

Why Do You Seek the Lord

by Dan Young

This sermon emphasizes the significance of the Passover meal that Jesus shared with his disciples, highlighting the sacrificial nature of the lamb and the act of humble service through foot washing. It encourages reflecting on personal journeys of transformation and surrender to God's will, acknowledging past struggles and the need for faith and obedience. The message underscores the importance of seeking God's interests above personal desires, renewing the mind, and trusting in God's promises for deliverance and spiritual growth.

Scripture: Exodus 12:3, John 13:1, Philippians 2:3, Romans 12:2, Hebrews 11:6, 2 Corinthians 10:5, 1 John 5:4, Psalm 34:17, Matthew 16:24

Topics: "Sacrifice", "Transformation and Surrender"

Description

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Transcript

I shared with my kids yesterday, I said Jesus and his disciples, they never celebrated a Christmas meal together. You know, it's a good time of year and everybody gets together with their families and stuff, but I said the one meal that he did celebrate with them was the Passover. And I shared with them the story of how they would have to take a lamb that was maybe their prized possession.

And I was speaking to my children, they love animals and they have their prized possession. And I said, you know, I said the Israelites every year at the Passover, they had to take their prized lamb, pure and spotless, without blemish, and they had to offer that as a guilt offering to the Lord. And they had to eat that as a reminder to them of what the Lord had done for them, and how he had brought them out of land of Egypt, a land of affliction and a land of slavery, and how the Lord had delivered them.

And I said, that was the meal that Jesus chose to have with his disciples. And he says, I longed for that. And at the end of Jesus's life, the last thing that he did with his disciples was he sat and he had fellowship with them at a meal, and he washed their feet.

He humbled himself to the lowest place and he washed his feet and he even said, I long to have this meal with you guys, so that you guys would know that I love you, that I care for you. And, you know, when I was sharing this with the children, I said, guys, you know, the things that we get together for these gatherings, you know, nowadays the world mistakes it for such a pleasant thing, but when Jesus brought them together, it was a reminder of what God had done for them and how he had delivered them out of a land of slavery, out of a land of affliction. And I said, it's good for us to remember.

It's good for us to remember from where the Lord has brought us from. You know, I remember 16 years ago, 17, actually 17 years ago, I was kicked out of my house, sleeping on my sister's couch, and without God and without hope in this world, I owed \$30,000 in debt. I had no job.

I had nothing. I was a slave of sin. But the Lord in that place, he could have, he could have judged me, he could have, which he rightfully was, he could have done worse to me, but he had mercy on me in that place.

And I remember at that time, crying out to him in my affliction, saying, Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. You know, at that time, I was really justifying myself and pointing out all the faults that other people had done to me. And the Lord, you know what he did to me is he pointed it right back at me, and he said, you're the one, you're the one who made the decisions.

You're the one who made the choices to sin, and this is a result of your actions and the fruit of your decisions. And when I started to take ownership of it, there was a change in my heart, was a change in my life, and the Lord's mercy started to be poured over my life. And he took me from such and such a place.

I had no fellowship. I had no friends. I had nothing.

I had no godly fellowship. The Christian friends that I was hanging out with were the guys I was going to the pub with after church, you know, and I had nothing. And I remember crying out to the Lord, Lord, I need you to bring friends into my life, fellowship, people who you can put into my life who will be a good influence.

And it was a short while later that I ran into Randy and his family and the church that was here at this house. And I remember the first time I came, I heard a hard message. I didn't hear a peaceful message.

I heard a very hard message. And you know, I think Randy afterwards, he told me later that he never expected me to come back again after he heard that message. But you know what? It stuck with me.

And I didn't come back for three weeks, but you know, that fourth week I was so tired of it and I knew that the Lord wanted me to go back and I went back and it was good for me. And I look back over those times. It was such a process of the Lord having to cleanse me of all the sin and wickedness in my heart.

And he's still doing it. And you know, when you're younger in the Lord, you're really hungry for him. And I really valued those times because I could sense the presence of the Lord.

I had nothing. I had nothing. I had no money.

I would walk to work. I had no friends. I had nothing, but I had Jesus.

And I would call on his name and he would be near to me and I would see the nearness of God was my good. As I shared that verse a while ago, the nearness of God was so close to me and I had such trials

and difficulties. The battle in my mind was so fierce because the devil didn't want me to change my ways.

The devil wanted me to turn back to the life that I was living. And that's what happens when you turn from sin and you turn from a life of ungodliness. The devil wants to keep you from moving forward.

And this is what happens when you turn from a heart of lukewarmness or heart of deadness, a heart of being stagnant in the church, or a heart of having no hunger for God, and you start to seek after the Lord, do not expect that it's going to be easy. It's going to be difficult. The battle against you is going to be fierce because the devil doesn't want you to be in a place where you're on fire for the Lord.

The devil doesn't want you to be in a place where you're not lukewarm because if you're lukewarm, you're useless to the Lord. You're useless to the Lord. You're just another religious man.

You're just another religious woman. And so in that time, the Lord, he brought me from that time and he slowly worked on different areas in my life, sharp areas, areas in my heart that needed to be cleansed. We don't see the pride in our lives until we go through difficult situations where we have to yield ourselves, where we have to submit, where we have to die to ourselves and the things that we want.

And we have to learn to be led by the Lord and allow the Lord to lead our decisions. I remember many times I didn't know what decision to make in my life. I didn't even know what to do.

And I'm saying, Lord, what do I do with my life? Which direction do I go? Which direction do I take? And I would just say, Lord, I don't have any wisdom. You're the one with wisdom. And I pray that if the decision I'm going to make is from you, then you will open the door.

But if it's not, I ask you to slam the door in my face. And you know what? There were many times where the Lord would slam the door in my face. He would shut it so fast.

He would shut it so fast. And I remember being at the time discouraged and wondering, what is this? Why is the Lord seem to be keeping me in this one little spot? Why does he keep me here for such a time as this? It's because he's wanting to work on our character and he doesn't want us to run from it. We can go outside of God's will really quickly when we decide to make decisions and go in a direction that the Lord doesn't want us to go.

And we have to be careful that we don't do that until the right time. It says, you young men, humble yourselves under your elders. Humble yourselves until the Lord exalts you at the proper time.

And the Lord had to do that with me. He had to do that with me. I remember for seven years, you know, I had a desire to share the word of God with people.

And the Lord would, he would just keep me and just say, Dad, I want you to listen. I want you to receive. I want you to learn from the things and the people who've gone before you.

And it was a blessing and a value to me because I learned many valuable things at that time. And you know, that hunger that I had at first, I look at myself now, I don't owe \$30,000 in debt. You know, I have a lot more.

I have a lot more. The Lord has taken me from that place and he has now, he has filled the bank account. And I'm not, I'm not saying that for that reason because, oh, this is the blessing.

This is not the blessing of God, my friends. The true blessing of God is when you are rich spiritually, not rich naturally. And many of us seek after the riches naturally here and not after the spiritual riches.

And we need to ask the Lord to give us a heart's desire for that, not for the things of this world, because quickly as it came, quickly it can go. And we have to be careful that we don't chase after these things and let these things get a hold of our heart. And I found myself as I, in the last couple of years, I found myself going stagnant.

And why do you go stagnant? You want to know why? It's because we've become full. We've become full. We've become rich and increased in goods.

We have everything that we need. And sometimes the Lord, like Randy, prayed today that he has to shake us and order us to get us to have a hunger and a thirst for him. But I wanted to read from John chapter 6, verse 26.

And Jesus says this to the people. Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. And why do you seek the Lord is really what I want to ask you.

Why do you seek the Lord? I think the Lord, when we're younger in the Lord, we seek the Lord for what we can get, like Jacob. Like Jacob, he sought the Lord so he could, hey, if you give me safe passage, if you give me a home, if you give me riches, I will give you a tenth of all that you give me. He was seeking after the Lord for what the Lord could give him.

But as you grow in the Lord, the Lord wants to change that, where we can say, Lord, it's not what you can give me, it's what can you do for me in my life? I want to seek after the true blessing, and that's knowing you, Lord Jesus. That's knowing you and the power of your resurrection and the fellowship of your sufferings. It says later that when God met Jacob on his way home after 20 years of the Lord dealing with him in his life, that he changed his desire from giving him a tenth to wrestling with the Lord and saying, Lord, I will not let you go until you bless me.

And I want to ask you and leave you that question today. The world today celebrates such a holiday at such a time where it's, what can I get? This is what little children ask for. What can I get? No, what can I give you, Lord? What do you need today? What are your interests today? This is the mark of a truly spiritual person, is somebody who has learned over time where it doesn't matter what happens to them in their life.

It's saying, Lord, all things that are from your hand are for your glory. Let me receive it with gratitude, whether it's good or whether it's bad. But what can I offer you, Lord? What can I be concerned about you and your interests? I remember one time in the church at Randy's, we were there and I remember one time we were all hanging out and having a good time together, which was a wonderful thing.

But the Lord gave me a dream that night. And in the dream, there was the church. And in the church, everybody was having a fun time together.

They were fellowshiping. There was this and that. And I looked over in the corner and I could see Jesus in the corner.

I could see Jesus in the corner. And nobody was hanging out with him. Nobody was hanging out with him, worried about what his interests were.

And I remember getting up and walking over to him and I said, what are your interests? You know, the Lord, he's calling, he's bidding many people to say, is there anybody out here? Is there anybody in this room who's concerned about his interests? I know for a fact right now, guys, that the wrestle that goes on in my heart is I don't know if I'm concerned about his interests because I'm rich in increasing goods. And in my mind, I feel I have need of nothing. But I'm telling you, when you're in a broken place and you're poor in spirit and you have a need in your heart, that's a wonderful place to be.

Lord, what are your interests? What are your interests? I think the hardest thing for the Lord to do is to still the soul of a man or a woman. Is to cause them to be at rest, to sit at his feet, to listen to him. And that doesn't mean you sit at your feet.

I mean, it literally means to learn to have peace in your heart, no matter what situation the Lord brings you in. No matter what, if you're working during the day and it's very busy, to be able to say stop in the middle of it and say, Lord, do you have anything to say to me today? Do you have anything for me today? Or what are your interests today, Lord? Is there anything you want to teach me about you? You know, my wife's reading this book and in the book, he says our relationship with the Lord is like when you first get married. When you first get married, you realize that your love for each other is so shallow.

It's very just surface stuff. But as you grow together, you have children, you raise a family, you start to realize that that love was very shallow and it needs to go much deeper and so much more with our relationship with Jesus. Are we seeking him so that we can eat of the loaves and be filled? Or do we want to know him more? What is our genuine care? That's something that we should be asking ourselves all the time is what is my real motive for seeking and serving the Lord? Am I serving it? So like Jacob, he served seven years with Laban so he could get a wife.

Then he got the wrong wife. Then he served seven more to get the wife that he wanted. And he went through many hard trials in that situation.

We have to ask the Lord in these times, why do we seek you? And it says right here, verse 27, it says, do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life. Which the son of man shall give to you, for on him, the father, even God has set his seal. And I don't know about you, but in this next year, I don't want to work for the food which perishes.

I want to work for the food that endures to eternal life. I hope our desire and leave that with you is that you would ask the Lord to help you in your heart to not seek after the food which endures or food which perishes, but through the food which endures to eternal life. Are your interests earthly? Are your interests earthly so you can have a happy family? So you can have a nice home? So you can have a great career? So you can have peace and satisfaction wherever you're at? Or are you willing to say, Lord, not my will, your be done.

I'm asking you to lead me and guide me to help you put you first in my life. And when I shared this with my children yesterday about the Passover meal, I said, when he came together, he brought them together and they had to sacrifice that lamb. And I asked them, I said, you guys, would you be willing to give up your favorite thing? And I asked them each individually, what's your favorite thing? And they each told me what their favorite thing was.

And I said, would you be willing to give that up for the Lord? My one daughter, she was very honest. She says, I don't think I could, dad. And I said, you're honest.

I said, that's an honest answer. And you know what I told her? I said, you know what my favorite thing in my life? I don't know if I could give it up, but I'm asking the Lord to help me to surrender all into his hands and say, Lord, mold me and shape me after thy will. Help me, Lord, to be concerned about your interests in this coming year.

Help me, Lord Jesus, to have your ambitions and your desires and to do the things that please you and help me not to seek after you so I can have my loaves and be filled, but help me to seek after the food which endures to eternal life. It says right here, and they said, what must we do that we may work the works of God? And Jesus answered and said to them, this is the work of God that you believe in him whom he has sent. You know, I think it's good when we gather, we celebrate certain times that we remember what the Lord has done for us and from where he's brought us.

You can look back at certain milestones. Some of you guys may not remember certain milestones, and it can be simple things like even success at a job or something that you've done in a daily thing where the Lord has helped you in a certain situation. I think it's good to write those things down and to remember those milestones of what Jesus has done for you.

And he can look from where he's taken you to where you are now, where you are at now, and you can start to see the change in how the Lord has worked in your life. And you may not see it, but you look back over the past 17 years. I look back over the past 17 years of my walk with the Lord, and I can say, Lord, I was so stubborn, so proud, so selfish.

I didn't see the strong will that I have in my life. You know how the Lord helped me to see the strong will that I have is he brings me through dealings. He's brought me through trials, and he's humbled me.

And I don't take that as a bad thing. I take it as a wonderful thing, because the only way sometimes to work in a man or a woman's life is to bring them through circumstances which break them. And I can look back, and I can thank the Lord and say, praise you, God.

Praise you, God, for your mercy on me. You haven't given up on me. You're working in my life.

Help me not to forget all that you've done for me, and help me, Lord, to continue to allow you to work in my life and to allow you to do the things that you want to do to finish the work that you started in my heart. May the Lord bless us at this time. May the Lord remind us of the things that we've done.

And I said to my kids, I said, it's good to remember all that Jesus did for you. And so that night when we prayed together, you know what? Their part's prayer was a little bit more earnest. They had a deeper cry.

You know what they prayed? They said, Lord, I pray that you would take away the bad thoughts in my mind and give me good thoughts. Then they all prayed it fervently. I was very convicted.

They all said, Lord Jesus, take away all my bad thoughts and give me good thoughts. Give me good thoughts of you, Jesus. You know where it starts this year, how we're going to grow with Jesus, is we need to renew our mind.

We need to renew our mind. We need to take thoughts captive. And we just say, Lord, what are your interests above my own? Because every single day, from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to bed, in your mind, you get fired, fiery darts that come and buffet your mind and give you ideas, imaginations, bitter thoughts, things and arguments against other people.

You need to learn to take those thoughts captive. You need to say, Lord, this year, I pray that you would renew my mind so that me may prove what is the perfect will of God. And every single time that I have a high thought about myself, I say, Lord, help me to humble myself, because it's not of me.

It's you. It's you who's done the work. It's you who started the work.

It's you who's going to finish the work. Even thoughts of unbelief, where the Lord, you can't do it. You're not able to.

I don't believe that you're working in my life at this time. No, my friends, we have to trust the Lord, that we believe in him whom he has sent, that we can say, Lord, even though this situation seems very plain, you are able to work this for my good, and you are working it after my good. I'm trusting you in this situation.

Guys, we need thoughts of faith this year, thoughts of faith to trust the Lord, to believe in him, to say, Lord, you are greater than anything. It says in the Bible, if he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. So I don't care what situation you're in.

God is greater than it. And you can rely on him and the resource of his strength, the resource of his Holy Spirit. You can rely on him to help you endure and to overcome in that situation.

And Jesus said to Peter, he said, Peter, I do not pray that you won't fail. I pray that your faith won't fail. And I pray this year that your faith will not fail, brothers.

I pray this year that your faith will not fail. That you will say, you know what, in times past, I haven't got the victory. But today I'm trusting you for the victory.

Because the Bible says clearly, faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. We don't have to be unbelieving.

It says, do not have an evil heart of unbelief. And every single time you have that thought of unbelief come in your mind, you need to take a captain. You know, I remember I worked seven, eight years at a job where I made very little.

And I said, Lord, it is impossible for you to change my life in this situation. I'm telling you right now, I look back with shame in my heart and in my tongue saying, I can't believe I said that. Because the Lord is able to do more than we ask or think.

I'm now married. I have five children. I own two businesses.

I can't believe it. A guy like me, a worthless lout, living on my sister's couch, and the Lord had mercy on me. I can look back and say with gratitude that the Lord has done great things.

Some of us would say the Lord's not doing anything in my life. No, my friends, the Lord has not allowed me to perish in the way. He has had mercy on me.

And he's even allowed me to make dumb mistakes, trip over my feet, fall face first in the ground. But the Lord, he's been my stay. He's held me up.

And he says, Dan, let's keep going. Let's get back up. Let's keep walking with him.

No, we can't be discouraged. Discouragement comes through unbelief. No, we have to have faith.

And we say, Lord Jesus, you're greater than my ambition. Why is it always about me? That's why we get discouraged and unbelieving, because it's always about us. My situation.

What about your situation, Lord? Help me to take my eyes off of myself and to put them onto you. What are your interests, Lord Jesus? Is it your interest that I would have two businesses so I can be successful? No, it's your interest that I would have this. So it can be a place of refuge for people who can work there, for customers who come in and we can help them.

Things that I can do for the glory of God. I get on my knees and I say, Lord, let this not be my place. Let this be your place.

And let me use it for your glory. You've given it to me for a season. And I pray that in this time I'll be faithful with it.

Help me, Lord Jesus, to not use it for my own glory or gain, but for your witness and your testimony. You know, I was so encouraged. I had one customer come in the other day and she wept and she said, Dan, you've always helped me.

You've always helped our family. You know, it brought joy to my heart and I said, Lord, help me to do this with everybody in every situation that you put me in. Help me, Lord, to remember all the good things that you've done for me and how you've delivered me from a life of slavery, a life of affliction.

And you want to bring me to a place of abundance and life in you. Let us reflect on the promises of God, because the promises of God are true and yes and amen in Christ Jesus. Promises of God will get you out of the situation you're in.

But you need to call on the name of the Lord. You need to suffer in the flesh. You need to deny yourself.

You need to take up your cross and you need to follow after him and you need to ask him to have mercy on you. God is able to deliver you from every power of darkness. He is able to deliver you from every sin.

He's able to deliver you in every situation that you're in. As David said at the end of his life, the God who has delivered me out of all my troubles. Let us ask the Lord to do that in our lives as well, too.

Amen.

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