

The Spiritual Measure of Spiritual Success

by Carter Conlon

The purest measure of spiritual success is manifesting God's heart to people around us, seeking and saving the lost.

Duration: 43:30

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11, Luke 15:1-7, Luke 15:32, John 21:15-17

Topics: "Success"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of loving and understanding how God works. He highlights that many people claim to love God but do not truly appreciate His actions and methods. The preacher uses the example of Peter and Jesus to illustrate this point. Peter, after denying Jesus, is confronted by Him on the shore. Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him and then proceeds to show His love by preparing a meal for him. The preacher encourages the congregation to embrace God's love and become ambassadors of His love in their city.

Transcript

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Now, I want to speak this morning to people who are here and you are among those that you acknowledge that this is a perilous time. We're living in the last of the last days and I acknowledge in my heart that I'm called to do more than just survive. I'm called to be a living witness for Jesus Christ in my generation.

But I'm so insignificant. I don't know how that's going to happen through my life. I like to come to Times Square Church and I see the singers singing and I see the preachers speaking.

I love to hear the stories of people going to the missions trip. But what is my part? Am I to sit and just be an audience for those that are going on with God? Or does God have something for me that he would

consider successful to the point where I would stand before him and hear the words spoken one day in eternity? Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Now, beloved, that's where we all want to go to.

Now, that's not our salvation. We know that we don't work for our salvation. It's freely given to us when we believed in Jesus Christ.

But if you truly are a Christian and if the Spirit of God is within you, there's something of this heart of God's passion for lost humanity that has to find an expression through you and through me. Now, I believe that the Holy Spirit is going to open something to you today. It may not be new, but it can be revelatory without being new.

Truths that you've heard, you might be familiar. But if you'll listen very, very carefully, I'm going to speak to you today on the purest measure of spiritual success. Who are the people that are one day going to stand before God and he's going to say, well done.

Now, keep this in balance. There's another side to this where there's a there will be people who stand before the Lord and they've done great works. They prophesied, they cast out devils.

They, in a sense, were high profile in what's supposed to be the ministry only to find out that all that they've been doing is outside of the life of God. What a tragedy. And when we get to heaven and we see the reverse order of what God views as success and how that today you can walk out of this sanctuary, and I believe that you will, with a new sense of divine purpose.

And an awareness of what the purest measure of spiritual success really is. Luke chapter 15, please. In the New Testament.

Father, I thank you for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. God, thank you that you have a testimony established for this last hour of time. Thank you, Lord, that there is a body of believers all over the world.

Lord, they're not visible and God may not even be seen individually until the day that we stand before the throne of Christ in heaven. But I thank you, God, that you are unlocking something in this church age. You're guiding us into something of your life where, Lord, we're truly going to make a difference.

Father, I thank you for this. Help my heart to speak this. Help my mind to comprehend it and help me to live it more than even preach it.

God, I pray for the grace to personally live this. Guide me into this. Oh, Jesus, help this church today to hear what the Spirit is speaking to us.

I thank you for it in your precious and holy name. Now, Luke 15, beginning at verse 1. Then drew near unto him, that is, Jesus, all the publicans and sinners, for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.

Now, in this parable, there is something of the heart of God that is being revealed. And sometimes we look at it simply factually and we can't see it. And something is being revealed of his heart that should cause me to ask myself a question.

And here's the question. How do I know that God's heart is becoming mine? Because he's speaking something of the heart of God here that is incredibly profound. It's my desire as a Christian to have this heart of Christ manifested through my life.

So the question is simply, how do I know that God's heart is becoming mine? How do I know that I'm truly changing into that which represents Christ among men? If I'm a Christian, I am growing into, as it is the life of Christ, or maybe better say, the life of Christ is growing into me. I'm becoming a new creation. Paul says, just as I behold him by the Spirit of the Lord, I'm being changed by God's Holy Spirit into the very Christ that I'm beholding.

My life is intertwined with his. I'm no longer my own. I'm bought with a price.

I'm left on this earth, I believe with all my heart, to glorify him. And I best glorify him by allowing that which is the deepest embodiment, as it is of his character, to be manifested through my life. That people truly see Christ.

They hear Christ in me. When they're touched in a meeting, a chance encounter, it's not me that they've met, it's the Christ in me that has touched them. Now you know this already.

It's beginning in most of you. You know you're not the person you used to be. You have a stirring of compassion where there was an indifference before.

Your value system is beginning to change. And sometimes that is the first evidence of that is you have an internal war going on right now inside of you. Paul knew this war in the book of Romans.

The things I want to do, I'm not doing. The things I know I shouldn't do, I am doing. I have an inner delight for the things of God.

But then I've got a war going on inside of me. But of course Paul concludes it with, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ. Paul knew there was a deliverance from this.

And there was another kingdom coming in his heart that would truly glorify God. Romans chapter 8 and verse 19 tells us that, All which God has created waits longingly for God's own children to be made fully known. Romans 8 actually calls it, All creation groans for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Now I know this will be fully realized when Christ returns. There will be an order reestablished in the world. That was brought out of order when sin entered into the hearts of man.

And when finally things are brought back into right relationship with God, There will be, even nature itself will come back into its proper balance and perspective. Everything will change. But till that day is fully realized, this longing still exists.

This longing and who God is, is being manifested through his body, which is the church. You and I. There is a longing. Now people fight against people knowing this, but you know it yourself.

Before you came to Christ, there was a longing in your heart. How do you explain that longing? Now many of you, the longing drove you to relationships. It drove you to evil practice.

It drove you to doing, saying and becoming something that even you began to despise in your own heart. You didn't know why you couldn't stop. You didn't understand why you were on this particular journey.

But you were on this journey because there was a longing in you to come back to God. No matter how you phrase it, no matter how you form it, you were created by God. In the image of God, you were created for fellowship with God.

There is an eternal purpose that God stamped of himself in your life. The day that you were allowed to be formed in your mother's womb. And you've always longed to come back to an understanding of this.

There is a longing, therefore, in everyone. And you come in contact with. There's a longing, folks.

Oh, it's disguised by violence. It's disguised by vulgar speech. It's disguised by this nonchalant attitude about tomorrow or today.

But there is a longing. And it's a longing for something of God which he has chosen to reveal to mankind through you and through me. It's the highest measure of spiritual success.

The question that I ask myself, is my life a manifestation of God's heart to man? Folks, if you can answer that question, you've come somewhere that study will not take you. Is my life a manifestation of God's heart? Can I walk away from most encounters at least and say, Jesus, your heart was made manifest here. Somebody saw something of you.

They felt something of this incredible passion that you have for the souls of men and women and children. And, of course, the question goes on and says, how does Jesus want to reveal his life through me? How does this happen? How do I get to the place? And what is the place where truly his life is manifested through mine? His heart as it is manifested through mine to fallen humanity. If I turn from sin and obey God's commands, is this how it happens? If I choose to be a righteous person, others are lying and I tell the truth.

Others are stealing and I'm honest. Is this how the heart of God is manifested? Well, of course, absolutely, in part. But this is only the beginning of a pathway that leads to something much deeper.

Folks, you can be obedient and be nauseatingly religious. And there are all kinds of people like that throughout the world. They do everything right.

They walk like an arrow as it is. But there's absolutely nothing of this depth of what God wants to manifest through them to the people around them. In Matthew 19, 16, there was a young man who had a lot of wealth and he came to Jesus and he said, What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? He was a doer.

He was doing things. He was following. He was obeying as best as he knew how.

And the interesting thing is in the Greek New Testament, when he said that I may have eternal life, the word have has a connotation of life within as being impregnated with a child. It means to have something, to hold it firmly and to have the power to share it. Now, this young man is looking at Christ and he's a very, very religious young man.

And he's an obedient young man. But he's looking at Jesus Christ and saying whatever it is that he has that I am now feeling in a sense towards people and even towards myself. Because in Mark chapter 10 and verse 21, the scripture says Jesus beholding him loved him.

Even in his confusion, he knew he was loved. And even in all his struggle, he knew he was loved. And so this young man looking and observing this outflow of divine life, which is far beyond his own experience.

He says, what good thing can I do? That I may have this life, not only for eternity, but that I may have it to share. That I may have this, what I'm seeing, what I'm feeling in your presence that I'm obviously aware that I'm outside of. What good thing could I do to have it? Jesus said, well, you know the commandments.

He says, do not murder, do not steal, do not commit adultery. Honor your father, honor your mother. And he starts listing these commandments.

And the young man probably feeling a ray of hope even in that moment says, well, all these things I've done from my youth and up. There's an obedient young man in the house of God. He's taken seriously the word of God.

And he's turning from the sin of his society and he's turning to obeying God. But the question comes to him, but what do I still lack? Why do I feel so outside of something? Why do I feel there's more? I'm in your presence, Jesus, and I'm feeling that there's more than I've found in just obeying truth. And obeying truth, of course, is absolutely essential.

You can't move on until you've come to that building block in your Christian life. You ask ourselves the question, is it the manifestation of the gifts of the ministry? Is that the purest form? Is that what God wants my life to be? Yes, there are wonderful gifts of the ministry. There's all kinds of things that God implants in our lives that are supernatural.

They come from him. We couldn't possibly have these things without him. But these gifts in a man or woman who is not yet given to the deepest work of God, they often lead him to corruption.

And we see this throughout church history and even in our generation. Men who are not surrendered and are not manifesting this fullness of God's heart to men around them, they begin to love recognition and greetings in the marketplace. They start loving the chief of seats at banquets and gatherings.

They love the praise of men more than the praise of God. And they will eventually get to a place where they will condemn others who they did not see as rising to their level of professed spirituality. They will stand in the house and say, God, I tithe.

I fast. Lord, I come here and I pray. Oh, thank you, God, that I'm not like other people are.

Thank you, Lord. And there can be this incredible manifestation as it is of gifts. There can be words of wisdom.

There can be an ability to interpret scripture. There can be God-given leadership ability. But if it's not moving a person to that which is the purest measure of spiritual success, it can ultimately end in corruption.

Is it prayer and Bible reading? Well, of course, these things are essential. But they can also fall short of that which truly represents Christ among men. Oh, folks, I've known people who have memorized ten

times the scripture that I have, but there's so little, if anything, of Christ in them.

All they are is just a tape recorder playing back. There's dead as a tape recorder is if you push a button and they play back scripture. There's so little of the heart of God.

They have all this word and all this prayer, all this reading, but it's not led them to the life, the manifestation of God's heart to people around them. They can fall far short. James 4.3 tells us that prayer can become self-serving.

When we fail to embrace the heart of God for people, then we can start praying and it's all about ourselves. Oh, help me with this and do this for me and take me there and give me that. James says you ask and receive not because you ask that you may consume it upon your lusts.

And there are many, many people today, especially in the Western world, whose focus is almost solely now on themselves. Do this for me, do that for me, as if Jesus is some kind of a CEO of a cosmic corporation whose sole responsibility is to prosper you and give you this great sense of worth and destiny. Jesus himself said in Matthew chapter six and verse seven, that prayer can become empty.

Repetition can be just praying the same thing. You go into your prayer closet, you can get on your knees and bring out your list and just just empty, empty words. Your mind is 100 miles away from everything that's coming out of your mouth.

And anybody who's tried to pray knows what I'm talking about. We all have to go through this classroom to get to what prayer really is all about. James 122 tells us that we can read the Bible.

We can actually understand scripture without allowing it to bring us into true spiritual action and only leading us into a place of self-deception. If any man hears the word and doesn't become a doer, he just simply deceives himself. Paul, the apostle in Second Timothy chapter three, infers that this will be the spiritual climate among much of professing religion in the last days.

There will be a love of personal pleasure and that love of personal pleasure will be combined with a quest for spiritual things. And these two things together will lead to a powerless, empty profession of religion in those who are called to represent the heart of God among men. Paul said they'll always be learning.

They will not learning will not bring them to the knowledge of the truth. They'll have a form of godliness, but their lives will be a denial of where the power of God is supposed to bring us to, of what we're supposed to be among men. You see, the answer to all this is in our opening text in Luke chapter 15.

It's something in the heart of God that he plants in those who truly want him. And folks, if you and I don't truly want him, we'll never know this. We'll read it and it will be interesting, but we will never embrace it.

We will never know it. And it's so simple as we begin to look at it in verse four. He says, what man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose, one of them does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he found it.

Now, think of it for a moment. God created the universe. There's a lot more out there than just planet Earth.

We're just a speck of dust in the universe. He has created beings that worship him 24 hours a day. Of course, there's no time there, but if there were, it would be 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

There are created beings in heaven that are worshiping him by the thousands and tens of thousands. These need no repentance. They dwell in the presence of God.

And we are, in a sense, small in comparison to perhaps what God has created when we finally get there and see it. But look at Jesus left this adoration of heaven to come for you. I hope you appreciate that today.

You see, it's in Christ that we find the embodiment of all knowledge and ministry that represents the heart of God among men. He left all of this just as we are called to leave all praise that comes from anywhere but from God. We're called to leave all ambition that leads us into any place other than where the will of God is leading us.

We're called to lay down things that want to grip our minds and grip our hearts and to embrace this heart of God that he has. The church is powerless when she doesn't have the heart of God in her. We can learn.

We can sing. We can study. But then if the heart of God is not manifested, we will resort to gimmickry.

Every church does. There will have to be entertainment to bring the people into the house of the Lord. They will be gathered because of the fancy entertaining manner of the singing or the preaching.

They will not be gathered because they truly have the heart of God. There will be no rejoicing because they're not doing the work of God. And everything now becomes situationally dependent.

If the choir sings and hits the right chord, then I can worship God. There's so little worship because there's so little of the heart of God left, even among his own people. You see, I don't know about you today, but I see the purest manifestation of God's love in John chapter 8. Just listen to me.

When Jesus helps a woman who is condemned and friendless, he could have come down on a platform into the heavens and spoken to the whole world at one time. He had the power to do it. If it was about crowds, then he could have made it about crowds.

Thanks be to God, it isn't about crowds. It never has been. It's about individual people.

In Mark chapter 10, he was encompassed with a crowd. The people are pressing him on every side. But in spite of the multitudes that are pressing in for their various agendas and reasons, he heard something and it caused him to stand still.

And he called and he ministered to the cry of one blind man. One person standing, sitting on the edge of the road. He said, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

And it caused the son of God to stop in his tracks. Because Jesus is the embodiment of the heart of God. He cares about individual people.

He already had the crowd and if it was about crowds, he just would have kept on going. But he's showing us something deeper than just crowds. Deeper than just multitudes of people.

As wonderful as that may be. In Mark chapter 8, we see Jesus taking another blind man out of town and ministering to him alone. Can you see the spiritual ambition that were around him? Hey Jesus, the crowds are over here.

This is success. Jesus, if you're looking for spiritual success in the world, it's over here. The crowds are here.

Where are you going? As you see him with his arm around the shoulder of a blind man. Leading him out of town to personally speak to him and minister to him. We see in John chapter 4, yes, the multitudes do come out.

Because multitudes will be a result of that which purely and truly represents the heart of God. It's inevitable, it will happen. But the multitudes are only the extended fruit of the purest measure of spiritual success.

It's evidenced in the compassion for one. The people of Samaria didn't come out to hear what he had to say until he had first stopped and taken time, perhaps the greater part of a day, to minister to one thirsty woman who was stopped at a well looking for water. That's the purest manifestation of the love of God.

Aren't you thankful today that God doesn't see you as a crowd? When you get to the heaven, aren't you thankful that he's going to say, I saw you, I remember you, I remember you, Times Square Church, February 2007, row 23, seat F, that was you, wasn't it? What is your name anyway? Aren't you thankful that he doesn't see you that way? He sees you as an individual. He passionately loves you, personally, in spite of everyone else who's here today. God's focus is on you, you've got to know this.

He knows every hair on your head, he knows every thought in your mind, he knows your future. He knows the thoughts, he says, that he thinks toward you, which are so numerous they can't even be counted. He didn't see you as a crowd, he came to you.

He left the ninety and nine in chapter 15 in verse 4 and came down to the one who was lost. He drew you. You all have to acknowledge this, we all do.

There was a strange drawing that came into your heart before you came to Christ. He was already there. He was coming to you because he had lost you.

And he passionately loves you. And he came for you. And then in verse 5 it says, and when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing.

I think of the cross. I think of when he found me. And he brought me into the victory of that cross.

He laid me as it is on his shoulders. And took the weight and the penalty of my sin upon himself. And then he said, and then when he comes home, he rose from the dead.

And he ascended to his father. He called together his friends and neighbors. There's the ninety and nine now that don't need any repentance.

And he said to them, rejoice with me for I've found my sheep which was lost. Not rejoice with me for I've found a crowd that was willing to follow me. Rejoice with me for I've preached to a hundred thousand last Friday.

No, I found one. Rejoice with me. Do you know today, do you fully realize that there was a shout, it's perhaps still going on in heaven today.

Of all created beings in heaven, the day that you came to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Do you know there was a shout in heaven? Have you fully ever embraced that or realized that heaven stood and there was a shout in heaven? You think we have a shout here Sunday night? Sometimes in this house. Oh, it can't even remotely compare to the shout in heaven.

Because the created beings around the throne, they know the heart of God. And they are manifesting this heart of God. Every time a man, woman or child comes to Jesus Christ, there's a shout in heaven.

It's a constant time of rejoicing over every person who comes to him. God loves you with a passionate love. He loves you individually.

He doesn't look upon you as a crowd. Now, in John 21, don't turn there please, I'm just going to share this with you. Jesus asked a very profound question to Peter.

He said, Peter, do you love me? Now, Peter, I have no doubt, had a lot of ideas about ministry. All the disciples did. They were somewhat power hungry.

And at one point they were judgment hungry. And there were a lot of things. And there was so much misunderstanding.

Because every man had a concept of who the Son of God should be, who the Messiah should be. And as their concepts began to vanish into thin air, they found themselves all fleeing. They found themselves confused.

They failed. Peter failed most. His failure is documented, but I'm absolutely sure the failure of the others was no less grievous than Peter's.

They all failed him. And they so couldn't understand him. They couldn't understand his kingdom.

And then Jesus appears, of course, in this place where they were gathered after he rose from the dead. His very first words to them are, peace, be still. And later on, as Peter goes back fishing, and I'm sure in some measure, he's still not sure.

What is this kingdom about? How do I fully represent the one who's called me to be the cornerstone of his church? This man must have been very confused. He was told that he has the keys of authority. He was told that on this rock I'll build my church.

Now, he's talking about the profession that Peter had made, that he was the Christ. Peter had it theologically down. But what was missing? What would cause him to have all this experience with Christ, see him risen from the dead, and then go fishing again? What was it that was missing in him? I'm sure at this point he wants to obey God.

I'm sure he wants to pray. I'm sure he wants to study. I feel that these things are deeply woven, perhaps, in this man at this point.

He just simply doesn't know. Where do I go from here? What do I do? How? I want to be spiritually successful, but how do I be spiritually successful? And what does God view as success? And suddenly, he hears a voice calling to him from the shore, and he knows it's the Son of God. And he leaps into the water, the scripture says, because he passionately loved Jesus, and swims to the shore.

And what does he find? He finds a risen Savior who's made of fire, and he's put fish and bread, and he's made a meal for individual men that he loves. Individual people. And then he asks Peter, do you love me? Now, here's how I see this.

It's Peter, do you love what I do? Do you love how I do it? See, a lot of people love God, but they don't love what he does. And they don't love how he does it. Oh, they love the flash and dance and the power.

They love all of these things, but they don't necessarily love Jesus the way he does things. They will use Jesus to move to their own agendas of what they think spiritual success is. But Jesus speaks to Peter as he's speaking to me and to you.

Do you love what I do? Do you love how I do it, Peter? Do you love how I could have walked out on the water to you? I could have done some great display. I could have preached, I could have spoken to you from the clouds. But I've come down, and time and again, I have come to you tenderly.

I've come to you personally, in all of your confusion, in all of your struggles, and in all of your failures. And even where you've fallen short of the glory of God, I still come to you. I come to you tenderly, I come to you compassionately.

I come to you manifesting the heart of God the Father and his love for you. Do you love this about me, Peter? Do you love this? See, if you don't love this, you'll never know what ministry really is. In ministry, folks, listen to me, can become a very, very, very handy cloak for never fully realizing the heart of God.

The heart of God is not about crowds. Crowds will come. The heart of God is about individual people.

It's about who I meet, Monday to Saturday, when I'm not standing in this pulpit. It's about the kind of a man that I'm becoming in Christ, and the true heart of God that is being manifested in and through my life. That is the purest measure of success in ministry.

It's what people don't see, but God sees it. It's the effect on people's lives around who are hurting, confused, they're struggling, they've failed. They don't know if there's a God.

They are groaning, as creation does, as Paul the Apostle says, for the manifestation of the sons of God. Which really, to me, means, God, where are you? And who are you? And do you love me? Is there hope for me? And will I make it in life? Am I going to get through? I don't care if you're a scientist here today. You have that cry in your heart if you are outside of the kingdom of God.

Every man, woman, and child has that cry. And they yearn, oh God. Think of Pastor William, when he wandered the streets of New York City, with that cry for three years in his heart.

He said, oh God, is there somebody out there who's living for you? Show me one righteous man of God. And he said, I will live for you all the days of my life. And then he walked into this church, and our maintenance department were kind to him and let him take a shower and change his clothes.

Stood at the back, heard Pastor David in this pulpit, and said, God, you're alive, you're real, you're real. Do you love this about me? Peter, do you love this about me? The simplicity of the manifestation of God's heart of love for the individual. Peter, it's not about crowds.

Crowds will come. It's about the individual. God so loved the world, God so loved every individual soul ever created in His image.

Success is not just about crowds. Crowds may come, but crowds can corrupt you as well. It's not all about that.

It's about every individual learning to manifest the heart of God to every man, woman, and child that will ever cross your path throughout your lifetime. It's a word of kindness. It's a heart that genuinely feels with God's compassion for the waywardness of a whole society and individual people that are going to hell without God for eternity and don't know it.

It's about this awareness that comes into our heart that people are simply looking for a genuine manifestation of God. Do you love me? Do you love me was the question. Peter, I'm not standing here glowing before you.

It's not like the Mount of Transfiguration. I don't have a crown on my head. I'm not leading multitudes.

I've come just to you, and I'm speaking to you, and I'm speaking to you personally in your struggle and your failure. Do you love this about me? Do you love this? I think at that moment it could be the point where the revelation of God's heart came to Peter. He said, I do.

Jesus, I love you. You know I love you. And then Jesus just says, feed my sheep, feed my lambs, feed them.

Feed those created in my image with this awareness. You see, you've been a recipient now, Peter, of my tenderness to you personally. You know how tender I am, Peter.

I could have judged you a hundred times over, and I didn't. I didn't let Satan get you. I prayed for you, and I've come to you.

You even cursed yourself with an oath that you didn't know me. But I disregarded that, and I came back to you again. Do you love this, Peter? And if you do, would you feed my lambs with this? Would you feed my sheep with this? He's not talking just about crowds and congregations.

He's talking about people created in the image of God. Would you go to them, Peter? Would you leave the 99, which represents, I think, in our case, all of our ambition and all of our self-view of what success is all about. Would you leave the 99, and would you go to the one? Would you find him? Would you let him know that I love him or her? Would you let my love be manifested through you to them? Would you bring them to my shoulders and I'm going to carry them and take them home that we may rejoice together for all eternity? Would you feed them, Peter? I've come to you alone.

Go to them in the same way. You know, it's funny. We get a sense in our minds of what ministry is.

I don't really know where it comes from. But we get this sense. You come to church, and you're waiting for this moment, this divine moment when a white shaft of light is going to fall out of heaven and single you out and empower you with great oratory skill.

You're going to lay hands on every sick person they're going to recover. And you're going to travel the streets, and crowds are going to gather, and you're going to be known as a great, successful man or woman of God. And you miss the whole point.

You see, if you live under that kind of presentation of the gospel, then all you become is a financial resource for others to do the work of God. And that's how many people are seen now in ministries in

America. Just a resource, that's all.

But the reality is that you are the church of Jesus Christ. You have the living Christ inside of you in his fullness. But you have to love who that Christ is.

I hope this is making sense. You have to love that Christ. The Christ in you that if he were to be outside of you for a moment, and you were just simply following him, he would be in your neighborhood.

He'd probably stop and talk one-on-one with the drug pushers or the confused children. Not in a gang, but one-on-one. He'd probably knock on the door across the hallway from you to that lonely person that just never seems to go anywhere and doesn't seem to have anybody who cares.

And he would most likely bring biscuits and something to eat. Do you love me? Do you love this about me? Is the question. This is the purest form of spiritual success.

When we get before heaven, people are going to be dumbfounded. And they're going to say, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, or in prison? When did we do this? And it became natural to them. They weren't doing it as ministry.

It was them. Jesus said, no, you went to them. You did it to the least of these who became mine.

Enter thou into the joy of the Lord. Blessed be God. Blessed be God.

Hallelujah. There's about 8,000 people who attend this church. We don't have any more room to put other people.

So you know that I'm not trying to build a congregation because we wouldn't be able to put them anywhere. But everybody here, everybody here has the resource inside to love somebody the way that God does. And if you start seeing that as success, you don't have to apologize when you get to the throne one day and you say, well, sorry, Jesus, I never went to Bible school.

I never got to crowds. I had this vision of myself. It just never materialized.

If you and I could learn to love the Jesus who just ministers to the one. To love that Jesus and let that Jesus love through us. We walk away and say, well, if the crowds come, fine.

But if they don't, there's a thirsty woman, there's a blind man, there's a person caught in adultery. I can go to them. And I'm going there.

And if the crowds come, fine. And if they don't, it doesn't matter to me. I'm going to manifest by faith, by the Spirit of God, the love of God for individual people.

Now, it shouldn't be a revelation. But strangely enough, it is. It is.

There's no greater fulfillment in my life than to just hold somebody's hand who's suffering and just tell them that Jesus and I love them and truly mean it. To me, that's the greatest measure of spiritual success. Hallelujah.

The Bible says that all creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. If you're here today and you don't know God's love, you can receive that before you leave. He'll forgive you of your sin.

But I want to give an altar call today. And in the annex, you could stand. I do feel an altar call is sometimes important because it's the first step in a life process that we're going to go into.

It's the first step of faith into something. And it's for people to say, God, help me to understand what success really is in your kingdom. Success is a manifestation of your love to individual people.

And folks, that is not the bottom line. That is the top line. That's as good as it gets.

It's a manifestation. I want to say it again. Success in the realm of the spirit is the manifestation of God's love to individual people.

Whether the crowds come or whether they don't. It's the manifestation of God's love to individual people. All creation groans for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Oh, beloved, we don't have a lot of time to win New York City to Christ. I wish I could tell you there's a thousand tomorrows, but I fear that there aren't. I pray with all my heart now that you hear these words.

And that you and I have the courage to say, God, I'm just going to get up. And in your name, and with your life in me, I'm going to love people. I'm going to start where I live.

My house, my apartment building, my block, my family, my work associates, my friends. I don't want them to die in their sin. And if you don't have the heart fully that you need for this, then that's why I'm going to give an altar call today.

For those who long to have that heart. God, I long to have this heart of love. You've got to plant it within me because I don't have it in myself.

You and I can't do this. It has to be a work of the Holy Spirit. But if you long for it, Jesus said, if you ask me for bread, I'll not give you a stone.

How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? For those who truly want this, say, Lord, I want this. And I know I need the Holy Spirit to do this. I'm going to ask you as we stand, make your way, please, to this altar.

And we're going to pray together. You can begin to pray even before we pray and begin to worship even before we have anything to sing. Let's stand, please.

In the balcony, you could make your way to any exit. In the main sanctuary, slip out of where you are, please. And you begin to just talk to God this very moment.

First, realizing that he loves you. You have to know that before the love of God begins to be manifested through your life. Thank you, Lord.

Lord, manifest your love. Manifest your love through us as your church. God, love this city and your kingdom.

God, I pray for an anointing on this entire congregation that we become ambassadors of your love. The love that sent you to this world to reconcile men with God. Oh, Jesus.

Oh, Jesus. Oh, God, help us to lay hold of this. Help us to embrace this.

Help us to see this. My God, thank you, Lord. Thank you, Father.

Lord, we just agree with you now. We simply agree with you. We've heard your word, God.

We agree with you. This is right. This is good, Lord.

God, we will feed your lambs. We will feed your sheep. Oh, God.

Oh, God. Send us, Lord, wherever you want us to go. Whether anybody is thirsty, or somebody is blind, or somebody is condemned and accused and has no helper.

God, send me there, Lord. Send us, God. Send us individually there, Lord.

Throughout the streets of our city, oh, God. Let the love of our God be manifested through us. Oh, Jesus, thank you that you are clearing everything.

You're making things simple and plain. You're helping us to understand, oh, God, what it means to be your church. Jesus, thank you.

Thank you, God. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, God.

From the depths of our heart, we give you praise. Hallelujah. This is the conclusion of the message.

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