

# Is the Bride of Christ Ready?

by Don Courville

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*This sermon emphasizes the need for the church to prepare itself as the bride of Christ by recognizing its shortcomings and deepening its relationship with Him through prayer and repentance.*

**Duration:** 57:19

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Revelation 2:14-15, Revelation 3:21, Revelation 19:7, Revelation 19:9

**Topics:** "Bride Of Christ"

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## Description

In the video, the preacher highlights the disturbing trend of false teachings and exploitation of vulnerable people in Africa. He describes how impoverished individuals in Africa are giving all their money to a preacher who owns multiple luxury cars, while they struggle to feed their own children. The preacher emphasizes that these false teachings lead to damnation and warns against being lukewarm in one's faith. He also references the biblical passage of Revelation 3:14-22, where Jesus rebukes the lukewarm church and urges them to repent and seek true riches from Him. The preacher concludes by emphasizing the importance of the last day's church, the bride of Christ, being prepared for His return.

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## Transcript

Stacey and I were at a joint session between the House and the Senate this week, and a famous and a well-known minister opened up the session with prayer. And both of us were bitterly grieved because this renowned minister would not pray in the name of Jesus. And that's grievous.

And our government is in more need now than it's ever been for Jesus Christ. You know, the separation of church and state was never the plan of God. God's never called us to live a divided life or to have a divided house.

And we need to be praying for our country. You know, you may think that this country in its present course is irreversible, but with God, all things are possible. With God, all things are possible.

We need to hope. We need to hope. We need to pray for our nation.

And listen, if you've got the mindset, well, I'm not going to pray for our president, you're in error, friend. You are in error. And I don't agree with the decisions that are being made.

But one thing I do know is that the Bible tells me to pray for our leadership, that we might live a quiet and peaceable life. We need to pray for the kingdom of God to come and to be established within our land,

within our nation. And we need to believe what this says.

If his people who are called by his name will humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways, then he will hear from heaven. He'll forgive our sins and he'll heal our land. Despite what the government does, he'll heal our land.

The land is made up of the people, not the government. The land is made up of the people. And our government is to be a government of the people and for the people.

And God has the power because his power is unrestricted and unlimited to work powerfully within the confines of our leadership within this nation. Amen. Does not the Bible say that God holds the king's heart within his hand and turneth it whether whatsoever he wills? Amen.

That's what it says. We need to begin to trust God instead of to spend all of our time running down those in authority. We need to start crying out to God in brokenness for our nation.

Amen. Christians are very quick to be judgmental and skeptical and to not be faithful. We need to learn to turn our attention.

And I'm as guilty as you, by the way. We need to all come to a realization that we need to pray and to exercise faith and to believe God for the nation that we're raising our children and our grandchildren in. We need to believe God.

We need to pray and believe God to send righteous men into places of prominence in our nation, into leadership positions. We need to pray for righteousness, exalteth the nation. But sin is a reproach to any people.

We need to pray and believe. And we can do that. We can do that.

We can, by the power of God, by the working of the Holy Spirit, we can pray and believe. Then we can see the course of this nation turn back to the Father, to the heart of the Father once again. Turn with me in your Bible to the 19th chapter of Revelation.

Today, we're going to talk about the bride of Christ. And the message title is, is the bride, is Christ's bride ready? Sister Jerry, it's good to see you. I know what you're thinking.

You was the one that wasn't here last week, Pastor. And you're right. I was a weak tardy.

In verse seven, the Bible says, let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him. For the marriage of the lamb is calm and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her, it was granted that she should be arrayed and fine linen, clean and white.

For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he saith unto me, right? Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the lamb. And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God.

I want to emphasize the short statement that we are to rejoice and be glad and to give honor to him for the marriage of the lamb has come. And his wife, that is the bride of Christ, hath made herself ready. This is talking about the last day's church.

This is talking about the glorious and the beautiful bride that Jesus Christ is coming for. This is the one that the 25th chapter of Matthew is making inference to. That the five wise virgins who had oil and their lamps were trimmed, who were ready for the appearing of her Lord, for the coming of her groom.

And then we know the midnight cry was heralded and that she went in and the door was closed. And when the door is closed, no man can open. The true church of Jesus Christ, even in this hour is anxiously awaiting the return of her Lord as a bride awaits her groom's appearance in the marriage supper of the lamb.

Beloved is going to be a very wonderful experience to those who endure to the end. And I don't know all of the the ins and outs, nor do any of us, nor has it been made readily readily available in the word of God. But we know that it's going to be a spectacular thing whenever that door closes and that consummation takes place between the bridegroom and the bride.

Beloved, the body of Christ is the bride of Christ. But yet, friends, in our postmodern church. There are many who have not made themselves ready.

Ready as in the context as being spoken of in this opening text, because their garments have become stained with the flesh and their hearts are yet unrepentant. And so it's my desire this morning to take just a few moments out of our our busy schedules, and I want to examine three. Specific areas that are mentioned also in the book of Revelation, whereby the modern church has become tainted.

It's imperative, beloved, that all of us in this place, including me, that we all examine our hearts as I minister and expound upon these three anomalies or these three wrongs, and we need to measure these according to the scriptures and to see if our heart is indeed or if it has indeed been influenced by these things that we're going to mention. And it could be possible, beloved, that there are those among us here today that have not made themselves ready in the Holy Spirit of God is yearning to convict our hearts of the indwelling sin and also to trouble the waters inwardly, the waters of our soul unto the healing of these inordinate passions that are indwelling. Remember that the Holy Spirit.

Did not give this message. To the pastor down the street, he's given it to us here locally. Also, to those who, by providence, visit our website and download this message on the Internet.

And I think that our monthly. We're a little bigger church than what it looks like on the surface, as we have a weekly participant level of around 18000 people. From the last we knew, so I'm going to mention three areas.

whereby the strength of sin is asserting its power and its influence in the modern church, and it's also possible for it to be asserting its power here with us. It's important that we know that these sins. Have not been identified by me, your pastor, but they've been identified by the Holy Spirit, the author of the word of God.

So I'm going to talk about three areas. The first one is we're going to talk about is the failure to recognize our own in it or innate wickedness. Secondly, we're going to talk about allowing our first love to become tainted with worldly involvements.

And then finally, we're going to talk about cultivating an appetite for heretical doctrines. So let's go ahead and turn to Revelation chapter three. We're going to talk about one of the maladies of the modern church is that we have failed to recognize our own innate wickedness, our own inherent depravity.

And Revelations chapter three. We know the passage quite well. We have in time past identified and spoken about the church of Laodicea.

And the scripture I want to illuminate is on down in the text, so we're going to begin in verse 14. And go through the whole course of this of this address that the Lord Jesus Christ, as we see here is addressing the church. The words are printed in red, signifying this is Jesus speaking in verse 14 and to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, right? These things says the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot, but I wish that you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth. Because you say I am rich, have and become have become wealthy and have need of nothing and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire that you may be rich and white garments that you may be clothed that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed and anoint your eyes with eyes so that you may see as many as I love. I rebuke and chase and therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him and he with me to him who overcomes.

I will grant to sit with me on my throne as I also overcame and sat down with my father on his throne. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the spirit says to the church. So we're talking about we have in our generation and within the modern church of failure to recognize our own inherent evil and wickedness.

Here we find in the 17th verse of chapter three, the Lord Jesus Christ himself addressing the last day church. It is an assembly of believers who do not recognize that they are horribly depraved inwardly by nature. We see this in today's religious circles.

We sing songs that I am the righteousness of God and Christ and beloved. There is truth in that. But beloved, there must be a revelation that we in ourselves are evil and our hearts are deceptive and our hearts are depraved and that the righteousness that we stand in is not our own righteousness, but it's the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And it is only conferred to us as we trust in him. We stand in his righteousness. And so let me get back to my notes here.

Well, maybe I shouldn't. I don't know. And so again, we see that the Lord is addressing the seven churches of Asia.

He's demonstrating his love and rebuking them for their sin. In this address here, he illuminates indwelling sin and he rebukes it as an act of divine love. We have a real hard time with that in our generation, don't we? We don't see discipline.

We don't see a rebuke as an act of sovereign or divine love. You know why? Because selfishness and self-centeredness failures to fails to accept any challenge to any other way than the way to which we are living now. But also, it's important that we understand that these are written.

These examples are written to us. They're written for us, lest we to follow after their folly and their example. The church of Laodicea had several sins that were harbored within them, within the mix of their

congregation.

But one of them stands out, I believe, as a glowing ember in our present generation. It's the church that has forgotten that she is inherently wicked. She boasts of a righteousness that is not within her possession.

And today we have in the mindsets within the modern Christianity that is mirroring what we see here in Revelation. It's a mindset that boasts of righteousness while forgetting of whose righteousness it is that we claim. But it is not the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed by faith that it's speaking of.

It's talking about a righteousness here that self-described by the works of pious activities. It's what's being addressed. This is a benign, not an act of righteousness.

It's benign having no life within it. It's self-wrought. It's also self-centered.

We also must understand that this righteousness in which the true church stands in is imputed. The true imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ stands together as the Christian is wholly mindful. Listen, this is important as the Christian is wholly mindful of his innate wickedness or his inherent wickedness and also of the paradigms of the folly of his own heart.

The righteousness of Jesus Christ is only valued when it is experienced through the realities of our own wicked hearts and what we truly deserve. Amen. This righteousness is received by faith, but it's given by grace.

This is an unmerited imputation. It's an unmerited imputation. What we merit is death.

But God, by his grace, gives what we don't deserve. In fact, he gives the opposite of what we deserve. He gives us life, whereas we deserve death.

This is a failure to recognize the evils of our own hearts while claiming a righteousness that we do not value. This is a church or a religious assembly and even a belief system that celebrates a righteousness without identifying the inward unrighteousness. And therefore, the whole system is a mess.

Beloved, what makes me celebrate the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ the most is the revelation of what I truly deserve, the revelation of who I truly am. And beloved, until I leave this body, I love it until I leave this as long as I live on this earth and a journey in this pilgrimage, I live my life by by trusting the righteousness of Jesus Christ to be the grounds of my acceptance and the beloved and before God. It's not in my praying, it's not in my confessing, as some circles may believe.

But it's in the finished work of Jesus Christ. And listen, my wholehearted cleaving unto his righteousness as my only merit before God, my only merit, my only stance before God is the righteousness of Jesus Christ that covers the shame of my nakedness and my sinfulness. And there are those that stand and shake their fists and say, I am righteous, I am righteous, I have no sin in me.

And beloved, they're blind, just as Laodicea. They say, I am rich and have increasing goods and have need of nothing, but they're blind, not even knowing that the Lord sees them depraved. And beloved, we need to know that we are a generation, that we are a people and that we are a race that has become grossly fallen and that we are covered with shame.

Our hearts are filled with sin, every inordinate and every vile and every evil thing is within the very composition that makes us up and it's passed down from generation to generation. And the only hope that we have to have a just standing in the eyes of God is the finished work of Christ and us holding on with the only hope that Christ is become our righteousness. And beloved, this righteousness has come by and through faith, it's God blessing us with what we do not deserve, and that's a righteousness that wholly belongs to his son.

But that's not the righteousness that's being mentioned in this passage. This is the the gross failure to recognize the evil and the darkness of our own hearts while claiming a righteousness that we do not value. Laodicea saw herself as rich.

Laodicea saw herself as increased with goods. Laodicea saw herself as having need of nothing. They did not know that they were grievously wicked in the eyes of a just and a holy God.

And their celebration of their righteousness was in vain. They did not identify their innate wickedness just as many today in our culture. Beloved, there is a mood that exists today, especially in certain doctrinal circles that negates the realities of personal depravity.

It's a system that refutes the importance of understanding the depths of our innate wickedness and evil depravity. This system teaches its followers that they are as righteous as Jesus Christ and acceptable in the eyes of God. And these depraved and deceived followers live their lives in an unrighteous righteousness that is amiss at the root level.

Their profession is that they are righteous. Their profession is that they are holy. But their motives are corrupt, being lovers of temporal things and not lovers of God.

Secondly, the second wrong in the modern church that is keeping her from being ready for the coming of Jesus Christ, that's keeping her from the beauty that our Lord requires is allowing our first love to become tainted by worldly involvements. Revelation chapter two, verse one to the angel of the church of Ephesus, right? These things say he who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamp stands. I know your works, your labor, your patience, that you cannot bear those who are evil.

You have tested those who say they are apostles and are not. And have found them liars. These people are doctrinally astute.

They have a doctrine that is correct. But we find something like lacking. It says that you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not.

You found them liars. You have persevered and have patience and have labored for my name's sake and have not become weary. Quite possibly beloved, this could be a strong missionary church.

That are doctrinally astute, doctrinally, doctrinally sound. The services I am sure were quite lively. I'm sure the sermons were quite doctrinally profound and accurate.

The Lord Jesus says, I have still yet something against you. You have left your first love. You have left your first love.

Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen and repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent. That this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear to hear the spirit says to the churches, let him hear.

To him who overcomes, I'll give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Well, this this is a church that is a doctrinally sound church. I mean, this church is engaged in good works.

They're they're doing great things within the community. They're doing great things in in the nations. But over the course of time, within the security of doctrinal truism, that the feeding upon doctrine alone without fanning the relationship side of the Christian life, they have become weakened in the first love.

They never wavered in doctrinal purity, but they began to dilapidate whenever it comes to relational grace. They're holding fast to doctrine, but yet not cultivating that intimacy with the person of Christ. It is quite possible to be secure and sound in doctrine, but yet to be a mess in relationship.

And this is what we see. These are those they never forsook their identity with Christ, only their love for him. He says, I have something against the thou has left by first love.

How many of you know that it's within human nature to cling to only one thing at a time? We rarely leave one thing until another thing comes along that we value more. And then soon we have that in our possession. We value the car that we're driving until we set our affections upon another.

And then we begin to value that more than our own. So we work our magic then until we let go of what we have to lay hold of what we desire more. And this is the case in Ephesus.

And it has a message for today, for those that hold fast to the name of Jesus Christ within the paradigms of the modern church. There's a mood that has crept into the church and into the hearts of church going people that profess a Christ they do not love. Professing a Christ without loving Christ.

Their mouths are committed to their confession, but their hearts are committed abroad. Thank you. They've become lovers of this present world.

Our Lord Jesus addressed this in Mark 4, 18 and 19. And these are they which are sewn amongst thorns, such as hear the word and then the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things. Enter in.

And it chokes the word. And it becometh unfruitful. And again, these are those that never forsake their identification with Christ, but they begin to relapse away from their love for Christ.

It's a fundamental woe, a fundamental wrong. The heart begins to depart, but the mouth never does. They're lovers of this present world, but their deceived hearts never allow their profession to change allegiances.

They practice and profess two different things. There are church members and their church members that labor day and night, but yet they labor day and night for the mammon that provides earthly things. But in the very quest of this, they abandon their Lord Jesus Christ by practice.

Not by profession. We sing songs still. We raise our hands.

We carry our Bibles. We still quote spiritual things on Facebook, but our hearts are committed to the pursuit of our possessions. We're committed to monetary assets, physical things that make this temporal life more pleasant and more comfortable.

And with the increase of labors for possession, come less and less desires and to honor and to love the one whom has begotten us by his own blood. And again, the deception is in our minds that we are wholly unaware of the change of allegiance. We still go to church.

We still carry our Bibles. We still can quote the scriptures, yet our hearts become more fond of the things of this present world that tend to our comfort and to our ease than for a relationship with Jesus Christ. We spend more and more time laying up for ourselves and thereby robbing our Lord of that which he has purchased.

And that is our hearts. Heaven no longer is our passion, but the things of this temporal life, such as hobbies and possessions and fashion, social networking, entertainment, and friends now hold our heart in bondage. But all the while we lift our hands and we sing a song to an offended God that does not hear the vials of our songs.

Amos 5, 23, take away from me the noise of thy songs. This is to talk to the church. Take away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy vials.

Beloved, this is a people that has began to pursue the things of this temporal life. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, holding fast to a form of godliness, yet denying the power of godliness, blocking the access, blocking our lives to what would make us truly godly. But yet our profession is quite different than our possession.

And today, beloved, we're living in doctoral circles where you confess it and you can have it. Bless the Lord. You just name it, claim it.

And we're teaching people that confession has power over possession. And beloved, it's heretical. You don't confess yourself into possession.

Beloved, we profess what we believe and we believe because Christ has given us the gift of faith. And we are lovers of God. But we want to have our hand in this till and this till and this till and still confess that we are children of God.

Following after the way of Balaam. Love of money, love of temporal pleasures, the love of temporal comforts. And they're choking out.

They're choking out while people are still singing songs to God. They're singing songs to an offended God. And it's choking out that relational grace, choking out the true life of God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

And then we find ourselves going through the motions just as the Church of Ephesus. We still have the doctrines correct. We still have the profession correct.

But the practices are nowhere near the profession. It's a malady of the modern church. That's keeping her garment stained.

That's keeping her from becoming the chaste virgin. The apostle Paul made inference to that is to be presentable unto Christ. Why is it that these pilgrims have so much allegiance to things that are not even of their kingdom? Why is it? Why is it that pilgrims, followers of Jesus Christ, citizens of heaven, inheritors by faith? Why is it that the desires are still for the kingdom from which they have come or supposedly have come? Why is it that our allegiance is to Christ and our hearts are still in Sodom? Thirdly, our generation and our, our religious generation has cultivated an appetite for doctrines that are heretical.

Revelation is chapter two, verse 14. Let's go to verse 12. And the angel of the church in paragraphs, right? These things says he who has the sort sharp two edges sort.

I know your works and where you dwell where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to my name and did not deny my faith. Even in the days in which Antipas was my faithful martyr who was killed among you where Satan dwells.

But I have a few things against you because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel to eat things, sacrifice to idols, to commit sexual immorality. Thus, you have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaites, which I hate, repent, or else I will come to you quickly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches.

To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna to eat and I will give him a white stone. And on the stone, a new name is written, which no one knows except him who receives it. I want to go back and draw special attention, but I have a few things against thee because thou hast there them who hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel to eat things, sacrifice unto idols, and to commit fornication.

So also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaites, which thing I hate. Emergent ideology is coming across this land as never before. It negates any absolute truths that God can never hate something.

Beloved, this is a miss. God is a sovereign king who has absolute standards, absolute principles. His word is a revelation of his character and his character is a character of principle.

Absolutes, but we're living in a day in time to where absolutes are going out the door and everything has fallen under the guise of relativism. It has. And we've drugged that into the local church.

Relativistic idealism, that God embraces every lifestyle. God embraces his people, even though they live in sin. Everybody's a child of God.

There is no. There is no. There is no distinctions.

But beloved, the word of God tells us that there are standards upon which his kingdom has built. That's why we continue and we have in between messages such as this, when the spirit of God just prompts my heart to pour something into the local body. Immediately is an immediate.

Challenge to things going on in the church, but we line up online have been building upon biblical revelation. What is true doctrine? Because there's so much coming against the church in this hour that is contrary to the doctrinal truths revealed in the Bible. Historic Christianity has been challenged by the lies of the adversary and by the flimsy desires of wicked men to try to press upon modern Christendom, a belief system that has been founded upon the sinking system of man's innate desires.

Instead of the standards of the word of God and the authority of this book is being challenged, the faith that we live for and should be willing to die for is being challenged as never before. And it's imperative in this hour for men standing behind the pulpit to spend exhaustive hours. Ministering upon the historic themes of the authoritative word of God and to establish what makes Christianity Christianity.

Because it's under assault and people are succumbing to lies. Preachers are not preaching doctrine because doctrine offends because the heart. Naturally is inordinate and it seeks for justification, excuse for sinful living.

And we would begin to to embrace any doctrine that removes the standards. Pure biblical doctrine confronts and assails fallen humanity. Reveals fallen humanity for what fallen humanity is sinful, despitely wicked, awful, sinfully wicked.

Despitely wicked. It contrasts the depravity of men with the holy righteous requirements of God, to which mankind can never appease. But yet there's an intermediary in his name is Jesus Christ, who became sin that took the wrath of God and we hide in his righteousness.

Holy living for him and his glory. And these these truths are being challenged. And so this is a rebuke for the Church of Pergamos.

And they held fast to doctrines of demons while they mingled it together with the profession of faith. There were those amongst the church that held to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which is a doctrine that promoted indulgence. Eat and drink for tomorrow we die.

The doctrine of Balaam is a doctrine that centers around prosperity. Of course, there are no preachers of the prosperity doctrine today. Beloved, if you do not see it, you're a blind.

They had a profession of Christ, but their doctrines were tainted to suit their desires. Their wicked hearts had become indulgent. Their motives become perverse.

They began to miss contextualize passages from the Bible to endorse their perverted beliefs. Their hearts were yet in chains, the chains of pleasure and prosperity, while their profession seemed to be free. Because yet they did indeed profess Christ.

But yet the Christ they followed is yet another Christ and not the Christ, the Holy Son of God, who requires all of his followers to abandon everything and follow him. Die to live. Beloved, this is the belief that you can have Jesus Christ and this present world too.

It's a doctrinal tenet that correlates mammon with righteousness. That's the doctrine of Balaam. A doctrinal tenet that correlates or meshes together the righteousness of God with mammon or money.

It identifies righteousness by financial prosperity instead of faith alone in Jesus Christ. What did your righteousness has nothing to do with your bank account? But that's not what's being taught across America today. I watched a chilling video from Africa from a Nigerian evangelist.

These poor, poor people in Africa were running forward and throwing all their money at the feet of this preacher while he had five or six Rolls Royces. And these people didn't have enough bread to feed their children. And their hearts are strangely drawn towards it.

They'll give up everything for it. But yet the only one that's getting blessed is the man standing up there spewing the lies. Poisoning, feeding the sheep, just like a tick drawing off a dog's blood.

The only one getting healthy is the tick. This system teaches that the reward of righteousness is monetary. And without this effect, your faith is fraudulent.

Beloved, it's heretical. It's heretical. Any system that teaches the reward of righteousness is monetary is a defective doctrine.

It's a doctrine of Balaam. The doctrine that correlates monetary value with righteousness. This doctrine emphasizes your best life now.

But it does not prepare your heart for a kingdom that is built upon righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. It laces together New Testament redemption with the lusts of this present world. It's the mingling together of the holy and the profane.

It projects the holy name of Jesus as a means to gratify and to indulge the sinful and the innate desires. Whereas the Bible teaches us that these desires must be mortified by the spirit of God and nailed to Christ's cross. It's a Jesus without a cross, a Christianity without a sacrifice.

It's a Christianity that adds more to the corrupt heart of man, not a Christianity that requires the man's life and heart. It's a belief that God is the servant of man and not man, the servant of God. It's the belief that pleasure and the well-being of man is the chief end of mankind and not the biblical revelation of God's glory to be the man, the chief end of mankind.

But yet the profession. Might just be very much akin. The profession.

Just might be very much akin to biblical Christianity. But the heart of it is strangely a mess. In this new breed of Christianity, that is no Christianity, historical and biblical doctrines are not valued, nor are they emphasized.

In many evangelical circles, friends, doctrinal truth has become all but extinct. Those in the pew who are wholly unfamiliar with the sacred doctrines of the faith. They become tossed to and fro, thrown about as the Bible declares in Ephesians by every wind of false doctrine, chasing after every current fad that leads to nowhere.

And beloved. I made a statement on Facebook. I send out quotes.

Just encourage the body of Christ and to bring truth. But the chief threat to American Christianity stands behind his pulpits. A lot of this disorder is being taught by false pastors who are nothing other than hirelings.

They are not shepherds. They don't feed the chief of God. They bleed them.

They robbed their poor congregations of their hard earned money while they set in the seat of ease, making a living from the hard labors of other men. They drive BMWs and they wear Gucci suits and they live in million dollar homes and their doctrine justifies their extravagance. But beloved, God will judge them for it.

This system takes advantage of the greed that is inherently within the unregenerate, unregenerate, and it exploits them. As merchandise. Both Peter and Jude made mention of false prophets making merchandise of the people.

And this doctrine has become greatly coveted simply because the God of Mammon and the God of prosperity has become preeminent. It's drawing power is tremendous. His followers have become vast.

But beloved, it is the doctrine of Balaam, the God of prosperity and the God of wealth. It is the doctrine of the Nicolaites. Indulgence.

This system friend is so powerful and it's so preeminent today. If you speak against its hierarchy, if you speak against its leaders. In certain circles, it's almost as if you are blaspheming, blaspheming God himself.

Run away from a church. Flee from it. Your life is at risk.

Denounce these heretical and false doctrines. Flee from these lies. Put it to death at once for God's judgment is stored up against it and the fate of it is of damnation.

I'm loud. Sorry, kids. Our visitors probably go.

Oh, dear God, what we got ourselves into. I'm a very passionate person, so sometimes that comes through as aggression. Well, I am aggressive too.

These folks are used to it, but visitors come and it's somewhat strange. You know, I find that also to be a trend in the modern times that we're living in. I'm not used to this microphone yet.

The people of God have grown to accept that a man of God is supposed to be flimsy as a dime store pencil. Effeminate. Was it spoken of? John the Baptist, when they went out to see him in the wilderness, what did you come to see? What did you come to see? A reed shaken by the wind? Because I have a feeling they were probably saying he's too strong and I can imagine and partially can understand you brood of vipers who has fleed you, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come.

It is a little strong, but hey, the Holy Spirit that filled him is a very strong deity. Powerful, holy. And I think there could be somewhat of an indissoluble link between the flimsiness of those behind pulpits and the flimsiness of those in the pew.

Where are those that are stalwart? Godly. I agree with C.T. Studd, we need a baptism in masculine holiness. In our generation.

I've had people leave this church because I said that I'm too strong. Oh, we love our pastor. He's weak.

And you're listening to that. The word of God says that we're to be strong in the Lord and the power of his might. We're to be upright.

We're to be godly. We're to be pure in conversation and lifestyle. And we're to speak clearly.

We're speak clearly these truths and boldly. And we should never fluctuate. We should be strong.

The true bride of Jesus Christ is beautifying herself. And she's beautifying herself with truth, and she's beautifying herself with obedience. The oil spoken of that trimmed the lamps in the Matthew chapter 25 of

those wise virgins is the oil of godliness based on obedience.

A love relationship. Not a confession alone. But a people that live obediently to the true Lord of their heart and their lives.

I preached a sermon here some years ago. And the sermon was called Oil for Beauty. And my last scripture is in Esther 2, 12 to 14.

And it talks about a process of beautification. And beloved, that symbolizes this dispensation in which you and I are living in today. That this is a dispensation to where the bride is making herself ready.

In verse 12, it says, each young woman's turn came to go in to King. How do you say that? Acheras. Acheras.

After she had completed 12 months preparation, according to the regulations for the women, there were absolute standards. According to the regulations, all regulations, we don't believe in them. Come on.

For thus were the days of their preparation apportioned. Six months with the oil of myrrh, six months with the perfume, perfumes and preparations for beautifying women. Thus prepared each young woman went to the king and she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the women's quarters to the king's palace.

There's time for preparation. Six months preparation here. Six months preparations according to the regulations, according to the standards, according to the faith.

This is talking about and this is an actual story that happened. The wisdom of God is an amazing thing. This was all planned out according to his foreknowledge.

This is all planned out by the hand of omnipotence. This perfectly describes the bride of Christ preparing herself for her groom. This actually happened.

Esther was a person. These other young women were actually alive and these preparation processes happened perfectly in harmony with that which is to take place thousands of years later to the people who have been claimed by the lordship of Jesus Christ to the preparation of their meeting him on that day when they come together in consummation to be his bride forever. It blows me away.

It blows me away. The beloved we're living in a time to where we need to be preparing. I've mentioned three major anomalies that are in the modern church that are keeping her garments tainted and we need to search our hearts according to the word of God.

And see if these things are in us. We're living in a dispensation of preparation and the Holy Spirit is at work illuminating our maladies sanctifying our deficiencies purifying our sins that we might be a chaste virgin presentable to Christ. Hearing truth obeying truth and following Jesus Christ as we're being led by his Holy Spirit and he is the chief desire of our hearts.

This beloved is the only way that we will be ready at his beckoning call. This is the way working in us. Beloved this is a message for this local church.

I recognize it will go abroad on the internet but beloved we are the first fruits of this of this word from the Lord. You know, beloved the enemy always likes to contort things beyond the truth of things. You

understand that that he's a manipulator a deceiver, a liar.

Nowhere in the Bible does it teach us that we can't buy a new car. That's not what we're inferring today. We're talking about the chief pursuit of our hearts you might be thinking well I was thinking about selling my house and get another one.

You know what? If you're working hard with your hands and you're serving the Lord with your heart with all of your heart and you're doing those things that our Lord requires of you and the Lord's opened the door for you to sell your home and to buy another and you can afford it. That's not what we're mentioning. We're mentioning a people that the very core of their heart that the passion that burns on the inside of them is to pursue things that make this temporal life more luxurious, more indulgences where that is the pursuit the pursuit, the chief aim of their life and heart.

But yet they have a confession of something else. They confess that their heart belongs to Christ but yet their heart's bound and tied to and controlled by desires lusts that are contrary to what a Christian should have. Do you see the difference? You know the Lord may open a door Brother Charles for you to drive a brand new vehicle this year but then the same Lord may come to you and say give it to your brother six months later.

And the problem is that there are people that wouldn't be you but there are people that would say that's mine, it's mine because there are those desires on the inside of us that are greedy and still these things on the inside of us that wrap our arms around those things we won't let go of them. The Lord said that there's nothing that we can give up on this life that will not be rewarded by the Lord. Nothing and on that great day you're not gonna be thinking about that car.

On that great day you're not gonna be thinking about a bigger house. On that day you'll not be thinking about getting rich. On that day when we stand before God when we have to give an account for the judge of the rich or the quick and the dead the rich and the famous he'll judge of those too.

All that's gonna matter is are we in Christ by possession by possession and not just by profession. I could go a long time talking about this stuff. We need to hear it because of the prominence that our culture gives these things these lies the doctrinal maladies that we have if you just confess it enough that you'll get it.

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