

The Two Mysteries - the Mystery of Church

by Zac Poonen

The sermon explores the two great mysteries of Godliness and Iniquity, highlighting the importance of being careful of counterfeit leaders and seeking to live a life of obedience to Christ.

Duration: 57:08

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 6:3, Luke 2:7, John 3:16, John 6:38, 1 Corinthians 12:12, Philippians 2:5-8

Topics: "Mystery"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding Jesus' purpose on earth and how it relates to the calling of the church. He highlights the significance of money and how it should not be a focus for church leaders. The speaker shares his personal experience of serving in his church for 27 years without taking any money from it, and how their workers in India follow the same principle. He also mentions the growth of their churches in India by pushing people to rely on Christ rather than on themselves. The sermon concludes by stating that our calling as the spiritual body of Christ is similar to Jesus' calling when he came to earth, and the speaker presents John 6:38 as a verse that summarizes Jesus' ministry.

Transcript

We were looking at the two great mysteries mentioned in the New Testament, and we saw the first one, 1 Timothy 3.16, the mystery of godliness. I just want to say a few words before moving on to the second mystery, and that is, there is an opposite or a counterfeit to everything that God does. And idolatry and heathen religions that have a trinity are all examples of these counterfeits.

And just like there is a mystery of godliness, which is a great thing, the Bible speaks in 2 Thessalonians 2.7 of a mystery of iniquity. The mystery of iniquity is the opposite of the mystery of godliness. The mystery of godliness is that Jesus Christ came in our flesh and lived a pure and holy life, and now seeks to come and dwell in us, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, manifest that same life of God through us.

That is what God wants to do. And in the measure in which the Holy Spirit is able to manifest the life of Christ through you and me, in that measure, God has succeeded in fulfilling his purpose. And in the measure in which you restrict or hinder the life of Christ from being manifest through you, in that measure, you are frustrating the purpose of God on earth.

The mystery of iniquity is where people use religious language and appear to be leading you to God. It speaks here in 2 Thessalonians 2 about the Antichrist who sits in the temple and displays himself as being God. He is filled with the devil, but he doesn't say, I am the devil manifest in flesh.

No. He says, I am God manifest in flesh. Remember when Eve, we were thinking of that day before yesterday evening, when Eve was tempted to sin, the devil didn't say, you'll become like the devil if you eat that.

You know what he told her? You'll become like God. So Eve wanted to become like God. That's how she sinned.

Do you know that you can sin when you want to become like God? When you want to become like God in having authority over others, ruling over others, making demands on others, then you sin. Jesus also came with a message, you can become like God in humility, in service, in goodness. It's a totally different message, even though the words appear the same.

So here is the Antichrist who displays himself as God, but he's actually possessed by the devil. He's the devil incarnate, the opposite of Christ. And that's referred to here as the mystery of iniquity, verse 7, where people use religious language and appear to be leading you to God, appear to be leading you to Christ, use biblical language perhaps, but their life is not the life of Jesus Christ.

So that's why we have to be very careful in our day. If you don't want to be deceived by the mystery of iniquity, that you don't just listen to a man's doctrine. A man's doctrine being right proves what? The devil's doctrine is right too.

What does it prove? Does it prove he's worthy of being followed? Not at all. What about his life? In our church, I tell people to use three tests. Is a man trying to control your life, dominate you as an elder or a leader? Beware of such people.

Stay miles away from such people. Even if their doctrines are absolutely right, even if they are powerful speakers, one who's got the spirit of Christ will never want to run your life, will never want to control your life in any way. He'll only want to wash your feet.

And when you want your feet to be washed, he won't grab your feet and wash them, even if you don't want them to be washed. There are people who do that, you know, and say, well, I'm determined to wash your feet. I'm a servant.

He's a cult leader. Don't follow him. The second thing I say is, is he interested in your money? That's the second thing you need to ask yourself.

Is he always asking you for money? That disqualifies almost all these television preachers. Is he interested in your money? I never see Jesus once asking people to give him money. That is Christ manifest in the flesh.

I have believed that, practiced that, followed that for over 27 years. I want you to know that any money you put here into a box or an offering box may cover the cost of my travel, but not one cent of it will be used for my personal expenses. Not one cent.

I take care of my own personal expenses. And even Annie's travel, you take care of that. From the books and tapes here, I get nothing.

No royalty from books, tapes, CDs. Because I don't believe Jesus would have taken royalty from books and tapes and CDs. It's a very important area.

Money. If we are not clear in that, that's why Paul was so careful. He was able to tell people, I was not interested in your silver or gold, or I didn't want you to give me clothes or any such thing.

I came to serve you. He said, nobody will rob me of this boasting anywhere. He was very clear on that.

And that's how I've sought to serve, because I feel that I have to fight against the spirit of the Antichrist, which seeks to dominate people, which is interested in people's money. And that's how our workers serve in India, in our churches. I myself have served in my church for twenty-seven years, never taken one cent from that church.

And our workers in our churches serve like that too. We seek to follow the Apostle Paul in making tents and earning our living and serving the Lord. Any money that's used from church offering is only used for travel or publication of books or tapes, etc.

So that we have a very clear testimony, which is a unique thing in India. In fact, it's a unique thing everywhere in the world. But that's the second thing you need to ask yourself.

Is that man interested in your money? And the third thing I ask people to be careful about is, does that man flatter you with nice words to win your heart? Beware of people who flatter you or seek to dominate you or are interested in your money. There could be other warnings. I don't know whether you've read a second-century book called The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles.

It's a little twelve-page booklet. It's not Bible. It's just a writing that's come down from the second century.

One of the things that is written there is that any man who asks you for money is a false prophet. That's the way they protected people in those days, because they didn't have a Bible to teach people what was right doctrine and wrong doctrine. So the only way to protect some fellow who landed up there and said, well, Paul sent me, or I was with the Apostle John for many years, and now I'm a servant of the Lord, was, the test was, does he ask you for money? And the second thing was, does he stay too long in your house without doing any work? Send him out.

Send him out. These lazy people who come and plonk themselves somewhere and decide to stay for weeks on end. The apostles were very cut and dry about these things because they wanted to protect God's people from deceivers.

So there is this counterfeit that is there. We must face the fact the counterfeit is there in the world, and we have to be aware of it, the mystery of iniquity. It's a mystery because it appears to speak the righteous language.

I tell you, we have to be very careful in our day of people who have the right doctrine. Look for the life. Look for humility.

Look to see whether that person has got the humility and the serving nature of Christ, whether he wants to be a brother among you or a Lord. This is one reason in our church is we never have any titles. I say, don't

call me reverend or doctor or anything.

I'm not those things. You know what I am? Romans 8.29 says, I'm a younger brother of Jesus Christ. I've been predestined to be conformed to the image of his son that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

When I had only one son, I called him the only begotten. Now he's the firstborn because I've got four sons. Do you know that when Jesus came to the earth, he was the only begotten.

After his resurrection, he's never called the only begotten. He's always called the firstborn. Why? Because he's got younger brothers.

And I'm one of them. And so I said, please call me brother. Younger brother of Jesus Christ.

Brother. Don't call me by lowdown titles like reverend and doctor and pastor and all that. Give me a dignified title.

Brother. That's what I want to call you. Tell me, can you find a bigger title than this? Younger brother of Jesus Christ.

Try and find one. There isn't. That's why we call one another brother, sister.

We're equal. We may have different gifts, different functions, but we're equal. There is only one head.

Jesus Christ. Sometimes babies are born with two heads. You know, they don't live.

They don't live long. And we have churches sometimes with two heads. Jesus Christ is one and the local leader is another.

They don't survive. No baby with two heads can survive. There has to be only one head.

Jesus Christ alone. You know what they sing in heaven? Thou alone art worthy. It's not thou and Paul.

Paul is somewhere there in the corner. It's Jesus Christ alone. Thou alone art worthy, O Lord.

Think of that. And the church which leads you to worship Christ, to be centered in Christ, where every man, no matter how gifted, is an ordinary brother. That's the church I want to be in.

Because that's a foretaste of heaven, where they're only going to glorify Christ. And so be careful of any church where a man becomes very prominent. No doubt Paul was a blessing.

He wrote at least 13 of the New Testament epistles. But that's because God called him for that type of gift. And some people have a unique gift.

Like I said, the tongue does all the talking. But still, the tongue is as important as the little muscles and sinews in my body, which you can't see. There are a lot of parts of the body which are equally important.

And without them, the tongue wouldn't function. So this mystery of iniquity is that which uses religious language, but which is not motivated by the Spirit of Christ. It's not the life of Christ.

And you can sense it. You know, I believe we must be sensitive to the voice of the Spirit. When you listen to a man, I always tell people in our church, don't just listen to his words.

You'll go astray. I believe you'll be led astray into cults. Listen to his spirit.

Whenever a man speaks, like body odor. You know how a dog can pick up body odor? Much better than we can. We can also pick it up when it's bad enough.

But a dog can pick it up. But body odor is something which we don't realize. Like bad breath.

See, I don't realize when I have bad breath, unless someone is kind enough to tell me. It comes out whether you like it or not. I mean, bad breath.

That's why we use things to wash our mouth. Bad breath comes forth and it's not deliberate. It's unconscious.

It comes out. It's like that with our spirit. You don't realize it, but when you speak to people, there's a spirit that comes forth.

And if that man is a spiritual man, like a dog, he can pick it up immediately. But since 90% of people in a church are not usually spiritual, they can't pick it up. That's the danger.

And that's how a lot of people push themselves, build their kingdoms over poor simple people who get dominated and ruled and destroyed. We're living in such a time. I would urge you to be very, very careful.

Be very cautious. Don't be deceived just because somebody's got the right doctrine. Don't be deceived just because a meeting seems to be lively.

Drunken parties are lively too. It doesn't mean God is there. You know, liveliness and activity, you go to rock music concerts, they make a lot of noise.

It doesn't mean God is there. Noise is not the mark of the Holy Spirit. When Elijah was in the mountain, there was thunder, earthquake, fire and everything.

God was not in them. God was in a still small voice. So we need to develop in these days a sensitiveness to know what is of the Holy Spirit, what is of Christ and what is not.

And the test is always Jesus. Whenever you see a leader, compare him with Jesus in the Gospels and you won't go wrong. Do you see the spirit of Christ in him? Do you see his freedom from the love of money in him? Do you see a freedom from the desire to dominate in him? Do you see a spirit of service? Does he consider you equal to him? These are the tests.

And you can protect yourself from multitudes of Protestant evangelical leaders who are cult leaders with right doctrines, destroying lives, building their own little kingdoms, submitting to nobody, answerable to no one except themselves, imagining that they are under the authority of Christ. God doesn't bear witness to such people. Where God builds something, where God gives ministry to a person, he brings him in fellowship with others.

Even a Paul was in fellowship with Peter. A Peter was rebuked by Paul and he accepted it. This is the fellowship there was among the apostles.

The elders of churches in the New Testament were under the apostles. That's how they were protected. But today we have a whole lot of people who are under nobody, answerable to no one except themselves.

Beware of such people. I can only warn you. Whether you listen to the warning or not, it's up to you, but I've done my job.

The mystery of iniquity, it's a mystery. It's a mystery because it appears to be right. The doctrine appears to be right.

But it's not Christ manifest in that flesh. It's the dominating power of Satan. You know, there's a difference.

Have you noticed in the scriptures, it never speaks about the spirit possessing people? Demons possess. The spirit fills. Do you know the difference between spirit filling and demon possession? The difference is this.

When a demon possesses a person, he controls that person totally. The fellow has no control over himself. He automatically speaks.

He automatically writes. He does so many things, tears his hair. He's demon possessed.

When the spirit fills a person, the fruit of the spirit is self-control. Galatians 5.23. He has more control over himself than before the spirit filled him. For example, he couldn't control his temper before.

Now he can. He couldn't control his eyes from lusting before. Now he can.

The spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets. He can control himself. When I hear people say, oh brother Zach, the spirit came upon me and threw me to the other end of the room and I had lost control of myself.

I said that was not the Holy Spirit. I don't know what spirit it was, but it was not the Holy Spirit. Because if you've got the Holy Spirit, you'd have control over yourself.

I've heard people say, I was stuck to the floor. I couldn't get up. Well, that was not the Holy Spirit.

If it was the Holy Spirit, you could have got up. There are people who say, I was filled with the spirit and I kept on speaking in tongues. I couldn't stop.

Well, that was not the Holy Spirit. I've heard people speak in unknown tongues. When the evil spirit is cast out, they stop.

I've also heard people speak in tongues through the Holy Spirit. So there is a difference. And we live in a day of tremendous deception, counterfeit.

But if you apply some of these tests that I have mentioned, you'll protect yourself from these counterfeits, if you want to. But if you are after excitement and entertainment, well, the devil's got everything out there with a Christian name, with Christian language, with the right doctrines to fool you. You'll be a little poorer at the end of the experiment.

That, of course, but probably a lot poorer. Somebody else will be enriched at your expense. But you would have got the entertainment and the excitement that you wanted.

And you'll finally have wasted many years of your life and even be lost if you continue that way. The mystery of iniquity, beware of it. The mystery of godliness is that the Holy Spirit comes to reproduce Christ in us.

In our flesh, we can live an overcoming life like Jesus lived. Progressively, like it says in 2 Corinthians 3:18, from one degree of glory to another, he transforms us into his likeness. I want to speak about the second great mystery, and that is mentioned in Ephesians in chapter five.

In Ephesians chapter five, it speaks about the second great mystery. There are only two great mysteries mentioned in scripture, and this is Ephesians chapter five and verse 32. This mystery is great, but I'm speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

What is that? Verse 31, for this, verse 30, we are members of his body. For this cause, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. Referring to husband and wife, but it says not only referring to husband and wife, but referring to Christ and the church, that our relationship with Jesus Christ is exactly like that of a wife to her husband.

Exactly the same type of relationship. Is it possible? This is a great mystery, but it's true. You know, it says in a little example of that in one Corinthians in chapter six, where the same expression is used, the two shall become one flesh is referred to a harlot there.

But whether with a harlot or with your wife, there's a physical union, which makes you one flesh with your wife. One Corinthians 6:16. Don't you know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her, for the two will become one flesh.

But when you're joined with your wife, that also, the two shall become one flesh in exactly the same way. Verse 17, the one who joins himself with Jesus is one spirit with him. We're not one flesh with Jesus, because it's not a physical union, but we are one spirit.

But the union of our spirit with Christ is very similar to the union of a man and a woman. See, when a man and a woman joined together in physical union, they are one flesh. The man doesn't become the woman and the woman doesn't become the man.

They still remain man and woman, but they are one flesh. And when I joined with Christ, I don't become Christ and Christ doesn't become me. He's Christ and I'm a sinner saved by grace, but I'm one with him.

We have to be careful. Stay within the limits of Scripture and you'll be all right. When we use our reason, like Eve used her reason, we go astray.

But this is a wonderful mystery. This is a great mystery. But I'm speaking concerning Christ and the church.

Jesus Christ, the head and the church, the body. Ephesians chapter 5. Husbands ought to love their wives, verse 28, as their own bodies. So the relationship between a husband and wife here is pictured like the head, the husband, and the wife, the body.

The head, the brain. That's what it means when it says the head and the wife is the body. In the same way, Christ is the brain and the church is the body.

We are related to him, connected to him spiritually, just like a wife to her husband. And we are to be subject, and it uses the picture of the body here. That means we are members of his body, verse 30.

So our calling today as the spiritual body of Christ is similar to the calling that Jesus had when he came in a physical body to the land of Palestine 2000 years ago. What did Jesus come to do in his physical body?

Why did he come from heaven? I want to show you the one verse that I have found which explains it better than anything else, which sums up in a nutshell everything that Jesus did in 33 and a half years. When many people, you ask many people, why did Jesus come to earth? They'll say he came to die for our sins.

Actually, that was just one day of his 33 and a half years. Tell me what he did for the rest of his life. Well, he was born in a stable.

Okay, that's also one day. But can you tell me in one sentence what he did in 33 and a half years? Which includes everything, being born in a stable, growing up as a carpenter, submitting to Mary, dying on the cross, raising from the dead. Everything is summed up in one sentence in Jesus' own words.

John chapter 6, verse 38. And I've never found a better verse than this to explain the ministry which Jesus fulfilled when he was here on earth. Why do we need to see this? Because this is our calling as a church.

We are one flesh with him. We are one spirit with him. Jesus said in John 6, 38, I've come down from heaven, in a nutshell, my entire life, never to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

Why was he born in a stable? Because he didn't choose his own will. The father's will was that. Why did he, why was he a carpenter for maybe 12 of his 30 years? Because that was the father's will.

It wasn't his choice. Why did he go out to preach only for three and a half years? It was the father's will. If he had to die for the sins of the world, why didn't he die decently in a corner instead of dying in such a horrible death on a cross? That was the father's will.

There was only one factor that determined everything in Jesus' life. What is the will of my father? And you remember that great agony that he went through in Gethsemane, where he pleaded with the father that, father, please take away this cup from me. And the father said, no.

He prayed again. Father said, no. He prayed for one hour, prayed a third time.

Father said, no. What was it that Jesus dreaded so much? What was it he, he certainly wasn't physical death. I mean, I've heard of martyrs who went to the Roman Coliseums when they were going to be eaten up by lions and who sang praises to God and sang hallelujah while their head went into the lion's mouth.

Amazing boldness. And I can't imagine that Jesus was less bold than them. No, he was not afraid of physical death.

Not at all. He'd have been willing to die a million physical deaths. He's the one who gave courage to the martyrs.

And he certainly was very bold himself. But there was one thing that Jesus dreaded, dreaded, dreaded, dreaded, dreaded terribly. And that was what he valued most in his life.

Fellowship with the father, which he had experienced from all eternity. He was not interested in comfort, money. He was not interested in the things that many Christians are interested in.

He was not even interested in being a leader of a group like some Christians are. He was not interested in any of those things. He was not interested in having a ministry like some Christians are.

Don't think you're very spiritual if you're interested in the ministry. I want to tell you that. Don't think you're spiritual if you're interested in being a leader.

You're carnal like any other carnal adulterer. Jesus was not interested in these things. A spiritual man is interested in only one thing.

Fellowship with God. He's not interested in ministry. He's not interested in leadership.

He's not interested what people think about him. He's not interested in anything. He's interested in fellowship with God.

And if that's all you're interested in in life, you're a spiritual man and woman. Otherwise, you're not, no matter what you think of yourself, no matter what other people think of you, no matter what other people in your little group think of you, you are not a spiritual man. So Jesus was only interested in fellowship with his father.

That's all he had. That's what he had from eternity long before there was a world or heaven or earth or angels or anything. He had fellowship with his father from all eternity.

And now he faced the prospect of a three-hour break in that fellowship on the cross if he were going to take our sins, the punishment of our sins. Only three hours. You and I have had break of fellowship with the father for days on end.

It never bothered us. So long as we had money and comfort and a good bed and good food, it didn't matter if we didn't have fellowship with the father, but not Jesus. He wouldn't want to break a fellowship with the father even for one minute.

You know why? Because he had the divine eternal perspective, which realized that fellowship with the father is the only thing worthwhile. We haven't come there. We still think a comfortable bed, good food and sex and money and all the enjoyment of luxuries of life are also necessary.

Jesus knew they were not. He knew the only thing necessary for man was fellowship with the father. He had the right perspective.

And the more you come to that place, the more spiritual you are. And the less you have an interest in all these vanities that the world offers you. A lot of people who think they're spiritual are not spiritual.

Like I've often said, my dear brother and sister, you are not as spiritual as you think you are, unless you value only fellowship with the father as the only thing you want in life. Everything else, ministry, having a little church to run, to get some little ego satisfaction, all this is garbage. It is.

Fellowship with the father is the only thing a spiritual man desires. And beyond that, what God gives him, opportunity to serve other people, he serves them and moves on. But these are not the big things for him.

And God has shown me that more and more in my life. And I praise the Lord, it's liberated me. Ministry is no longer important to me.

When I was a young man, it was. I wanted to impress. I wanted to do this, that and the other.

No longer. I'm not interested in writing books or making tapes or ministry or traveling or even having a little church. I've told the Lord, I say, Lord, if one day you paralyze me and make me lie down on my bed and I lose my voice, it won't make any difference to me.

I still love you with all my heart and fellowship with you. Nobody can take that away from me. If somebody locks me up in an Indian jail for preaching the gospel and I sit there for 20 years.

Fine. If that's the will of God, that's perfectly okay for me. Well, we have persecution coming in India.

There's a real possibility of such things happening. That's fine. Nobody can take away from me what God has given me through the Holy Spirit in Christ.

Fellowship with my heavenly father. That is what Jesus was afraid to lose in the garden of Gethsemane. He pleaded with the father, isn't there any other way? Isn't there any other way? And father said, no.

If you don't face that and come back to heaven, you can come back. No problem. But nobody will be saved.

That was a struggle. I see the love of Jesus for me in Gethsemane, long before he went to Calvary. I see him in that moment choosing a way which was the greatest agony for him and saying that for the sake of that fellow who's going to be born in India in the 20th century, for his sake, I'll do it.

For my sake, for your sake. He chose to go that way. And I say, Lord, thank you.

I'll never forget it. That you chose three hours of agony, which, you know, you and I will never know what that agony is. If you want to know what that agony is, you've got to spend eternity in hell to understand it, to be forsaken by God.

Jesus experienced hell for three hours. But because he was an infinite being, not a finite being like created beings, in three hours he could experience concentrated eternity in hell. Infinity multiplied by three is finite being multiplied by eternity.

It's very simple mathematics. He experienced he experienced eternal hell because he was an infinite being. Three hours was enough.

And to experience it, you've got to go to that man who spends eternity in hell and ask him to tell you what it's like. That's what Jesus experienced on the cross because that is the punishment for sin. And by the time the cross was over, he had finished.

He said it's finished. I've taken the punishment. After that, the Bible says he descended into Hades.

That's not hell. That's just the place of departed spirits, mistranslated as hell in different places in the King James Version. He was in paradise with the thief, proclaiming to the people on the other side of hell that they were defeated.

Satan was defeated on the cross. So he came to do the father's will on earth, whatever the cost. And now we have become one spirit with him.

What is our calling? To do this, to live the same way on earth. Then we are his body. Never to do my own will, but the will of God.

Do you know that the members of my body? Now, I want to say this to only those who are serious about not who want points for sermons. Some people listen to me to get points for sermons, which they want to go and preach somewhere else and get honor. I'm going to say, I'm not talking to such people.

I'm talking about the people who are not even interested in an intellectual explanation. I'm talking to people who are interested in following Jesus day by day. It means self-denial.

It means dying to your rights and your reputation and your honor and your own will every day. Do you know that every part of this body never does its own will? My hands have done the will of my brain for 62 years. From the time I was a little baby to now, it's never once have they done their own will.

They have voluntarily surrendered their will to the will of the brain. The head. Every part of my body has functioned like that.

And that's why my body has never fought with itself. My right hand has never slapped me. My right leg has never kicked my left leg in anger.

Amazing, isn't it? For two people to live in fellowship like that for over 60 years. Is it possible for Jesus Christ to reproduce in his spiritual body what he has already done in my physical body? Isn't this a miracle, the way God has made my body that my brain controls everything and every part is genuinely concerned in the other part? This is a mystery. The devil says impossible.

Okay. If you believe the devil, according to your faith, be it unto you, it will be impossible in your life. But if you believe God, if you believe that this is what Jesus came to do, if you believe that this is what Jesus came and died on the cross to accomplish, it's a mystery.

I agree, it's a mystery. That I don't question. It's a great mystery.

It's one of the true great mysteries in the New Testament. The church, the body and the bride of Jesus Christ related to him just like a wife to a husband. Becoming more and more intimate with him.

Not seeking to take the glory away from her husband. A true wife always works behind the scenes to promote her husband. That's how church does, to promote Christ, to lift up Christ, not herself.

Be careful of a man who's trying to lift himself up. Steer clear of him. No matter what his doctrine, steer clear of him, he'll destroy you in the process of destroying himself.

Steer clear of such people. There are lots of them floating around. Little heads, big heads, all seeking to promote themselves.

But in the church, there is to be only one head, Christ. You need to be ministered to by a man who will draw you to Christ and not to himself. A man who will connect you to Christ and pull out.

You know, one of the best examples, this is what the Holy Spirit does, by the way. You know, it says in John chapter 16, the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Verse 14, speaking about the Spirit when he comes, Jesus said, he will glorify me.

He will take of the things that are mine and disclose them to you. He will not glorify himself. Verse 13, he will not speak on his own initiative.

The Holy Spirit will not speak of himself. It says he will glorify me, not himself. When a man is filled with the Holy Spirit, he will not speak about the Holy Spirit.

He will speak about Christ. That's what it says here. I am so scared of these meetings where they talk about the Spirit, Spirit, Spirit, Spirit, Spirit, Spirit.

There's no Christ. Beware of a Christless Pentecost that a lot of people seem to be having today. It's a counterfeit Pentecost.

It's a counterfeit baptism in the Holy Spirit, which does not make Jesus glorious in your eyes, because the Holy Spirit does not speak of himself. He speaks about Christ. He lifts up Christ.

He draws you to Christ. And he hides himself, just like Jesus, when he was on earth, he pointed to the Father. When the Holy Spirit has come, he points to Christ.

This is how the Trinity is. They don't point to themselves. That's why I say you be careful of a man who is lifting himself up.

A spirit-filled man, light filled with the Holy Spirit, will naturally point you to Christ, because that's what the Spirit does. And so the most spirit-filled meeting is a meeting where even if the Holy Spirit is not mentioned, you will see Jesus more clearly and be drawn to him. This is the test, because that's what Jesus himself said.

I tell you, if you followed these simple teachings of Jesus, we would be saved from all deception. You know why believers are deceived? Let me tell you in one simple sentence. They are too lazy to read the Bible.

They're too lazy to read the Bible. They want to be spoon-fed, spoon-fed, spoon-fed. And there are multitudes of deceivers who are ready to spoon-feed them with the wrong thing, which will promote their own kingdoms, build their own financial empires, satisfy their own egos, that they've got a little group of people following them and their peculiar teachings.

Beware of these people. Anyone who does not connect you to Christ, steer clear of him. Steer clear of him.

I used to say, stay a million miles away from him, but I discovered that the whole circumference of the earth is only much less than that. So you can't stay a million miles away, but stay as far as away as possible. Stay as far away as possible from these people.

There are lots of them floating around the world today, and particularly in our day. They are proud, they're selfish, they're self-centered, but they talk the right language. And they talk clever stuff, which sounds very much like the real thing, but it's the mystery of iniquity at work.

The mystery of the church is being one body with him, his bride. Anyone who ministers to you in a way that your bridal relationship with Jesus Christ is enhanced, is being led by the spirit. That's like saying, if you see a husband and wife, anyone who helps them to come closer to each other is led by the spirit.

Anyone who tries to come between them to separate them from each other is led by the devil. Even in a human marriage, what God has joined together, let no man put us under. I would never in my life want to come between a husband and wife.

Never. I've seen preachers who, because of the power they have through their ministry, and I know I can exercise that too if I want to, but I won't. It is to, you know, you can exercise power in your ministry where people see you, they are so blessed by you, that they respect you, they admire you, they'll do anything you say.

And you can use that power in a wrong way. I've seen how women are attracted to certain preachers. I've had married women in our church come to me and say, Brother Zach, oh it's so blessed to hear what you say.

It's so wonderful, and my husband doesn't appreciate all these things. And I'm not fooled by all that. I know there's a demon lurking there.

I mean, not she's a demon, but somewhere in that vicinity, there's a demon. And so I always tell this sister, Sister, you please listen to your husband. Go home and listen to him.

He's a good man. And then she'll come to me another week and say, oh Brother Zach, that was wonderful what you shared and all that. I say, Sister, listen to your husband.

You should listen to him. After two, three weeks, they learn they can't try these tricks with me. I am in the business of joining these people together, whom God has joined together.

I'm not interested in getting that woman's admiration. I'm sorry. I'm not a servant of Satan.

I'm a servant of God, who's joining people together. I've seen lots of preachers who don't do that. Lots of preachers.

They say, well, what to do if people admire me? Well, you should push them off. That's what I do. Push them on to Christ.

Get them closer to their husbands if they're women. Get them closer to Christ, not to yourself. How to do that? Well, correct them, rebuke them.

They won't get attached to you then. They'll get attached to Christ. They get attached to you because you flatter them.

Oh, Sister, is that right? Oh, I'm so glad that I've been such a blessing to you. And you talk like that and they get more attached to you. Give them a word of correction.

They won't get attached to you anymore. That's what I do in my church all the time to brothers and sisters. I do not want anybody attached to me.

I want them to be attached to Jesus Christ. I'm a member of the body. Till my dying day, I'll be a member.

I will not be a second head competing with Christ in the body of Christ like so many leaders. Don't be one. And don't follow one like that unless you want to destroy yourself.

This is a great mystery that Jesus has given us such a tremendous privilege to function on his behalf, to lay hands on people in the name of Jesus. What an honor! Don't ever take advantage of it. Walk in humility.

It's a tremendous privilege to be able to walk on this earth as the representatives of Jesus Christ, to take his name upon us. Do you know the very word Christian, which has been abused, misunderstood, and degraded, devalued? Do you know what it means? Shall I say it reverently? Reverently, don't misunderstand me. It means Mrs. Christ.

When did my wife get my name? When she married me. You know when I'm supposed to call myself a Christian? When I'm married to Christ. Unworthy, wretched sinner that I am.

Christian. That devalued name has got such dignity about it. If only you understood it.

And the devil is determined to degrade that name, devalue it, because he wants to devalue and degrade Christ. It's a great honor to be called a Christian, to be the bride and the wife of Jesus Christ. That's what Ephesians 5 says.

It's a mystery. And woe unto that wife who tries to push her husband down to promote herself. There are a lot of Christian leaders doing that.

Our job is to hide behind the scenes and promote Christ, like the Holy Spirit does, to lead people to Jesus. And do you know the result of what we have seen in our own labors in the churches in India over the last 25 years? 20 years, that the first seven years God kept us in one place, consolidating the work. In the last 20 years, we moved out and God's raised up all these churches all over.

You know the wonderful thing we have seen? Because we have deliberately pushed people onto Christ and refused to let them lean on me. Well, initially, you know, there's the initial stage for one year or so when a baby has to drink milk from its mother. People are dependent.

But as soon as possible, we teach them to be on their own. Do you know what's the result of that? Leadership has come up so quickly in church after church after church. Godly brothers who are gripped by the same thing, who would never have become leaders if they had been dependent on me.

I pull out. I go away from there. And I don't write letters to them all the time to control them.

I say, you grow. That's the church. That's how the Apostle Paul did it.

He went to establish churches, appointed leaders and moved on. Then he established another church, appointed elders there and moved on. And when they had a problem, of course, they consulted him.

And he gave them advice, sorted out their problems. Little babies have problems. They get sick, they get a cough and a cold, they get a fever, they get chickenpox, all types of things.

And we're there to help them. So little children, little churches also have such problems, teething problems and all types of things. And we're there to help them.

That's what the apostles were around for. But the apostles were servants. They never got people attached to them.

They connected people to Christ. And this is how your personal relationship must be. You, even if you were born again today, you must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, exactly like a member in the body to the head.

Don't let anybody come between you and Christ. Don't let any pastor or leader or anybody come between you and Christ. I'm sorry to say that there are some people who come between people and Christ.

And I'm not talking about the Roman Catholic priests. I'm talking about the Protestant popes who are more dangerous than the Roman Catholic one, who make themselves out to be a little one who can find God's will for you and prophesy what you should do. Please steer clear of these Protestant popes who call themselves prophets.

Please steer clear of them. I'll tell you this. You don't need a mediator between you and Christ.

This little finger does not need anything between. When the head says to this little finger, move, it moves. It doesn't.

There's no mediator between the head and this little finger. Even my last little toe, so far away from the body, it can move under direct command from the head. It does not need a mediator.

You don't need a prophet between you and God. You don't need a pastor between you and God. You are a priest.

You can have a direct connection with Christ. And I'll tell you this. If I did have to have a mediator, I would choose Mary.

Because at least she's a holy woman. This pastor, I don't know whether he's holy or not. But thank God, I don't have to have a mediator.

But I'll tell you honestly, if I didn't need a mediator, I would choose Mary any day. Because she was a holy woman. I wouldn't choose this fellow roaming around calling himself a prophet.

I don't know what his private life is like. Mary is not interested in my money. That's for sure.

But the wonderful message of the gospel is you don't need any mediator. You don't need Mary. You don't need that pastor.

You don't need a prophet. Go directly to Jesus Christ. There is only one mediator between God and men.

The man Christ Jesus. You are connected to him. That is true Christianity.

You must develop a bridal relationship with Jesus. A relationship like the members of the body to the head. A relationship like a woman who's deeply in love with a man.

Madly in love with a man. Always wanting to be with him. That's the type of relationship you must have with Christ.

Always wanting to do things together. Marriage counselors say the secret of a happy marriage is do things together. I say, certainly with Jesus Christ it's like that.

Do it together. When you're sitting and watching a television program, don't watch it alone. Watch it with Jesus Christ.

And if he says, no, I don't want to watch that. Turn it off. Turn it off.

Do you want to do it alone? The secret of a happy marriage is what? Do things together. Will you follow that the next time you go watching some movie on television? I don't know. It sounds wonderful here in the meeting, but this is the secret of a godly life.

This is a great mystery. People want religious language. They want to live as they like.

When they sit in front of the television. When they are doing 101 things during the week. I say, brother, sister, you can do what you like.

But you'll never be a godly person. Not in a hundred years. Until you learn to lay down your will.

That thing which you want to do so badly. Which you have done so much and enjoyed so much. You're going to give it up from now on.

Because you want to do everything along with Jesus. One last thing. Do you know what the opposite of this mystery is? That's in Revelation chapter 17.

Just like there's an opposite of the mystery of godliness and the mystery of iniquity. There is an opposite of the mystery of the church. And that's the mystery of Babylon, the false church.

It says in Revelation 17 of Babylon, the harlot. You know what a harlot is? A harlot is one, supposing here's a young girl who's engaged to be married to a man who's gone on a long journey. And says, just wait, be loyal to me.

I'll come back in a couple of years. You must marry me. I love you.

And she writes all these love letters to him regularly. Particularly on Sundays. I love you so much.

And all this type of stuff. I surrender all and all that. But during the week, she's fooling around with other men.

What would you call such a young girl? That's why the Bible calls Christians harlots. James chapter 4. James says, you adulterers, adulteresses. Know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God? You send all these love letters to God on Sunday.

You sing so many songs to him. But how do you live during the world during the rest of the week? You live for money. You live for yourself.

You live for entertainment. You live for the unrighteous things that worldly people live for. You sit listening to all that rock music, inspired by demons, involved with drugs and witchcraft and all that.

And you say you're devoted to Jesus. Rubbish. That's Babylon.

Has got the right language and all that. But it's harlot. Harlot.

The spirit of harlotry. We're living in such a day. You know what the Lord's word is to people in Babylon? Come out of her, my people.

Come out of her. Revelation chapter 18. It says, come out of her, my people.

Verse 4. That you don't participate in her sins and that you don't receive her judgments. If you participate in her sins, you will receive her judgments, no matter how much you call yourself spiritual Christian or speaking in tongues or whatever you like. If you got the spirit of the harlot in you, the spirit of loving the world and trying to love Jesus at the same time, it will not work.

This is harlotry. And this is the message that is being preached around the world today. Yes, you can be a Christian.

You can go to heaven and you can also enjoy all the things in this world, just like any worldly person. You can live for the world, enjoy yourself and spend your life doing your own will. And at the same time, you can go to heaven when you die.

It's a lie. It's a deception. It's the same old lie of the devil, which he told Eve in the Garden of Eden.

You will not die spiritually, he said. But she died. And so will you, if you listen to the devil.

True Christianity is a serious thing. It's being discipleship. It's being a disciple of Jesus, being his bride, being part of his body.

May God help us to live according to that light. Let's pray. While it's about in prayer, I want to invite you to respond again to the word of God that you have heard today.

You want to live a godly life? Do you want to be part of his church? Body of Christ? Member of his body? In a bridal relationship with him? The choice is yours. God never forces anyone. He invites you to be devoted to his son and not to any man.

To function as a local church in your locality. To be an expression of that body of Christ. Heavenly Father, help us each one to walk in the light of your word.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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