

Having A Life Of Godliness

by Dan Young

This sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and responding to the true promises of God, focusing on living a life of godliness rather than pursuing earthly desires. It highlights the need to examine our hearts, prioritize spiritual growth, and be willing to face the reality of our spiritual condition. The message urges listeners to seek God's protection by dwelling in His presence, trusting in His faithfulness, and finding refuge under His wings.

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Description

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Transcript

You know, the key thing that Alan shared there was about the promises of God, and many times we can get confused what the promises are, and it's a scene that we've obtained everything that pertains to life and godliness. And those are what the promises are for, is that we would have a life of godliness. Nowadays, you can have Gospels out there that have a, we claim it, we claim the promises, but it's for a very earthly life.

And rightfully so, that's where our heart is set. I remember I've gone to different prophets and different meetings where they really proclaim you're going to have success naturally, you're going to have success this, and that's where your heart is set. And so naturally they would prophesy according to that.

But we need to make sure that the promises that we're laying hold of are to live a life of godliness, if that's in our heart. You know, and the key thing is, you know, where does our heart lie? Or is our heart set on earthly things, or is our heart set on spiritual things? If we truly are following the Lord, the promise is, is that we will be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. That all things will work together for good, to those who love God and their lives will become like Jesus.

And is that in your heart? That's a good question to ask. What do you think about every day? What do you think about when you wake up? What's the number one thing? We can claim as much as we want, but if the reality in our life is that we don't have that in our hearts, then we need to ask the Lord and say, Lord, what is my true spiritual condition? Because when you get a true diagnosis of your true spiritual condition, your priorities are going to change. You know, if I went to the doctor and the doctor told me that I have cancer, or I have a lump, or I have something going on, or I have sickness, what am I going to do? What am I going to do? Am I going to tell the doctor, well, I'm healed in the name of Jesus? Or am I going to say, no, this is the reality of my situation.

I had a brother recently tell me he had sickness, cancer, and he says, I'm believing Jesus that he's going to heal me. And I said, well, we can pray for healing if it's God's will. But if it's not God's will, we need to prepare our hearts to be able to say, I need to get healed by the doctor.

The doctor needs to help me. And so he went there, he went there, and the doctors, they said, you have cancer in your kidney. You need to have an operation.

You need to remove one of those kidneys. And instead of laying claim to those promises, he had to come to the reality of the situation. There was sickness in his life.

There was sickness in his body, and he needed help from the doctor. We prayed that the Lord would bring healing. The Lord didn't bring healing.

Now, sometimes the Lord does bring healing if it's his will. But if it's not his will, we have to be honest with our situation. The real reason that God gave us these promises is so that we can escape the corruption that is in our flesh, the lusts that are in our flesh.

Our flesh is constantly lusting for everything that it can have to satisfy that temporary desire. And we need the promises of God to say, no, Lord Jesus, you didn't die on the cross and rise from the grave so that I can continue to live this life. I'm going to claim the promise that, Lord Jesus, no temptation is going to overtake me such as common to man.

But with that temptation, you're going to provide me a way of escape. I'm going to lay hold of the promise that, Lord, I don't need to live a life of grumbly complaining. The number one thing that we struggle with, I would say, is grumbly complaining.

What's another promise that we have is we compare ourselves with those around us. We compare ourselves with other families who have more money, maybe a better job, a better house, or maybe their spiritual life is a little bit better than ours, and we become envious of them. We become envious of them.

And in our hearts, we become restless and not satisfied. That's not the promises that God wants. God wants us to learn that we can be content in whatever circumstance the Lord has us in, that we can be content.

Paul said, I've learned the secret of godliness in Christ Jesus. He says this, godliness with contentment is great gain. With contentment.

I know many people who can claim the promise to say, Lord, I'm going to be a millionaire. I'm going to be a billionaire. We can.

And you know what, that's not God's will. I want to be, you can be a millionaire and a billionaire, and you know what, you can be spiritually bankrupt. You can be spiritually bankrupt of the true promises of God.

I'll give an example. The apostles, when they went and healed the man at the temple, the man at the temple said to him, can you give me silver or gold? Can you give me silver or gold? And they said, silver or gold, I do not have. But one thing I do have.

Stand up and walk in the name of Jesus. God gave his gift to them that they would be healed. The power of God came into the man's life, and he was raised up and he walked again.

But those men didn't have any money to give them. And so we want to look at the example of those situations. It doesn't mean that God doesn't want us to have everything that we need to live a life, but he does not want our hearts to be pursuing after that.

That's where we want to say, is this truly the promise of God that I want, or am I seeking after earthly and natural wealth? Am I seeking after those things? If that's what's in your heart, then your heart is set on an earthly kingdom, not on a heavenly kingdom. The Bible says this. Jesus says to his own disciples who are following, he says to the young rich man, he says, I want you to sell everything that you have.

I want you to give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And he says, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And I want to ask you this question.

Is this what's on your mind? Is this what's consuming you? Are you laying hold of the promises that way? I don't want to do that. Now, many times we don't know anything against ourselves. And I want to read something in John 8. And the Lord, he wants to continually conform us to the image of Jesus.

But the only way that he can do that is if he convicts us of different things in our life. And sometimes we harden our hearts against the conviction, and we don't know anything against ourselves. But sometimes the Holy Spirit is continually showing us areas in our life that we need changing.

And this is where we need to call out to the Lord. And this is where we need faith. Lord, I believe that you love me, that you care for me, that you're going to make me more like you.

This is the promise that we need to give. We need to have faith in those situations that even though there's areas in our life, we have to be truthful about our spiritual condition. If we're spiritually proud, we have to be truthful about our spiritual condition.

We have to be careful. Spiritual pride is one of the things that you cannot detect the most of. We can know nothing against ourselves in regards to grotesque sin.

I didn't get shot. I wasn't left for dead because I didn't live that lifestyle, but I did live a very sinful lifestyle. But what happens is after our lives are changed by Jesus, we start to walk with him, we become spiritually proud, and we know nothing against ourselves.

We have no conviction anymore. We can do stuff every single day, and at the end of the day, we can lie down in peace, and yet we haven't searched our heart and said, Lord, was there anything in my life today that didn't please you? And if we're not asking that question, then we need to question ourselves if we're really walking with the Lord. His light is shining on us, and we need to be careful that we are not getting deceived and going in a different direction when the Lord is trying to show us something that is not

Christlike in our life.

I think the ones who are going to have the greatest treasure in heaven are the ones who are most like Christ. You want to know why? Because they responded to his spirit, leading them, guiding them, and showing them areas of their life that were not Christlike. Those are the ones who are going to be closest to Jesus.

I don't know about you, but when I get to heaven, I don't want a mansion. I don't want a mansion. You know when I see mansion here? I wouldn't want to live in this mansion.

You want to know why? Because it would be too tough to clean. You know, there's just too much to do. I look at the size of this house, and I say this is a very big house.

It would be so much for me to clean. I wouldn't want it. I said that to my wife one day.

I said, you know what, I could get an earthly mansion on this earth, and I could really seek after it and claim it, but frankly I can barely keep clean the house that we're in right now. I don't think I could handle it. We need to be careful that we don't seek after that.

But in heaven, do we really want a mansion? Is that all we want? No, I want to be close to Jesus. I want to walk with him. I want to sit at his feet and listen to his word.

There were two women that went, and there was one, Martha, who was very concerned about all the things that needed to be done, and yet there was a Mary who would sit at Jesus' feet and listen to his word. And Jesus was very pleased with Mary. He wasn't totally displeased with Martha.

He just said to Mary, Mary has done the good part. She's chosen what is best. She's chosen to sit at my feet and listen to my word.

Do we do that every single day? Do we sit down and say, Lord, I want to sit at your feet and listen to your word? And you know what the Lord does when he speaks his word to us? He convicts us. When I read the Bible, I used to read the Bible a lot. Now I read maybe five verses, and I get convicted by something there, and I say, Lord, this isn't true in my life.

I need to be honest. But I'm believing your promises that you're going to sanctify me and you're going to set me free. You're going to set me free from this because you're showing me, and you want me to get light on it.

Look what it says in John 8, verse 31. Jesus, therefore, was saying to those Jews who had believed in him, if you truly abide in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. And they answered him and said, we are Abraham's offspring and have never yet been enslaved to anyone.

How is it that you say you shall become free? They have a very valid point here. We're the chosen ones. In a sense, almost today, a word that we would say is we're Christians.

We have yet been enslaved to everyone. We've been set free. You could almost translate it in a situation like that.

But Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin, and the slave will not remain in the house forever. The son does remain forever. If, therefore, the son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

It's amazing that these men had written the Bible. They'd studied the Bible. They were in the temple all the time, and yet here comes Jesus, who the Bible spoke about, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, it's God in the flesh, and yet they don't even recognize him.

And they say, what do you mean we have sin? There's no sin in us. We're Abraham's descendants. How do you say we're going to become free? And he said to them, listen, truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin or practices sin is the slave of sin.

But yet many of us here would probably say, I don't have any sin in my life. And yet they were saying the exact same thing, and Jesus was coming to them to convict them and to say, guys, no, there is sin in your life. And the one sin that you guys aren't, or that are committing, is that you're not believing that I am the son of God.

You're not believing. He says, if you continue right here, I know that you are Abraham's offspring, yet you seek to kill me because my word has no place in you. And when someone comes and preaches to you about sin in your life, that you're setting your mind on earthly things and an earthly kingdom and not on heavenly things, you get upset about it.

It bothers you. When the Lord would come to us and maybe convict us about something in our life, what do we do? We shut the door to the conviction and we continue down the path that we're going. What do you think the Lord will do with us at that point? You know what? He will stop convicting us.

He will stop convicting us. He will stop walking with us. He will stop showing us things in our life.

I know many times the Lord will not allow me to grow spiritually until I deal with that thing that the Lord has been convicting me of for some time. And we can choose to have two responses here. We can choose to say, I'm not a slave to anyone.

I'm free in Christ. And yet we're still practicing sin. We're still committing sin.

I know nothing against myself. You know what? I hope at the end of my life that I am softer to Jesus' voice than I am at this time. I hope not at the end of my life that my heart is hardened and I'm just living my life.

I'm living for a good time. You know, I like to go golfing from time to time. I like to get on the golf course.

I like to swing the club. You know what? Every time I go out, I go out with older men who are retired. And we go to the golf course, and there are lots of them out there.

And I remember one day saying to one of the brothers, I said, Brother, it's good that we go golfing. I really enjoy it. We get exercise.

We get our steps going. I said, but at the end of my life, I hope that I'm not spending every day on the golf course. I hope I'm not.

I mean, it's nice to have leisure activity. The Lord wants us to, but I don't want to be in my final years when I'm retired and I'm doing my own thing. I don't want to be spending my time doing earthy things, even

though there's nothing wrong with it.

It's perfectly lawful. It's a good thing to do. No, I want to be spending my time, Lord, being useful to you, Lord.

I want to spend my time being useful to you. Am I useful to you? Can you say, Dad, I can entrust you the true riches of Jesus Christ? You've been faithful with money. You've been faithful with it, so now I'm going to entrust the true riches to you.

You know, I'll tell you this. When I had very little money, I walked very closely with Jesus. I was very dependent on him.

In the last couple of years, the Lord has blessed me with more money. He has. But you know what? My walk with the Lord hasn't been as needy.

My walk with the Lord has been more self-dependent rather than dependent on Jesus. And when we become independent is when we stop having that need for the Lord. The Lord, when he brought the Israelites into the Promised Land, what did he warn them of? He said, I pray that you would not, or I warn you that you should not, learn their ways.

You should not serve their gods. He says, when you get these houses that you have not built, that you have received by promise, this Promised Land, that you have been given, that you didn't work for, he says, take care that you do not turn your heart away from the Lord. That was the one warning he gave them.

When they received all of these blessings, he says, this is the place that you need to be cautious the most, is when you have more money in the bank account, when you have a nice house, a beautiful vineyard, and all the precious treasures of this earth, he says, you need to be cautious that your heart does not turn away from the Lord. And that's what he told the Israelites. And you know what happened with the Israelites? What happened? We know the story.

When they went into the Promised Land, and they received all those things that God told them they were going to get, their heart turned away from the Lord. It's a lesson, and it's written for our instruction, so that we don't make those same mistakes. The Jews here in this exact passage in John chapter 8 said, we know nothing against ourselves.

Why would we repent? And he says this, because of this, you are going to die in your sins. If we turn back to John chapter 5. So it's good when I say these things, I only say it because I don't want to lose that softness to Jesus. At the end of the life, I want to be able to say, Lord, when you speak to me, here I am.

When the Lord spoke to Abraham, Abraham was what? He was 80 years old, and the Lord spoke to him, or Moses, and what did Moses say? He said, here I am, Lord. Here I am, Lord. Guys, I want to be sensitive to Jesus' voice.

If we've lost that voice, and we don't hear it as clearly as we should have, then there's a problem. Somewhere down the line, we've made a decision when the Lord has spoken to us to not listen to him. It says, to the man who listens to me, more shall be given to him.

And when we hear from the Lord, guys, we need to have a quick response. We need to respond to that conviction. We need to be quick to deal with that thing that the Lord is asking us to deal with.

You know, when I talk to these older men, when we're golfing, I said to them, I said, guys, how often do you do this? They said, we do it every day. And I said, Lord, I pray that I won't get so focused on these things, that this is all that I do. I pray that at the end of my life, I'll have more of a fire for Jesus than I do now.

I want to ask you a question. Do you have more of a fire for Jesus today than you did five years ago? Do you have more of a love for him? If you do, then praise God you've been walking with him. If you don't, and you're lacking that, you have that stagnant spirit inside of you, and the Lord will neither do good nor evil, then you need to question yourself and say, Lord, there's things in my life that aren't good.

Actually, I want to turn to 2 Corinthians 3, about the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. And I was reading this, and I was convicted by it. 2 Corinthians 3, verse 5, it says, Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit.

For the letter kills, but the Holy Spirit gives life. You know, it's interesting that the Lord made him adequate, but he said, it's not that we're adequate of ourselves, it's the Lord who's made us adequate. You know, and sometimes we've been striving to seek to please the Lord, we've been doing our thing, trying our best to be pleasing to him, but we must remember that it's the Lord who makes us adequate, not our good deeds, not our good works.

And we have to trust the Lord in that situation and say, Lord, I have no righteousness of my own. My righteousness comes from you. It's because of you that these things are true in my life.

And we can believe on the Lord Jesus in those situations, that he's the one who's able to enable us to do the things that he wants us to do. It's not of him who wills or him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. The Jewish people, they were willing and they were running, and they had a righteousness of their own.

And when Jesus came to tear down that righteousness of their own, they didn't want to receive it. And that's how you know you're self-righteous, is when someone speaks about your sin in your life, you get upset about it and you defend yourself. But when you're not self-righteous and you're humble, and somebody comes and shows you these things, you can say, man, I don't know if I agree with you, but I'm going to think about it, and I'm going to pray about it, and I'm going to ask the Lord to show me if it's true.

And if your response to it is one of humility, then you know for certain that that righteousness that you have is by faith and not of works. The true evidence, this is why Muslims, this is why sometimes radical Hindus or other religions get very mad when you challenge them about their religion. And you want to know why? Because they're self-righteous.

In their eyes, they're righteous, and they did not want to subject themselves to the righteousness of God. They wanted to attain to their own righteousness so that they could say to God, I am righteous. I've done all the good deeds.

I've kept all the commandments, the Torah. I've done everything right. And yet the Lord will say, your righteousness is zero in my sight, and they get mad.

They get very upset about that. This is why Christianity is different than every other religion in the world. It's different.

You want to know why it's different? It's because Jesus says no matter how much good you do, it will never measure up to the standard that God has. You need to acknowledge that you're sinful, and then Jesus can save you. He can become a savior.

That's what it is. And he says here, not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider there's anything from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God. I want to read here in verse 14.

Verse 14, it says, their minds were hardened, for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant, this veil remains unlifted because it is removed in Christ. So God actually hardened their minds when they would read the Bible, when they would read the word, because they didn't have faith in Christ, because they had a self-righteousness of their own. God said, do you want to have a self-righteousness of your own? Fine, I'm going to allow your mind to be hardened to hear the word.

You can't hear the word anymore. Your ears will become hardened, and I will harden your mind. The Lord will actually do it, because you're no longer soft to the convictions that I'm giving you.

You have pride in your life, Dad. I want to show you that. I need to be awesome, not awesome, but I need to respond to it and say, Lord, it's true.

I have pride in my life. Spiritual pride. Spiritual pride.

Lord, help me to deal with it. Help me to see it. Open my eyes to see it, because there's things in my life that are not Christ-like.

I can look down on people, and I don't want to do that. This is one area that the Lord hardened their minds. But in Chapter 4, he actually says this, that the God of this world, verse 4 in Chapter 4, it says, the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving.

So there's two ways. God can harden their mind, but at the same time, these people who may be living in sin and not believing in the Lord, the devil has also blinded their minds, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ in the image of God. Now, how did the devil convince the Pharisees at that time that they wouldn't see the glory of God in the face of Christ? How did he do it? Because they couldn't see their sin.

He hardened their hearts. He hardened their minds, and he had blinded their minds so that they couldn't see the light of the gospel. They couldn't see the hope.

They couldn't see that Jesus is Lord. Why? Because they were righteous, and Jesus was not. Jesus was not righteous.

They were righteous, and they had to attain to that level of righteousness. And it was because of this that Jesus turned away from them, and he went to the Gentiles, that he went to the sinners. He went to the people who had received the gospel because the other ones would not consider themselves.

They could not consider themselves as Jesus, as somebody who they could put their trust in. That's how they blinded their minds. The God of this world blinded them.

And we have to ask ourselves and say, Lord, has my mind been blinded? Have I not seen the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Has my heart been hardened? Lord, have you been hardening my mind? I need to have a softness again. I need to have a softness to you. You know, today I said, Lord, I want to be thankful

to go to church today.

When I came today, I was very thankful to be at church. I said, Lord, Randy and his family are gone. Some of the other brothers and sisters are gone.

I want to be thankful that I get to come into the presence of the Lord. You know what? My heart, I had such joy when that happened. When I came, I was able to praise the Lord freely.

Are you able to praise the Lord freely in your heart? I love it when you can worship the Lord freely from your own heart and say, thank you, Lord. When your heart is hard, you can't do that. You can't do that.

Maybe you're struggling, maybe you're wrestling, but you need to humble yourself and say, Lord, I need to be thankful and grateful for these things. I want to turn to Luke chapter 13. I'll share a few more verses here.

But in Luke 13, there's two places in the Bible where Jesus says this, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I long to put you under her wings as a mother hen puts her chicks under her wings. There's two situations where it does it, and I want to speak specifically about those situations. In Luke chapter 13, it says this, Strive to enter the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and not be able.

Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door saying, Lord opened us, he will answer and say to you, I do not know where you are from. Then you will begin to say, we ate and drank in your presence, and you taught us in your streets. And he will say, I tell you, I do not know where you are from.

Depart from me, all you evildoers. The condition here is that they were practicing sin. They were practicing sin, but yet they heard the word.

They heard the word. He ate in their presence. They drank in their presence.

They taught him in their streets. And he will say, I do not know where you are from. I don't know who you are.

That's a scary place to be. When you hear the word, when Jesus meets with you, when you hear it every week, but yet our hearts are hardened to sin. He says, depart from me, all you evildoers.

And there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out. And they will come from east and west and from north and south and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last.

You know, my son said to me one day, Dad, I finished last, and he was very sad. And I said, son, that's okay. And the Bible says the last will be first and the first will be last.

In this world, everyone is striving to be first, even in the kingdom of God. We want to be known as the prophet. Do we want to go to some great church where we see the man of God, or do we want to go see Jesus? And sometimes Jesus, when he came to this earth, did he choose the great tribes of Israel to come from? No, he says, O Bethlehem, O Benjamin, you were the least among your brothers.

I'm going to choose you. And when he chose King David, did he choose the best and the highest stature of a man? No, he did not. He chose King David, who was the least.

He was the littlest in his own eyes. When he chose a King Saul, did he choose King Saul because he was tall like me? No, he chose King Saul because he was little in his own eyes at the time. And in the same way, we sometimes can think, well, my mind says, you know, I see that this church is very flourishing and it's powerful, and here's this little church.

What are they? You know what? It doesn't matter what church you're in. What matters is, is Jesus there? What matters is the spirit of the Lord in your midst. What matters is, are you receiving some conviction when you go? Are you receiving some sort of prompting in your spirit that says, Lord, there's something in my life that I need to change? I can see that my mind has been set on earthy things, not on heavenly things.

I can see that I've been focusing on the wrong promises, Lord. I want to see what the true promises are. I can see, Lord, that my mind is constantly bombarded with thoughts of just these things.

No, Lord, I cast those off. I'm fixing my eyes on you, Lord Jesus. You know, the other day I had somebody tell me they got robbed of some money.

They got robbed of some money. They did a task. The person said, I'll pay you for the job that you did, and that person never paid them for the work that they did.

And it wasn't even a lot of money. It was very little. And it really bothered this person, and rightfully so.

It was the wrong thing. They shouldn't have done it. And it was even from Christians who didn't pay them.

The Christian said, we will pay you this amount to do this service for us. That's right. And you know what? After that, they never paid them.

They just left it. And this person now is wrestling and struggling with these things. And I say, what would be the situation and the response in this? You know what? You could go to this Christian organization, runs a great children's choir.

You could go and you could talk to them about the money, or what could we do? We could just let it go. We could just allow our backs to be taken. And you could say, Lord, you want to take this money from me? Then that's okay.

It's a test to say, am I going to be concerned about this, or am I going to be thankful, Lord, that you give me the opportunity? I'm going to be thankful, Lord, and I want to become more like you in this situation. What's the promise there? The promise is that we now have an opportunity to overcome. But the Lord always allows us to be tested in that area that we're struggling with.

And that one area can be the love of money. That one area can be that thing that we want. And suddenly something comes up, and we have to spend money, and we have to lose the thing that we want.

And we need to say, Lord, not my will, your will be done. Not my will, Lord, your will be done. If you want to take it, then rightfully so.

I'm going to rejoice and be glad in it, whether you give or take away. This is a tough test for all of us, and it was a tough test for this person. But that's how we can overcome.

This is how we enter through the narrow door. This is how we become lost and little in our own eyes, thinking that we deserve nothing. Guys, we deserve nothing from the Lord.

The Lord isn't entitled to give us anything. He doesn't deserve it. You know, Dan, because you're such a... No, he doesn't.

It was only because of his mercy that he died for my sins. He's given me enough. He's given me all the precious promises that are found in Christ.

And it says, just at that time, some Pharisees came up saying to him, go away and depart from me, for Herod wants to kill you. Now, why does Herod want to kill him? Why does Herod want to kill him? Because Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He's shining a light on the darkness in his life.

And he says, you go and tell that fox. Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach my goal. Nevertheless, I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

And I thought it's amazing that the Lord would send all of his prophets, that they would receive their death at the hands of the church. The true prophets of God would receive their death at the hands of the church, Jerusalem, the city of God. It was the place that they would receive the crucifixion.

They would die there. The blood of Abel, the blood of Zechariah, all of it. He says, I'm sending them against you.

I'm sending them against you. Why? So that all the blood that was spilled by them might be accounted to you guys, because you wouldn't receive their words. You wouldn't turn back from your sin.

And this is a mark of a true prophet. A true prophet of God will preach about sin. A false prophet will preach according to the desires of your heart.

In the last days, it says, many false prophets will arise, and he will tickle their ears so that they will run after those things. But a true prophet will preach with conviction. A true prophet will preach with conviction, and he will preach against sin.

And they are hard to find, you guys. A true prophet is hard to find. Because nowadays, many want to seek the favor of men.

We want to seek the money that men have are lined in their pockets. A false prophet will ask you for your money. I guarantee it.

Even when he has more than you have. I remember once my parents had very little money. Very little money.

They had nothing. And the pastors of the church came to their house and said, I want you to sign an agreement to give me 10% of the money that you have. And my parents couldn't even afford to pay the mortgage.

I said, you're not a true prophet. You're a false prophet. Why are you asking my parents for money when they have nothing? Why don't you go and actually give them a bit of money? Because they can't afford to pay their rent.

You know what had to happen? I had to go to work so I could pay for my parents' mortgage. So I could do it. And I wondered about that pastor.

And I said, are you truly a pastor? I remember I heard a story of another church. It was a great division in the city where we're at. In this church.

And the pastors left the church. You know what they did? They went and they asked for more money from them. They said, you guys got to give us more money.

We need more money. And you know what happened? In the church service, they went up in the church service on stage. And they went and they confessed before all the people, we are leaving.

We are leaving. And the music ministry, the pastors, they all left in front of the whole church. And these elderly people who had been a part of this church for a long time just sat there flabbergasted, wondering why.

Why has this situation happened? And I felt bad for them. And I said, you know what? These pastors, they're not true pastors. They're not true prophets.

They don't care about your interests. They're only out for themselves. And it's good that the Lord has removed them.

It's good that the Lord has removed them. Because they weren't out for your own interests in the first place. A true prophet of God doesn't need your money.

He doesn't need your blessing. You give me \$1,000 and the Lord is going to reap rewards on you. He doesn't need it.

The Lord doesn't need my money. The Lord owns the cattle on 1,000 hills. He's the one who's giving it to me.

No, Lord, help me just to be willing and generous to share with those who have need. Help me to do it without any honor or reputation from men. But whenever a pastor tells you that you need to give your money so you'll receive spiritual blessing, that's an earthly promise, not a heavenly promise.

That's old covenant, not new covenant. Jesus said, I don't need your money. People would give to Jesus.

They would disperse it as they need to the poor. But he didn't ask them out of compulsion. He asked them to do it out of a cheerful heart.

And so you need to be cautious that you don't get caught up into that. Jesus says this, Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that city that kills the prophets and stones those who sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not love it.

You would not have it. Behold, your house is left to you desolate, and I see to you, you shall not see me until he comes. When you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

It's amazing. In that situation, it's in regards to entering the narrow door. It has to do with sin.

It has to do with Herod. Jesus said, beware of the leaven of Herod, which is a place where you can become a Christian and you're totally fine with sin in your life. You can do certain things just like Herod did.

He loved to hear John the Baptist preach the prophet, but he could also watch women dancing. That's the leaven of Herod. You can live a life where you watch women dancing.

That's wrong. We need to turn from that. We got to cleanse that from our system, especially in the church.

I'll finish in Matthew 23 about the Pharisees. It's the exact same time where he uses that verse. In Matthew 23, he says, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, in verse 23, for you tithe mint and dill and cumin, but you have neglected the weightier provisions of the law, justice and mercy and faithfulness.

But these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. Some of us are so focused on doing the little things that we miss the big things.

We're so focused on tithing, we're so focused on giving, or whatever it may be that we forget about the major things, which are justice, mercy, and faithfulness. Showing mercy to somebody who comes across your path. Being just.

Don't be unjust, but be just with the people that you deal with. Whatever relationship you have, whether it be husband and wife, friend, enemy, be just. Do what Jesus wants you to do.

The Lord will have your back. The Lord will stand by you. Woe to you, scribes and hypocrites, for you clean the outside of the cup of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence.

This is what the Pharisees did. They were outside, they looked very clean, but inside they were full of robbery, meaning they always want what was theirs and self-indulgence. Give me mine.

It's in our fleshly nature to always want what's for ourselves. And when somebody, in my mind, I'm thinking I'm very humble. I say, Lord, I'm a humble man.

And then this man, he said to me one day, I said, Lord, I'm so thankful, Lord, that I'm humble. And this man came up to me and he said, Dan, you're too harsh. And immediately I got mad.

And afterwards I knew, Lord, I'm not a humble man. I'm a very harsh man. Help me to receive what that man had to say to me.

Forgive me for that attitude of response when you did speak about something that is in my life. You know, your reaction to the thing that's spoken is always the true test. It's the litmus test to see if you're really responding to the word of God.

But outside we can look so good, but inwardly all we can think about is ourselves all the time. We need to say, Lord, clean inside of me. Clean me up so I'm not always thinking about myself.

Help me to think about others. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup of the dish so that the outside of it may become clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees.

Hypocrites, for you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside you're full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Again, the litmus test here is that you have no life. You're full of dead men's bones.

You have no life and desire for Jesus. You're not hungry for him. Say, Lord, cleanse me of this.

Give me life. Give me life. I don't want to just do everything right outwardly.

I'm asking you to do something for me inwardly. He says, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrites, for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous and say if we had been living in the day of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.

So Jesus responded and said, consequently you bear witness against yourselves that you were sons of those who murdered the prophets. It's amazing that he turned it back on them. These people thought that they were doing the right thing by saying this.

I remember I heard recently at a church that he made the whole church walk by a fountain and have them wash their hands and say, no, we didn't take part in the crucifixion of Jesus. And I thought in my heart, I said, man, we did though. Our sins is what crucified him.

We can do these outward rituals very good, staying clean, looking good, but inwardly we have to remember that it's only because of what he did. He says, fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers. Verse 34, therefore behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes.

Some of them you will kill and crucify and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city and that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, who you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. The Lord raises up prophets to send them to the church so that they would speak the truth and they have a response or a choice to make.

They can either receive it or they don't. The Pharisees did not want to receive it. They did not want to receive the conviction that outwardly they look good, but inwardly their spiritual condition was not good.

God could see their hearts and say, man, I don't care how good you look outwardly. I don't care how nice the building looks or how nice the church looks. I don't care how it looks.

The music is great. The sound is great. If the spirit of God is not in approval of it, if the spirit of God is not backing it, then there's a problem.

Then there's a problem. And many people can't even discern when there's a problem. They can't.

They just go right along with it because it's great. The music was awesome today. The message was perfect.

And they always go, but there's never conviction in their life. I remember the great David Wilkerson. He said, listen, if you're in a church, if you're in a church and that preacher isn't making you feel uncomfortable, then you're in the wrong church.

But if you are in a church and the preacher makes you feel uncomfortable, then that's a good thing because you're going to start to search your soul. You're going to start to examine yourself. You're going to start to search your heart and say, Lord, is there anything in between me and you and that relationship that we have? Help me to examine myself rightly so that you don't cause me to have the guilt of the prophets sent upon them.

You don't want to receive the prophets, then they will just persecute them. It's the natural thing. Well, those guys, they just preach a wrong gospel.

That's what they do. And they end up getting persecuted. And the Lord allows it.

He allows it. He allows it to show the people that they are not walking with him. Praise God that he raises up prophets in this day, true prophets who will speak the truth so that men will hear the word of God.

Nowadays, we have more need for a true prophet than ever before. We live in a wicked and perverse generation. We have sexual immorality at the children's doorstep.

You can go to the public library and they will preach and teach homosexuality in so many books. They literally will infiltrate them. You put on a cartoon on a show, they will literally see it.

It's wrong. And we need true men of God, true women of God who will stand up for the truth in this day, who will stand for the Lord, who will say, no, in the church, I'm not going to compromise your principles. I'm going to love people, but I'm not going to compromise it.

Sin is sin. And I'm going to call it for what it is because that's what a true prophet will do and a true Christian will do. A true Christian will stand for the truth, even if it costs them something.

May the Lord help us not to just look good outwardly. I don't want to be a good looking church. I want to be a church that follows Jesus in all of our disparities, all of our challenges, all of our hiccups.

I don't care. Maybe we're not perfect, but you know who is perfect? It's Jesus. And my eyes are going to be fixed on him.

And I want to say, Lord, get rid of those things in my life that aren't good. I'm going to forget what lies behind. I'm going to press forward to what lies ahead.

My mom recently just got remarried. My dad, bless my dad, he passed away five years ago. And my mom was able to be graciously blessed with another man in her life who treats her very kindly.

I'm very thankful for him. But you know what? I encouraged her. I said, I hope in those last days that you will glorify the Lord in your life.

Because the Lord has seen fit to put you and this man together to do what? To have a relationship? Maybe. But to bring glory to Jesus. And I pray that in our lives that we will have that same desire to bring glory to Jesus.

To bring glory to his name. So that we don't waste our days just sitting in church. So that we move forward in the gospel.

So that we grow and become Christ-like. And we speak the truth. And men and women will hear and respond to the gospel, the true message of the gospel.

That will pave that person, that woman. She's a woman of God. I want to hear and sit at her feet so I can listen to her.

Verse 37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stows those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were unwilling.

Behold, your house is being left to you desolate. It's the same verse. In Matthew, he talked about entering the narrow door.

Luke, he wanted to talk about entering the narrow door. Dealing with sin. And now he's talking about those who are self-righteous and dealing with sin.

And both of them would not respond. And he says, guys, I'm sending prophets to you. I want to gather you under your wings.

I want to protect you. But you need to be willing to listen to this. So that you can find shelter under my wings.

Last verse is in Psalm 91. I'll finish here. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say to the Lord, my refuge and my fortress, my God and whom I trust. For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions and under His wings you may seek refuge.

His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. You will not be afraid of the terror by night or of the arrow that flies by day or of the pestilence that stalks in the darkness or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. Many today in the world would say, this is COVID.

This is all these things. No, my friends, this is sin. This is things in your life that will destroy your spiritual life.

But when we take refuge in the shelter of the Most High, He will protect you from these things. He will keep you from sin. If you're falling into sin, it means we weren't dwelling in the shadow of the Almighty.

We were somewhere else. If we have spiritual pride, it means that we went away from Jesus and we didn't remember where the Lord saved us from. It says a thousand may fall at your side and 10,000 at your right hand, but it shall not approach you.

You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. For you have made the Lord my refuge even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil shall befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent.

For He will give His angels charge concerning you to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone. You know, many of us don't like this verse because we read about it in Jesus, and Jesus had to rebuke the devil because the devil used this verse.

But this is a true word, my friends. We can't put the Lord, the God to the test and do something stupid and say, oh, I'm just going to go and test the Lord by doing this thing. No, we don't do that.

We don't put the Lord, our God to the test by doing something stupid like jumping off the pinnacle of the temple. We don't do that. We don't go and exalt ourselves when the Lord doesn't want us to.

We just need to stay humble. Put the Lord to the test and say, Lord, you're supposed to protect me. When the Lord doesn't protect you, you get mad at Him.

No, you can't do that. You got out of His way. But the verse here is that the Lord will protect you when you dwell in the shadow of Him.

Say, Lord, I'm just sitting at your feet. I'm resting in you. You will tread upon the lion and the cobra and the young lion and the serpent.

You will trample down. Because He has loved me, therefore I will deliver Him. I will set Him securely on high because He has known my name.

He will call upon me and I will answer Him. I will be with Him in trouble. I will rescue Him and honor Him.

With a long life, I will satisfy Him and let Him behold my salvation. This is the most wonderful promise that the Lord has, is He will satisfy you with a long life and you will behold the salvation of the Lord. You know, those who have a long life and who have been able to see the salvation of the Lord, blessed are you.

Blessed are you. Blessed are you when you see the Lord work for you in your life. That's a wonderful thing is to behold the salvation of the Lord.

I think of John the Apostle. He was banished to an island by himself and it was there that he received revelation from the Lord. But that man loved Jesus and the Lord was with him even in his time alone by himself on an island that nobody could go see and the Lord was with him.

And that's a great testimony that the Lord will be with us.

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