Lord gave us when we started CFC.

And I want you to understand something here. From verse 6 to 11, that is the main passage that came to us. And it's a very important passage.

Why was the Lord fed up with the Israelites and why was he setting them aside permanently and starting something completely new, the church of Jesus Christ. And in that, we can see what has happened to Christendom also. As it has declined, just like the Israelites.

The Israelites started with great power in the day of Joshua. Book of Joshua is like the Acts of the Apostles. From that time onwards, a decline started.

So here we read in Malachi chapter 1, the complaint the Lord has against his people. Understand it. And there we will see something of the problem the Lord has with Christians today.

And then we need not think of other people. We don't have to say like the Pharisee, Lord I thank you. I'm not like other people, other churches.

We need to judge ourselves. A son honors his father. Malachi 1.6. And a servant is master.

If I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my respect? Says the Lord of hosts. Oh, reply to ourselves. Oh, you people who despise my name.

And you say, we despise your name? Isn't that a question we ask when somebody says, when the prophet says you've despised the Lord's name. You say, where did we despise your name? And the Lord says, I'll explain to you how you despise my name. Learn to apply this to yourself.

You are presenting defiled food upon my altar. And you say, how have we defiled you? You say, the table of the Lord is despised. In what way? Okay, here now comes the explanation.

You see the children of Israel had to give sacrifices regularly to the Lord. Three times a year they went to Jerusalem with their sacrifices. And there was a law that whatever you sacrifice, if you can't afford a lamb, offer a bird, a dove.

But it must be without blemish, without any fault in it. It must be a healthy lamb. If you can't afford a lamb, a healthy bird.

But these folks, it says they presented the blind for aid, verse 8, for sacrifice. And the lame and the sick. So what were they doing? When they went to offer the sacrifice in Jerusalem, they looked in their flock.

And they say, oh, here's this lame sheep. It's a bit of a nuisance to us in any case. Let's go and give it to the Lord.

We have to give one sheep in any case. And here's a blind ox. Bit of a problem for us.

Let's give it to the Lord. Essentially, they were giving to the Lord that which cost them zero. If they had given a really good ox or a good lamb, that would have been expensive.

But they gave the Lord that which really cost them nothing. They were glad to get rid of. And the Lord says, would you offer that to your governor? If your governor, I mean, if you were giving a gift to the governor of your state, would you give him something third-rate? Would you pick up something useless and give him as a gift? Leave alone a governor, even someone in the church.

You would not give them a gift which is third-rate and sick and bad. No. And would he be pleased with you? And then he says to the priests, I wish there were, verse 10, at least one among you priests who would shut the gates of the temple and refuse to receive such offerings.

But the priests were also compromisers. Even though they were supposed to check whether the animals were without blemish, they didn't do it. And he says, I am not pleased with you, says the Lord, verse 10.

I will not accept an offering from you. And the Lord rejected Israel. And I believe that the Lord has rejected most people.

And when I say most people, I mean most people who call themselves Christians today. And many, many people who call themselves born-again believers. Because of the same reason.

They have not understood what it means to give to the Lord that which costs them something. They give to the Lord the leftovers and that which costs them nothing. And it's good for all of us to examine ourselves.

And this is the word the Lord gave us when we started CFC. Malakai 1, verse 11. Remember very clearly, speaking on this in almost one of the first meetings we had in CFC in our home in 1975.

The Lord is looking for a pure offering. Verse 11, this is the rejection of Israel. You people think that you're the only ones whom I've chosen and you're the only ones I'll accept.

God says, I've finished with you. And it's the same way with a lot of Christian churches who think, oh, we are the ones whom God has accepted. We're not like all the others.

God's accepted us. But if you have this quality that you find in the Israelites, the Lord will say, no, I don't accept you. But from the rising of the sun from the east to the west, my name will be great among all these other nations.

I'm going to set you aside, Israel. You think you're the only ones whom I've chosen. I'm going to set you aside.

And from all the nations of the world, I'm going to get an offering that is pure. An offering that is pure. That's the word that the Lord gave us when we started CFC.

When the Lord started CFC 45 years ago. And thus my name will be glorified. So what is an offering that is pure? An offering that is pure is an offering that costs us something.

When you come to the end of the New Testament, that's the end of the Old Testament. You come to Revelation and chapter 17 and 18. Revelation chapter 17 and 18.

You see something similar. There were two, not just 17 and 18, but all the way up to 21. You see there are two cities mentioned here.

One is called Babylon in chapter 17 and 18. And in chapter 21, you read about Jerusalem. Babylon and Jerusalem, two cities symbolizing two types of churches.

See Babylon is a religious system. And it's called here in Revelation 17 5, the mother of harlots. And in contrast to that, you read in Revelation 21 verse 2, I see Jerusalem like a bride adorned for her husband.

So the contrast is between a bride and a harlot. A harlot means a prostitute or an engaged woman who is unfaithful to her fiancé. See we are not yet married to Christ.

The Bible says the marriage of the Lamb is going to come. But the bride is one who is engaged to be married to Christ. And while she says she's engaged to be married to Christ, she's unfaithful.

It's like, you know, if a girl is engaged to a man in some distant country and he says, I'm going to come back, wait for me, be faithful to me. And during that time she's fooling around with others. Well, she's a harlot.

So what is the other man with whom the church can fool around? It's the world. Money. Money is the biggest part of the world.

Where money and material things and honor and the world, where these things become the things I'm occupied with to the cost of devotion to my absent bridegroom. I have moved in the direction of the harlot. That's what Babylon is.

It's very important to understand that. And Babylon the Great is the mother of harlots. That means there are many, many denominations that have got this harlot spirit.

And as you read chapter 18, you get a little more understanding of what Babylon consists of. Babylon is a church which operates on the principle of the business world. Because here it speaks about Babylon as a city of business.

Turn to Revelation chapter 18 and verse 11. The merchants of the earth weep and mourn because no one is buying their cargoes. These are business people.

Babylon is a business system. It's a religious-cum-business system. And it talks about the cargoes of, verse 12, gold and silver and stones and pearls and perfume, verse 13, and cattle and sheep and all those things.

Again, it speaks about businessmen in verse 15. And wealth, great wealth in verse 17. And Jerusalem, on the other hand, if you went into the city of Jerusalem and went into the temple, as soon as you enter the temple, what you'd see on the floor there is blood.

Because the first thing there is the altar on which they would offer sacrifices. And the temple was the main part of Jerusalem. And as soon as you go in there, you see blood, blood, blood everywhere and the altar covered with blood.

It's a place of sacrifice. So Babylon is a place of business. And Jerusalem is a place of sacrifice.

And there are churches that operate on the principle of business. And there are churches that operate on the principle of sacrifice. And that is the difference between Babylon and Jerusalem.

And that is the difference between the harlot and the bride. And it's not one particular group. It's not that one particular church is Jerusalem, another particular church is Babylon.

It's not like that. The teaching of a church may be according to the principle of Babylon and Jerusalem. But the people in every church, including NCCF or any CFC church in the world, there are people who live by the spirit of Babylon in every single church.

And I'm saying that after watching CFC churches for 44 years. In every single church, there are people with the spirit of Babylon. But they think they're not because it's a new covenant.

They can explain the new covenant. They can explain all the points of difference between old covenant and new covenant and so many things, and they've got a fairly decent life. When I say a fairly decent life, it means old covenant life.

They don't commit adultery. They don't steal. They don't tell lies.

They come regularly to the Sabbath worship. I'm talking about old covenant. Today it's Sunday worship.

And they put their offerings like the Old Testament people. Everything is like a God-fearing Old Testament Jew. That is the condition of many, many Christians.

Nobody can find fault with their life. Their external life is very good. But the principle of Babylon operates in their life.

The principle of business. There's another verse I want to point out to you in the Old Testament. In the book of Zechariah, it's talking about the final day when the Lord returns in glory.

It says in Zechariah 14, the last chapter, The day will come, verse 9, when the Lord will be king over all the earth. Zechariah 14 and verse 9. And then it goes on to say, In that day holiness will not be just in the temple. Holiness will be everywhere.

And it says in verse 20, even in the bells of the horses, it will be written, Holy to the Lord. Holy to the Lord in the old covenant was written only on the forehead of the high priest. But he says in this day when the Lord is ruling over the earth, even the bells of the horses will be holy to the Lord.

In other words, holiness will be so widespread. It's not just among special people like the high priest. Down to the lowest insignificant person, there'll be holiness.

And the cooking pots, that means the pots in the kitchen, will be as holy as the bowls before the altar. The incense bowls in the altar were considered holy. The cooking pots were just to cook food.

But it says in that day, we're going to be equally holy. And every cooking pot will be holy to the Lord. Verse 21.

And then listen to this. This is the verse I wanted to point out to you. In the margin of my Bible it says, There will no longer be a businessman in the house of the Lord.

There will be no businessmen in the house of the Lord when the Lord returns. There'll be no merchants. The translation of Canaanite in the margin, the original Hebrew, it says merchants or businessmen.

So day is coming. I believe it's coming very soon. When all businessmen, I don't mean those who do business.

I mean, I'm not talking about businessmen in the worldly way, but those who have the spirit of the businessman. Let's put it like this. The person with the spirit of a businessman will not be found in the house of the Lord.

The only ones found will be those who have the spirit of sacrifice. I told you that's the difference between Babylon and Jerusalem. The spirit of business and the spirit of sacrifice.

So let's try and understand that. What is the spirit of business? I mean, you all know what principle all businesses in the world operate. Profit.

That's all. Every business in the world operates on the principle of profit and gain for myself. When a business does not get gain for itself, it closes down.

It's no longer a business. The principle of business is what can I get out of this for myself? If I run this store, what can I get for myself? If I start this new business, what can I get for myself? That's the principle of business. How does it apply in a church? If I come to this church, what can I get for myself? Uh-huh.

Not what can I give to the Lord. And I'm not talking about money. Some people, when you talk about giving, you think only about money.

Money is the last thing God is interested in. It's your life. It's your self-life.

It's denying yourself. So when we come to the Lord, if we come to join a church, I think all of you sitting here need to ask yourself, Why have you decided to join NCCF? I know many people join CFC because, Oh, this is a good place for my children to grow up. I want my children to grow up in this church.

You're a businessman. You're thinking what you can get out of it. What your children can get out of it.

That is not the reason why a person should join a church. That's the Babylonian principle. Or, there are good people here.

These are the type of people I'd like to be with. Oh, you want to get some good people to be with. Is it Babylon? Businessman, businesswoman.

So, Babylon is much closer than you think. What can I get out of it? The principle of every crooked businessman who lives in the world, whose principle, what can I get out of it, can come right into the church. What can I get out of it? And, the Lord says one day you'll be rejected.

There will be no more businessmen in the house of the Lord one day. Anyone who's come to the church with the principle, with the question of what can I get out of it. I know there are people who come to some, you know, smaller churches and CFC, some of our churches are not very big.

They say, yeah, and oh, if my children come here, they can play in the music. In a big mega church, they'll be sitting in the back. There'll be nobodies.

But this church, they can play the music and my children will develop. Develop what? Godliness? No. Music.

Honor. Shame on you. I hope there's nobody here like that.

That's Babylon 100%. What can I get out of it? What can my children get out of it? And there can be many, many other areas. Nice people to be with.

They'll care for me. They'll help me to shift my house when I'm moving house. I won't have to pay the laborer so much.

All types of stupid, selfish reasons why people come. It's a nice club to be in. And I tell you, many, many churches are just clubs.

But they care for one another, they love one another, they help one another. And they're always saying, what can I get out of it? And what about giving to the Lord? Minimum possible. And they say, this is a wonderful church because they don't even ask us to give anything.

How can we find a church like that? So, I have to make sure that I'm faithful in preparing you for the final judgment. So that none of you will be able to tell me in the day, Jesus, you stand at the judgment seat of Christ, saying, Brother Zach, you knew the truth and you never told me. I have told you.

There will be no businessmen in the house of the Lord on the final day. So, what is the spirit of sacrifice in Jerusalem? As I said, as soon as you come into the temple in Jerusalem, what you see is blood, blood, blood, sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice. Why did the Lord put it like that? Because he's teaching the principle on which the church is built.

When Christ died upon the cross, the Lord was telling the whole world, I run this world on the principle of sacrifice. That's the message of the cross. Have you understood that? Christ did not come here to get something.

He came to give. And the devil became the devil by wanting to get something. So, the contrast between Babylon and Jerusalem is also the contrast between the devil and Jesus Christ.

The devil is the ruler of Babylon and Christ is the ruler of Jerusalem. How did Satan become Satan? He was the head of the angels. We don't know his name.

He's called Lucifer, but that's not his name. We don't know his name. His name is not mentioned anywhere in scripture.

But he was the head of the angels. And he was in heaven. He already had the highest position in heaven.

The leader of the angels. But he wanted something more. He said, I'm not happy with these people worshipping God.

I want them to worship me as well. I want honor. I want to get something.

And so, the spirit of rebellion against God came in pride. I want something for myself. And as soon as that came, the first sin in the universe, God immediately cast him down and all the angels with him.

And they became the demons. And they have infected humanity with that spirit of pride and wanting to get for oneself. That's why you see so much of misery in so many homes where a husband is supposed to behave like Christ towards his wife.

But I know the number of non-Christian homes I've been to in India. Always the husband is the boss. The wife doesn't have a say in anything.

My word is law. You just listen to me. That's all.

Where did that come from? It came from Satan. In some cases, it's the woman who is the boss in the house. And the poor husband has got the meek and quiet spirit submitting to her.

But it's the same spirit of Satan. I'm going to control things here. I'm thinking what I can get, what I can get, what I can get.

Mother-in-laws and daughters-in-law like that, always thinking what I can get, what I can get from that person. What can I get from my parents-in-law? What can I get from my parents? Or how can I make my daughter-in-law serve me and work for me? It's all over among Christians. It shouldn't be that.

I've often said in a new covenant situation, there must be a demonstration of the perfect mother-in-law, daughter-in-law relationship. Without any conflict for years and years and years and years and years. The spirit of Jerusalem, the spirit of sacrifice.

Where do you find it? You find it in your married life, in your home. And it's got nothing to do with the other person. It's only got to do with you.

What is your spirit? Forget about the other person's spirit. The world can be filled with people with the spirit of the devil. I can have the spirit of Christ.

Christendom can be filled with people with the spirit of Babylon to get, get, get, get, get. I can have the spirit of Jerusalem, of sacrifice. It's an individual thing.

So we can never blame anybody else. Many years ago, the Lord pointed out this to me. It's one of the first verses the Lord spoke to me.

When I was a very young Christian, I was about 21 years old. I had just taken my baptism. And one of the first verses of scripture that the Lord drilled into my head was 2 Samuel chapter 24 and verse 24.

2 Samuel 24, verse 24. So what the Lord spoke to me more than 58 years ago after my baptism. It's a place where David, the Lord told David to go to a farmer's property and offer a sacrifice there.

And David went to that farmer's property. And the farmer, verse 21, 2 Samuel 24, verse 21 said, Why has the king come to my servant? Aaron was the farmer. And David said, I've come to buy your threshing floor

because I want to build an altar here for the Lord that the Lord told me to make.

And Aaron said, Oh, no, Lord, I can't sell you anything. You're my king. Please take it free.

And you want to sacrifice here? Take all my oxen free. And you want wood? Take the yokes of the oxen and burnt it. You don't have to pay one cent.

And you know how we love to get anything free. If there are free books on a bookstall, we pick it up even if we don't want it. Even if we don't need it.

That's how we love things that are free. We love to pick up things that are free. All human beings.

And David said, No. Why? If I take this free from you and then I offer it to the Lord, what does it cost me? Zero. And he said, I will pay a price for it.

Verse 24. Because I will never offer an offering to the Lord that cost me nothing. That's the word the Lord spoke to my heart.

I'm very thankful. It's the word the Lord spoke to my heart after my baptism. What the Lord said to me was, Never offer to me that which costs you nothing.

I never realized then, I was a young believer, that that was going to be a principle that would affect my whole life. My family life. My ministry.

And I never knew that I would have the opportunity to serve and to lead churches. But that was the principle. I will never offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing.

So whenever I offer something to the Lord, whether it's a service or a ministry, for example, preaching is a service. It's very easy to preach God's word in a way that costs me nothing. That means I don't read the Bible.

I don't spend time with the Lord. But I want the honor of getting up and preaching. So I'll read some books or listen to some internet messages and copy down something and present it.

Get honor. Sometimes get honor with somebody else's message. What does it cost me? Zero.

What has it got me? A lot of honor. I'm a businessman. And you know Christendom is full of such people, full of such preachers.

And sometimes it's money. I've worked a lot with Christian workers in India. 90% of them, believe me, are earning much more in Christian work than they would in a secular job.

Is that sacrifice? No, it's business. If I were in a secular job, I'd get only so much. If I'm Christian work, I'm earning so much.

It's the same thing with a lot of Christian workers and preachers in America. With their television programs and the way they collect money from poor people, they would never have got that much money if they were in a secular job. I can get something by Christian work.

And we can look down and say, Oh, well, terrible when a guy buys a plane for himself from poor people's money. You may not be so crude. But as I said, you could come to the church to get something for

yourself.

It's the same thing. You may not be wanting money because you've got a good job and you're earning money. What you want is a good place for your children.

That sounds like a very spiritual thing, isn't it? I want to find a church which has got a good place for my children to grow up. Nice children, well-behaved children, place where they never ask for anything. I can keep all my money to myself.

I don't have to give anything. I'm so free. Well, around you may be sitting a few people with the spirit of Jerusalem, but you certainly have the spirit of Babylon.

And you may not be exposed for a long time, but a day will come when you will definitely be exposed. You know, in the early church, you know the story of Ananias and Sapphira. You see the context in which that happened in Acts chapter 4. At the end of Acts chapter 4, it says, there were so many poor people and the people who had more money felt, hey, these are my brothers.

They are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. I need to help them. And I'll tell you something.

See the wisdom of those people. They did not give money to that poor person. They gave it to the apostles.

I have rarely seen that wisdom in Christendom. Most people, when they see somebody in need, they give it to that person. You get some honor thereby.

A lot of people give because I want to get honor. I know I'm the great benefactor, the generous person who helps the poor in this church. And gradually you get a reputation.

But these people, they didn't do that. It says here, they brought their money. Verse 34, there was not a needy person.

Acts 4, 34. Because those who were owners of lands and houses would sell and bring the proceeds of their sales and give it to the poor. No.

They laid them at the apostles' feet. And the apostles distributed it. And I'll tell you why.

I've seen that from India. We have, without exaggeration, distributed millions. And I mean millions of rupees to poor people in the villages in India.

For medical help, for educational help, to give the children education. We've done it in the last 30, 40 years. Literally millions.

But it's always been done by the leaders. Not that people go and give them, okay, this is for your child's education. No.

It's done by the leaders. Because, I'll tell you why. Because if each person gave directly to the poor, the clever poor fellow will make his needs known to everybody and get a lot of money.

He'll become a very rich person. And the person who does not reveal his needs will never get anything. Because people think, oh, he's all right.

He doesn't seem to have any need. Whereas the elders, who know the financial state of all the people, will be able to know whom to give. And how somebody, we don't want to give this person more.

They'll give wisely. That's why in our churches, we say, if you want to give to the poor, put it in a little envelope and mark for the poor. And the elders will decide whom to give it.

And we have found through 40 years, that's the wise way. That's what they did too. But in the midst of this, there was a couple called Ananias and Sapphira, who also, yeah, they wanted to give.

But they also wanted something for themselves. They wanted some honor. They wanted the honor of giving.

And so, they sold a piece of property. Acts 5 verse 1. But they kept back part of the price for themselves. Let's assume that they sold their property for \$100,000.

And they kept \$50,000 for themselves. And gave \$50,000 for the Lord. Boy, I mean, if somebody did that today, you'd call that person a wholehearted radical Christian.

He sold his property for \$100,000 and he gave \$50,000 to the Lord. Wow. But they died.

Because it says here, they pretended that they were giving the whole thing. That was their problem. They pretended that they were giving the whole thing.

And they were only giving a portion. So, Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to tell a lie to the Holy Spirit? When do you tell a lie to the Holy Spirit? I'll tell you. When you give other people in the church an impression that you're more spiritual than you really are, you are telling a lie to the Holy Spirit.

And, you know, it's not in words. It's not saying, I'm a very spiritual man. We are not so crude.

It's the airs we have about ourselves and the way we talk and the way we conduct ourselves and the way we give a little testimony here and there of something we did. And the whole aim is the business principle. What can I get? What can I get? I can get some honor from this church as a spiritual man.

Aha. There will be no businessman in the house of the Lord in the final day. Remember.

So, Ananias wanted that. And Satan, Peter says, you've lied to the Holy Spirit. And now listen, a matter of money.

See how clearly Peter says about who our money belongs to. Your money does not belong to the Lord. It says here, before you sold the property, the money was yours.

The house is yours. Nobody asked you to sell it. And even after you sold it, verse 4, it is still yours.

Even after you converted property to cash, the money is yours, Ananias. God doesn't want your money. Why then have you conceived this deed in your heart? You have told a lie to God.

And do you know Ananias never opened his mouth? Can you tell a lie without opening your mouth? Here is a classic example in the opening pages of the New Testament church. How you can tell a lie without opening your mouth is by giving a wrong impression that you're wholehearted, just like all the others in the church, but you're not wholehearted. You give, but not like the others.

But you want the same acceptance as the others. You want to be accepted as a spiritual person when you're not a spiritual person. That's the principle of Babylon.

To get something. And here it says, Ananias fell down dead. And his wife, Peter gave his wife a chance and asked her the question.

Tell me, verse 8, did you sell the land for this price? And she could have said, no, we kept 50% for ourselves. She would have lived. But she also wanted honor.

Yes. This is what we're giving 100% to God. Their crime was they were pretending that they were giving 100% to God when they were giving only 50%.

It's the same principle. And that's the first people who died in the early church, not because they committed adultery or stole money, but because they, not because they didn't give money to the Lord. Don't misunderstand it.

The Lord, Peter said to him, the money was yours. Before you sold the property, the money was yours. After you sold the property, there's no sin in that.

You could have kept the whole of it to yourself. But why do you tell a lie? Why do you pretend? Why do you come into the church of the living God and pretend to be more spiritual than you really are? This is very important, dear brothers and sisters. Because we can never build the church of Jesus Christ with that spirit.

I told you about David, another man who had the same principle as Abraham. When the Lord asked him to offer up his son, he didn't take 10,000 sheep. He didn't take anything else which would have cost him less.

He gave his son. So when you turn to 2 Chronicles, there's a very interesting verse here in 2 Chronicles 3, in the building of the temple, which is a picture of the building of the church. 2 Chronicles 3, Solomon building the temple is a picture of the Lord Jesus building the church.

And we cooperating with the Lord in building the church. Where did the Lord choose to build the church? Listen to this. 2 Chronicles 3, verse 1. The Lord, Solomon, began to build the house of the Lord and the place where the Lord told him.

In Mount Moriah, in the place... Mount Moriah, by the way, you read in Genesis 22, is where Abraham offered up his son Isaac. Where he said to God, you asked for my son is the most precious thing I have on earth. I will not offer to you that which cost me nothing.

Here is my son. That's Mount Moriah. And way back there, when Abraham offered up his son, God decided, my temple will be built here.

Where a servant of mine offered to me that which cost him everything. And the exact place is where David prepared on the threshing floor of Orna and the Jebusite. That's where David also, 1,000 years after Abraham said, I will not offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing.

Isn't it interesting that that was the place the Lord selected to build his church. And it is the same today. There are many places that call themselves churches.

There are probably a lot of people that call themselves new covenant churches. We're not the only ones who claim to be new covenant churches. There are a lot of others who call themselves that.

It's easy to get a label. Doesn't cost anything. Painted, new covenant church.

But the spirit of the new covenant, the pure offering, the Lord says, are you offering the lame and the sick? That which costs you nothing? What is your motive in wanting to be a part of the church? Is it the principle of the business world? What I can get out of it? What I can get out of it? Or what can I give to the Lord? I want to offer myself to the Lord. And I want to come to the church seeking nothing for myself. I don't want anything for myself.

I don't want anything for my children. I want to give myself and I want nothing in return. You know, out there in the health, wealth, charismatic churches, they say, if you give to the Lord, the Lord will give back to you.

He'll give back to you a hundred times. And people give because they say, I'm going to get something from the bank. It's like giving to a bank, which gives you a hundred percent interest.

Who will not give to a bank like that? There are people who give like that and we expect the Lord to give. And accidentally, if they get some money, they say, the Lord made me rich. And the preachers will take that one example among a thousand who got some money and say, see, this man gave and he became rich.

He won't tell you about all the 999 people who got nothing. That's how they fool people nowadays. I remember the story of a journalist who came to an American church that preached the health, wealth gospel.

And say, I want to really find out if it's really true. Then we must proclaim this in the newspapers that this is the way to make money. Give to the Lord.

So he said, this journalist, I don't have to go inside the church to find out what they preach. I'll just go to the parking lot and see what type of cars they have. And I'll find out whether God has prospered them or not.

And he found all the parking lot is full of old cars and Jeeps. But in the space reserved for the pastors and assistant pastors and church staff, it was the best, most expensive cars. And he says, yes, this does work, but only for certain people.

The people who preach this, they get the benefit out of it. Now they're looting all the others. But who understands this? You go and see these mega churches, they're still sitting there with their mouth open imagining this great man of God is telling them the truth.

Babylon is a huge system. It's going to be destroyed one day. Turn with me to Revelation chapter 17 again.

Revelation chapter 17, it says, no, chapter 18, sorry. Revelation chapter 18, verse 2, fallen, fallen is Babylon, the great. Come out of her, verse 4, my people.

And further down in chapter 19, verse 1, the last part. Hallelujah, salvation and glory. And power belong to our God because His judgments are righteous.

He has judged the great harlot. A second time, verse 3, they said, Hallelujah. The smoke of Babylon rises up forever.

Do you know, I don't know whether you know this fact, that in the entire New Testament, the word Hallelujah, which Christians speak so often, particularly in charismatic churches, never occurs till you come to the book of Revelation. Most people don't even know what it means. Hallel means praise, Yah is Jehovah, the Lord.

It means praise the Lord. If you translate it, it just means praise the Lord. We say praise the Lord.

But it's interesting to see where Hallelujah comes for the first time in the New Testament. The destruction of Babylon, Hallelujah. The great harlot, verse 2, has been destroyed.

Again, a second time, Hallelujah. The smoke of the harlot rises up forever. Isn't that significant? That Hallelujah comes when Babylon is destroyed.

I want to have a Hallelujah in my heart to see the destruction of Babylon and that spirit, first of all, in my life. Hallelujah, I will never offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing. I will not go to a church to see what I can get out of it.

Money, honor, nothing. It's so easy, brothers and sisters, to have something of that spirit in some corner of our heart and think, because we are in a good church, we are spiritual. It's very important to understand that it's easy to be spiritual if you look at Jesus Christ and say, Lord, I want to have that same spirit.

You lost something when you came from heaven to earth. You never gained financially. You didn't get honor.

You had more honor in heaven. You lost honor when you came to the earth. You had all the wealth of heaven and you lost everything when you came to the earth.

What did he gain? What about you? Have you served the Lord? Have you come to the church? And you're satisfied that you and your family can get something. And I believe that it's because of that that our Christian life remains so shallow and don't seem to grow. You wonder why you're not getting victory over sin.

You wonder why you cannot rejoice always. You wonder why you're not living that overcoming life. And I'll tell you, here may be the reason, may be here, that deep down in your heart is the spirit of Babylon.

You're thinking of what you can get. So repentance means you want to turn around from that today and say, Lord, today I want to give that up. I never want to think from today onwards, what am I going to get? So in other words, don't ask yourself what you do, but ask yourself, what is the motive behind my doing this or saying this? I want to get zero out of the church for myself and my children.

I want to glorify God. That's all. I go to the church to glorify God.

I make my children there to glorify God, not to find a comfortable place and a nice place where I can meet with others who are good people. And I believe if you turn around from that spirit of the harlot and turn around with the spirit of, I will not offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing. I believe the Lord can use you to build Jerusalem, the true church of Jesus Christ.

And that is the purpose with which this church and every CFC church was raised up. And I praise God that there are people like that. There are very few.

It's always the number is few. Jesus had only 11 among all the crowds he preached to. And it was a very small number, but he had some.

And they are the ones who turned the world upside down. And he has some today as well. But those few are mixed up in the crowd of many others who have got other motives.

And I pray that this church will be a church where the light shines so bright that people who have that spirit, they may not give it up, but they'll feel uncomfortable. I pray that everyone who has that spirit here will feel terribly uncomfortable after hearing this message today. And you'll keep on feeling uncomfortable until you get rid of that spirit.

Because that is the message I always preach. It's the message I preached for 45 years and I'll continue to preach until Jesus comes. I've often said the prophetic message in the church is to comfort those who are disturbed.

That is also there. And to disturb those who are comfortable. To comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable.

And I hope if you're disturbed in your spirit, you'll feel comforted in God's love for you. Even if you don't have any recognition in the church. And if you're comfortable in the church with the wrong motives, I hope you'll feel disturbed enough to set things right today.

May God help us all.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/0RM_cVrLDKg.mp4

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