

# The Sin We Never Mention

by Bill McLeod

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*Bill McLeod's sermon warns against the dangers of covetousness and emphasizes the importance of valuing spiritual wealth over material possessions.*

**Duration:** 49:21

**Topics:** "Sin"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of using our possessions and wealth for the glory of God. He shares a story of a young man who was moved by a film about a missionary in India and felt compelled to donate money, even though he didn't have enough. The preacher then discusses the issue of covetousness and how it can hinder our ability to use our resources for God's purposes. He references a parable from the Gospel of Luke where Jesus warns against the desire for material possessions and emphasizes that life is not defined by wealth.

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## Transcript

Well I want to read then from the Gospel of Luke chapter 12 some things that Jesus teaches us beginning at the thirteenth verse. And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

And he spoke a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do? Because I have no room where to bestow my fruits. And he said, This will I do.

I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then who shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, neither for the body, what you shall put on.

The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn, and God feeds them. How much more are you better than the fowls? And which of you, if taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? If you then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take you thought for the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow, they toil not, they spin not, and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

If then God so clothed the grass, which is today in the field and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith? And seek not you what you shall eat or what you shall drink, neither be you of doubtful mind. The marginal reading says, Live not in careful suspense, for all these things do the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you have need of these things. But rather seek you the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have, and give alms. Provide yourselves bags which do not wax old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.

Where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupts, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. Now the experts tell us you should never begin a public discourse with an illustration, so I'm going to break the rules and do that.

Back in the 1800s, towards the latter end of the last century, a wealthy Christian businessman in Great Britain, a man who was using his income, his wealth, for the glory of God, became so concerned at something he saw in churches and among God's people, wherever he went, that he offered a large reward. The problem he saw was this, that God's people, like the worldlings, were largely given over to a covetous spirit, and they were not using their goods for the glory of God. So he offered a substantial reward to any person in the British Isles who could write the best essay on the subject of a covetous spirit.

There were 160 entries. I don't recall the name of the man who won the competition, but recently, that is within the last ten years, they printed that essay under the title, Mammon, the Demon of Greed. It's by far the best book on this subject that I've ever read.

I don't think he's missed a single solitary Bible reference to this problem, Mammon, the Demon of Greed. Dr. White is a Christian psychiatrist in Winnipeg, Canada, who does a great deal of preaching Christian work, and he's recently written an excellent book entitled, The Golden Cowl, on the same subject. I wonder what that wealthy Christian businessman back in the 18th or the last century in England, what he would say were he to see how Christians in North America are living today.

Jesus Christ was preaching. He had just dealt with the theme of the unpardonable sin, a very, very solemn thought, the sin that has never forgiven us. Then he was talking about a beautiful thought, how Christians can depend on the Holy Spirit to speak through them.

But there was a man in the audience who was not listening at all, and he might be related to you, I don't know. He was not listening, because something else was eating out his heart. And something may be eating out your heart this morning and preventing you from receiving the message that God has.

You know, when you're climbing a mountain, you can't see it. You have to back away a few miles before you can appreciate its contour, its outlines, its majesty, and so on. And sometimes we are so close to our

problems that we can't see God.

We don't see any solution. And maybe you're like this man. He's not listening at all to what the Son of God is saying.

He's just waiting for Jesus Christ to pause for breath. Then he's got a very important question to ask him. I think it was probably like a young man in Binghamton, New York.

I had a crusade there a couple of years ago, and this young man gave his testimony one night. He had a very wealthy uncle, a Christian uncle, and this uncle told this young man before he died that he had remembered him in his will. He even told him the amount of money that he would be getting.

Now, he was not excitedly sitting around, waiting for his uncle to make his exit out of this world. I don't think this was a problem. But he had some Christian relatives, I mean, in the same family, of course, who got a hold of the uncle when he was not quite right in his mind.

They drew up a new will, they cut out this young man entirely, and he got nothing, not even one dollar. And this had happened just before we arrived in Binghamton to have the crusade. And he was in the meetings.

And what had happened was just eating his life away. He hated those people. I mean, he hated them with all his heart.

Christians or not, he a Christian. It was destroying himself. And God spoke to his heart one night.

A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses. And God gave him a victory so complete that he was able to totally love and accept those Christian relatives who had cut him out of the will. Now that's what God can do.

But notice, a man's life to God does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses. In 1 Timothy chapter 6, Paul speaks about those who suppose that gain is godliness. He says, from such turn away.

That's an evil philosophy. That's the world's philosophy. It's not from God.

And I find a disturbing, a very disturbing philosophy in certain circles among Christian people today that says, if you are God's child, you have a right to expect to have money in the bank, always. That is an evil philosophy, and I'll tell you why. Any philosophy that will not work in any culture is not of God.

And it may work here in North America, but I'll tell you something, it doesn't work for Christians in India. And it doesn't work for Christians down in South America, where in some countries inflation has been running at 350% a year. Or in Argentina and Buenos Aires, a city of 8.5 million, where there are many dear Christian people, and rents rise automatically 35% every three months.

Automatically. Do you know what that means? I mean, Christians are really struggling. One missionary told me, in Argentina, he said, where I live, we eat cornmeal mush three times a day.

In Northern Canada, they feed that to the dogs three times a day. Christian people, the money is just not there. And this philosophy that says we have to always be fat and flourishing, in this sense, is not biblical.

I know both how to be a base, Paul said, as well as how to abound. Everywhere and in all things, I'm instructed both to be full and to suffer hunger, to abound and to suffer need. A man's life does not consist in how much money you have in the bank.

Do you think it's right that in North America, we are using up 75% of the world's energy? You think that's right? I don't. And I don't think we can continue living the way we have been living in the past, where people have four and five cars. Well, in Canada recently, I talked with a Christian, and they're building five garages at his place, because they have five members of the family, and every member has a car.

And you're saying, what's wrong with that? One of the things that's wrong with it is the awful imbalance of it, that in many countries they do not even own a bicycle. They'll go their entire lifetime. They'll never have a ride in a car.

Are we better than they? Not at all. But we've adopted this evil idea that you can measure a man's abundance before God by what he has, supposing that gain is godliness, from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can take nothing off. We can carry nothing out. And nothing isn't very much.

And so the Bible says in the same context in 1 Timothy chapter 6, and having food and clothing, let us be there with content. He didn't mention a car. Well, they didn't have cars, and all right, he didn't mention a horse.

He didn't talk about money in the bank. He didn't even talk about a house. He simply said, if you've got food and clothing, thank God.

There are millions that don't have it. I could not get used to in India seeing people sleeping on the sidewalks, or sleeping under a cart, or sleeping in a field, and walk along at 11 o'clock in the morning, and there's a body lying there. You don't know if they're dead or alive.

If the flies gather by 4 o'clock in the afternoon, that person's dead. They died in the night. And you see a bridge.

And if the last span of the bridge is over dry ground, there'll be 30 or 40 people. That's their home, living under the span of the bridge. We saw that.

They don't even have a toilet. And they mark a little scratch on the ground, or pull up a couple of rocks. That's their house.

Eight feet square of dirt under a dry span, a bridge. And the look of utter, total desperation on the faces of those people, they're trying to stay alive for another week. And we could feed millions from our garbage cans in North America.

And I think we here in North America, more than any peoples in the world, need to hear the message of Luke 12, 15. That you have got money in the bank doesn't mean anything. Will you listen to a prophet from an earlier age, John Wesley? He said, and I'm translating it into American terms.

He said, if when I die I leave behind me more than \$500, history will bear me record that I lived a dishonest person. How can I have so much when others have so little? And it's a problem we've never

faced up to in North American evangelical circles. This was the original sin.

What is covetousness but dissatisfaction with my present lot in life and envy of what somebody else has? It's a combination of the two. Satan, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty, he wasn't satisfied. I will be like the most high God.

He coveted, he envied, he was dissatisfied with what he was. The greatest, most glorious, most highly gifted of all of God's created beings. And he wanted more.

And the angels. The Bible talks about them, they did not keep their first estate. Now if they did not keep their first estate, they were dissatisfied.

They thought there was another estate that would make them happier than the one they were in. So they left their first estate and they sinned against God. Covetousness.

And wasn't it this in the Garden of Eden? They were not satisfied that they lived in a virtual utopia and had God for their companion day after day. This was not enough. And when a woman saw that a tree was good for food and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired, to be coveted, a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took and ate of the fruit.

That's where it all began. And the story of Israel in the Old Testament is to a large extent the story of them grasping after forbidden things, again and again. Why did God tell Israel's kings, do not multiply horses, do not multiply wives, do not multiply silver, do not multiply gold? Because He knew by some of these things their hearts would be turned away from God.

And Solomon, the wisest king that Israel ever had, he disobeyed God on all four counts. Horses, chariots, gold, silver, he made silver as plenteous as stones in Jerusalem. A thousand wives, seven hundred princesses he married.

These were military, political marriages, yes, and three hundred concubines he had. Totally disobeyed God and brought ruin on himself because his son Rehoboam lost ten of the twelve tribes when he first took over. And Shyshach, an Egyptian pharaoh, came down and defeated Rehoboam and plundered the country, took everything that Solomon had spent all those long years laying up.

And God was trying to teach His people, your life does not consist in the abundance of the things which you possess. That's not where action is. That's not where life is.

That's not where the approval of God is. There are very evil men that are very, very wealthy, so don't reason from that angle that because people have money God has blessed them. What about Sodom? What was their sin? This was the iniquity of your sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, abundance of idleness, a utopian paradise.

And they were haughty, God said, and they committed abomination, and I took them away as I saw good. And this was the sin in Old Testament times when Israel chose judges. God told Moses, you are to choose judges, and He told the people, men that hate covetousness, men that will not accept a gift or a bride.

These were the kind of men that Israel needed as judges. Sometimes they had them, and sometimes they did not. Most of the time they did not.

And the nation, the situation went from bad to worse. You find, well of course the law talks about it, the Psalms talks about it, the prophets thundered about the problem. Malachi said the situation was so bad in Israel that there wasn't a person that could be found who would shut the doors of the temple or kindle a fire on the altar unless somebody crossed his palm with money.

And the heads and the judges and the prophets, Micah said in chapter 3, I think the eleventh verse, he said they work for reward. Everybody's in it for money. They plant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor.

So covetous that if a farmer, he saw a poor man walking by with a lot of dust in his hair. If he had a vacuum cleaner, he'd suck the dust out and blow it on his field. They plant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor.

Like the fellow said, I'm not covetous, I just want all the land that adjoins mine. And that's the spirit that's got into the church. And that's why our young people are not going to the foreign field.

You know, I read something disturbingly greatly recently. A missionary society had an annual missionary convention. There were 30 or 40 different missions represented, thousands of young people at this conference.

And of course, they had missionaries, veteran missionaries in these booths representing these different fields. And young people come and ask questions. And the missionaries kept a record of the kind of questions that were being asked.

Do you know what the number one question was? The number one question was, what will I be paid? Do you know what the number two question was? What kind of a house will I have to live in? What kind of retirement benefits will I get? Dear people, these were the questions that young people were asking. Almost nobody was asking, what opportunities will there be for winning souls to Christ? There's an area in India, 6 million people, not one evangelical worker among them. Up in the north in the Himalayan mountains, there's between 60 and 80 million people and almost no gospel work at all.

And down in South America, a missionary friend of mine from the United States, he thought it would be a very simple thing to find a place to, you know, set up shop and begin soul winning. So he took a tour of a month or two, came back to Buenos Aires, shared with us. He just didn't know what to do.

He said, I thought, you know, the country was almost evangelized and I might find a place here. It might take me a while. He said, Bill, I found all kinds of villages and small towns, 5,000, 10,000, 15,000, 20,000 people and not one evangelical worker or church in the whole place.

Do you think that's right? Well, I don't. And you'll never persuade me in a thousand years that it's right. It's wrong.

And it's that way, dear Christian people, because you and I are not giving our young people to the work of God. I have five children. I'm not preaching myself.

I know myself too well. If I were to talk about myself, it would take three minutes and I'd waste two minutes of your time. But before my children were ever born, I gave them to God.

I said, God, they're yours. I want you to take them. You can put them any place in the world you want.

I want them to be faithful servants of yours. I've never told my children about that. God has called three of the five already, and I know He's going to call the other two.

My oldest daughter was 35, and I began to look. The devil was telling me, you know, the Lord isn't listening. He's not going to do it.

So what happened? Recently, the wheels began to turn in a very astonishing way, and my daughter and her husband are now full-time workers in a church in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. I didn't say, God, you have to put them in other countries. I have a daughter in the Philippines.

My son feels a call of God to South America or Africa, and I thank God for this. But a lot of Christian parents, they don't want their children in some other country. Man, what? My son gone for four years? I'm only going to see him once every five years or four years? Not for me, brother.

That's stupid. And that's why we have cities and we have towns and areas, thousands, millions of people sometimes, no gospel testimony, because here in North America, we're holding on to our kids. And Christian parents, they all say, how many children do you have, they tell me.

What are your children doing, they tell me. And oftentimes, you'll sense this glow of pride. One son's a doctor.

One son's a lawyer. One son's making tremendous money in business, and they're telling you all about it. And I feel so sick at heart.

It's the same in Canada as it is here. Very, very few Christian parents are living by Luke 12, 15. They really, and how many of us here this morning, really in our heart of hearts, if you judge your philosophy by the way you live, we don't believe it.

We really do believe that a man's life consists somehow in the abundance of the things which he possesses and the prophets. What did Jeremiah say? He said, from the least of them even to the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness. He said it twice in his book.

Ezekiel said the same thing. With their mouth they show much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness. And in the New Testament, Judas Iscariot, the sorriest character that ever lived, he kissed eternal life and went out into eternal death.

He went to his own place for the price of a dog. He sold his soul and the God of glory for the price of a dog. And some of us are doing the same thing today.

Ananias and Sapphira, they lied about money matters to the Spirit of God, and they lost their life. Demas has forsaken me, cried Paul, having loved this present world. What in the world? I mean, what can people find in the world to attract them? When you know Jesus Christ in a personal way, with Paul, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, so that when you see the world, there's a cross there, and the world is dead, a dead, stinking thing that has no appeal at all, because you have eternity's values in view.

How bad is it to God? I'll tell you how bad it is. Twice in the New Testament, in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3, God says the covetous man is an idolater, covetousness is idolatry. You wouldn't be found dead on your knees, worshiping an idol made out of metal or stone or wood.

But a covetous spirit makes a person an idolater to God. And in the Bible, Deuteronomy 32, Psalm 106, idolatry is always connected with demonism. The covetous man is an idolater.

And if you look at these references, 1 Corinthians chapter 6, Ephesians 5, Galatians 5, you'll find that covetousness is associated in the immediate context with fornication and adultery and homosexuality and murder. That's where God puts it. With such a one known not to eat, it's that bad to God.

And there must be some way, there must have been in the early church, some way by which they could tell whether a man was covetous or not. I haven't heard, and I've been around preaching for a few years, I haven't heard anywhere of a church that ever disciplined anybody because they were covetous. But the Word of God says we should.

Matter of fact, not only discipline them, but don't even eat with such a person, because that person is denying the whole gospel by having a covetous heart. Having food and raiment, let us be there with content. When Jesus comes back, and he's coming back, we know, and the trumpet blows, a lot of Christians know they're going to go up feet first, holding on to the steering wheel of their new convertible or their doorknob of their \$75,000 house.

Perhaps it's easy to talk about the problem. You know, Jonathan Goforth was a famous missionary in China many years ago, and he used to get paid once a year. A check would come in the mail, a check would come, and he'd get out his notebook and a piece of paper, and he'd start scribbling.

And he was doing this one time, and he said to his wife, Honey, do you know what I'm doing? She said, Oh yeah. He said, What am I doing? And she said, You're figuring out how little we can live on and how much we can give to God for the next 12 months. He said, That's right, Honey, you're on the right length.

This is how they were when money came. How little can I live on? How much can I give to God? What a spirit! But that's not how we live. Among evangelicals today, somebody gets a bonus of \$500 or \$800, what do they think about? Oh man, a new outboard motor, praise the Lord! Or a fourth TV set, praise God! This is how we think.

How it must grieve the heart of God. Do you know something? We're going to pray for revival until we're blue in the face and we aren't going to see it until we deal with this problem. Finney said he never knew God to bless a stingy church, and if it didn't happen then, it will not happen today.

And somehow we've got to get these priorities straight, and we've got to start serving God. If God's given you more than somebody else, or the ability to make more money than somebody else, it's for His glory, not for yours. There's a lot of kids straying out in the world today because their parents gave them too much.

Money that should have gone into the work of God went to give the kids what they call a good time. I'm trying to be as balanced here as I possibly can. A man's life, take heed, Christ said, beware of covetousness.

A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses. There's a beautiful thought in one of the Psalms, all my springs are in thee. Now if there's somebody here with a little bit of music and I don't have it, make up a song on that, will you? All my springs are in thee.

That means every spring from which I drink has its rise in God. And certainly if God can't satisfy the thirsting of my heart, there's absolutely nothing out there in the devil's world that can satisfy your heart. The more you try it, the more you want it, and after a while those appetites you have, they get jaded, then you have to think up new ways of doing things to get more joy out of them.

They don't yield as much as they once yielded, you see. Whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mine earthly things, our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we're looking, we look for the Savior. Am I living for the glory of God? Is my money, are my possessions on the altar, God, it's all yours? Funny thing, you know.

And I'm not trying to hurt anybody. Quite often I'll get into a home and it's a very, very, you know, posh affair. And I've been in some homes that would make your eyes just pop.

I don't say anything, and I don't look astonished, I just walk in like I've been there all the time. And you know what they invariably say to me? You know, Bill, this house cost me \$120,000, but I'll tell you why I built it. I built it for missionaries coming home on furlough.

Oh yeah, I've heard that, I've heard that over and over again. They build these huge homes for missionaries to come home on furlough. And maybe once every four years they have a missionary staying in their home for a couple of weeks, and they're wondering when the guy's going to take off, because you know they play ping pong down there all the time, and they can't play ping pong when the missionary is there.

But they did build a house for missions. Now you must understand that. And it's this sort of thing.

And we're not really satisfied with food and clothing. We wouldn't really sympathize or couldn't quite understand the woman in Scotland who was so poor, and all she had for supper was one piece of bread, and it was kind of dry. So she held it up and she said, God, all this, and heaven besides, Abraham returned from the slaughter of the king, and the king of Sodom offered him the spoils of war.

And it was right for Abraham to take the spoils of war, but he never took the spoils of war. Do you remember what happened? He refused. He said to the king of Sodom, I've lifted up my hand to the Lord, the King of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread through a shoelace.

Why? Lest you should say, I made Abraham rich. He wanted God to have all the glory. You know, some Christians, if they won some kind of a sweepstake, brother, they'd latch on to it in a second, and they'd start praising God, how wonderful, God answered our prayers, now we can do all these things.

And in the first place, you got it in the wrong way. The Bible talks about dishonest gain, and that's another subject entirely, and I don't have time to go into that, but a man's life, Jesus said, doesn't consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses. Dick touched on something this morning, from 2 Peter 3, the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up, seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, everything you ought not to have.

What manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God? What kind of a person ought I to be? Well, somebody said, we have so many things in our houses that our feet stick out the windows, and we've got this great pile of things. Why? In the coming day of God, what am I going to do? Am I going to stand there and say, hey, you guys, look,

my fire is 80 feet high, yours is only 20? Is this how it's going to be? But really, the problem will never get solved until we've fallen in love with Jesus. Then the problem gets solved.

So when I went to school, in grade school, they had this little fable, we've probably most of us heard it before. The sun and the wind were having a discussion. There was a weary traveler walking down a road, and the sun and the wind talked together to see which one of them could make him take off his coat.

So the wind tried first, and he blew fiercely, and the harder he blew, the harder the fellow wrapped his coat around him. And finally the wind gave up. So then the sun just turned on the heat, and it wasn't very long before the traveler had his coat off across his arm.

And you know, it's like that in the Christian life. You can tell Christian people, this is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong. Okay, they agree, but they don't say anything about it.

And it takes the heat, the warmth of the love, the personality, the person, rather, of Jesus Christ to set us free from these things. So we see them in their true light. Things are nothing but something to be used for the glory of God.

A car, a house, whatever you have, use it for the glory of God. Do without those things you do not need. Put it into the work of God, then you'll see it again.

Whatever thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. A beautiful thing happened in the church in Saskatoon recently. I showed the film on India, and there's a fellow in India called Daniel Abraham, a man God's given a fantastic vision for reaching people for Christ.

And there was a young man, he's a first-year university, he had some money in the bank, he had enough money in the bank to take care of his tuition for this year, and room and board. And he saw the film, and God said, I want you to send \$1,000 to Daniel Abraham. Well, he didn't have quite \$1,000 in the bank, almost, but not quite.

But by faith he obeyed God, he wrote out a check for \$1,000, and he sent it to the Canadian Revival Fellowship in Regina, and they forwarded it on to Daniel Abraham in Ludhiana in India. And here's what happened. He told me about it.

He said, Boy, was I ever sweating, yet I knew the Lord was going to do something. And sure enough, before two weeks went by, the Lord sent him enough money that he could put it in the bank to cover the check so it wouldn't bounce. And then you know what God did? A man, a professor in the University, a Christian, a Ph.D., not knowing anything about this, came to this boy and said, My wife and I have been praying and asking God what specific local ministry could we have towards some child of God for the next 12 months.

And the Lord told us to take you into our home as our child, as our son, and we'll pay all your bills for a whole year. You see, you can't outgive God whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord whether he be bond or free. All my springs are in thee.

Is it really so? Do I see the loveliness, the wonder of Jesus Christ? Do I worship the Lord in the beauty of a holy life? That truth is given three times in the word of God, the Father, glorious Holy Father. We worship Him in the beauty of holiness. Don't you suppose God wants to have fellowship? He doesn't like sitting up there listening to all the wants I have and all the complaining and the groaning.

I don't know times when I worship Him just for who He is. Don't ask Him for a solitary thing, just love Him, worship Him. If the rich men, the wise men came, we don't know how far, a thousand miles or more, just to worship the baby Jesus for an hour or less, and heaven recorded it in the Bible where millions could read it, then I think the heart of God was touched and pleased by what they did.

Someone said most Christians do not have fellowship with God, they have fellowship with one another about God. And the last verse of 2 Corinthians says, it talks about the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. Do I have fellowship with God? Sometimes we're afraid to have fellowship with God because He may ask me to do something along the lines of things we're talking about this morning.

We don't want to get that intimate with Jesus, for fear it might change the direction of our life. His commandments are not grievous, but the way of transgressors is hard. The devil's got it all turned around the other way.

He's got Christians persuaded to be a Christian is hard, and to live for the devil is easy. It's the other way around. I say it again, the way of transgressors is hard, it's hard, and God's commandments are not grievous.

Revival? Do you want it? Do you want it at any cost? Will you lay everything on the altar, everything you have, everything you are, say, God take it, I'll use it? Would you do that? It's all part of it. What does it mean? It means a total committal of what? It means, of course, a total committal of everything I have, everything I ever will have. It means I put my ambitions on the altar as well.

I remember a fellow down in Minneapolis, he'd been offered a job in Denver that would pay within five years almost a half a million dollars a year. Fantastic opportunity. He was then making in Minneapolis about \$35,000.

A thing like that, you don't even pray about it, man, that's got to be the will of God. I mean, if you're going to get such an increase, that has to be the will of God. And he and his wife made up their minds they were going.

And one night he came to a meeting late, and as he came in the door, I was just sharing something along this line, and he said to me after his bill, you rascal, he said, the Lord flung a spear into my soul. You know what happened? He's still in Minneapolis. He didn't go to Denver.

He prayed about it, and God said, I want you to stay here, because he was working in a growing church and had a very important position in a bus ministry helping to pick up kids from a needy area, and God said that's more important than making a lot of money down in Denver. So he didn't go. There is a postscript to the story, and the postscript is this.

The company in Denver went belly-up. It's a good thing he didn't go. It's a good thing he listened to God.

Bill sang, Oh, to be like thee. That doesn't mean much unless I know what he's like. But we all with open faith, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

I'm going to close in just a moment or two. Moses said, Lord, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. A lot of people think that God's like a great big power plant, you know, with turbines spinning and dynamo spinning and wires going in all directions with fantastic power.

And when they think in terms of the glory of God, that's what they seek for. That's what they're looking for. Moses said, Lord, I beseech thee, show me thy glory.

And God did. But it wasn't what he expected at all. The Lord passed by before him and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

And the name of God speaks for the faithfulness of God. And what did he show Moses? His mercy, his grace, his long-suffering, abundant in truth and goodness, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving sin and iniquity and transgression. That was the glory of God.

We beheld his glory. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory.

The glory is of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. When they looked at Jesus Christ, they didn't see any halo around his head. There were no shafts of light coming out of his hands.

He has no form nor calmness. And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He's despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not. We didn't understand him.

He grew up like a tender plant out of a dry ground. Did you ever think of Jesus, the tender plant that grew up out of the dry ground of Israel? In my mind's eye, I can see him. Many times I think about it, I start crying inside.

I am meek and lowly in heart, he said. Meek and lowly in heart, you shall find rest unto your souls. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me.

Crying meek and lowly in heart. And he never even had a bank account. And somehow he made it.

He made it in such a miraculous, marvelous way. The glory of God, grace, mercy, forgiveness, goodness, truth. That's the glory of God.

Seen, it says in 2 Corinthians 4, but God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Can you be satisfied? Can you revel in the abundance of grace and truth and mercy that's in the Lord Jesus? That's his glory. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world.

Who, being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down in the right hand of the majesty on high. Jesus Christ, the brightness of God's glory in spiritual ways. Do you love him with all your heart? Are you born again this morning? Does Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, live within you? And if he does, would you consider his claims, his total claim on your heart and life? In a few moments, I think Ralph will come lead us in an invitation.

Will you respond? There's that song, it's glory just to walk with him. It is, but they're just words until you give everything to Jesus Christ. And then when you do that, you know what he does? He gives himself and his fullness back.

What an exchange. You don't lose, you gain. And you gain so much.

All that you're looking for, all that I need in him I find. And I close with this thought, Psalm 1 chapter 2. Jesus speaking, I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys. The rose, fragrant, the lily for beauty, representing purity.

As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. There's no love among the sons of men like the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I'm sure there's lots of people here, you think you couldn't get along without human love.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus name. And if you're leaning on human love, God will knock the props out again and again. And you'll finally have to come to a place where you'll discover that the love of God is more than all you'll ever need.

And he may throw in some human love along with it. But you don't need it. You can get along without it.

His love, in comparison, a lily to a thorn. The best, the highest form of human love compared to his. As the apple tree, now the Christian is speaking.

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. There's none like him. There's none like him.

I sat down under his shadow. He's a tree with great delight. And his fruit was sweet to my taste.

He brought me to the banqueting house. In the Hebrew language says he brought me to the house of wine. And wine represents the spirit of God.

He brought me to the house of wine. And his banner over me was love. Do you want that? They that dwell under his shadow shall return.

They shall revive as the corn and grow as the vine. The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. God bless you.

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