

The Anointed Body of Christ in China

by Denny Kenaston

The Chinese church is an example of the anointed body of Christ, demonstrating the characteristics of a church that is filled with the power and presence of God.

Duration: 1:04:16

Scripture: Psalm 48, Philippians 3:17

Topics: "Church In China"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the importance of facing reality and embracing the ideals of the church. He shares how God prepared the message in advance, with a brother praying for a revelation of Christ. The preacher emphasizes the need to take action based on what we have heard, especially in light of the coming persecution. He highlights the power of God's word to challenge and uplift us, referencing Psalm 48 and Philippians 3:17. The sermon aims to inspire and encourage the congregation to follow the example of Paul and mark the path of righteousness.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Well, I'm glad for that this morning.

The wonder-working power of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, it hasn't changed from all eternity past into all eternity future. The power of the blood of Christ is the same. Also very grateful to be reminded again that they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

I'm glad for that reminder. I believe those were the very words that Elisha also spoke to his servant when he was, you know, looking at all the soldiers outside of the city. I believe those were his very words.

Oh, don't worry, he said. They that be with us are more than they that be with them. Those are the words of a man who is filled with God confidence because he's been in the presence of the living God.

Well, let's bow our heads for prayer for a moment here. Oh, God, our Father, we bow down to you again this morning in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. We come by the blood, Father.

We know there's no other way that we can come. We don't come bringing our own righteousness. We do not come bringing any of our past accomplishments of before thee.

Oh, Father, we know that as we stand in your presence, we only stand by the blood, Father. Oh, Father, based on that, we pray, release your spirit upon us, Lord, this morning because of the blood, Lord, because the price has been paid. Father, we pray that you will bind the devil and every evil spirit, Father, that would seek to hinder our meeting this morning, that would lie in the ear of our heart and our mind.

Oh, Father, drive out every one of them, Lord, that would hinder any one of us in this meeting. We trust you for that, God. Now speak to our heart, Father.

Give us your word to us today. In Jesus Christ's name we pray. Amen.

You can open your Bibles to Psalm 48. We'll be reading there in a few minutes after a little introduction. The title of my message this morning is this.

The Anointed Body of Christ in China. The Anointed Body of Christ in China. Back in February at the Leadership Seminar, many of you probably remember that I preached a sermon on Sunday morning called The Church, God's Anointed Servant.

This sermon was a vision that came as an overflow from preaching on the Holy Spirit all week long in Leadership Seminar. We learned at that time that the name Christ literally means Anointed One. And that every place where you see the word Christ, you could just as easily put in there, Anointed One.

Thou art the Anointed One. The Son of the Living God. The Anointed One.

We also learned in that sermon that we, the Church, are the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ, the Anointed One. And I think we just began to get a glimpse of what God's heart would be for any church, because we are the Church, the Body of Christ, the Anointed One.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 27, said these words to us, Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular. And a little earlier in that same chapter he said, For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body. We are the Body of Christ.

Well, the sermon was visionary and filled with many holy ideals. The purpose for the sermon was to challenge us and to lift up our sights a bit and to help us to come to grips with where God would want to take us as a church. The Father wants us to be Christ on the earth.

His Anointed Servant. Well, I've been reflecting on the testimony of the Chinese house churches for some time, and I guess it's that way for all of us, that which we are spending most of our time reflecting on. It comes up into our own hearts, and that's what I've been inspired to speak about this morning, because we heard the report there on Sunday evening at Bible school.

I sat in an interview after that with those two men who shared, with a desire to prepare an article for the remnant, and I've been preparing that article for the remnant, and also, we as a family have been reading through that little biography that they were selling there at the meeting on Sunday evening. We've been reading through that in the evenings. It has my children on the edge of their seat pretty often.

I don't know if you've looked into it, but there are many times they look over at me in shock, wondering if I could explain what I just read, because there are many, many things in there that are beyond their reach. So, I'm thankful for that, but all these things have caused my heart's meditation and reflection to be on this church that is in China. It is there.

It is there today. They met earlier today. They are probably sleeping right now.

They are all there. Just as much as we are here today, they are there today. The church that is in China.

In the midst of my meditations, God quickened my thoughts back to the sermon that I preached. My heart was thrilled and challenged as I realized, here is a church that is an example of what I preached. Here is a church which is Christ's anointed body upon the earth.

And the first thought that came through my heart, you know, was not much, but as I reflected on it more and more, I realized, that is an anointed body of Christ in China. Christ being manifested in China. Idealism made real.

You know, idealism is great, but idealism made real brings us face to face with reality. Face to face with reality. What more can we ask for than idealisms made real before our very hearts and our minds.

In Psalm 48, we find a beautiful prophetic explanation of the church. I was so blessed by how God prepared so many things ahead of this message. I remember one of the brothers praying downstairs in the prayer room.

These very words, he said, Oh God, would you show us the Christ this morning. He prayed that in the prayer room. I was just in awe.

And then the song about Zion, as we sang that beautiful song about Zion. Well, brothers and sisters, we are Zion. We are Zion.

And Psalm 48 is a beautiful prophetic explanation of Zion. The church is called Zion in Psalm 48. In this psalm, we are encouraged to study Zion.

For our benefit, and we'll read the scriptures in a moment, but we are encouraged to study Zion for our benefit and for the benefit of the children that are in this room. For the benefit of the next generation, God tells us, God commands us to study Zion. And what I believe God is saying to us in that, now I know what He was saying to the children of Israel as they read it in their day, Go back and remember the way that I worked in days gone by.

But for us, I believe that God is telling us, I want you to read biographies, I want you to study church history, I want you to reflect upon my church in different parts of the world and what she is like. Why? Because this God is our God, it says at the end of chapter 48. We must study Zion because this God is our God, so that we can pass it on to our children.

Well, that's what I want to do this morning. Study Zion in China, for this God is our God forever. Let's read Psalm 48.

Shall we stand to our feet while we do that, huh? Reading Psalm 48. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion.

On the sides of the north, the city of the great king. God is known in her palaces for a refuge. For lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together, they saw it, and so they marveled, they were troubled and hastened away.

Fear took hold upon them there, and pain as a woman in travail. Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind. As we have heard, so have we seen.

O God, grant it. As we have heard, Lord, so let us see. In the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God, God will establish it forever.

Selah. We have thought of Thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple. According to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth.

Thy right hand is full of righteousness. Let Mount Zion rejoice. Let the daughters of Judah be glad because of Thy judgments.

Walk about Zion. Go round about her. Tell the towers thereof.

Mark ye well her bulwarks. Consider her palaces that ye may tell it to the generation following. Why? For this God is our God forever and ever.

He will be our guide even unto death. You may be seated. Precious words to my own heart.

Flashes, beautiful flashes of revelation of truth came to my heart as we read down through those verses. I'm sure they did to yours also. Isn't that beautiful how the Word of God can do that? How many times we've read that chapter already, but here we go down through the chapter again and just little light beams shine here and there all the way down through the chapter.

That's God's Word. It's quick. It's powerful.

It's sharper than any two-edged sword. And I would like us also to turn to Philippians so we get a New Testament acknowledgement of the same principle. In Philippians 3, verse 17, if you'll turn there yet, Paul gives us these words after he gives his testimony of his anointed life, his powerful, Spirit-filled, anointed, suffering, serving life.

After he gives that testimony, he says these words to us. And I believe they apply to what we're doing today. Chapter 3, verse 17.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them... Notice the word mark. It was in Psalm 48 also. And mark them which walk, so as ye have us for an example.

Why, Paul? For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is

in their shame, who mine earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is saying, our life is in heaven.

The life we live is in heaven. Paul is saying. That's Zion, brothers and sisters.

And so I believe with these verses in Psalm 48 and these in Philippians chapter 3, we receive encouragement from God's Word this morning to study Zion, to get a hold of a church history book, and see the grace of God manifested in the saints that live before us, and get a hold of a biography and read with marvel at how God worked in somebody else's life, and read the history of revivals, and see how God poured out His Spirit upon His people in days gone by, and yea, even if we have such testimonies, if we are privileged enough to have such modern day testimonies, yea, even study Zion in this our day to see how God is working somewhere else, because this God is also our God. So let us walk about Zion this morning. As we were sitting and listening, many of us, to the report about the Chinese church, I sat and wrote questions.

Questions that I could ask. Questions that would be important. Questions that I felt the answers to them would be a blessing and a challenge to us.

I sat while that man and those two men were sharing, and I wrote questions that I could ask in my interview which followed that meeting. And what I'm sharing with you this morning is the answers and the insights that I gleaned from the questions that I asked. Zion in China.

The anointed body of Christ in China. Number one, the Chinese church, they have lively, responsive congregations. They have wholehearted singing, and lots of amens and hallelujahs.

They have a lively, responsive congregation. The fire of God's love burns in their hearts as they gather together. And a lively church is the overflow of this.

They're not into emotions. They're not into acting out things. They're not into whooping up their emotions and calling that the Spirit of God.

But the fire of God burns in their hearts, and a lively congregational meeting is the outflow of that. Number two, they believe in evangelism. The Great Commission is their commission till Jesus Christ returns.

They believe the only reason that we are here is to evangelize the world around us. They witness at every chance. It's not something they do once a week.

They do it as they are going all throughout every day. They witness at every opportunity. They, as a church, when they are persecuted, have been promised peace.

They have been told multitudes of times, if you will just shut up, we will let you go home to your family. If you will quit preaching to other people, we will not disturb your assemblies anymore. If you will just be quiet and have your own religion to yourself, we will let you dwell in peace.

We will not chase you like dogs all over the countryside anymore. However, evangelism is the reason why we're here. And they cannot and they will not stop.

Their methods of evangelism are very simple. We heard a testimony of it there on Sunday evening. You go to a village that has never heard the gospel and inquire what is the hardest problem in the village.

What is the most difficult thing in your village? Is it a demon possessed man down the road at the end of the village? Is it somebody who is sick and dying of cancer over here? Find out what the most difficult situation is in that village. Go, by God's grace, solve the problem. When you have solved the problem, then you preach the gospel to the people.

Those are their simple methods of evangelism. I was told by these men, as we spoke about evangelism, they said, we preach the gospel very differently than you do here in America. In America, your gospel is more of an intellectual proclamation of certain truths.

Whereas in China, 50% of what we do is proclamation, and the other 50% is a revelation of the power behind the gospel and our Lord Jesus which we preach. That's their methods of evangelism. Number three.

They practice fastings often. They have two kinds of fasting in China. Note this.

The first kind of fasting is simply this. They're poor. They don't have any money.

And many times they don't have any food. When they do not have any food, God is leading them to fast. They don't sit around and complain, because they don't have any food to eat.

They don't sit and have a pity party, when there's no food or no bread to eat. They just simply say, God is letting us fast today. And they give their heart over to it with all of their hearts.

The other way that they fast is purposeful. They fast and pray to break the yoke. And these are the words that these two men shared with me.

We fast to break the yoke. Fasting breaks the yoke. Dear brothers and sisters, that works the same over here, as well as it does over there.

Fasting and prayer breaks the yoke. If you have a yoke on you here today, I want to encourage you, there are ways that those yokes get broken. So, they fast when they run out of food, and they fast on purpose at times when a yoke needs to be broken.

Many fast and pray for days and days at a time. He was sharing with me, one of the things they do, if they'll go out into a certain area to evangelize, and they sense nothing but resistance when they go into that area, they stop evangelizing. Go back home, gather together, spend two or three days in fasting and prayer, and then go back out into that area again, and find the hearts of the people open.

Because fasting and prayer breaks the yoke. These are their words. And that's done in a corporate way.

That's not just one or two here and there. But if, say, a group of ten go out to a certain area to evangelize, and all they get is resistance, they come back and report to the church, and the whole church says, okay, next move. We're going to fast and pray for three days before we go back into that place again.

That's how they practice fasting in the Chinese church. Number four. They are a praying people.

They believe in prayer. Life is filled with prayer for these people. They're leaders.

Not every little leader of every little house church, but they're leaders. They're major leaders. These leaders spend three to four hours each day in prayer.

Alone in prayer. They have all-night prayer meetings. Many of them.

Their all-night prayer meetings are such that when the morning time comes, you better be careful as you walk out of that cement floor building. Because they've been crying all night long. And you will slip and fall in their tears.

Because they've been crying all night long. They have also full-time intercessors among them who spend their entire life and most of the hours of every day praying and interceding for God's further work in China, and whatever other burdens come their way. Leaders get thrown into prison.

Things like that. There are certain ones who lock themselves away and intercede for hours and hours every day. They have those in the church.

God's anointed body in China. They pray like Jesus prayed in the midst of their sufferings. Many times, as we've been reading through this little book, this story about the Chinese church, many times I took note of this fact.

In the greatest amount of sufferings, when you would think they would absolutely give up for the pain that they're going through, at those moments, their hearts just break forth in intercession for the land of China. Imagine that. Sound familiar to you? That's exactly what the Lord Jesus did.

That is exactly what He did. And it seems like the sufferings that they go through bring them in such close contact with the heart of the Lord Jesus that they find themselves interceding right there in the midst of the hardest things that they're going through. Things that, as we read them, we sit in shock.

I mean, the children sit in shock when I read the little stories to them. They think, how could anybody endure that? And here they are, totally lost to all that's going on, praying for those people in China that they would hear the gospel and be saved. They are a praying people.

Their church government is very interesting, is highly spiritual. They spend much, much time in prayer for any major decision that is going to be made in the church. They have what they call operational elders and old spiritual guiding elders.

The operational elders are elders who are busy about the church work. They're preaching to the people. They're out visiting.

They're counseling people. They're overseeing the work that is going on. They're busy going here, going there, preaching, all those things.

These are called operational elders. But they also have old spiritual guiding elders who spend most of their time alone with God. These are men whose legs have been broken again and again and again and they can't travel anymore.

They can't get out here and there. And they just spend the day alone in prayer. And the operational elders visit these old leading elders a couple times a week and lay everything before them.

Here's what the church is wanting to do. Here are some of the things we're facing. Here's where we'd like to go preach the Gospel.

Here's a decision we need to make. And they lay them before these old leading elders. And the elders take them before God to hear God's voice on the subject.

And the operational elders come back two or three days later and these old men say, here's what the Lord says to do about this and here's what the Lord says to do about this and here's what the Lord says to do about this. The operational elders say, thank you, my brothers. And they go out and do the work of God.

Church government is highly spiritual. Have mercy on us, Lord. They believe in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Every believer must be filled with the Holy Ghost. It's not just for the leaders. They all must be filled with the Holy Ghost.

And they believe in continual fillings of the Holy Ghost. Not one. Many.

Not one. One every day. Not one every day.

Many times a day. Continual filling of the Holy Spirit. And the evidence? What is the evidence of this continual filling of the Holy Spirit? It is not tongues.

They don't believe that. Though they have some of that among them. But it's no big thing.

What is the evidence? The fire of winning souls is the evidence that you are being continually filled with the Holy Spirit. As they look on at Americans, they feel that American Christians are selfish about the Holy Spirit. Selfish.

We take our blessing and we sit on it. We have a sweet time with the Lord. We sit on it and enjoy it.

They have a sweet time with God. They go out and tell somebody else about it. They feel we are selfish with the Holy Spirit.

And that's why we have so little of Him. Because we want Him for us. For our pleasure.

For our blessing. Whatever. When they believe the Spirit was poured out for one reason.

Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you. And ye shall be witnesses unto me. And all those places that are mentioned there in Acts chapter 1 verse 8. They believe in the power of the Holy Spirit.

They believe that this baptism of fire of the Holy Ghost brings the baptism of blood into the life of the believers. And they have thousands and thousands of testimonies to prove that what they believe is true. Number seven.

They have millions of youth that are on fire. They have millions and millions of young people who are on fire for God. Hear that young people? Praise God.

Do it here Lord. Millions of them that are sold out at an early age. Multitudes of young people, 13 and 14 years old, know what it's like to run like a scared rabbit from a meeting from their persecutors.

They know that from 12, 13, 14 years old. Many of them at that age have been beaten because of their faith. And they go everywhere witnessing about the grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.

Number eight. We've got a lot of these so we'll keep moving. They believe in and practice miracles.

They believe in and practice miracles. This is the testimony of these two men. Eighty percent of the church in China have personally experienced a miracle working God in their life.

And because of that, their faith is strong. They can believe God for anything. Miracles is part of their methods of evangelism.

They believe it is the character, the very character of God to heal. And they believe that God heals. They have miracles among them.

People have been transported from one place to another like Philip. Didn't know how they got where they got. But here they were.

One man started running. He knew, it's two hours to the place where I need to go. He started running and he was there in two minutes.

He said, Brother Denny, hey, that's what happened to Philip. He was found at Azotus. That's what the Bible says.

Boom. Here he was. Hey, I can't figure that out.

But who cares? I don't need to figure it out. Who am I? Some little bitty head down here on the earth with a great big almighty God sitting up in heaven? If God wants to take Philip from one place to the next and do it in an instant, who am I to question it? Those things happen over there. They pray for people.

And they are raised from the dead. It's so much that way among them that when some precious soul dies, they go to that place where the person is dead to seek God, to find out if God wants to raise him from the dead or let him go on to glory. It's so much believed in among them that they don't go to see the dead or comfort the widow.

They go to pray and ask God if He wants this guy to stay dead. Very different. They believe in miracles.

But they do not follow after miracles. Miracles follow after them. It's no big deal to them.

They are not running around wanting to do miracles and get a big crowd of people to look at them as if they are somebody special. It's nothing to them. It's no big deal.

They don't make a big deal about it. It just happens. I like that.

Number nine. They believe the book of Acts. That book called Acts is part of the Bible.

Acts is for our day. They believe the book of Acts is normal Christianity and they live in the reality of it all the time. They believe that the book of Acts is our example of the anointed body of Christ functioning upon the earth.

They believe that. Number ten. They believe in and experience continuous revival.

They have been experiencing revival for fifty years. Flashes of flames bursting forth again and again and again over the fifty years since the communists took over in China. They believe and experience continuous revival.

Evangelism and persecution are the two secrets of their continuous revival. I asked them, so okay, what are the secrets for continuous revival? And they said very simply, there are only two. One is evangelism.

The spirit of revival or may I say the spirit of God broods in evangelism. And evangelism brings persecution. And persecution brings purifying and brokenness and more of the spirit of God.

And the spirit of God brings evangelism. And it just goes back and forth like that. Number eleven.

They are a non-resistant people. And that didn't surprise me at all. Didn't surprise me at all.

Because when you take persecution and you put it up next to non-resistance, they go together. You know, every place in the Bible, it goes together. God's people are supposed to suffer persecution, not fight against it.

They believe in non-resistance. They love their enemies and show them love. They love the enemies who throw them in jail and show them love.

They pray for them. They love their enemies that are in jail who beat them and take their food away, will turn around the next day and bring the food and lay it at the feet of the one who stole their food the day before and give it to them in Jesus' name. They love their enemies.

They pray for their enemies. They will not fight back. They believe that suffering love releases the captives from the bondages that they're in.

And they will not fight back for love for the souls that they're dealing with at the time. They believe in non-resistance. Number twelve.

They believe in holy living. They are a people that are very word-centered. The Bible is precious to them.

They hang on every word. They believe one of the greatest needs in the American church is that we know the Bible, but don't obey the Bible. And they say, you cannot truly know the Bible until you learn to obey the Bible.

You're just getting head knowledge, but you don't know the Bible until you begin to obey the Bible. And they are word-centered people. They react and grieve at loose American Christianity.

It's confusing to them. They wish we would stay home. They don't want us to bring our mixed-up confusion over to their land.

And oh, how sad it is that many American Christian organizations will try their way to get into China and just jump in and start doing their thing over there, not even stopping to ask this persecuted church what God is saying to the church in China. It's as if we're so proud we know just what to do, and we go in there and set up our drums and our bands and all that nonsense stuff, and we think we're going to do it. They look on in utter shock at our worldly ways.

They believe in holy living. They are a simple, conservative people. No show.

No ostentation. They would think we're dressed pretty fancy, even here. They believe in meeting in houses.

Now, you may say, Oh, they have to, because the church buildings would be burned down. Well, that may be true, but I ask them, What is the secret of the growth of this church in China? And they said, We believe in having church in houses. It is the secret of multiplication.

Many little fires burning many other places scattered all over the area. It is the secret of finances. They don't have to finance big buildings and pay for all the stuff that American churches do.

It is the secret of multitudes of leaders, because if you have a church in every house, you're going to have a whole lot more leaders than if you have a church this big. They believe in meeting in houses. They feel strongly about it.

They feel that it was the leading of God that they should meet in houses. And they wouldn't change that if all of a sudden the doors opened up and they could have church in buildings. They believe in meeting in houses.

The church in China is basically a lay movement. No Bible schools, just God-fearing men, full of the Word and full of the Holy Ghost, serving the Spirit of God, who doesn't need any help. Amen? He doesn't need any help.

They just serve Him. And many times they meet in forests and caves. Number 14, their theology is simple.

Here's their theology. We seek to hear the shepherd's voice and we obey. Sit.

We seek to hear the shepherd's voice and we obey. Their simple theology. Jesus is coming.

Be ready and evangelize until He comes. Their simple theology. So refreshing to hear their simple theology of unity.

And I know their persecuted situation helps them. I mean, you can lose your head if you join yourself to the church. Their simple theology of unity.

And the persecution allows a simple theology of unity. They're not picking each other apart because everybody doesn't believe just like I do. They don't do that.

And sometimes when they do, according to these men, they find themselves in jail, chained to the guy that they didn't want to fellowship with because he didn't believe just like I did. They find themselves chained next to this guy. And guess what? They start praying together.

Guess what? They repent for their rotten attitudes. And God gets the glory. Number 15, they have set their sights on the Muslim world.

They have set their sights on the Muslim world. They are not afraid to evangelize the Muslims. And the West is.

The West is. They are not afraid. They believe the West, that's us, missed their chance.

So now it's their turn. They are not afraid to die, which is one of the secrets to evangelizing a Muslim. They are not afraid to die.

They are not scared. They walk right into a situation where Muslims are, and they are not afraid to die. That's a secret to evangelizing Muslims in another country.

Not here. We are safe here. But over there, you can't be afraid to die.

And number three, they are confident that God will manifest Mount Carmel everywhere they go. Mount Carmel? If God be God, then serve Him. And if Allah be God, then serve Him.

And the proof is very clearly displayed. They believe in a confident Mount Carmel demonstration of the power of the Gospel. So they are not afraid to go to a Muslim country.

Hey, no big deal. So we are going to die? No big deal. But if we don't die, we are going to challenge them to the very depths.

We are going to find the biggest problems they have. And bless God, you talk to those Muslims, they have multitudes of problems. We are going to find the biggest problem they have and solve it in Jesus' name.

And then we will talk to them. And guess what? Most of them will listen when they go. Number sixteen.

What do they think about the West? I felt this was worthy for us to ponder a bit. What do they think about the West? Number one, they are very burdened about the West. They are very burdened for us.

They believe we are bound and hindered by traditions. And therefore, the Spirit of God cannot lead us where He wants to go. Because we got our traditions.

And I am not just talking about us. I am talking about the whole of the United States. We are not talking about Mennonite traditions now.

We are just talking about the way that we do it. Number three. They believe we follow programs.

And it is hard to hear the Spirit of God. You know, we have everything all planned out. All our programs.

This happens at this time. This happens at this time. You finish preaching here.

We have our lunch at this time. We got everything all programmed. We programmed the Holy Spirit right out of the thing.

And I do not mean us. I mean America. Because I know that we feel strongly about some of these things.

Listen to this one. We laugh in church. They cry in church.

That is their interpretation. We laugh in church. They cry in church.

Very different church service. Amen? They believe we are overcharged with luxury and materialism. And therefore, we cannot hear the voice of the Spirit.

They believe that many function with little or no Holy Spirit's presence in their meetings. And lastly, their simple message to America is given in one word. One word.

Repent. Repent. That is all they would say to America.

Repent. Repent. Number 17.

They love God extravagantly. I do not think I really need to say any points on that. The whole thing that I have been giving are points on that.

They love God extravagantly. They serve God full time and live in poverty because of it. They serve Him full time and they live in poverty because of it.

The Bible is a sacred book to them. They memorize chapter after chapter after chapter. Some of them do not even have a Bible.

So, they will copy chapters of the Bible when they get together with other believers who have a Bible. And take their little treasure home with them and read it and memorize it and hide it in their hearts. They count the Bible sacred, holy, sanctified, set apart, precious gift.

That is how they see the Bible. And they spend hours memorizing and reading it. And lastly, they have a radical view of persecution.

They have a very radical view of persecution. What do I mean by that? To them, it is a joy. It is a joy.

We do not look at it that way. But they do. It is a joy.

To suffer for Christ is a joy. Again, they are over there in the book of Acts, aren't they? That is the way it was there. It was a joy.

To them, it is a joy. They believe that persecution brings life. Death worketh in us, but life worketh in you.

We are always delivered over unto death. Why? That the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our mortal bodies. They believe that.

They are radicals. They are bold and not afraid. They are not running and hiding everywhere.

They are not hiding in a corner somewhere and never opening their mouth for God. They are bold. They are confident.

They do not cower in the face of their persecutors. They are poised in God, like Elijah, John the Baptist, and the Lord Jesus. They are poised in God.

That is one thing that has gripped my heart as I have pondered those people. They are like Jesus, you know? I mean, Jesus was in complete control when He was hung on the cross and died for our sins. He was in complete control.

And they are too. I mean, think about it. Pilate, He said to Him, Why aren't you talking? Don't you know who I am? Don't you know that I have power to crucify you or power to release you? And Jesus looked Him dead in the eyes of His heart and said, Whatever power you have, it came from above.

In other words, I am not afraid of your power, fellow. You can't do anything to me that my Father in Heaven doesn't allow you to do. I am not afraid of you.

That really puts a new twist on the whole thing of being confronted by persecutors. You know what I mean? They are poised with a confidence in God when they face their persecutors. Sometimes God confounds the persecutors before their very face.

And other times God allows those persecutors to beat them till they are dead. But it doesn't matter to them because they are not afraid to die. Well, we have walked around Zion here a bit this morning.

What shall we do? It's good to walk around Zion. It's a blessing. It stirs us.

It challenges us. Maybe even thrills us. But brothers and sisters, now we get down to the gist of the message.

Though we are at the end of the message, we get down to the real crux of the whole matter. What do we do with what we have heard? That is a big question. What do we do with what we have heard? You know, I thought about it.

Persecution is coming. Do you believe that? Let me see your hands if you believe that. Yeah, I thought so.

Persecution is coming. The way I see it, we have two choices. We can go on the way we are and be surprised by it someday and unprepared, shocked, devastated, gripped with fear, which by the way, multitudes will find themselves in that state.

When persecution does come to this land, multitudes will find themselves in that state. And we can go on the way we are and just be surprised by it all, get caught unawares, get caught shocked, get caught gripped with fear, and all that. We can go that way.

We have that choice. Or, we can foresee the trouble and say, not here, but down here, this is coming. Let us get prepared for it, so that we can boldly face it, and so that we can be a help to all the multitudes who will be shocked by it.

I believe God would raise up a remnant of people who are prepared to face these things, who can be a blessing to all the multitudes of shocked ones. And there will be multitudes who will be shocked. We can prepare.

We can prepare. You say, well, how do we prepare? Well, that's a sermon all its own. It's a whole other sermon.

But, brothers and sisters, I do believe that we need to be prepared. We need to prepare ourselves. We need to be the anointed body of Christ in America.

That's how we can prepare for what is coming. We need to be the anointed body of Christ in America. What do we do with what we've heard? Can we just hear and thrill and go our way? Can we do that, brothers and sisters? Can we just let another ten years go by? You know, it goes by fast, I tell you.

Just like that. Can we do that? I don't think we can. To give you my frank opinion, I don't think we can.

I think God has let us do some of that. I think God has let us stumble around a bit as a congregation. I think God has allowed some of that.

But, you know, God doesn't do that again and again and again and again and again with the people. He doesn't do that. There comes a point in time where God finally says, Okay.

They don't want to walk in the light. You know any churches like that? Hmm? I do. I don't want us to go our own normal way.

And just go on the way things always are. Just go on life the way it is. I don't want us to go that way.

This God is our God, brothers and sisters. God is no respecter of peoples. God is not doing something special over there that He doesn't want to do here.

Do you believe that? He is not doing anything special over there that He doesn't want to do here. Should there be a vast difference between the anointed body of Christ in China and the church in America? I don't believe so. I don't believe there should be.

Now, I want to readily admit. You know, God is sovereign. And God will work out all kinds of details in His own sovereign time.

And He will prepare us and He will purify us. And things will come our way that will break us and things like that. I know all that.

But I don't believe we have to sit and wait for God to do that. I think our hearts should rise up and cry out to God like the heart of the Chinese Christians rises up and cries out to God and says, God, we need You. We need You now.

We need You to work in our midst. We want to hear Your voice. We don't want to go our own way.

We don't want to have our own programs. We don't want to have our own mind, Lord. We need to hear Your voice.

We want to hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the church. I believe if we earnestly sigh and cry to God for those kind of things, God will continue to lead us as a fellowship. You say, well, Brother Denny, whoa, wait a minute.

Wait a minute. No, you wait a minute. This isn't Brother Denny.

This is God. I mean, this testimony is the testimony of a living God in the midst of His people in China. We can't just push it all aside.

Like one man said, one brother said, I was wondering what was wrong with me. I just didn't believe any of those things that were being said and I was wondering, is there something wrong with me? Yes, there's something wrong with you. Yes, there's something wrong with you.

This God is our God. This God is our God. So, I just felt this morning to share that with you, to just walk about Zion a bit and tell the towers thereof and mark well her bulwarks and consider her palaces that we might pass it on to the generation to come.

These things are very important. Let us kneel for prayer. And let us all, let us just, all of us, just pray about this message on our knees before the Lord.

Just like we did at the beginning of this message, let's do at the end. Let's all just pray about what we've heard before the Lord. You tell the Lord your response to these words.

In Jesus' name, let us pray. Hear the cry of our heart, dear Father. We acknowledge where we are.

We are lacking, but oh God, we acknowledge before you that our heart rises to these things which we hear, Father. We acknowledge, Lord, before you, we believe, dear God. We believe these things.

You are doing this. You are this kind of God. You haven't changed.

Your people have changed, but you have not changed. Oh, Father. We pray in Jesus' name, God.

Would you do such a thing in our midst? Would you make us like this church, dear God? Would you use this challenge to us, God, to stir our hearts to fervent prayer, Lord, to repentance. Yes, Lord, to repentance and fervent prayer. Father, would you do that, God? We open our hearts to you this morning and say, Lord, do it.

Amen, Father. This God is our God also on this side of the ocean. Father, we pray that you will be God in our midst in this New Year, God, that lies out ahead of us, Father.

This is not a New Year's service, Lord. This is not a New Year's message, God. This is not a New Year's resolution.

But, God, I pray, would you take us on in this next year, 2003, Father. Maybe it's the last one we have, God, before we have to scatter and meet in our houses. Oh, God, would you do something in our hearts, Father, in this next year, God, would you take us on, Father, in all that you want for us, Lord.

We open our hearts to you, Father, and pray. Lead on, O King Eternal. Lead on according to your Spirit, according to your Word.

Make us like Jesus. Lord, we mark these people, dear Father, as an example to follow. In Jesus Christ's name we pray.

Amen.

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