

The Church Beautiful

by Denny Kenaston

The Church is beautiful because it represents God's holy character and is a shining light in a dark world, and we are called to be the testimony of God upon the earth.

Duration: 1:14:09

Scripture: Titus 2:9

Topics: "Church"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preaching the simple message of Jesus Christ to bring about true life change. He acknowledges that while some people may have emotional experiences at events like rock concerts or movies, true transformation comes from the preaching of the word of God. The preacher urges believers to remember that they represent the life-changing message of the gospel and should live in a way that reflects this message. He highlights the need for practical examples of holy living in order to impact the lives of those around us and ultimately bring glory to God.

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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In the name of the Lord Jesus this morning, it's a joy to be here. I wonder if anything like this ever happened in this building before. What do you think? I don't think so.

You know, the joy of a meeting like this is to realize that this building is not the house of God. This is the house of God. I've preached in all kinds of different places.

I remember one of the sweetest services I ever had was in an old mechanic shop on a Hutterite colony with a basketball hoop right above my head. One of the sweetest services I was ever in. You know why?

Because of the hearts of the people that were in that old garage.

That's what made it sweet. It's not this building, it's us that make this place sweet. May God sanctify this building today with the pure hearts and lives of His people from the beginning of the day all the way to the end of the day.

May God do that. Let's pray. O God, our Father, we bless You this morning.

We come in Jesus Christ's name. Lord, we do acknowledge this building is not Your house. We are Your house.

Just like we heard even again this morning, prophesied to David way back there in 2 Samuel, that a Son will come and He will build me a house. O Father, that's what we're talking about this weekend. The Son coming and building a house.

Father, we thank You for this opportunity that we have to gather together in this way, Lord. We ask You, Father, that You would cleanse the atmosphere, Lord, of this place this morning. Wash this place, God, in the blood of Jesus.

Lord, we don't know what has gone on in this place. We don't know what kind of activities have happened here. But, O God, this morning, we sanctify this building in the name and through the blood of Jesus Christ, Father.

We set it apart for holy purposes. That we may be a place where we can worship God, where we can have fellowship one with another, where Jesus Christ can be exalted. Father, I pray, wash me in the blood of the Lamb, fresh and new this morning, God, from every little thought and every little attitude, God.

Any thought that may have gone through my heart, God, wash me in the blood and fill me with the Holy Spirit, Father. God, we pray that You'll teach us about the church this morning. We ask it in Jesus Christ's name.

Amen. Continuing to follow our theme that we've been looking at here, Friday night, Saturday night, now this morning, looking at the church, principles of the church in the New Testament. You know, Jesus said those beautiful words, we looked at them already this week.

On this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This morning I would like to consider just two little words in that verse. Jesus said, my church.

He said, it's going to be my church. It's not going to be anyone else's church. It's going to be my church, said Jesus.

And the question is, what kind of church is it that is my church? If it's His, it's going to be like Him. If it's His, it's going to represent His holy character. Jesus said, my church.

And that's what we'd like to look at this morning. We have been looking at some basics, the last two messages, and some practical issues about our own walk with God, our own relationship with God. But this morning, I would like to get a bit more visionary and dream some dreams and see some visions that are in God's heart for His church.

You see, this whole matter of church is not something that man has come up with. This is what is in God's heart. There are some lofty visions in the book of Ephesians, and you can turn there with me because that's where we'll be reading this morning after I make a few opening comments.

But there are some lofty visions, beautiful, awesome, lofty visions that we find in the book of Ephesians. It seems to me that God gave to the Apostle Paul some dreams and visions about what His church is supposed to be. And Paul, writing to the church at Ephesus, felt moved by the Holy Ghost to write in such a way to deposit into their hearts some of those dreams and some of those visions about what God wanted His church to be like.

Amen. Thank you, Lord. For light.

We look into the book of Ephesians. We find words like this. Consider them.

There are nine of them. In fact, there's probably more, but these are the ones I just skimmed out this morning. We find in the book of Ephesians that the church is mentioned, which is His body.

Also, we find the church as an assembly of believers seated together in heavenly places. So you see, it doesn't matter whether we're in this building or we're in another building. If we are a church, if we are an assembly of believers that are seated together and raised together to be seated in heavenly places, hey, you can do that in any building.

Amen? An assembly seated in heavenly places. He mentions the church and calls it the household of God. Hallelujah! God's big family.

Praise the Lord. And oh, that just seems sweet and dear to my heart this morning as we've gathered together on Friday night and gathered together on Saturday night and met people from all around this area and from many different churches. They've been here through these.

That's the way it is. The church is the household of God. Paul goes on to speak of the church as an habitation of God.

A place where God can dwell. And brothers and sisters, again, that's not this building. God dwells in the midst of His people.

He mentions the church as a holy temple in the Lord. And he speaks about the church in Ephesians 4 as one mature man. One mature man.

Living out the life of Christ upon the earth. Moving on from there, also in Ephesians 4, he speaks of the church as a new man created in righteousness and true holiness. Look at that.

And he speaks of the church in Ephesians 5 as a beautiful bride ready and waiting for the bridegroom to come. Hallelujah! And lastly, in Ephesians 6, he mentions the church as a mighty warrior with its armor on and a sword in its hand and a shield in its other hand. And yes, we can take those verses there and apply them to our own lives, but oh, have you ever considered that that warrior in Ephesians 6 is a local New Testament church who knows how to do battle against the powers of the enemy? That is clothed and is armored that has a helmet on, that has a sword in its hand, that has a shield of faith in its hand, moving forth against the enemy.

Ah, these are lofty visions as we consider what the church of Jesus Christ is supposed to be on the earth. And I can by no means cover all of that in this short time this morning. But to sum it all up, we could just simply say the church is Christ on the earth manifesting His life, His character, and His ways through us to a world that is around us.

That's the way it's supposed to be. Now, we want to read in Ephesians here this morning in chapter 5. And the title of my message today is The Church Beautiful. The Church Beautiful.

Reading from Ephesians 5, verse 25, we have one of these nine revelations that I mentioned to you. Ephesians 5 and verse 25. Paul is speaking to the husbands, but as he speaks to the husbands, he branches out into one of the most glorious revelations of what the church is supposed to be.

Follow with me. Husbands, love your wives. How? Even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.

Why? We mentioned this a bit last night and brought it out here in John 17. Why did He give Himself for it? Verse 26 is a very clear definition of the why He gave Himself for it. That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Hallelujah. Look at that. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.

He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherishes it, even as the Lord nourishes and cherishes the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

Now that's far enough for us to read. We can conceive a heavenly nature of this revelation, and we want to look at several aspects this morning, but it's very important that we understand that His church is supposed to rightly represent His righteous character. You know, the verse there in the Old Testament, I'm not sure exactly where it is, but it's in the book of Psalms where it says that we are to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

God calls holiness beautiful. And this morning I want to preach to you about the church beautiful. What is this church going to be like? Now the light is coming back on.

What will this church be like? It is clear from the verses that we have read that God wants His church to be beautiful. And that beauty is holiness. There are several reasons why we should be concerned about what this church is like.

And I'll give you four, and there's probably many more, but just consider these four briefly. First of all, because we represent God's holy character. We are the ones that are supposed to represent His holy character upon the earth.

Ezekiel expressed it this way in Ezekiel chapter 36, as he was speaking prophetically to the children of Israel, and also speaking prophetically right down to the day that we live in now. Hear the heart of God in chapter 36 of Ezekiel and verse 23. God says, I will sanctify My great name, representing God's holy character.

We name His name. Do we not? Sometimes I think we throw His name around way too lightly. I like the attitude of those scribes, those orthodox Jews, those Old Testament Jews, who when it comes time to write the name Yah, they put down their pen and pick up another one.

Now, I don't think we ought to do that, but I think we ought to get some of the hard attitude that those men had about the name which is above every name, the glorious name of God. God says right here, I will sanctify My great name which was profaned among the heathen, O brothers and sisters, if there was ever a day and a time when God's holy name has been profaned among the heathen, it's in this land that we live in today. God's name has been lowered and lowered and lowered and it's even in the mud today.

How do you think God feels about that? My holy name, My great name which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them. Oh, I hope that's not us this morning. And the heathen shall know that I am the Lord.

Remember, we talked about that last night. Brother Aaron mentioned that to us last night. God wants the heathen to know that He is the only true and living God and beside Him there is no other God.

The best way that the heathen can know who God is, is by your life and mine. Listen to the heart of God. And the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord.

When? When I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. We represent God's holy character. We name His name.

We have responsibilities to be His witness. Number two, we are God's testimony. We are His witness.

We are to be shining lights in the midst of a dark world. We are to be the testimony of God upon the earth. Remember how it was in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, God's testimony was in one place. In the Old Testament, God's testimony was the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem and the temple that was there and the people who lived there. That was God's testimony in the Old Testament.

And people, whoever could, would come to Jerusalem and gaze upon this and see what God was like by looking at the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel and the king that was there. And that beautiful testimony rose to its highest height in the days of Solomon. But as we know the story there, it went up and down and up and down according to those leaders in the nation of Israel.

Well, brothers and sisters, we're not in the Old Testament anymore. God has not raised up a testimony in one certain locality in the world and called the rest of the world to come and look at it. But now God, through Jesus Christ, through His death, burial and resurrection, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, amen, the Comforter has come.

Now God has scattered people in churches all around the whole world. Now, nobody will be without excuse if God's people represent His righteous character. That's what the church is supposed to be and do.

Number three, we represent the most glorious, life-changing message that the world has ever known. That message is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is life-changing.

It is glorious. It is the good news. I mean, it is good news to every seeking soul who is desiring to be changed.

Every seeking soul who knows there's something wrong in their life. Every seeking soul who knows they're not rightly related to God. Every seeking soul who is longing for eternal life can come.

It's whosoever will. But, brothers and sisters, we are the ones who represent that message, that glorious message. Oh, I like these words.

Let's just turn there and read them for a moment over in 1 Corinthians. We must do that over in 1 Corinthians 1. Do you know those verses? Oh, Paul, he was excited about the gospel. In 1 Corinthians 1, he says it this way, starting in verse 17, For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach.

What? The gospel! Not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. Remember what he said to the Romans? He said, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

Why? For it is the power of God and a salvation for all who believe. Why should he be ashamed of the gospel? It changes lives! There's no reason why we should be ashamed of the gospel. It changes people's lives.

God can save people from the guttermost to the uttermost. Whosoever cometh to God by Jesus Christ, it says in Hebrews. Why should we be ashamed of that? Paul wasn't ashamed of the gospel.

He proclaimed it everywhere he went. He didn't change it. He didn't spark it up.

He didn't move it around. He didn't add this to it. He didn't put multimedia in there and all those things.

He didn't need to do all those things. He just preached the gospel and people's lives were totally changed. He was not ashamed of the simple gospel of Jesus Christ.

Oh, may we be the same way. Lord helping us. Verse 19, For it is written, this is God speaking now.

Hear the heart of God. I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and I will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where are the disputers of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God.

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Listen to what God is saying, their brothers and sisters. Oh, listen.

Man's got all kinds of wisdom and he has all kinds of ways and he has all kinds of new methods and he has all kinds of innovations about how we're going to get people saved. But look at what Paul said right there. God is pleased.

It pleased God in the annals in eternity past that God had sat together and it pleased the Godhead that through the foolishness of preaching souls would be saved. Oh my! If there was ever a day in an age when we need to grab a hold of that, it's this day that we live in. Now it's the passion of Christ and everybody's going to get saved by watching a movie.

No way! You mark it down! Very few people will get saved because they watched that movie. All they had is an emotional high and they went out the door without a changed life. I know maybe one or two here and there they'll get saved just like a few people get saved in a rock concert.

But I'm telling you, brothers and sisters, it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching the simple message of Jesus Christ to save those who believe. We need to remember that and keep that seated in our own hearts. But brothers and sisters, we are the ones who represent that beautiful life-changing message.

Remember what Emmanuel said this morning? Somebody standing and giving a testimony. You know what that testimony is? That person can look and say, God changed him. God can change me.

Oh, my brothers and sisters, we represent the most life-changing message that there ever was around. Consider it. It is.

It is the secret of the ages and it's been opened up to man in these last days. It brings liberty to the captives. Hallelujah! And people that are bound by occult influences and all other things can be freed from it.

It's the sweetest message of hope to the poor of this world. Hippies hear it and get converted. People in the psychiatric sanitariums hear the Word and in one week, they walk out the door confounding the psychiatrists many times over because they can't figure out how this is that they worked with this man for three years.

And in one week after he hears the gospel of Jesus Christ, he walks out the door seen and clothed and in his right mind. Hallelujah! Oh, brothers and sisters, that's what we need today. We need more of that kind of preaching.

Drug addicts hear this message and they are changed by its power. Alcoholics dry up without any therapy when they give heed to the words of this glorious message. And Satan and his kingdom tremble at the sound of the message which changes the lives of humanity.

You can be sure of it, brothers and sisters. But we are the ones who represent that beautiful, glorious message. Hear the heart of God.

Hear the heart of God in these things over in Titus. Can we just turn there for a minute and hear the heart of God through the Apostle Paul? Paul is exhorting Titus to take care of the church there and tells him, say these things to the aged men, say these things to the aged women, say these things to the young women, say these things to the young men, and say these things to the servants. And then listen to what he says in verse 10.

Now let's go with verse 9. Exhort the servants to be obedient unto their own masters and to please them well in all things, not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity. Why, Paul? Why? That they, those servants, those converted servants, may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. What is Paul saying there? He's saying you tell those servants that the way they live is going to have something to do with the effect that this Gospel has upon those that they work for.

And brothers and sisters, it's the same way with us. We represent the message which is the most powerful life-changing message that there ever was. Let us adorn the doctrine of God our Savior by our lives.

Amen? Let us do that. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 4 as we consider this point just a little bit further and we'll move on to the fourth one. 2 Corinthians 4. Paul says these words in verse 3, If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.

Now here we are again. We're on the message. We're on the message.

If our Gospel, if the message, if the good news be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. We would all agree with that, wouldn't we? Paul explains, in whom the God of this world, that's the devil and all of his wicked demons, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. And why blind them? Lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them.

For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. What is Paul saying here? We know.

We've experienced it. We've been out on the streets. Maybe you've been witnessing here or there.

You try to tell someone about Christ and it's just like they're just looking at you and you know that they're not understanding what I'm saying. Here I am giving them the most beautiful message that you could ever hear. And they don't see it.

Why? Because they've been blinded. Let me ask you a question, brothers and sisters. Blinded where? Blinded in the eyes of their heart or blinded in the eyes of their head? Which one? It is the eyes of their hearts.

They have not been blinded with the eyes of their head. The eyes of their head can still see. And that's where you and I come in.

Amen? The eyes of their head can still see. Let's give them something to look at, brothers and sisters. I like the words of Jesus in Matthew chapter 5 where He says, Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Brothers and sisters, we represent the message of the gospel upon this earth and how we live affects how that message touches other people's lives. We have to come to grips with that. Number four, fourth reason why we should be concerned about these things is we are the Lamb's wife.

We are the Lamb's wife. Says Ephesians and says the book of Revelation, Lay aside God's burden for the lost for just a moment. That is a right burden.

We should be concerned how we live because of the lost and dying world around us. But let's just lay that aside for a moment. Brothers and sisters, there is going to be a wedding like no other wedding you've ever imagined before.

And the honeymoon lasts for eternity. We are the Lamb's wife. This should be a tremendous motivation to our hearts every day that we live.

He's coming. He's coming. And He's coming for a bride.

And He's coming for a beautiful bride. And a beautiful bride is not one with makeup on her. The word beauty, you have to take that in the context of the Bible.

And the word beauty in the Bible is speaking about holiness. He's not coming looking for a bride who painted herself up, who put on a face, who put on a facade, who put on a feet, who's making a show, who looks like everything's okay when things are really not okay. No, no, no.

He's coming for a beautiful bride. A bride who's beautified herself in the inward. A bride who has prepared herself.

Yea, come see the Lamb's wife. The angel said to John the Revelator. Come and see.

And I looked and behold, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven like a bride adorned for her husband. Oh, brothers and sisters, we are the Lamb's wife. We surely ought to be concerned about how our garments are.

We read the Scriptures there without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. And I'm telling you, brothers and sisters, there are millions of people in this land of ours that are in for a shock someday. And maybe some of you in this room will be in for a shock someday.

But Christ is not coming for all those who believe that He is coming again. He is coming for a beautiful bride without spot or wrinkle. That means their heart and life is up to date.

That means heaven is open over their life. That means they're walking in the light that God has given them just like we said the other evening. A beautiful bride who's made herself ready, who's watching and longing for the day when the bridegroom will come.

Oh, if God could just let that settle down deeply upon our hearts and let it become a motivation that we keep ourselves pure in this impure world we live in, brothers and sisters. Well, my, that's a whole sermon. We're just getting started here.

Well, we want to take a practical look at this beautiful church this morning. Not just have some lofty ideas about what it's supposed to be, but we want to take a practical look at this beautiful church from the Bible's perspective. Jesus said, you're the salt of the earth.

He also said, you're the light of the world. He said, we're to be a city that is set on a hill. And Peter said, we're to be a holy nation of believers.

How does that get worked out? That's the question this morning. What are some practical ways in which we, as God's people, as the church, can manifest and properly represent who He is? How can we do that? Some practical ways. Number one, by living a holy life.

By living a holy life. You say, well, what is a holy life? It is a life that is set apart for God. Amen? Fully surrendered Lord Divine, I will be true to Thee.

You know the song? It's in the little song book that we have here. It is a life that is set apart for God. A holy life is a life that has been sanctified by the Word of God.

Jesus said, sanctify them through Thy truth. Thy Word is truth. Brothers and sisters, each time we open up our hearts to the beautiful principles that are in this book, if we open our heart to them, we are transformed by the renewing of our mind.

Romans chapter 12 verse 2 says, we are transformed by the renewing of our mind so that we can prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. As we read the Word of God with an open heart, and we come to the principles of God's Word, when we see God's Word and open our heart to it, it changes us. Amen? You agree with that? We're not going to be the same anymore.

The Bible says in Isaiah chapter 55, that God's ways are not like man's ways, for as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways, says God, above your ways, man's ways, saith the Lord. So when we open up our heart to the principles of this book, it changes us. You can't get away from that.

It changes us. Each time we do that, the truth comes to our heart, the teachings of the Word of God, and it changes us, and we are not the same. Now when you walk this way for a while, many changes take place.

God touches your marriage. God touches your home. God touches your finances.

God touches your possessions. God touches your activities. God touches your hobbies.

God touches your free time. And God will do that until Jesus comes, my friend. He is going to touch our lives.

Amen? As we allow God to do that, He changes us. Those changes make us a very different people. Amen? And I know, there's a lot of people around today who don't want to be different.

There's probably some young people in this room this morning that, deep down inside of you, you may not verbalize it because you know you shouldn't say it, but deep down inside of you, your heart is saying, I don't want to be different. My friend, if you're going to be a Christian, you will be different. And if you don't want to be different, you can't be a Christian.

Mark it down. You go study the New Testament and find out. I don't have three hours to show you all the verses this morning.

You will be different. And there's nothing wrong with being different. Now, brothers and sisters, I don't believe in the doctrine of being different.

But I do believe, if you open your heart and your life to this book, especially in this departing culture that we live in, you are going to be different. Different! Holy! Separated from the people around you. Your marriage is going to be different.

They're going to wonder why that man is holding his wife's hand. And they'll wonder, I wonder, are they married? Are they just girlfriend and boyfriend? Look at how they're acting. Look how he opens up the car for her.

They must not be married. Because married people don't do tender things like that, do they? But oh, God wants us to be different. God wants the wives to be different.

And respect and reverence their husband. God wants the children to be different. God wants us to bring our family into the grocery store or into the doctor's office.

And there they are all lined up. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. All those seven children.

And they're all just sitting there so nicely and reading a little book, looking at a story, waiting for mom while she's back there seeing the doctor. And the nurse is just kind of looking over the corner of the counter thinking, what is this? All these children. And they're not bouncing off the walls or anything.

They're just sitting there so nice and reading books and speaking kindly to each other. God wants our children to be different. Why? Because they represent His holy character.

That's why. And represent a message of the gospel. The places where you go, they won't be the same.

Oh, my friend, don't go where everybody else is leaving. So interesting to me. You know, I meet all these Mennonite people down through the last 22 years.

And sometimes, and I don't know who I'm talking to, but sometimes you Mennonite people confuse me. I don't understand you. It's like, you're going this way and I'm going this way.

And for a little while, we see each other and we can talk a while, but it seems like you're going where I came from. How could this be? And the music that I burned before the Lord Jesus was in a bonfire. You're playing it.

And the movies that I renounced and walked away from and said, I'll never darken the door of a theater again. You're going there. I tell you, we're going different ways.

Where are you going, my friend? God's people are supposed to be different. You say, I'm so sick and tired of putting on these holy clothes and having nothing else with that. I know.

I know. But don't overreact, my friend. Don't throw away something that's good and right.

Go to the Bible and test it out. Hold on to that which is good and add to it other things that God may give you. Listen, if you are going to follow God's Word in this departing culture, you will be different.

Amen? You will be different. Your friends will change. How you handle your money will change.

Many practical things in your life will change and this is very important because people are looking for practical answers to real problems in their lives. They don't know how to handle life. They need an example.

Let's give them something to look at. Let's turn their eyes in the grocery store when our children walk so patiently beside us and they're not screaming and fussing and carrying on for a candy bar and they won't stop screaming until they get it. Let's give them something to look at as we relate to our husbands or our wives.

Let's give them something to look at by the way we live and everything we do. In all things, let us adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things, brothers and sisters. A holy life.

A holy life, my friends. That's an influence, isn't it? People see that. They will take note of it.

But that's not enough. God wants more than that for the church of Jesus Christ. He also wants us to be filled with the graces of humility.

Jesus laid the foundation of the New Testament Christian life when He gave those beautiful beatitudes or the beautiful attitudes that are found there in Matthew 5. He laid the foundation of true Christianity in the

New Testament when He said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.

And all the rest of the blessings that He gave there, we'll call them this morning the beautiful attitudes of the graces of humility. If there was ever a day and an age when the people looking on need to see the attitudes of brokenness and openness and humility, it's this day that we live in. I'll never forget some years ago when a young lady came into our midst.

I think it was during a week of meetings, if I remember right. It was a young lady that came into our midst. She didn't look like us.

Not at all. But she was there. And you know, the first day or so, she wasn't sure about this place, but she was there.

And along about Wednesday or Thursday night, God broke in. And all of a sudden, God's people broke up and started opening up and acknowledging their needs. And an altar call was given.

And a bunch of people went to the altar. And this young lady went to the altar too. And into a prayer room she went with a bunch of other people.

And all this circle of people, they just started breaking their heart and opening up their lives and humbling themselves and saying it like it really is, you know. And this young lady sat there in the middle of that circle and she was thinking these thoughts. These people have needs just like I do.

It seems like it's safe here. Maybe I could open up my life and get my need met. These people seem like they're real.

And she opened up her life there in that circle and God changed her and she's changed to this day. Hallelujah! I know her very well. I know she's changed to this day.

How did that happen? Because of the graces of humility in the hearts of God's people. The beautifying graces of humility. The beatitudes, the beautiful attitudes graced upon God's people walking through a proud and an arrogant world in humility and brokenness.

Oh, my brothers and sisters, this is the church of Jesus Christ. This is the church beautiful, having been graced by the beautiful attitudes that we find in Matthew 5. But that's not enough. God wants more than that.

He wants our hearts and our lives to be filled with love. It's not enough just to have a practical holy life. It's not enough to be humble.

Our heart needs to be filled with love. What do I mean by that? A heart that is open to others. Open to others.

Holiness left to itself can be harsh, judgmental, pharisaical and untouchable. Did you know that you can give a silent message to the world around you? You can look at me, but please don't touch. You can give a silent message to a world around you that says, stay away from me.

Or you can grace that beautiful, practical, holy life that you're living with an open heart of love to a world around you which sends out a silent message that says, welcome, welcome, welcome! Come talk to me!

Oh, listen, brothers and sisters, I agree with Brother Keith when he said, holiness without love is ugliness, my friend. It's ugliness. Praise God for a practical, holy life.

...that God has showed to us. We want them. I love them.

I appreciate them. And I'm not ashamed of them. But, oh, that God would grace our practical, holy life with an open heart of love to a world around us.

Going through the grocery store, reaching out to those that are around us. Good morning. Isn't it a beautiful day? How are you today? Oh, God's just so good to me.

Just open, just bright, just cheerful. You know, your attitude just says, come, come, come. I'm touchable.

You can talk to me. I'd like to talk to you. I'll be your friend.

I'll share with you. You come to me. Listen, that's giving away.

There's a silent message that comes out of a heart that's open and free with other people that says to them, come, come. And it should be in the church, and it should be in our lives when we go outside the church, and here and there, and all the places where we go. It should be there.

A love-filled life. A heart that cares, that reaches out. One that is free, joyful, that touches other people's lives.

That's powerful, brothers, sisters. That's powerful. When was the last time you sweetly blessed that gas station attendant or that grocery store lady that's working behind the counter there? When was the last time you showered some sweet dust upon some mechanic who was fixing your car as you walked in there and just blessed him and poured honey all over him? When was the last time you did that? And gave out that silent message that says, if you ever need help, you can come to me.

I'm touchable. I'm not at a museum with glass around it where you just walk up there and look at me and go away and wonder. You can walk right through the glass and touch me.

That's what our heart's attitude should be saying. Brothers and sisters, we've been left in this lost and dying world to win it! That's why we're here! But that's not enough, brothers and sisters. That's not enough.

Praise God for a practical holy life. Praise God for these attitudes of humility. Praise God for a heart of love that wants to reach out to others.

But that's not enough. We also must have an anointed life. An anointed life.

Now that's powerful. In 2 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 14, Paul says these words, Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph. How? In Christ.

Don't forget that. That's how we all triumph. In Christ.

No other way. And in Christ also this happens, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish.

To the one we are a savor of death unto death, and to the other a savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? Paul is speaking here in these verses about the fragrance of an anointed life.

There, listen brothers and sisters, this is a perfume that you can wear all you want.

It's the fragrance of an anointed life. It's the mysterious influence of the Holy Ghost upon God's people. That's what Paul is speaking about here.

It's beautiful. It's not enough to have a holy life. It's not enough to have a love-filled life.

It's not enough just to have attitudes of humility. God wants His people to be anointed. There is a mysterious working that takes place in a world around us when we are anointed with the Holy Ghost.

Study the book of Acts and you will see. It's there when you are anointed. Did you ever consider this? You become literally a living epistle.

A living epistle. And if you are not anointed with the Holy Ghost, praise God for dead letter, but you are a dead letter. You can be a dead letter this morning or you can be a living epistle of Jesus Christ.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3, but if the anointing of the Holy Ghost is not on my holy life, all I am is a walking dead letter of the Bible. We all now praise God for the dead letter of the Bible. We have it in our hands, but every one of us in this room, we know there's a big difference between reading the dead letter of this book and sitting down with the Spirit of the living God and reading this book.

And it's the same way with you and I in our lives. We can walk through this world without the anointing of the Holy Ghost upon us. And yes, people can see something.

And yes, they'll see the truth. And yes, it's right to look the way you look. And yes, it's right to act the way you act.

But it is simply dead letter unless it's anointed with the sweet fragrance of the Holy Ghost. The church beautiful is made comely by the sweet fragrance of Jesus Christ through the Holy Ghost. That's the church beautiful, brothers and sisters.

And what does that make us? That makes us little Christs all over the earth. You see, the word Christ means the anointed one. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Thou art the anointed one, the Son of the living God. Now, that makes us little Christs, little anointed ones going everywhere with the anointing of God's Spirit upon us. Think about it! What a privilege we have! You must have the power of the Spirit of God upon you.

You say, oh, now wait a minute, brother. You're getting charismatic. No, I'm not.

How about the Bible? How about the Bible? The Bible talks about the Holy Ghost. It's a sin to not be filled with the Holy Ghost. Did you know that? We are going to be judged out of this book someday.

And if we end up without the grace of God and the power of God upon our lives, you are going to be judged for it. We must be filled with the Holy Ghost. He is the one who draws a sinner.

He is God's voice speaking to the depths of somebody's heart. You can't do that. You know, we can't do that.

We can say words and we'll say more about that later, but if the Spirit of God isn't there speaking to the heart of that man or that woman, it is not going to do anything. He is the illuminator. He is the one who

opens up their eyes.

He is the one who convicts the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come. He is the one! We need the flow of this influence upon our lives, brothers and sisters. Have you been filled with the Holy Ghost? I said it the other evening.

I think I'll say it again. Remember old George Brunk, the revivalist? Old George Brunk. There was a day when he walked out of the church building on Sunday morning after one more dry Sunday morning service and said, I am not going to do that again.

I am not going to do that again. That is the last dry service that I'm going to sit through. He told his wife, he said, I'm going into my closet and I'm not coming out until God makes me another man.

And if God doesn't make me another man, I'm through with the ministry. I'm not going to get up and preach ever again. And he went into his closet.

And I don't know how long he stayed in there, but he stayed in there a long time and he wrestled with God. And God wrestled with him. And when he came out of there, he was another man.

And the rest is history. Revival broke out in Mennonite churches all over this land. And a breath of fresh air came through the dead formalism of a religious people.

Because one man said, I'm not going on without the Holy Ghost. Maybe there's some men and women in this room this morning, you need to get in your closet and say, I'm not coming out of there until God does something to me. Yet I know that I have the anointing of the Spirit of God upon me.

But that's not enough, brothers and sisters. Praise God for it. It's the church beautiful, but there's more to the church beautiful than what I've already said.

You say, brother, that's enough. Enough. Hold on.

We can't take anymore. We're just looking at the church beautiful this morning. We're just dreaming dreams and seeing visions this morning.

We're just looking into the Word of God to see what the heart of God is for the church of Jesus Christ upon the earth. So in light of that revelation, which we find in the New Testament, that's not enough. It's more than that.

God wants us to have a speaking life. Praise God for a practical holy life that people can see. Praise God for a love-filled life.

Praise God for the attitudes of humility upon us. And praise God for the anointing of the Holy Ghost. But that's not enough.

God wants us to open up our mouth. Now this is where it separates between the men and the boys. Right here.

God wants us to open up our mouth. We read the Scriptures already, but let me just remind you of them again. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

How many of you are here that got saved by hearing a preaching? Whether it was one-on-one or in a meeting. Let me see your hands. How many of you were saved by preaching? Yeah? Probably about two-thirds of the people in this room.

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Now what do you suppose the devil is going to work the hardest on if that is the way that God ordained to save souls? He's going to do everything he can to shut our mouths. Just keep quiet! You can look the way you look.

You can act the way you act. You can be a Christian. You can go to church.

You can have your prayer meetings. Just keep your mouth shut! Because that's the way that God has ordained that souls get saved. Can you see the device of the enemy, brothers and sisters? You take that person who has a holy life and attitudes of humility and a heart full of love and an anointing upon him and get that person to open up their mouth and look out.

Oh, look out, look out, look out! It's through the voice that heart speaketh to heart. Imagine what it would be like if while you go through the grocery store line all of a sudden, after you've built a bit of rapport there and there's that openness that's coming from you and the grocery store attendant knows who you are. Imagine if you would stop that one morning, look down into the eyes of her heart and say, Oh my friend, let me ask you a question this morning.

And you'd do it with a burden, not an arrogant attitude, you know, not a condemning attitude. They don't need that. You do it with a burdened heart and you look into the eyes of the heart and you say, Oh my friend, let me ask you a question this morning.

If you died today, would you go to heaven? Oh, those are powerful words spoken from a life that we've just been speaking about here this morning. Those are powerful words. How's your soul's relationship with God? Are you ready to meet God? That's powerful.

Some of you, many of you, will understand what I'm saying. We live in Lancaster County. We have for 22 years now.

I don't live there because I would like to. I live there because God tells me to live there. We don't get to choose where we live.

Amen? I've lived in Lancaster County for the last 22 years. One of the things that has grieved me from the first day I got to that county was the tourism. First day, we're on a walk out there not far from Brother Moses' house that he was renting back in those days 22 years ago and a whole busload of tourists pull up while my family and I are out on a walk.

Vroom! That pulls the bus. Everybody runs to the one side of the bus and sticks their cameras out. Click, click, click, click, click, click, click.

Everybody takes a picture of me and my family. I thought, oh Lord, what? And I've thought many times, you know, Lancaster County could clean the tourism out of that county in six months if we would just open up our mouths. Amen? I mean, they would hightail it out of there so fast and the news would get out real fast.

Don't go to that place anymore. Everywhere you go, somebody with a sincere heart speaks to your heart and you feel guilty and you feel troubled and all kinds of things go on and you don't feel like getting out and riding on the rides anymore. Don't go to Lancaster County.

The pie's good, but oh, there's a lot of other things there that just aren't very good anymore. And it's the people of God who are anointed, who are living a holy life, who will open up their mouth and speak to those tourists about Jesus. You know, it's very interesting to me, brothers and sisters, that wherever there is persecution, this whole issue is the issue with the persecuted church.

And they all claim religious freedom. Religious freedom. India says religious freedom, but they burn their church houses down and kill the Christians.

China says we have religious freedom, but they kill the Christians in mass and put them in prison. In Russia it was the same way. But do you know what they tell them in all those countries? Here's what they tell them.

Can you hear the serpent in these words? They say to the men in prison and the women in prison, Look, it's hard here in prison. Wouldn't you like to go home? We'll let you go home. We don't care if you're a Christian.

You can be a Christian. There's religious freedom in our country. You can be a Christian.

We don't care if you worship God. You can pray. It's alright if you read a Bible.

But don't you open up your mouth to anybody else about it. Now, if you'll just keep your mouth shut, you can go home. What would you do? What would you do? I wonder what we would do.

We have all the freedom that you could imagine. And no words. Ah, the church.

How does it say in the Song of Solomon? Hear these words. Bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners. That's the church, brothers and sisters.

Woo! Marching forward, armor on, moving out into a world around them, graced with the graces of humility, living a holy life that they can see, having practical answers to real problems in a real world, and opening their mouth and challenging and speaking and ministering to the people to tell them the message which will change their life. That's it. Oh, that's beautiful.

Oh, those are beautiful. But that's not enough. You say, how could it get any better? Or worse? Depending on how you're looking at it this morning.

How could it be? Well, I just have one more, and maybe you could find five or six more. The point is, we are to represent God's holy name on this earth. That's why we're here.

That's what the church is all about. So here's the last point in our message this morning. A united heart.

A heart that has been drawn together with other hearts into a local New Testament church. That's God's will. Praise God for your holy life.

Praise God for your heart full of love. Praise God for the anointing that is upon you. Praise God for your attitudes of humility.

And praise God if you're willing to open up your mouth, but you're only one person. Jesus also died to bring these little Christ into assemblies all over the world. It is true.

The fullest, clearest measure of Christ cannot be seen in any one person. It can't be. Christ is most beautifully seen in a body.

And that is a local body, brothers and sisters. A local body. The care that He has for mankind cannot be fully expressed in one man or woman, but it can be in a body.

The beauty of His holy character cannot be completely manifested in one person, but it can be in a body. A city that is set on a hill has many lights. And so also does the church.

So we're just talking a little bit here about what happens when God brings a whole bunch of these fanatics like we've been speaking about here this morning all into one place. Amen? Then you have the ekklesia, the called out assembly of believers who worship the living God. Here they come.

It's Sunday morning. They've been walking with God. She's been walking with God.

He's been walking with God. They've been walking with God. They've been set apart by God.

They've been set apart to God. They've been reveling in the joy of God. They've been living a life for God all through the week.

And here they come. It's Sunday morning. One family, another family, another one, and another one, and they all come together in one place with hearts in tune to sing God's praise, with hearts burning with love for Jesus, with hearts desiring to be a blessing to those that are around them.

Here they come all into one place. It's Sunday morning, brothers and sisters. And it's like the Queen of Sheba, you know? She heard.

She heard. And it's good to hear. Oh yeah? I heard about you, Solomon.

I heard about your city. I heard about your people. I heard about your wisdom.

But now that I have seen and heard it, the half was not told me. And that's the way it is. When people hear things, they're only going to get half.

But when they come, they're going to get a full revelation of what Jesus Christ is all about. Or they should be when they come to a church. Like it says there in 1 Corinthians 14, Thus they shall fall down on their knees and confess that God is in you of a truth.

That's the assembly. They come to church. They come to visit.

They sit down on the third row in the back. Somebody comes up to them and reaches out to them. Good morning.

Who are you? So glad to have you here. Praise God. I hope you feel at home.

Hey, do you have a place for lunch today? Would you come to my house when the service is over? Yeah. Okay. And then they sit down and somebody else comes up.

Hey, good morning. What's your name? Where are you from? So glad to have you. Hey, do you have a place for lunch today? Well, yeah.

Somebody already asked me. Oh, okay. Good to have you here.

And they go their way. This happens, you know, several times. And then all of a sudden, they realize everybody's coming together and they're sitting down.

Somebody gets up to lead a song. And all of a sudden, boom! Worship! And God's people are full of love for God. And they begin to worship God.

And they sing with all their hearts. People are just overwhelmed. The way these people worship and sing.

Wow, this is unusual. And then somebody gets up and preaches a message out of the Word of God. And it's clear.

And it's simple. And it cuts right to their heart. And then they open the meeting up and somebody stands and speaks.

And somebody else stands and speaks. And then somebody breaks their heart over a need in their life. And they begin to weep and ask for prayer.

The church stops and prays for them. And then somebody else stands up and shares. And here's this person sitting in the back and they're just getting convicted and convicted and convicted.

And it's as if God called their number and gave everything to all the people in the church. That's how they're feeling. It's like the hearts and the intents of my heart are all made manifest here this morning.

How do these people know who I am? And they thus fall down on their knees and say that God is in that place. That's God's will, my brothers and sisters. That's what the church is supposed to be.

That glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Holy and without blemish. Hallelujah.

That's God's church. It's the church beautiful. Now I want to say in closing, just with a little balance here, you can have some of this and not have others.

There are churches who have many, many practical things right in their lives, but there's no love there and there's no anointing upon them. And we praise God for every practical thing they have in their life, but God wants more. And there are churches just like the Corinthian church that they had an anointing there, but their lives were a confusion and Paul had to exhort them and rebuke them strongly to repent and change their lives.

So you may think, you know, as you're sitting here today, well, my church, I'm not sure where my church fits. Maybe you have some, maybe you don't have others. But all I'm saying is, this is God's vision this morning.

This is God's heart for the church. The church beautiful, holy, without spot and without blemish. That's the church.

And think about the life of Jesus. You know, Jesus had every one of these points and ten more that I didn't hit today. Jesus had them all.

But, when we all come together, we can manifest the very image of Jesus Christ to a world around us. Brothers and sisters, that's the vision. I want to just read something to you in closing.

Something that I found the other day that's worthy. You all know who A.W. Tozer is, don't you? How many know who A.W. Tozer is? Let me see your hands. Way up in the air.

Okay. He was one of the evangelical church's last prophets. He died in 1963.

He wrote these words in about 1950. Hear them. The church's mightiest influence is felt when she is different from the world in which she lives.

Her power lies in her being different. This power rises with the degree in which she differs and sinks as the difference diminishes. It rises and it falls.

It rises and it falls. According to that. This is so fully and clearly taught in the Scriptures and so well illustrated in church history that it is hard to see how we can miss it.

But miss it we do. For we hear constantly that the church must try to be as much like the world as possible, accepting, of course, where the world is too sinful. Don't want to be like that.

And then he says these words. Let us plant ourselves, and this is my exhortation to you this morning, brothers and sisters. Let us plant ourselves on the hill of Zion and invite the world to come over to us.

But never under any circumstances will we go over to them. The cross is the symbol of Christianity and the cross speaks of death, separation and never of compromise. No one ever compromised with the cross.

Hallelujah! The cross separated between the dead and the living. The timid and the fearful will cry, Extreme! Extreme! And they will be right. The cross in its essence is all that is extreme and final.

The message of Christ is a call across a gulf from death to life, from sin to righteousness, from Satan unto God. Brothers and sisters, let us also stand on the holy hill of Zion and call out to a world around us, Come over to us! We are the people of the living God. This is the church beautiful.

This is her responsibility upon this earth. This is what God saved us for, brothers and sisters. Don't you doubt it.

It is what God saved us for. He is looking for a people who will represent His holy character upon this earth one more time. And in this land where we live, He is looking for a people who will represent His holy character again upon this land where we live.

Oh, my dear people, let us be that people. Let us get things clear that need to be clear. Let's get out of this pendulum swing thing, you know.

Aye, we had too much of that, so we're going all the way over here. Let's find a balance of the Scriptures and be the church beautiful in these last days and give the world something to see and something they can hear that will open up their blind eyes and the glorious light of the gospel can shine in and they'll be saved. That's God's part for us.

That's why we're alive. Do you get it? Do you see it? Do you want it? Oh, I plead with us this morning. We will go for it with all of our hearts.

With all of our hearts. Let's bow for a word of prayer. God, our Father, we see this morning it's beautiful, Father, what we see.

We bow our hearts to Your will, to the revelation of Your Word this morning, God, and we pray, Lord, do what You have to do to make us what we need to be. Father, I think of the church at home down there in Leola, Pennsylvania. God, You know how we fall short of this beautiful revelation, God.

But You also know how we are crying to You daily that You will make us this kind of a church, God. Oh, Father, I pray would You spark a fire in our hearts again this morning and cause us to move forward with a vision that we cannot stop until we have, I pray this in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.

God bless you.

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