

# The State of the Church and Our Lives

by Richard Langworthy

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*The church is in a state of darkness and deception, and we must return to the truth of God's Word and have a rich fellowship with the Holy Spirit to be good stewards of the grace of God.*

**Duration:** 49:51

**Scripture:** Acts 19:13-16, 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Ephesians 5:15

**Topics:** "Church"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not wasting time on worldly distractions such as TV and cell phones. He encourages the audience to redeem their time and prioritize spiritual matters. The preacher quotes Spurgeon, who compares the beating of the heart to a muffled drum leading to the grave, highlighting the finite nature of our time on earth. The sermon concludes with a focus on living for Christ and allowing His love to compel us to live for Him rather than ourselves.

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## Transcript

As we get closer and closer to the days and the dark days in which we are living, one thing I am persuaded, that there is less and less truth in the church. The modern church today is a mess. And I realize that apart from saving souls and bringing the gospel to sinners, we must not be ashamed of the truth that God has given to us, and that there is a responsibility we have to share with men and women, pastors, churches, wherever we can in these days.

Deception is a terrible thing. Worldliness in the church is like a cancer. Pastors are lying to their people.

Congregations, people are going to go to hell. Men are sitting in church today, women believing in rubbish, not knowing that their hearts have been closed to eternity. I don't think we have an option but to stand up and as boldly as we can to proclaim the truth.

You know the days of John Knox, Wesley and these boys. Catholicism dominated the world. It was considered as a Christian religion.

But they saw, they saw truth. And they weren't ashamed to stand for truth. They weren't ashamed to shake their countries for truth, even if it meant they died.

We have the freedom today because of those men. The church is going back into the state of darkness, like it was in the time where the Catholics were dominant. The Western church is ill.

It's anemic. I got an SMS, an email last night from a lady, or a couple, but they were part of us and they're living in England at the moment, and she just wrote to me. She said, I go to a church where the doctrine is right, and that's all that's right.

They don't know, there's nothing. It's so dead, and the people have no faith, it's that I want to scream in church, and I have nowhere to go. What is a pastor doing, standing up and leading his people to nowhere? But I can feel their heart.

Do you want to jump in a plane and go across and just arrive in church and cause as much trouble as you can? But we've got to accept the fact that all over the world, it's like a fog, it's like a thick pea soup fog that's come across the spiritual world and blinded the eyes of men, and it's one of the things that God said would happen. I watched the DVD the other day of a, I don't know if I mentioned this to you, but of a well-known pastor in overseas. I mention his name here because I still want to do some research on the whole story, but he's very well-known, and his writings are, he's considered as someone that, you know, is one of the Christian leaders.

And we watched the DVD on worship in his church, and the worship was fine, it was quiet and reverent, but then the cameras lifted up towards the ceilings, and the gold dust is flowing from the ceilings. But it never comes to the ground, so you can't pick it up and get rich, and you can't go off and see Mr. Gorno with your little bag of gold dust, it doesn't work like that. It just kind of swirls around.

Then the pastor comes to the lectern and he says, you know folks, this is a wonder. God is wonderful and this is a wonder. And he said the first time it happened, feathers fell in our church from the roof.

I thought there was a bird's nest in the air conditioning. Feathers. He said, and I was amazed, and then I went home and feathers fell in my house.

And then on the airplane, feathers fell around me in the airplane. Then I realized that this was a wonder. Now it's gold dust.

There's a scripture in Thessalonians that says that in the last days, that Satan will deceive people with lying wonders. That's what it is. It's a lying wonder.

It's a wonder that has a resemblance of being spiritual, but it's lying to you. It's lying because it's taking people away from the reality of Christ and Him crucified into mysticism. How sad that they cannot see a lying wonder.

And how scary that what's written in Thessalonians is actually happening in the churches around the world today. The lying wonders are alive in the church. They're not happening out there with the witch doctors, they're happening in the church.

You see, gold dust doesn't bring repentance. Gold dust won't challenge your heart. Gold dust won't confront your flesh.

Gold dust will not bring us to the revelation of Jesus Christ. It's simply a wonder. There's never been a true revival in history that God has sent gold dust upon sinners.

Or feathers. Feathers, what's a feather going to do? Tickle your conscience. It's ridiculous.

What we need is to have men and women on their faces at an altar crying in repentance, seeking Jesus Christ. But we are taken with lying wonders. Oh, gold dust.

Let's go to that church, there's gold in the air. Babylon is in the air, not Jesus. You understand that? You understand that we are living in days when Satan has pulled out every single thing he can, and even sincere men of God who started off right, because we've taken the cross out of the centrality of our gospel, we are now open to every form of demonic deception available, and we cannot discern the difference.

These are dangerous days. These are confusing days. And these are days in which we have to guard our faith and to guard our hearts and to guard the truth that we know.

Yes? Amen. What I want to share with you this morning is very simple and very basic. But it's, I want to speak about our walk with the Holy Spirit, the life of the Spirit.

I'd like to read from 2 Corinthians 5, and we'll look from verse 14. It says, For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus, that if one died for all, then all died. And he died for all, but those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and rose again.

The impact of the revelation of Jesus Christ changes, in my life, changes my priorities to the point that he becomes the reason that I live. He is not an email attachment to my life. You know when you, little attachments that you send a picture, your favorite picture, you attach it.

We don't attach Jesus so that we can have a bigger house or a better car. We don't attach Jesus so that we can pass our exams or become successful businessmen or have a happy marriage. We do not attach Jesus to our lives.

He's not an attachment so that we can live better lives. He is the reason that we live. That's a revelation.

There are too many Christians who have attached him. Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him thus no longer.

We knew him in the man on the earth, but now we know him in the Spirit. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ Jesus, he's a completely new creation. All things have passed away.

Behold, all things are becoming new. We have been saved from sin. We are being saved from sin.

And we will be saved from sin. We have been saved from sin. We got born again.

We are being saved from sin. That's sanctification. It's a process by which Christ works in our hearts day by day to deal with our character.

We will be saved from sin as the resurrection, the glorification of our bodies, in which we're taken out of this little cheap world of iniquity and we go into the presence of God to start our life that he has prepared for us for eternity. That's what he's talking about here. Now, all things are of God, who's reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

So, the same way that Christ opened the door for us to come to him, our lives must open the door for others to come to Christ. Did I read that correctly? Yes? He has given us the ministry of reconciliation. So, in the same way, if Christ dwells in me and my life is no longer mine and I'm living for him, the same way

that Christ opened in the Spirit to open my eyes to come to him, so he wants to use my life and the fragrance of my life to open the eyes of men and women that they may see Christ and come to Christ.

The ministry of reconciliation is my life. Therefore, the vessel is more important than the message. Can I say that again? Or as important, just because someone gets super spiritual on me.

The vessel is as important as the message, because the vessel is the message. Right? Your life is the message. You know, too many Christians walk around with four spiritual laws and speak about a gospel, but everybody at work knows that they're a cheat.

Everybody at work knows that they have a bad testimony. It's not Bible punching and preaching the Scriptures to my workmates that's going to get them saved, and they get saved because of that. That's an act of divine grace.

But it's our lives. It's what we carry. It's the work of Christ in us, but when we speak, it adds punch to the words.

The fragrance of our lives makes the gospel come alive. Hence, God is more interested in forming Christ in us, so that there's an authority when we speak. There's a clarity when we speak.

There's an energy when we speak. It's because of the testimony of the fullness of what's happened in us, that gives what we speak credibility. Yes? That makes it a lot harder though, doesn't it? Because we are on trial all the time.

Every single day, every single moment. Wherever we are, the sinners are watching us. They are looking at us.

You never know who is watching you, who was at school with you, who saw you last week, yes, and is watching you and comparing your attitude. I was going to say your driving habits, because I disqualify on that one, and all the rest. That's why there's no fish on my car, because neither the driver or the car is born again.

There are days that I backslide. But it's true, you can't go and squeeze some little old lady off the side of the road, because you're in a hurry, and then she walks in the church on Sunday, and it's like, oh my goodness. Our conduct is known to the world, and it's through our lives that we open doors.

We've got to understand that we're on trial all the time. So, He's given us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, that God is in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing the trespasses unto us, and has committed to us the same word of reconciliation, which is what I've been saying.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ. As though Christ were pleading through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf.

Be reconciled to God. Doesn't that make it clear? We are ambassadors of Christ. Now, the trouble with an ambassador, is he does not have the right to speak on his own authority.

The ambassador has to reflect the nation he comes from, and the government, and especially the president. So, when he's called in, if the American ambassador is called in here to see our president, he doesn't walk into our president and say, and answer his questions with his own view of international politics. He stands before the president and he says, you know Mr. President, this is what the American

policy is, and he reflects what the American government is saying.

Even if he disagrees with it, he may have a personal opinion, like, I think Obama goofed it. But he can't tell our president that. Do you understand? When he's called in, he has to say, Mr. President, this is what the American administration, this is their view.

He is an ambassador. And therefore, as an ambassador, he takes what he hears, and his job is to communicate it clearly to his audience. That is what we have to do in the Spirit.

We have to have a relationship with Christ, so that we take what we hear, and the fellowship of Christ in the Spirit is real enough, that when we go to communicate it to others, we're not passing on a theory. We're not passing on simply head knowledge. We're passing on that which has been given to us in the Spirit.

There has to be life in our words. There has to be something we're conveying in the Spirit, that has been transferred from the throne of grace, through our hearts, to our audiences. That's an ambassador.

And he says, and as an ambassador, I communicate to you that, so I'm imploring you, I'm bringing to you the same urgency that Christ had when He died. The same reality, the same burden. I'm imploring you, be reconciled to God.

And when people hear us, that urgency grabs their hearts, because it's been transmitted from our heart, that's been touched by God. And if we lose that fellowship of the Spirit, if we lose that clarity, we lose our testimony. We've become Christians without a voice.

We're simply churchgoers. We can talk, but how often do we talk to people and our words fall at our feet? We don't want words to fall at our feet. We want words that are going to pierce hearts, touch consciences, open eyes, bring men and women to see something they've never seen before.

That's life. And we can't go around saying, the elders said, or Richard said, or Mickey said, ask the seven sons of Sceva the Jew. Yes? Jesus in whom Paul speaks, and they got thoroughly beaten for their efforts.

It can't be like that. In these days, we have got to know something in the Spirit. We've got to know Christ so clearly that when we talk, there's a confidence and a clarity, there's an overflow of our own lives that must be passed on.

And that is what Paul is talking about here in this verse. That changes Christianity from a Sunday-go-to-church Christianity to something where my life is on the wire all the time. In 1 Corinthians chapter 4, he says, we're stewards.

We won't go there. We are stewards. Stewards of the grace of God.

I've been entrusted with something, told to look after it. And if you go through all the parables where he speaks about stewards every single time, the master entrusted something to the servants, and the servants are held accountable with what they did to that to which they were entrusted. So we've been entrusted with what? The Gospel.

We've been entrusted with the life of Christ. We've been entrusted with the revelation of Christ. He has entrusted it to us.

It's a little bit tough when we put that conclusion to the end, where we say, okay, when I stand before the Lord, He's going to ask me, not, how good were you on earth? I didn't lie too much. I didn't steal too much. I coveted my neighbor's wife, just sometimes not too much.

Amen. I try to be good, Lord. He's not going to ask us that.

That's part of the question, but not the full deal. He's going to say, what did you do with my life that I entrusted you to, and to how many hearts did you sow that life into? Well, not many, because you see, Lord, I lost my contact with the Holy Spirit. So I went to church every Sunday just to be encouraged, just to be strengthened.

But the real life of the Spirit, I lost. So really, I wasn't able to touch anyone's heart in anyone's life. Therefore, we are not good stewards of the grace of God.

Was that a terrible thing to say? But it's like that. You've got to see our responsibility. Now, we are not going to succeed in doing anything for the Lord outside of the power of the Holy Spirit being at work within us.

One thing that does not work, Christianity in the flesh doesn't work. Christianity by principle doesn't work. Christianity by works doesn't work.

Christianity only works when the Holy Spirit is alive in my heart. I'm in fellowship with Him. He's working in me and through me, and it's the energy of the Spirit working in me and through me that enables me to do what I have to do.

So, if I lose the flow of the Spirit, the fellowship of the Spirit, the freshness of the Spirit, the well is going to go dry. And so the key is not how many courses I attend, how much knowledge of the Bible I have, all those things are good. The key at the end of the day is how rich is my fellowship with the Spirit and what is the fruit of that fellowship.

That measures a strong, clear Christian. Ephesians chapter 5. I'm going to touch on two things after that. Okay, from verse 15.

Paul is riding to this church. These guys were perhaps one of the more spiritual churches at the time. They were doing well.

There were some of them who'd been snoozing. You can see from verse 14, but verse 15, he writes in. And he says, See then that you walk circumspectfully.

That means carefully. Not as fools, but as wise. Now a fool here doesn't mean someone who didn't go to school.

It simply means someone who is not paying attention to the times, their calling, what's going on in the Spirit. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. How do we redeem the time? It means buying back the time.

Our lives are linear. You know, that's a strange term to use, isn't it? Linear. It means that we only move in a straight line.

You get born, and you're going to die. And your life starts here, and it ends there. And it goes through time in a straight line, like that.

Yes? God is not linear. God can take your life, and He can see your life. He can look at you from above, underneath, to the end.

He can see you before you get there. God can move around your life, but you are confined to a linear lifestyle. Because we are confined to time.

You can't go backwards in time. If you can't go back today, and decide to change yesterday. You can't do that.

And you can't live tomorrow before you get there either. So you can only live for the moment. Which means you only have so many hours, and minutes, and seconds to your life.

And every minute that you are breathing, or every moment that you are messing around, you are losing time. You only have so many hours to invest in spiritual things. To invest in your future.

To invest in the call of God upon your life. You look at your time and say, in my last week, how much time did I have fellowship with the Lord? How much time was I actually in touch with the heart of God? Okay, we are normally just honest on that one, because we exaggerate. Okay.

Then let's go look at, how much time did I spend doing things that are just a waste of time? Preparing meals. We spend hours, and hours, and hours preparing meals. Getting dressed.

Watching TV. iPhones. Cell phones.

Huh? My phones. Your phones. Whatever they are.

We are hours, and hours, and hours on these things. But it's time we are losing, because every moment... I'll give you a little quote from Spurgeon. He said, Your heart is like a muffled drum.

It beats its way to the grave. I love that saying. But for you mere mortals, you probably don't understand it.

Amen? Where is this old drum here? This is Spurgeon saying. This is it. This is your heartbeat.

Every time it beats, you are taking one more step to the grave. That's what he said. Your heart, like a muffled drum, beats its way to the grave.

Amen? Amen? Sir, how many heartbeats are committed to TV? How many to my cell phone? How many heartbeats are dedicated to serving the Lord? How are you going to buy back your wasted time? You can't. He says, don't waste the time. Redeem the time.

If I've wasted the time there, then I must make sure that in the future, I'm able to buy in the time by opening my heart to spiritual things, to use the time I have to my best advantage. Some of us try to say, Amen, or Oh me, or Oh my. But that's how it is.

And in these days of... of entertainment, and everything being so visual and fleshly, we are so easily distracted with the natural, that we lose sight of the spiritual. We lose sight of what is real. We lose sight of what is around us.

Those spiritual things are hardly significant, and it's extremely dangerous. Because we could end up as spiritual paupers when we die. Therefore, he says, do not be unwise.

But understand what the will of the Lord is. Don't be drunk with wine. Okay, but... Be filled with the Spirit.

That, in the original, that means a continual refilling, because the vessel leaks. It means, let the Spirit of God come into you constantly, over and over again. A fresh drinking of the Spirit, because somehow it drains out.

Somehow, through day by day... I kind of got baptized in the Holy Ghost 20 years ago, and say, then I spoke in tongues, and I'm filled with the Spirit. It doesn't work like that. It's like the manner in the Old Testament.

The Spirit works, the Holy Spirit works on relationship. As long as the relationship is alive and fresh, it's going to work. When it goes dry and stale and stagnant, the dove flies away.

I want to touch very quickly on something that I think we must just look at. Because very often we go, we get on our knees, we go home, we get on our knees, and say, Lord, fill me, fill me, fill me. I just want to know.

Oh Lord, give me the Holy Ghost. I just want to fall, fall, fall, fall, fall. Ever tried that? Yes, and try.

Maybe it didn't work. But the Holy Spirit is also conscious about things like undealt with sins. Now, here's an interesting observation.

When a sinner comes to Christ, he is brought to repentance. A true sinner, a sinner coming to Christ with a true conversion is going to come to repentance. And the reason he comes to repentance is that he sees his total state.

As his total state, he's a sinner. His total state, he's rebelling against God. His total state, he's an enemy of God.

He understands, that's who I am. And he falls on his knees, and he seeks the forgiveness of God through sincere repentance, and he gets born again. Christians are told to confess their sins.

Sinners don't confess their sins. Sinners have too many sins to confess. Besides, they don't remember them all.

They won't. He doesn't even know what he's done wrong. He must be convicted of his state.

But if we... This is the message which we've heard from Him and declared to you that God is light, and in Him is no darkness. And if we have fellowship with Him, we say we fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and don't practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with Him.

And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Why must a Christian confess his sins? Not to the priest, by the way.

Alright, I'm not opening a little cubicle at the back here with some black cloth on it, so you can come and tell me what's going on. That's not the story. To God.

Because you have a relationship with the Lord. Do you understand that? And when you come close to the Lord, what's He going to do? He has forgiven you of all your sins. So the slate is clear.

Now we've come before the Lord and we're walking with God. And let me tell you, the things that are happening in our lives that we know are out of order with God. Our little pet sin.

There's no perfect human being. We have little sins that we keep as pets. Because we like them.

And we justify them. And we excuse them. And we tell God that it's so hard to let it go.

But there are a couple of things that happen. That they are there and we struggle to let those little deals go. But does that grieve the Holy Spirit? It does.

There are areas in our lives that the Holy Spirit says, And that? That? We say, sorry God. I want to help you here. In the contract that I signed when I got saved.

Here it is. It says certain sins are non-negotiable. That's one of them.

Alright. So you can love me and fill me and bless me and all the things. But when it comes to my temper, it's non-negotiable.

It doesn't change. So don't go there. That's not true.

There are no non-negotiable sins. So the first thing that happens is that when I come to the Lord. And I'm a Christian.

And now my tank is a little dry. I get before God. The Holy Spirit walks in and He says, let's talk about something.

Talk about the things that you know and I know need to be sorted out. And He puts. That's why He says if we walk in the light as He is in the light.

We have fellowship with Him. It's like God shining a torch straight into my heart where there are no more shadows. I can see the little mouse running around.

The little rat. Called pride. Amen.

So what do we do? Bible is very clear. We confess it to God. We go before the Lord and we say, Lord.

This is my state. I'm willing to talk to you about it. I'm willing to acknowledge it.

I'm willing to say this is what it is. And because I'm a Christian and I know the Lord. I can't hide it anymore.

It's something that I have brought into my life on this side of the covenant. And the Bible is very clear. I need to bring to God and say, Lord.

This is where my struggle is. And the Holy Spirit says now we need to deal with it. We can't brush it over.

We've got to go to God and discuss it with God. And be honest with God. So that our heart is open and humbled and exposed before the Lord.

So there's nothing in our lives that is hidden. And too often we have too many things that are hidden. We want to serve God on the surface.

But there's little things in little boxes that are no-go areas. That we're not really to let go. And it's got to change.

Because the Word can now. Because with the sinner, his repentance is all-inclusive. With the Christian, true repentance.

Because repentance never leaves us. It's attached to the word confession. It's called clarity.

Before God forgives the sinner of everything. Gone. Washed in the blood of Jesus.

Taken away as far as east is from the west. Welcome into my house. Gone.

There you are. Justified. Now, six months down the road.

There are a few things that I have done in my heart. That I know have grieved Jesus who lives in my heart. What am I going to do with that? The Lord says, let's talk about it.

It's right there. I'm willing to forgive you. I'm willing to cleanse you.

I'm willing to do it. But I need you to tell me about it. So that we can focus on it.

So that it can be put to death. In other words, He's saying, I want you to be honest about the state of your life. Because fellowship with the Holy Spirit is very simple.

He is going to walk with us and put His finger on things. And say, let's talk about that. That should not be in the house.

Let's talk about it. And we don't like confrontation with God. And so, we push things around.

And we say, Lord, it's not like that. He says, let's talk about it. I need to discuss this attitude.

I need to discuss these thoughts. I need to discuss these habits. I need to discuss them to the point where you will take responsibility for them.

And come to the place where you are willing to come with me. And I'll give you the grace. We'll go to the cross.

We'll go to the altar. We'll go to the point of death. And I, by my grace, will help you lose this so that it dies.

Then we can have fellowship. If we confess our sins, acknowledging our responsibility and need of His assistance. He says, He will forgive us our sins.

And we will have fellowship with Him. Very often, the reason that I struggle to make contact with the fullness of the Spirit. Is because there are areas in my life that are not clear.

Basics. 1 and 1 equals 2 in maths. 1 and 1 equals 2 in spiritual walk.

You know, many years ago. There was a revival. It's probably still there.

But they had a real powerful revival in Quasi Bantu in Natal. And I read the book. In fact, I met the man.

The German. Called Erles Degen. Back in 19... 17... 1774, 1775.

He came and spoke at Bethel Church here. He said something very interesting. He said, the revival is such.

That we have ambulances drive in. And as we open the doors, the people getting out are healed. We've seen miracles every day.

Such we've never seen before. But he said, there's some days where there's no move of God at all. And we get all the staff members together.

And we sit down. And we say, has anybody got one attitude here with somebody else? One attitude. And some say, well... Yes, you know, that one.

They borrowed my soap this morning and didn't ask me. And... Repent! The moment every member of staff humbles themselves. And it's clear.

The presence of God returned to the station. That's how sensitive God is. The power of God is being poured out.

Just let a couple of Christians have a bad day. It stops. What a road to walk.

So I want to be in Natal. I want to be where the revival is. Do you really want to be where the revival is? You've got to scrub your heart so hard every morning it shines.

But do we want the presence of God in our lives? Yes. We've got to understand that things of God are not cheap. And the Holy Spirit doesn't play games.

And sin and iniquity brings darkness into our lives. That He doesn't want to remain there. And I can't walk with God in darkness.

Neither can I pretend. Come to the altar, cry, weep, do what it is. He's not interested in that.

He wants to know. Confess my friend. Tell me.

Talk to me about it. Don't come and tell some human being. Talk to me about it.

Then we've got to come to the point of obedience. And obedience... You know... I was chatting to some of the youngsters in Mauritius now. Those who've got... Some of them have got a real call of God upon their lives.

And they're saying, you know... God, we know it. And we just can't wait for the day that God opens the doors. And we get sent somewhere.

And we're just going to go and change the world. I said, there's only one problem. God can't drive a stationary car.

You're not going to move from being passive and just enjoying the church to changing the Congo. It doesn't happen. He's not going to have the curtains parted.

One day... I've got faith. Man, let's go to Africa. Won't happen.

It's got to start in little steps. Yes? It's got to start with you saying to God, what you're asking me to do today, I will do it with all my heart. You've got to trust God and walk in obedience to the little things He puts in front of you day by day by day.

Because as you grow in maturity, so those little things become bigger things. The little doors become bigger doors. And the journey you take will prepare you for when the real door opens, you are ready and trained and prepared to walk through it.

And the same in our Christian lives. We want to get used by God. We want to see signs and wonders and miracles.

We want to have faith in our hearts. Yes, but when He says to you, what about your attitude? Am I willing to take a step of faith in obedience to my friend the Holy Spirit and allow Him to put that thing on the altar so that it dies, so that I can mature beyond it? What about the programs that you watch on the internet? What about the movies that are called grey area movies? The music. The little things that the Holy Spirit says.

And here's the problem. It's not what your friends tell you that's spiritual. If you listen to man, you're always going to go backwards.

Because man's values and God's values are two different things. Bunch of spiritual Christians will tell you, No, that's cool, man. That's fine.

I'm free in Jesus. He's so free, he doesn't know where Jesus is. But when you get down to where the Holy Spirit is, as you're on your knees in the presence of God and the Holy Spirit says, Let's talk about that.

That is tough. And that's when you say, Lord, I'm willing to walk this road by faith. Walk this road in step with you.

Walk this road in obedience. I'm willing to do what you're asking me to do. And as I take that road, so I can promise you, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit grows and grows and grows, becomes clearer and clearer until the river stops to flow.

The well has been cleansed. It's been dug out again. And that's what we've got to seek.

We've got to seek to be a people who are not passive. We've got to seek to be a people who are willing to say, to accept the challenges of God. And as we deal with the little things, and as we open our hearts to the little things, the Holy Spirit comes along and says, There's someone over there.

Go and pray for them. And you may not hear thunder and see lightning. In fact, the very opposite.

You may feel completely unspiritual, but you just go and pray for them. And they jump off the bed and get healed. And you go, What happened? Oh, I'll tell you what happened.

The vessel was ready to carry the anointing. That's what happened. The vessel was prepared.

All that God wants is the vessel and His grace will flow through the vessel. And in these days, I believe we've got to have a real relationship with God in the Spirit. It's going to give us discernment.

It's going to give us authority. It's going to enable us to confront darkness in another way. Again, I was sharing with... We were talking about different things with a young couple just before I came home, about the ministry, and talking about keeping our sword sharp.

I said, You know, years ago, a friend of mine and myself, we took a year off in the ministry. We didn't leave our churches, but we took a year and dedicated ourselves to casting out demons. Now, we weren't in the gospel as I know it now.

Please understand that. But we slowly decided, it is time to go. Let's study the occult and let's see how many demons we can go and panel beat this year.

And you know, within a few weeks, we were panel beating demons. They are there. The little guys are like cockroaches.

They are everywhere. And the two of us would go and we got into some amazing situations. Amazing.

By the end of the year, we were sharp. I could smell a demon at about 60 feet, and I got him. Bang! I knew where he was.

Our discernment, our senses of working in that field were razor sharp. I didn't say everything we did was right, but we were sharp. About six months ago, I was talking to someone and they walked away.

And about two hours later, it dawned on me, I'd been talking to a demon. I was mad. I was furious.

I thought, how can I be so dull that this guy is talking, but it's not him, it's actually a spirit talking to me. And I was so... my spiritual senses, my spiritual weapons were so rusty, so out of tune, that that thing could chirp to me and walk down the road and only afterwards I thought, Ah. Ah.

No, no, no, no, no. That's not allowed to happen, man. That's not allowed to happen.

But I was cross with myself. Do you know why? Because I have let my spiritual weapons away. You want to put it, my senses, go to bed.

It's easy to be comfortable as a Christian. It's easy to look after sheep. It's easy to just preach a little bit here and there.

It's easy to settle into a routine. We've got to realize that if we're going to step out of the boat and be on the front line, we've got to know the power of God and the power of God doesn't come until we want to be on the front line and to get on the front line, we've got to let God do things in our hearts that are going to prepare us to do that. But once we start to taste the life of the Spirit, you will want nothing else.

So let's take the broom and let's allow the broom to go through the house. Yes? And let's seek fellowship with God, not for our benefit, but that we may be ambassadors for Christ. That the vessel may carry the message and the vessel's ready for the message.

Because the way we are going, every one of us is going to have to be involved in carrying the message of life to a world that's dying around about us. Amen? That's it, guys. Somewhere the race each one of us has to run is our own race.

But we've got to be a people who are spiritual, prepared and ready to go. Willing? Amen? Let's pray. Father, thank you for the privilege we have of serving you, of being Christians and of carrying your presence in our hearts and our lives.

Every one of us faces issues, struggles, financial problems, many natural things. And yet you are the source, Lord, and you can somehow guide us through all that. But they must not distract us from the plan of God for our lives.

And all I can pray is that you open our eyes to spiritual things. Open our eyes, Lord, to where we hide and we justify. Open our eyes, Lord, and create within us a thirst again for a fellowship with you that the river may flow, that we may give our lives to touch those around about us with the reality of Jesus Christ.

And let's not be afraid of the cost. Because the cost is only measured in temporal things. But let us cherish, Lord, the grace that you've given to us and the gospel that we have.

And let us run with patience the race that you set before us, that Jesus Christ may be glorified in everything that we do. Everything. So stir our hearts, Father.

Stir our hearts. This road is an individual road. Each one of us must know his own state before God.

Each one of us must guide his own state before God. Each one of us must treasure the state of his own heart before the Lord. But, Father, let us not become complacent.

But rather stir ourselves up for the race that lies ahead. Let's redeem the time. For the days are truly evil.

But you've given us the privilege of being alive in those days. So strengthen every heart and every life here. We bless your name.

We worship you, Lord. We give you the glory and the praise. We thank you for it.

Amen. This message was brought to you by Sovereign Pope Christian Church. We hope you have been blessed.

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