

Attracting God's Attention

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of drawing God's attention by being faithful, repentant, and separated from worldly influences. It calls for a return to consecration, prayer, and ministry unto God, highlighting the need for a Zadok remnant who prioritize righteousness, discernment, and a focus on God's glory. The message challenges the church to establish altars of prayer, seek repentance, and prioritize a deep, intimate relationship with the Lord.

Scripture: Isaiah 66:2, Matthew 6:22, Ezekiel 44:15, Jeremiah 15:19, Revelation 2:1

Topics: "Faithfulness", "Consecration"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of drawing God's attention by being faithful, repentant, and separated from worldly influences. It calls for a return to consecration, prayer, and ministry unto God, highlighting the need for a Zadok remnant who prioritize righteousness, discernment, and a focus on God's glory. The message challenges the church to establish altars of prayer, seek repentance, and prioritize a deep, intimate relationship with the Lord.

Transcript

I want you to turn in your Bible with me here this morning. I hope you have your Bible with you. Isaiah chapter 66.

Isaiah chapter 66. And just as you turn there and find your place, let me just say something, especially to those online or who will watch afterward, but also to all of you. In the past week we've gone through about 50 messages in this school of Christ here you've gathered in and we're just coming aside for this time.

The subject is Christ. All of the lessons, although we deal with everything of repentance, the conflict for the church, faith, prayer, etc. The one sole subject is conformity to Christ.

That is the subject and the Holy Spirit moves in our midst to conform each life, deal with every heart, to make us more like Jesus Christ. That's why we call it the school of Christ. It is a school in which you learn the person of Christ and when we lose that as the sole object of the gathering of the church, there's something very terribly wrong.

We'll be continuing this school over the next two weeks. We'll have about a hundred other messages amidst all the prayer, the seeking of God, just making an altar where you are. It's a very precious time for us just to hear from the Spirit of God, allow him to deal with us, to deal with issues in our life, to deal with

the call of God on our lives, to prepare us for the things that lie ahead and it's a very precious time.

But here this morning we are in the midst of our prayer series. This is part 7 of our series on prayer and then we're going to move this afternoon into another new series. Again we have 19 series in a school of over a hundred and fifty lessons and this is a time of consecration, a solemn assembly, a coming aside to meet with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our message here this morning as we turn to Isaiah 66 verse 2, attracting God's attention. Can I just say one thing here and I want to emphasize this before we preach this morning. I want you to be so very conscious.

You're getting taught so much it can be overwhelming and then in the midst of the Spirit of God teaching and the Word of God being opened up, you can begin to see your lack. How far away you are from all that you've heard in the past week and all that you will hear in the next two weeks. It can be overwhelming but please don't think that all of this teaching in this three weeks is to be accomplished in one moment of time.

This is the out working of an entire lifetime. The Word of God is being presented to you, open to you, so that you have a vision. I know that you're not the completed work in two weeks time.

I know that. I'm a work in progress. I understand that.

But do you know what he's doing? He's presenting to you a vision of the Christian life, a vision of the church, a vision of his plan and purpose, not to discourage you, not to depress you. And it can be overwhelming when you see it and see what you are and see the lack. I understand that but please be assured it is by the grace of God that you are conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, God's precious Son.

And as you see this vision, it's not for you to accomplish but it's to submit to God and to begin to pray and say, Lord change me, change me. You have an eternal plan to change me. I have never ever, I need to be careful what I say, but I've never been discouraged by hearing the Word of God come like this.

You know why? I know I can't accomplish it. All I do when I hear the preaching of the Word, Lord will you work this in me? The Word of God never comes expecting or demanding anything unless the Holy Spirit is there to accomplish it. I know that.

I've learned some secrets along the way. And so when I hear it and I go, oh boy, you know all I do is open my heart and say, yes Lord, yes Lord, I long for it. Will you work it in me? You wouldn't speak to me about these things if you weren't here to accomplish it.

This isn't the old covenant. This is the new covenant where when he speaks, there's not a lessening of the intensity in the new covenant, but you know what? He is here to work it within you. So don't be downcast.

Don't, don't get weary and all of this, but have faith in God. Reading from Isaiah 66 in verse two. For all those things hath mine hand made and all those things have been, saith the Lord, but to this man, and notice this carefully, but to this man will I look even to him that is of a poor and contrite heart and that trembleth at my word.

My message attracting God's tension. Let's pray together. Let's lift up our hearts.

Let's open up and ask for the grace of God here this morning. Lord God, we pray right now in Jesus name. Let nothing distract us here this morning.

Lord God, that we might have faith in you and that we wouldn't be overwhelmed by the teaching and the word of God, but oh God, that you'd stir us, oh God, to receive of the grace of God, to have faith that what you have spoken, you're willing to accomplish in us. It's not by our works or our power, but it's by the power of your Holy Spirit. My God, conform this church, conform us as individuals to the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And even this morning in this message, we want to attract the attention of the most high God in Jesus' mighty name. Amen. Attracting God's attention.

Saints of God, in this series, we have seen the prayer closet is the battleground. That place of prayer isn't a place of entertainment or of great joy always. It's where you fight your battles.

Most Christians don't realize the intensity of the war. When they go to prayer, they look for nice feelings, but realize they encounter a warfare that is so raging that they can easily get discouraged in the place of prayer. It is the war, the place of prayer.

That's where you fight the war. That's where you win the war. That's where you overcome the devil.

That's where you overcome this old nature or this sadamic nature. This prayer closet is the place where we meet with God, we contact God, and we reach God. The battle is either won or lost in the prayer closet.

That's going to decide what your Christian life is every single time. We are not businessmen in the church or us preachers in the church. We're not businessmen.

We're not psychologists. We're not social workers. You know what we are? We're soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the Bible says in 2nd Timothy chapter 2 and verse 3 that we are to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. I wish this was taught in every church of our generation. You're not coming to church to be entertained, to have nice feelings, to be made to feel nice, but you're here to be raised up as soldiers who are going to go back out and stand on the battlefield.

There are injuries in this war. There are battles to encounter. I wish I could tell you it was a picnic.

But saints of God, this is a warfare and you engage in it in the place of prayer. The greatest problem that I see in today's church and generation is inconsistency. We are too easily distracted from those disciplines of prayer that lead to excellence.

If you don't get a victory in prayer, you'll never be the Christian that God wants you to be. It says in 2nd Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 18, but we all with open face beholden, notice that word beholden, beholden as in a glass, the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory unto glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord. Saints of God, we become like what we behold.

Notice that word behold in this verse. It means to gaze intently upon. It means to behold earnestly or steadfastly to do not take your eyes off that thing.

It means to fasten your eyes on something and let nothing take your eyes off that thing. We are told that we are to behold his glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Set your eyes on the glory of Jesus Christ.

Don't let anything hinder you from gazing intently and earnestly on the glory of Jesus Christ. Usually what happens, we come to church, we sing for 30 minutes, we take a faint gaze at the Lord Jesus and then get distracted with all the things of this world the rest of the week. But very few in the church gaze intently day by day in their Christian walk.

It says in 1 Samuel chapter 13 and verse 11, we capture a picture of this very thing in the life of King Saul in the Old Testament. Saul has just offered up a burnt offering. Listen very carefully to what it says.

And Samuel said unto him, what has thou done? And Saul said, because I saw that the people were scattered from me and that thou camest not within the days appointed and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash. Therefore I said, the Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgath and I had not made supplication unto the Lord. I forced myself therefore and I offered a burnt offering.

Do you see what has happened here? Saul is not a man to seek the glory of God. He was not a man of prayer. It says in verse 12 here, I have not made supplication unto the Lord.

Saul was a man that only prayed in a crisis. It's only when the Philistines are coming. He is not a man of the altar of prayer.

He's not a man that's given over to prayer. Only in a crisis will he be driven to this place of prayer. He had fought wars very often, but he had never built an altar of prayer.

He is not a man of prayer. And you begin to see that in this chapter. In 1 Samuel chapter 13, Saul offers a sacrifice.

Why did he offer the sacrifice? He was in trouble. Like many Christians of our day, they get in financial trouble. They get in physical trouble.

They get in social trouble. And suddenly they go to prayer. God, where are you? God, you've got to help me.

God, I need you to change everything. This is an entire picture of our church in this day and generation. Always living on a crash program.

Only building an altar when our life gets in trouble. Only seeking God earnestly when we need him to do something for us. Trouble comes knocking on our door and we offer up a soul sacrifice.

We build a soul altar. There is an altar of prayer that isn't a real altar of prayer. It is a soul altar of prayer.

It might sound right. It might look right. It might have all the right elements, but really God will not deal with it or have his way with it.

There are many who are deeply involved in the work of God in this generation. They're evangelizing. They're leading our worship.

They're preaching in pulpits. They're involved in the social work of the church, and yet they've never built an altar unto God. That doesn't mark their life.

They would rather minister unto men than to minister unto God. If you haven't ministered unto God, you have no right to minister unto men. If your life isn't consumed with being dedicated to God, you have no right to minister in the house of God.

To know the presence and the power of God, we must live in his glory with eyes looking upon his glory, not just glancing at his glory on a Sunday morning. We need Christians again who are utterly consumed with gazing on the face of Jesus Christ, and out of that place of gazing intently on his glory, they then come to the house of God to minister. Since our gatherings would be different, our preaching would be different, our worship and evangelism would be different, if we came directly from the presence of God with the very fragrance and smell of heaven, of the throne room of God upon us.

We are talking about living in the glory. It says in Numbers chapter 19 and 17, listen to this, when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed, and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. Notice this very carefully, when the cloud moved, Israel moved with the cloud.

You keep moving when God moves. It isn't a time to stand still when God is moving. Sometimes the cloud would stop for long periods of time, months on end, or it might only stop for one single day, but if you're seeking after God, you're gonna follow the cloud of his presence.

In a desert place, the cloud might have stopped for an entire month, or when you reach the water oasis with all of its freshness and beauty, that cloud may only have stopped for one day at that beautiful, plenteous oasis. This is where the church goes wrong. You see, when we reach an oasis and the cloud begins to move, we go, I don't want to go to the desert.

I want to stay in the oasis. We have a church generation that seek for the blessings, seek for the provisions of God, but we're not really being led by the Spirit of God. If the cloud moves away from the blessings, we want to stay with the blessings, so we lose the cloud.

We seek after what God gives and provides instead of seeking after the provider. When the cloud moved on, Israel had a choice. Are you going to stay with the oasis, or do you desire the manifest presence of God? I would rather have the cloud in the wilderness than to be absent of that of his presence and have all of the blessings around me.

The oasis for the moment seemed wonderful. It had everything that you needed. It was a temptation to stay at the oasis rather than following the will, the plan, and the purpose of God.

It may seem unbearable to walk out into the wilderness. It may seem unbearable to leave the provisions of God, but you have to be sure that you're following God and not just enjoying his blessings. If they would have ever left that cloud, it would have meant disaster.

If they would have stayed at that oasis with all of its blessings, I tell you, eventually it would become unbearable. The cloud was their covenant by night and day. It was the fire of their guidance.

They would have frozen at night if they didn't have the fire of his presence. You could have all the blessings of God, but if you don't have God himself. Saints of God, you could get what you seek for.

It says in the Psalms that God gave them the desire of their hearts but sent leanness into their souls. I see it all through the church. Men and women seeking the blessings, seeking comfort, seeking the things that

will satisfy their heart.

Very few are seeking after the glory of God. It's all me, me, me. It's all about what I get out of this.

My ministry, what I can have, but there are very few that are seeking for the manifest glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Had they stayed, they would have starved at that oasis because the manna only fell where the cloud moved. If it means going out into that wilderness where it seems impossible to be fed, but I promise you if you follow the cloud, God's provision is going to be there in a wilderness, in a desert place, in the backside of the desert.

If you follow God, God is going to provide for you. The oasis of the natural life represents the alternatives of the devil to draw you and me away from gazing upon God's glory. Saints of God, fix your eyes this morning on the glory of God.

The oasis often was a place of ease, a place of comfort, a place of provision, but if you set your heart upon the oasis and do not live in the light of God's glory, you yourself, you will be unprotected and have no covering from the enemy. Your heart will begin to grow cold for there is no fire where you're abiding. There'll be no substance because no manna falls there.

The cloud is where the manna falls. The water flows out of the rock and the fire begins to burn in the darkness of night. The cloud is our covering in the midst of the wilderness.

It is God's glory. It is the glory that changes us from one degree of glory to another into the likeness of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. You may say, all that you've heard taught the past week, who can possibly live this? Absolutely no one unless the Holy Spirit works in your heart.

Saints, you're being led by the pillar of fire, even in the midst of the school. You're being offered what this Christian life is, but if you gaze at the Lord Jesus Christ, you'll be changed. In Ezekiel chapter 44, verse 9 to verse 14, the prophet is shown a vision of the temple, which is a picture and type of the church, and it is told there that certain people are forbidden to minister in God's temple.

They're not allowed to. It says in verse 9, no stranger, no uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh shall enter my sanctuary. We have no problem understanding that.

No stranger, no sinner in the house of God, no homosexual on the guitar, no immoral person standing in the pulpit. We understand that. No one with a confused doctrine out evangelizing.

We have no problem with that. They aren't allowed to minister in the house of God, but it doesn't stop there. It goes further.

In verse 10, listen to what it says. We get a shock. It says, and the Levites that are gone away from me when Israel went astray, which went astray from me after their idols, they shall even bear their iniquities.

Then in verse 13, and they shall not, what a word, they shall not come near me to do the office of a priest unto me, not to come near to any of the holy things in the midst of the holy place, but they shall bear their shame and their abominations, which they have committed. I believe there's many in the church who should be in ministry, who should be functioning in the church, but God himself has said, you're forbidden. You're not going to minister.

Oh yes, you're in the house. Yes, you're born again. Yes, you can be forgiven, but you're forbidden from ministering on the holy things.

How you've lived, what you've done for years, how you've functioned in the church, I forbid that you come and minister the holy things. Listen to what it says in verse 14, but I will make those, those Levites who should be ministering, preaching, dealing with holy things, I'm going to make them keepers of the charge of the house for all of the service thereof, and for all that has to be done there. The Levites were ordained for ministry, the hidden things, the secret things, the spiritual things.

It says in Deuteronomy 18 and 5, for the Lord thy God has chosen him, Levi, and all of thy tribe to stand to minister in the house of the Lord and his sons forever. Now they are forbidden from this ministry, what they were called for, what they were chosen for, what they were born for, what they were trained for. God actually says you are forbidden.

I cannot use you in this ministry. Your entire life was about being given to this ministry, but I'm telling you, you will not function in this ministry in God's house. Their ministry is now confined to the outer court, not the inner court, not the secret place of God.

You're not going to minister unto me. You know what's going to happen? You have to stay in the outer court. You're going to minister to men.

Have we not seen it in our day in the generation in the church? We have an entire church generation. It's all about man. That's why the preaching changes.

The worship is about man. The preaching is about man. The church service is about man.

It's all man-centered. Do you know what we have lost? We have lost a ministry that ministers in the inner place, in the holy place, in the secret place. Ministry has moved from there, where it's all about God's glory, ministering unto God, standing on behalf of God, and now we have a church ministry that's gone out into the outer court, and it's all man, man-centered.

This is the crisis that you and I have lived through in the church, where we have lost the conscious awareness of what ministry itself is all about. Their ministry is now confined to the outer court, and those who are ordained and set apart to ministry have been reduced to custodians in the temple. Why is that? Listen to Ezekiel 44 in verse 10, because they went astray from me after their idols.

This is a picture of much of the ministry of our generation, set apart for ministry, prepared. You have all the desires to minister, all the longings, all the prayers, yet living so far away from the holy place, so far from intimacy with God, so near your idols, so intimate with heart, inward idols, that you're excluded from ministering unto God himself. You see, if you could minister unto God, it's easy to minister unto men.

When your focus is a priority to minister to man, or to be in the pulpit, or to be in worship, or to be in evangelism, or to go do something for God, when that's your focus, you have lost all sense of reality. If you ministered unto God, if he was your goal, if he was your consuming gaze and attention, it would be easy to minister to man at the right time, in the right way, in the right place. Pastors today are caught up in serving tables.

Go to the average church. They're social workers. They're psychologists.

They're counselors. They're running after people. Everything is about man.

I better not say that. I might lose Jimmy Jones, who gives a nice offering in the basket. Everything is centered around men.

Oh, I don't want to lose the young people. I'll stick them on a guitar. I want them to hang around here long enough.

All of that is so typical. Most of the ministry of our day, running to and through in the outer court, giving widows bread, instead of preparing the word of God, a thus saith the Lord, not intimate with God in prayer. Again, we need a generation of preachers, of pastors, of leaders who are men of prayer.

That's what we need to get back to. Pastors have lost their way, and crisis has come to the church. They are religious executives.

They are stewards. They're deacons in the outer court. They're sweeping up instead of standing in the presence of almighty God.

Like the Levites, we have gone astray from God after our idols. We've got caught up in entertainment, games of religion, gimmicks, the latest strategy for church growth, the latest thing to entertain people, the latest style of worship. All of this may have some element of good in it, but most of it is a distraction from purely ministering unto God.

Ours are not the idols of wood and stone. You're not going to be here. I can remember the day Mary chucked out all her idols.

She'd come to me one day. She's under conviction. God's dealing with her.

She's beginning to see what the gospel is. Says, Keith, do you think the Lord of mine, if I just start moving all my statues and idols an inch a day? I knew that wasn't the answer, but I said, sure, Mary, you just do that. She kept coming in under the gospel.

I'm preaching. You must be born again. All the time.

She's scared to throw those idols out. You know why? They meant so much to her. They've been there so long.

It's very hard. She cannot lift a hammer to them. Well, her unsafe son just helped her by throwing them over the wall in a bag.

That got rid of the whole lot of those idols. First time Candice went to that house, she'd come back. Says, the place is filled with idols.

I mean filled. They're everywhere. I think they should carry some little didgeridoo round in her handbag.

You know what you're like, those idols. But you know what? In the church of this hour, our idols are not made of stone. They're not in the image of the Virgin Mary or some saint or some angel.

You know what our idols are? They're things of the heart. They're things of the inward man. They are idols of presumption and they're idols of the perception of men.

If you form a view of God in your mind, and it's not biblical, it's not according to the word of God, and you begin to worship that God, you are worshiping an idol. It's not the biblical Christ. It's not the God of the Bible, but you worship that God.

You serve that God. You actually say, I can sin. He's a God of grace.

He'll accept this. You know what? You are an idolater. You are just like a Mary worshiper.

You are worshiping a false Christ, one that's made in your mind. That's the idols that we have in our day and generation. We perceive ourselves to be more important than we are.

Hasn't it happened across all of the church ministry? You can't even get near them. They're the untouchables. They're the anointed.

They need a special aeroplane. What did Copeland say? He said, oh, I can't fly the normal flights. I need to buy, what is it? His 10th aeroplane, whatever it was.

He said, he actually went on record, can you believe it? And said, I can't go on those planes. You know why? They're all sinners that travel on that. And they're all those demons.

I have to protect the anointed. I'm going to preach. All those demons would jump on me and disturb my spirit.

Have you ever heard the like of it? That these men get exalted above their own intelligence. It becomes despicable. That is idolatry in the church.

I want to tell you, we tend to make God dependent upon us. I'm the center of his will. Everything depends on me.

I can disobey God, but his grace is still going to be there. His plan is still going to be there. His glory is going to be there.

I don't need to obey him. He's a God of grace. He'll wait on me.

He'll follow me. I want to tell you, there is great confusion in the church of our day, and they've lost the glory. They've lost the pillar of fire, and now they create a church atmosphere of the five senses.

It's all made by sound, and by feeling, and by sight. Get the music right. Get the lights right.

Why are they so radical in the past 30 years on getting the lighting right? What's that got to do with a spiritual atmosphere? Why are we toning everything down? Why are we trying to get the atmosphere right? You know what we're doing? It is idolatry, because we lose the cloud. We lose the glory of God. We don't want holiness anymore, and we create something that's man-made.

How dangerous to create an atmosphere that affects your five senses. Those five senses can deceive you, and lead you astray. Whatever threatens, or gets in the way of the principle of consecration, absolute given to God, is an idol, and it will lead you astray without any doubt.

It doesn't matter what it is. It could be your wife. Your wife could be your idol.

You young guys getting married, you better not let that wife, that girlfriend, that fiancée, become your idol. Does your partner, your wife, will she hinder you in the will of God? Do you put her, I didn't say ministry, note that, I said the will of God. If she, you know I said to Candice, and you two guys, you better have this in place.

I said to Candice, you'll never be first in my life. She looked at me, said Keith, you'll never be first in my life. It'll never happen.

Jesus Christ, you know when I put Christ first, I love her like she ought to be loved. If I love him, and believe me you wise, you better make sure your husband loves Jesus more than you. If he loves Jesus more than you, you're very safe in that marriage, and he'll love you.

He'll serve you. He'll do everything for you that he ought to do. Why? Because he's walking right with God.

Your family must not take precedence over Christ, or it becomes an idol. Your little child could become an idol. Your job could become an idol.

Your business could become an idol. Your farm could become an idol. Your hobby could become an idol.

Your day off could become an idol. Whatever gets between you and a pursuit of the glory of God is an idol. Paul defined this principle in this line, in these words, Philippians chapter 3 and 13.

This one thing I do. In Paul's life, Christ had no rivals. You know ministry could be an idol.

I believe one of the great idols of our generation is ministry. I've seen men would kill me to get in the pulpit. I've seen people manipulate just to maneuver to get into a worship team.

I've seen people do all sorts of things to get notoriety, acceptance, or a position. You know what that is? That is your idol. What are you serving? What are you pursuing? Are you pursuing the glory of God? Are you pursuing death to your own ambitions and your own motives? If you're dead to all ambitions, you're a very safe person to be around.

I learned a long time ago in the church, having people who are not crucified are very dangerous. To be surrounded by people, uncrucified Christians, is very dangerous. They're ambitious.

They're proud. They're arrogant. They're selfish.

They're self-centered. They're all of those things and more. They're gossips.

They're liars. All within the house of God. I'm not talking about the world this morning.

I'm not dealing with that world out there. We know about that. I'm talking about what I found in the house of God.

I mean right across generations, many churches, many different nations. I do know what goes on in the house of God. But Paul gave no rival to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He was sold out to this because he had no other single ambition. When the cares of this world and the preoccupation of your life begins to threaten your consecration to God, there's something wrong. You say, oh I'm a faithful hard-working man.

Why does that get in the way with your walk with God? Oh I'm just loving my life and caring for her. Why are you neglecting your Bible? Why are you neglecting the place of prayer? You say you're a hard-working man or woman. Why are you neglecting Christ and putting him first? There's some people will choose a job on a Sunday and miss the house of God.

They make a decision. They make a conscious decision. They don't need it.

They could take another job. They don't need the money. None of you are on the breadline.

If you are, please come and speak to me and I'll help you. I'll give you an offering right after this gathering. Don't all come in a one-hour please.

But I'm telling you, do you know what? You choose. You've got a choice. A job that isn't working on a Sunday and a job that is.

Why do you choose that? What drives you? What leads you? You know what? Do you love Jesus Christ? If you don't love him, it's very easy. I'll take that job. I'll be out of the house of God Sunday.

I'll get there the odd time. You're not under constraint to do that. That's a choice.

I understand people who have to work. I understand that. There's no burden.

There's no laying of a legal burden upon them. I'm just telling you, when it's within your power and choice, if you make that choice and it doesn't bother you, you are dead. You're in serious trouble.

You don't care about the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, you're making decisions all about you. If you cared about God, you would choose the house of God.

Let the pay drop. Let the job go. I want to serve God.

What is your idol here this morning? You see, they undermine our spiritual intimacy. That's what an idol does. It challenges your prayer life, your time in the word of God, your holiness.

You will identify your idol when you see what is undermining your walk with God. What is it in your life? Is it a person? Oh, all my grandchildren. It's too much there.

Draw me away from the place of prayer. Then they are your idol. You can put grandchildren in the place of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you think the Lord will understand? Well, Lord, I just had all these parents. I had all these kids. I had to mind them.

Did you? Would you not have been better on your knees in prayer, crying out to God, fasting and praying, shutting them out for a time? You've got plenty of time with them, believe me. But saints of God, that could be your idol. If there's one thing that God shows us, it is his hatred for the lukewarm.

He says in Revelation 3 and 16, because our lukewarm, said this to a church, a great church, the best of churches, LCC, you better take this on board. The best of churches, he said, because they are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. This shows the hatred that God has for the lukewarm in his house.

He hates a lukewarm condition. Yet we see much of this in the church of our day. When we have seen these things that come between us and God, that is your idol.

What is hindering you? What consumes your time? What takes your money? Some people say, oh, I can't give to God. I've got this and this and this. I know that's your idol.

That's what you worship. That is your God. You sacrifice your time.

You've got plenty of time. You give it to your idol. You've got plenty of money.

You give it to your idol. As we heard this week, when you're in the world, you thought nothing of emptying your wallet, emptying your purse, drinking, partying, discos out in the world, new dresses, new hats, new whatever. You would empty your bank.

You'd go into debt for all of that. You guys, you thought you didn't even have a good night unless you woke up Sunday morning. Your wallet is empty.

You don't know what you've done. You're a mess. You feel awful.

You don't even think you've had a good night until that's your condition. You come to the house and you drop a euro into the offering basket. And I'm saying this, we never make much of money.

It just reveals your heart, doesn't it? It reveals the attitude of your heart. One of the greatest gods that oppose the real God is mammon, is money. Money is such a real thing, possessions, that it reveals your heart in almost every way.

We give a small donation. I've had people give a small donation and they come to tell me, all proud. I gave five euro.

I gave 10 euro. And they're waiting for a response. First of all, don't tell me.

I don't keep track of your money. I'm not interested. I don't want to know.

Just let it be between you and God. You worship him. You serve him.

But to come as proud as punch. I go, man, you're in trouble. If you think that is given to God.

I gave more to God than that when I had absolutely nothing in the bank account. You know, when I could barely buy toothpaste every month. I went for years like this.

Never made my needs known unto men. Could barely get toothpaste by the end of the month. I would never go into God's house without giving an offering.

One pound, one euro, wherever I was, maybe visiting some church. I would not walk. I made it a principle.

I don't have much. But do you know what? I made sure I gave. It was a principle and an attitude of heart.

You know why? That is not my God. I know who my God is and I'm going to worship him. They erode our passion and our love for God.

And this is what happened at Ephesus in this church. This is very important for you and you've got to hear this here this morning. And especially if you're going to be in ministry.

You've got to understand these principles. Only one thing can be in control of your life ultimately. And that one thing has to be God himself and the glory of God.

If you allow anything else to distract you from your love and your passion for Christ, then that thing is the idol that you worship. And it's the idol that will take you out of the inner court and put you in the outer court. There are so many in the outer court consumed with man.

Man-made ministry. They're famous. They're ministering to multitudes and yet they're centered on man.

They've lost the glory. They've lost the focus. They've lost the power and presence of God.

They're not in the inner sanctuary anymore. They're not men and women of prayer. They're not men and women of the altar.

They're in outer court consumed with ministry. Caught up in ministry. Activity.

Trying to get promoted. They're going, I'm just looking to be discovered. I want to be found.

Because I'm such a great preacher. I'm such a great singer. I can play an instrument wonderfully.

I'm waiting for the church to discover me. They little realize they're in the outer court seeking after man. That isn't a seeking after the glory of God.

You know what that is? They want to be noticed by man. Noticed by the church. Well you'll get that.

You know what? The devil will give you that. All across the church the devil has answered that desire. I'll give you a big pulpit.

I'll give you a ministry time. You know some of these worship leaders. One of them I used to listen to him.

Beautiful songs. Worship CDs. I loved his songs.

I loved the songs he wrote. Loved the music he played. Then Cam has got a hold of two audios of him speaking on the word of God.

She come back devastated. Says, do you know what he said about the word of God? I went, that man is heading for a fall. Within a short period of time it come public.

He committed adultery. He divorced his wife. Married his floozy.

Went back into worship within two years and carries on on the international scene as if nothing happened. Do you know what that is? That's when things go wrong. It says in Revelation chapter two and verse one.

Unto the angel of the church at Ephesus write. These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand. Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

Notice this. I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience. All good things.

I know, I know how thou canst not bear them which are evil. And thou hast tried them which say that they are apostles and they are not. And you have found them to be liars.

And you have borne. And you have patience. And for my name's sake you have labored and you have not fainted.

This is the church at Ephesus. Is this not a dynamic church? Is this not a fruitful church? Is this not a mighty church? Is this not a church in the will of God? Is this not a church that all of us would be impressed with and want to join? We'd move from our cities and our countries just to be in this church. But listen.

All of this is to the credit of that church. Christ encourages the church in all of these things. In other words, Christ is outlining all that is good in that church.

Then comes this one word. Nevertheless, I am somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. In other words, all of these things are necessary.

But they can never be the first thing. Can you expose all the false apostles, ministries, and revivals in the church? Praise God. You're a wonderful guy.

Praise God. Aren't you great? You know how to discern ministries. But that isn't sufficient.

That isn't the number one thing. Oh you're patient and you endure through much suffering and many trials. You still walk with God.

Praise God. Oh you're so laboring for the Lord and serving Him without taking a penny. Praise God.

But have you lost your first love? You see, the Lord Jesus Christ, He commends what is real. He knows what is real and good. But that isn't the first thing.

There's only one thing can be first, and that is love for the Lord Jesus Christ. If you go wrong there, you can have everything else in place. All your doctrines, your lifestyle, your obedience.

But if you lose your love for the Lord Jesus Christ, God only has one issue with you here this morning. Have you left your first love? Our prayer life begins to stop when we lose this love. We can still do the right things, say the right things, but we're not praying.

We're not alone with God. Our love for Christ begins to wane. The first thing we lose is the time in the Word of God and prayer.

That's what begins to diminish. You begin to lose the altar of prayer. There is no altar.

You're like Saul. I'll build it when a crisis comes, but I can function in the church. I can minister.

I can do everything. I believe the same. I know the same.

I do the same. Yes, but the problem is you're not in that secret, intimate place with God. It was commendable what the church at Ephesus was doing, but they never existed for that.

That was not the primary purpose of their calling. Those things were wonderful that they were doing, but that was not God's number one thing. Their reason now is to win souls.

Who would say winning souls is wrong? Missions, evangelism, worship, teaching, telling you how to run your marriage, but do you love the Lord Jesus Christ with all of your heart? Is your love for him, your

passion for him like it once was? Are you a blaze for Jesus? Are you desiring to be alone for him? Are you more inclined to ministry in the church? You could spend hours if you're allowed to minister in the church. I'll counsel you. I'll phone with you.

I'll email you. I'll talk with you. I'll pray with you, but they are alone with God.

They are bankrupt of fellowship, intimacy, and communion. When anything undermines this principle of consecration, whatever it is, it becomes your idol, and it'll steal your time and your spiritual life. Time is stolen by idols.

What are you giving your time to? They take us from the prayer closet. When that happens, it is over, sings of God. You can't lose your prayer life and think everything continues.

It will for a time. Remember Samson? There he is sleeping with a Philistine woman, but he's still lifting gates off cities and carrying it down the hill. The anointing there is there.

The power is there. He's still doing the works of ministry, but he's began to sleep with a Philistine woman. See, the power hasn't diminished, just you wait.

One of these days, suddenly, unexpectedly, you'll lose your vision. You'll lose your consecration. You'll lose your power.

You'll lose your testimony. You'll lose it. When you think that you can leave holiness, but you've still got the grace of God.

God's grace is still here. He's still with me. I still know how to do all of this, but I'm not living right.

You know what? That's going to come knocking on your door. They take us from the prayer closet. It's disaster.

Listen to what it says in Jeremiah chapter two, verse 11 and 12. Has the nation changed their gods, which yet are new gods, but my people have changed their glory for that which is new profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this and be horribly afraid.

Then it says in Jeremiah two, verse eight, ye have walked after things that do not profit. The major problem throughout the church age or generation that we are living in is that they have walked away from the real God for things that don't benefit you. Success in the church.

Prosperity of your financial pocket. Self-esteem. We had a young man come to this church from another country.

He was here. He loved it. He'd get up close to the screen taking screenshots of the worship.

He almost begged us to hand round the tea afterwards. He loved it. He would send emails to Candice and me going, I'm praying for you.

I love this church. This is my spiritual home. He'd become a part of us, at least for a few months at any rate.

Then we got to that vital point. He said, can I have a word? Sure, we can have a word. Sit down.

Let's talk. So then let's talk about my wife. I said, sorry.

He says, well, I need a wife. I'm here. I'm a young guy.

So I just thought I'd come and tell you I need a wife. I said, what do you expect me to do? Well, I thought you would provide me with a wife. I'm being absolutely serious.

There's no joke. I wish it was. I was actually shocked.

What I hadn't realised was our guest preacher speaker, he had the same conversation with him. And he said, go and talk to Brother Keith. I'm flying out of here back to Spain.

So he sat there and I said, so I started going into the word of God. No man can give you a wife. I wouldn't dare give you a wife.

You need a wife from God. You've got to seek the Lord. This church isn't going to give you a wife.

You know what? He immediately got offended with me, left this church and went to another church. Do you realise what his idol was? It was the desire for a wife. And you know what? I failed him.

Didn't matter how much I preached. Didn't matter how much I prayed for him. Didn't matter how much I cared for the church.

If I couldn't provide him with a wife, I'm in the dump basket. I'm over. My ministry's finished as far as he goes.

I could give you example after example of those that I've met in the house of God who had misdirected priorities and couldn't understand what this Christian life is about. You see, it begins with the man of God. He makes an idol.

This is where the church goes off. It begins with the preacher. Let the preacher go off.

The people in the church will go off. When I go to churches and the elders and the worship team and the young people are all misdirected, I know that leadership's misdirected. I know there's always people in churches off key.

I know that. Same here, same anywhere. But you know what? When the entire church is off, it means that leadership is off.

There's no doubt about it. This is where it begins. He begins with the idol of presumption, presuming on the gospel.

I can add to the gospel. I can leave certain verses out. I don't need to preach against certain things.

I don't need to preach against pornography. I don't need to preach against ecumenism, accepting Catholics, I mean real doctrinal Catholics as being real Christians. We can just open this up a bit.

You know what? That is your idol because it's not the truth of God. Nobody has a right to change the word of God. He then leads the sheep into that spiritual desert and you get idolatry coming into the church and affecting every area of that local church.

If it doesn't instill in me a desire for holiness, it's an idol. If it doesn't make my heart burn for Christ, it is an idol. If it isn't all about his glory, it is an idol.

Jeremiah cries out to God concerning the deplorable situation in Jeremiah 15, 18. Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable which refuses to be healed? Then God answered that cry in verse 19. If thou return, then will I bring thee again and thou shalt stand before me and if thou take the precious from the vial, thou shalt be my mouth.

We can literally as a church here, our school of Christ, we can literally become the mouth of God. This preacher can become the mouth of God, but there's a price to pay. If you don't take the vial from the precious, you cannot be God's mouth.

You can be a preacher, but you won't be God's mouth. You can be a church, but you will not be the mouth of God. If there's confusion and compromise and mixture there, you cannot be God's mouth.

You could have great teaching ministry in the church, but there's an impure mixture. You could have all the right teaching in the pulpit, but you tolerate a mixture in the church. You know what that is? That certainly isn't the mouth of God.

You got a brilliant teacher. This confuses so many in the church, but he's a brilliant teacher, but he doesn't judge. He doesn't deal with sin.

He'll allow a mini skirt in the worship. There's nothing. Do you know what I've seen for 30 years? I've seen this.

I've seen young guys, newly saved, a year saved. They've gone to the pastor. Pastor, these young girls, they dress like the world, like harlots.

I've heard this numbers of times in different countries. Do you know what I've heard every single time? These mega pastors turn around and say, you've got a problem. There's nothing wrong with them.

It's you. You're the problem. You shouldn't be criticizing them and judging them.

It's the young guy who's just looking at that. The Bible says a woman ought to dress modestly. The pastors will defend that now.

We're in such a confused, mixed up stage. It's hard even to deal with it anymore. The gap between what is real and what is false has got so deep and broad.

There is no likeness or reality. We can identify them as real. They don't think we're real anymore.

And you know what? The two shall never be reunited. I want to tell you. We can literally become God's mouth if we're willing to pay the price in the house of God.

If you ever hear God speak, if you ever have his word in your mouth, you will take time to be alone with God in prayer. We can only as a church be the mouth of God, the house of God, the pulpit of God, if we actually have that altar established. God's attention.

Let me bring you to the end here, where we started. God's attention is drawn to praying people. You want to draw God's attention.

You see, you could be here and say, I want the attention of the church. I want the attention of people. I want to be noted in ministry.

You're deceived. You're really deceived. You better hide yourself behind the cross.

It used to be when I was young, every preacher would pray, hide me before preaching, hide me behind the cross. We've lost that. People laugh at that now.

But God help us. Now we've got preachers who aren't scared of being seen and of demonstrating the flesh. Something has gone wrong.

When you're looking to be noticed by man instead of noticed by God. Listen again where we started. Isaiah 62 verse 2. But to this man, I will look.

Do you want God's attention? Do you want God to see you? Do you want God's eyes to be drawn towards you? To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and that trembles at my word. You don't tremble at God's word. He's not looking at you.

You're not broken and contrite. God isn't looking at you. Oh, but my gift then, he's not looking at you.

But I'm so gifted, he could care less. Are you broken? Do you tremble under the word of God? Do you hear the word of God and you tremble and go, do not leave me. Do not let me play games with your word.

Don't let this remain in my heart. Please Lord, deal with me. It's that heart that he's looking for.

The lack of spiritual power in the church is the result of idols in the heart. We have learned how to promote and bring people into the church. And we have mistaken the ability to promote the faith for reality.

We have borrowed the world's programs to draw people, entertain people, and keep people in the church. We have strategized ministering to man, but we have lost the presence of God in the And as a result, we have filled the church with half-breed Samaritans that are cursed of God, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. These are all things apostles and prophets preach, by the way, constantly in all their letters.

You don't hear today. Oh sure, I'm sure they're saved. They get drunk every Saturday night.

Just show grace. Show you know what it's like. They love the Lord.

Let them in the worship team. They love God as much as you. They're getting drunk every Saturday night.

They're out running after the guys. The biggest Pentecostal church in this entire island. One of the main ladies worshipping, all the leaders knew, all the leaders.

She was out getting drunk on a Saturday night, running after the guys. One of the most immoral of girls, but she's up there singing on a Sunday night. I know what I'm talking about.

I do know what I'm talking about. I'll give you an inside view. See, this Bible is true.

This Bible is real. God said to the Levites, nor come near to me, nor my holy things, but they shall bear their shame. What was their shame? They were reproached in the eyes of the people.

You think people are reproached? You live unholy, but they come running after you. You know what? One day they're going to curse you. They know you're a compromiser.

They know you've changed the gospel for them. They know that. They don't respect you.

Oh, they'll clap you in the back and say, thank you for accepting us, the multitudes, carnal, wicked, evil believers, but they don't respect you. You see, it's a shame onto you, a disgrace that people knew they were set aside for ministry and inner court, but they're confined to the outer court. You've lost God, so you have to minister to men.

You're consumed with man because you've lost the altar. People know when you have been alone with Jesus, believe me, and they know when you have not. It's going to be seen.

The shame is trying to minister in the flesh without the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The sons of Zadok. See, there was an answer.

There was a people. You find it in Ezekiel 44 and 15. While many were left outside, there were some who were allowed back in, but the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they remained faithful when everyone else went astray.

They shall come near to me to minister unto me. Where's the ministry? Unto me. Ministry unto God.

That's priority. It's not unto man. It's unto God.

This is prayer. This is what prayer is all about. Do you think that prayer is all about you getting your way? Oh, I need to pray so God will do for me.

You think that's what prayer is. Is that the heart of your prayer? Like, I want this and I want this and I want this. I want you to do this for me.

I want you to make my ministry popular and I want to have all these opportunities and I want a nice five foot nine blonde. I mean, forget that one. You go through all of these things.

My prayer life is all about me. You actually see when your prayer life becomes all about you instead of ministry unto God. You've actually lost your way, but Zadok and his sons were not that way and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God.

They shall enter into my sanctuary and they shall come near unto my table to minister unto me and they shall keep my charge. Ezekiel identifies a small remnant of priests among all of the priests that were excluded. The sons of Zadok, the Levitical priesthood as a whole had corrupted itself, but there were a faithful remnant within all.

Zadok means we proved righteous or we have shown ourself to be righteous. God says these were faithful to me while others went after their idols. Just watch those that follow the idols that come through the church.

Every two years they follow a new idol. Every new thing that comes through the church. I found this out 30 years ago, 20 years ago.

I'd start meeting with pastors all around the country and you know what? Constantly changing direction. They'll redesign everything in the church, redesign everything for the children, the youth, the worship, the color of the building. They'll change everything, the style.

Every two years. I've got no problem with the change, got no problem with moving with the times, no problem at all. But when you see that constantly, that's a pursuit.

I knew a young man, one of the biggest churches. He told me, says I was a new convert and I was put into the worship of one of the biggest churches in the country to lead the worship. Says they put me in there.

You know what they commissioned me to do? Every Monday morning I had to go down to the local Christian bookshop and I had to get the latest CD with the latest song that was in the top 10. This is a top church. And I had to prepare that, bring it to the worship team and we had to learn it for the following Sunday morning.

And he said, you know in all the time there, I didn't know one song about the blood. We never sang one song about the blood of Jesus Christ. It wasn't until he come out of all that confusion and he began to sing about the blood of Jesus.

Something has gone wrong in the house of God. But you know what? Zadok is going to be called back. God is going to find a faithful people who have not followed the idols.

We're told the Zadok priesthood, we're going to be clothed in linen garments. Linen represents the righteousness of the saints. In Ezekiel 44 verse 18, they shall not gird themselves with anything that makes them sweat.

No running around in the outer court, sweeping floors, keeping gates, being exhausted, out of breath, dragging your idols around. They, this remnant, have put on the white linen of righteousness. They are not going to sweat in the house of God or in ministry.

They have been in the holy place at the prayer altar, ministering unto God. It is this remnant, both then and now in the church, who live in the holy place. They are consecrated to God and they do have the ability to teach God's people how to live.

They make a difference between what is profane and what is not profane. They discern what is right in the house of God. They make judgments in the house of God.

That statement, do not judge, has destroyed the church. That's why we are where we are. Don't judge, don't judge, don't judge.

That's utterly unbiblical. Jesus said, judge righteous judgment. He said, they that are spiritual, or they that are mature, or walk close with God, or who know God, they test everything, discern everything, and they judge everything.

Because you know what? They'll do it out of love, out of the grace of God, by the power of the Spirit, in line with the Word of God. It's not wrong to judge. The only people in the Bible who are told not to judge is if you've got a beam in your eye and you're judging everyone else hypocritically.

That's the only person, Jesus said, don't judge. That is the context of saying, do not judge. We have told everyone in the church, none of you are ever allowed to judge.

And the church ends up here. God help us, we need a revival again. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 6, 22, if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

The one outstanding characteristic of Sadok, of this Sadok remnant, was that their only true possession in this life was the Lord Himself. Listen to Ezekiel 44, 28. I am their inheritance.

What's your inheritance? Ministry, the good life, popularity. What do you think your inheritance is? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you satisfied with Him? Do you want Him to be your everything, the center of your life? God wants the people who are faithful to their Lord, and people with whom repentance is a way of life.

Repentance has been thrown out today. And people separated from all that is touched by this world, with an intense desire for God and His kingdom. To such people, God is attracted.

You want to draw God's attention this morning, here in this place? You want God to look at you? You want God to gaze at you? You better gaze at God. You better set your eyes upon Him, His glory, His righteousness, His truth. Will you stand with me here this morning as Brother Soph comes? And to do that, you have to spend much time in the presence of God.

When you go away from this school, you're going to have to establish an altar of prayer. I'm not telling you how long to pray for. I'm not laying burdens on you, obligations.

But I'm telling you, you're going to have to have an altar of prayer. You have to have time in the Word of God. In your day, morning and night, you've got to find a place to get alone with the Lord Jesus.

That's got to direct your entire life. You've got lots of time for everything, for work, for family, for friends, for ministry. You've got plenty of time.

You can find the time. They always say the busiest people. If you want something done, ask a busy man.

Don't ask someone that's got a lot of time in their hands. Ask someone who's very, very busy, because that man will find time for you. That man will always have time.

I tell people, I never stop for morning to night. I'm a very busy man. But see, when it's something serious, I'll always have time for you.

I'll always be sensitive to that. I'll pray that God helps me to be. You know why? Because when you're busy, when you're active, when you're shut in with God, I've got to have time with Him.

Saints of God, let's lift our heart here in this gathering this morning. God has you here in His will and His purpose. It's no accident.

But remember what I said at the beginning of this message. It's not a burden laid on you that you accomplish in your life. It's not for you to bring forth all of this.

You cannot do that. It's you making an altar of prayer. It's you finding a place in the sanctuary of God, in the secret place of the Most High.

It's getting alone with God, yielding yourself and saying, Lord, will you work this in me? I cannot do this. I desire this. Oh, I've failed in the past.

But I'm asking that my life isn't going to be wasted. This short period of time that we have now in the church, I don't want to waste it. Will you make sure that I'm part of this Zadok remnant? Saints of God, we're going to open this altar.

You can kneel where you are, sit or stand in this altar or where you are. But before you leave this place here this morning, are you going to be part of the Zadok remnant of this last generation? Are you a part of that people whose inheritance is the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you those that are going to enter into the secret place of the Most High and your sole focus is ministry unto God, not ministry on demand, not reaching the lost, not teaching the saved, but your number one goal and focus is a ministry unto God, taking time, being alone with them, having quality time, knowing who he is, allowing him to work in your heart, letting him search your heart. Do you have an idol this morning that you need to lay down in this altar? Do you need the power of God to remove an altar from your heart? Do you need to change your vision here this morning? Have you been looking in the wrong direction or praying the wrong prayers or desiring after the wrong things? Have you had your priorities wrong? Then here this morning, make an altar.

Meet with God. I'm not going to pray for you this morning. It's you and God.

Just raise up an altar and meet with them as we close here. Lord God, we thank you, God. Father, I pray for my friends, my brothers, my sisters.

Lord God, I pray for my own self, O God. We know the tendency of our own hearts. We know the tendency of our mind.

We know the tendency of ambitions and of thoughts and of desires that come out of the flesh. All of us have experienced them. All of us have been victims of them.

But I pray here this morning, Lord God, let there be a breaking of idols at your footstool. Let there be a laying down of idolatry in this church this morning. Let there be a casting out of things that shouldn't be in our hearts.

My God, I ask that repentance would come this morning, that your Holy Spirit would work in hearts and lives, that you might be glorified this day. We want to minister unto you. Remove anything that's hindering us from ministering unto you.

In Jesus' mighty name. Hallelujah.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/vp0cVKFUflo.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/keith-malcomson/attracting-gods-attention/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net