

# What Is Spiritual Reality?

by Stephen Kaung

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*We must seek spiritual reality by humbling ourselves before God, placing ourselves under the light of God, and examining our spiritual condition.*

**Duration:** 1:19:33

**Scripture:** Hebrews 12:25

**Topics:** "Reality"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of seeking spiritual reality that is solid and not abstract or imaginary. He explains that spiritual reality must meet four criteria: it must reach the spirit, last forever, be of substance, and be of God. The preacher warns that everything that is not real will be shaken, burned, and judged. He urges believers to build their lives on the foundation of Christ and to seek genuine spiritual reality rather than just an appearance of godliness.

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## Transcript

We do thank the Lord for bringing us together again this year, and the theme of this year is spiritual reality. Now we do not come here to discuss spiritual reality. We come here to seek for spiritual reality.

The reason why we feel this matter of spiritual reality of such tremendous importance to us now, it is because of the time that we are living today. In the Old Testament we find that term, the end of days, as we find in Isaiah chapter two, verse two, and in many other places in the Old Testament. Now the end of times is a Hebrew expression, signifying the end of the period of law, introducing the coming in of the Messiah.

With the Old Testament prophets, they have no idea of the two comings of our Lord Jesus. But to us, we know, in between the two comings of our Lord Jesus is the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and the generations, but has now been revealed to us through the holy prophets and apostles. And it is that period of the church.

So you find in the New Testament, the apostles in their time, they also mention about this matter of the last days. Paul in 2nd Timothy chapter three, verse one, he said in the last days we have very dangerous time. People will be lovers of self, lovers of pleasure, lovers of money, instead of lovers of God.

And the apostle John also mentioned this matter of the last hour. In his epistles, he said this is the last hour, because the spirit of the Antichrist has already come. Now to John, hour means a period of time.

So brothers and sisters, we realize that if in the apostles' time, they already realized we are in the last hour, the last days, then after two thousand years have passed, certainly we are in the very last of the last hour. And this is a very serious time. Brothers and sisters, it is most important for us to know the time.

Do we really realize what time we are living in now? You know in 1st Chronicles chapter twelve, verse thirty-two, we find that in the old days, many people, they came to Hebron to King David, to help him to transfer the kingdom from Saul to David. And among those who came were those from Issachar. The Bible says they knew the time.

And they knew what Israel ought to do. To everything, there is a time. To every purpose, there is a time.

And it is the wise who knows the time and manner. Brothers and sisters, this is why we feel it is so urgent for us to know what time we are living now. There is a purpose to every time.

And we need to know God's purpose for this time. We also need to know how to behave, conduct ourselves during this very special time. In the book of Hebrews, chapter twelve, verse twenty-five through verse twenty-eight, we find the writer of Hebrews, he mentioned, yet once there will be a great shaking.

And of course we know, he quotes the Old Testament Haggai, chapter two, verse six. Because in Haggai, the prophet prophesied that once, yet once, God will not only shake the earth, but he will shake the heaven and the earth, and the sea and the land, and all nations, and the desire of the nations will arrive. And the explanation of yet once is given by the writer of Hebrews.

He tells us this yet once signifies the removing of all that is shakable, that is being made. So everything that can be shaken will be shaken. So that which is unshakable will remain.

Now brothers and sisters, this yet once is already upon us. We find that not only in this world, all the earthly things, the whole world is being shaken. But even in things that we consider as heavenly, as spiritual, we are also being shaken.

Our faith is severely tested. Our love is greatly challenged. As the Bible said, because of the difficult days, the love of the many will go cold.

And the Lord said, when he shall come, shall he find faith on this earth. Brothers and sisters, we feel that today, our very spiritual life is being tested. Many things that we take for granted, we think that we do have, we find that when they are being challenged, they are shattered.

We feel that many that we think we are established, we understand, and yet when we are tested, we find they are gone. Very little is being left. Everything is now being shaken, preparing for the day when the unshakable kingdom shall come.

So brothers and sisters, living in such a time, how important it is for us to seek that which is unshakable. The Apostle Peter, in his epistles, he mentioned that the end of the days has drawn nigh. Be sober, watchful unto prayer.

In 2 Peter chapter 3 he mentioned that the day of the Lord shall come like a thief. And everything will be consumed by fire. The heavens and the earth, they all will be burned with fire.

And how we need to prepare ourselves, ready for our Lord, even hasten his return. And brothers and sisters, the Apostle Paul, he told us in Romans chapter 14 verse 10, that we shall all be placed before the judgment seat of God. And everything will confess before that judgment seat.

And the same you find in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 10. We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And we shall be judged according to each the work that he or she has done.

Paul said he is like a master builder. He laid the foundation and there is no other foundation. But Christ sees us.

But see how each one of us builds upon that foundation. If we build with gold, silver and precious stones, or we build with wood, grass and hay, that day a fire shall appear and it will test everything. The wood, the grass, the hay will be burned up.

You will be saved, because the foundation cannot be burned, but barely saved. But if you build with gold and silver and precious stones, under the fire, it will become more precious. So brothers and sisters, this is the hour.

This is the time that we are living now. And it is for this reason we feel very strongly in our spirit that we need to seek for spiritual reality. All that is not real will be shaken, will be burned, will be judged.

And thank God, He still gave us time to repent. He still gave us a time to be before Him. And let His light shine upon us.

Brothers and sisters, our heart is deceitful above all things. We deceive not only other people, we deceive ourselves. We do not know our real condition.

Even if we try to analyse ourselves, we won't be able to get to the real conclusion. Our analysis will either elate us, make us think that we are better than what we really are, or it may deflate us, make us less than what we really are. It is never accurate.

Self-examination will never do the work. But brothers and sisters, what should we do in these last days? There is one thing we must do. And that is, we must place ourselves under the light of God.

You know, in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 13, we are told that it is the light that shows the real character of a thing. It is the light that exposes. And we need light.

Today, we think we are in the light, but brothers and sisters, I am afraid, often times we just surround ourselves with the light that we lit ourselves. Just like Isaiah said, you light your fire, and you surround yourself with its sparks, but if you do, you will lie down in sorrow. We need the light of God.

Psalms 36, verse 9 says, For in thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light we see light. It is only in the light of God we will be able to see exactly what we are, where we are. Reality can only be shown in the light of God.

So, dear brothers and sisters, when we first begin, I think the one thing that we really need to do, and that is, we need to humble ourselves before the Lord. Probably, we think more of ourselves than we what really are. There are many things in our lives, many experiences, many teachings, many doctrines, many works, many service, many of what we consider as spiritual life.

Probably, when we are really under the light of God, the true character will be exposed, and we will find how little is there. It is much better to find out now, than to find out later, when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ. And that will be a tremendous regret.

So, brothers and sisters, we feel that we are really in a very, very serious, this is no time to play religion. This is time that we get real. Our brother mentioned last night, that the word reality, you do not find in the New Testament.

The word there is truth, because the word truth, according to Cremon, he said truth signifies reality. Lying at the basis of an appearance, the manifested, veritable substance of a matter. In other words, what is reality? Reality is something behind an appearance.

How often we think an appearance is reality, but it is that which is the basis of an appearance. That is reality. Reality is the substance, not the teaching, not the doctrine, not the form, but the substance, something that is solid.

Something that is eternal. Something that is unfading, incorruptible, undefallable, something that remains forever, eternal, something that is real. And we add spiritual reality to our theme.

Because, as our brother mentioned last night, even earthly things to us, to the natural man, they are very real. But, they may be real to the natural man, but spiritually speaking, they are unreal. Why? Because they are superficial, they are transient, they are passing, they are not everlasting, they are not the eternal verity.

I think probably the best way we can have a kind of understanding about spiritual reality, is trying to make some contrast, or to say what is not real, what is not spiritual reality. So, we would like to consider together a few things. First of all, religion versus spiritual reality.

Religion to many people is very real. When our Lord Jesus was on earth, he lived among a people that were very religious. The Jews at that time were very religious.

They had their temple restored, they had their priesthood restored, they had their sacrifices, daily sacrifice offered, they had their feasts, and they came to Jerusalem three times a year to worship God. So, by all appearances, they have a religion. They are a religious people.

And, as a matter of fact, Judaism at that time was the purest of all religions, and that's the reason why many Gentiles became proselytes, or have proselytized. They were converted to Judaism because it is the best religion you can have upon the earth. A very religious people, the Pharisees, they made the study of the law their life.

Not only that, but they even tried to keep the law. So, brothers and sisters, if we turn to the Gospel of John, chapter 8. John, chapter 8. You remember a conversation that was going on between our Lord Jesus and the Jews. And the Lord said, if you abide in my word, then you are truly my disciples.

And you shall know the truth. You shall know reality. And the truth shall set you free.

That reality will set you free. Now, the Lord was saying these words to those pious Jews, very religious Jews. They thought they already had the reality.

They thought they had the truth. And they were proud of it. And yet the Lord said, if you abide in my word, then you shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Your religion binds you, puts you into bondage. You are not free. Not a free people.

You are under severe bondage. But if you know the reality, then you will be set free. The Jews answered our Lord and said, we are never in bondage.

We are always free. Know how blind they were. Actually, even at that very hour, they were under the Roman Empire.

They were not free. They were a conquered people. And yet, they said, we are never in bondage.

We are always free. And the Lord said, everyone that practices sin is the bondman of sin. In spite of your religion, you keep on sinning.

You are bondman of sin. You are under bondage. And if the Son of God shall set you free, then you are free indeed.

Well, they said, we were Abraham's seed. Abraham is our father. So the Lord said, yes, you are Abraham's seed.

But you do not act like Abraham did. If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a man who has spoken the truth to you, which I have heard from God.

This did not Abraham. Our Lord Jesus was speaking the truth, the reality, from God the Father to the seed of Abraham. And yet, they wanted to kill him.

This is not the work of Abraham. Well, they argued with the Lord and said, now we are not born of fornication. We have one father.

God is our father. Now think of that. That's religion.

They had the knowledge. They had the knowledge of God. They consider God as their father.

Not like the Gentiles, who worship many gods, many fathers. But through Abraham, they worship one God. And God they consider as their father.

But was God really their father? So far as religion is concerned, it seems that God is their father. Because they accept that. But so far as spiritual reality is concerned, the Lord says, no, God is not your father.

Because if God is your father, then you will listen to me. Listen to the one whom the Father has sent, because I do not come of myself, but God has sent me. Why do you not know my speech? Because you cannot hear my word.

God is not your father. You are of the devil as your father. And you desire to do the lusts of your father.

He was a murderer from the beginning. Because there is, and has not stood in the truth. Because there is no truth in him.

The Lord says, so far as spiritual reality is concerned, you, the religious people, the devil is your father. And the devil is a murderer from the beginning. He does not stand in truth, in reality.

There is no truth in him. He is a liar. He speaks of what is his own.

He is a liar and his father. And because I speak the truth, you do not believe me. Brothers and sisters, I think it is a very clear illustration of the difference between religion and spiritual reality.

Sadly, this was not only true at the time of our Lord Jesus. It is true even today. We find that many accept Christian religion.

Of all the religions in the world, they compare these religions and they consider the Christian religion is the purest. And many accept Christianity as a religion. You remember the story of the Westleys.

When the Westleys were in Oxford University, they and a few friends of them, they were so religious. They organized what was called the Holy Club. They regulated their lives.

They frequented prisons, visited the sick. They fasted during the week. They were the holy people.

Very religious. Christian religion at its best. You know, many do not take Christian religion very seriously, even though they consider themselves as Christians.

But the Westleys, Whitfield and a number of their friends, they took Christianity very seriously. Very religious. The Westleys even went to the new world, that is this country, to Georgia, to convert the natives.

But after some time, they both discovered, they went out to convert the natives. But they themselves were not converted. They were not saved.

They had no living relationship with God. They had all the teachings, all the doctrines of Christianity. And they taught these things.

And they practiced these things. And yet, there was no reality in it. And no wonder, no one was converted.

Until one day, Charles Wesley of course, came to the Lord in a very real way earlier than his brother John. And it was both through Martin Luther's, the book of Romans, his commentary on the book of Romans. And you remember, when John Wesley heard the preface of the book of Romans being read, because at that time, unordained persons cannot preach.

It's against the law. And if you try to preach, you'll be in prison. So with these Moravians, they could only read the preface, book of Romans, written by Martin Luther.

And when they were reading it, John Wesley said, when I heard, my heart became strangely warm. And I realized, I do believe in the Lord Jesus as my personal Savior. Brothers and sisters, you see the difference between religion and spiritual reality? As our brother mentioned last night, his own testimony.

And I believe, brothers and sisters, every one of us has such experience. It is a touch, a contact, a relationship with a living God, through our Lord Jesus, by the Holy Spirit. And only there and then, we touch spiritual reality.

So religion is no help. Under the light of God, I wonder, how many of our spiritual life is religion? Not reality. You have the outward form.

You have the correct teaching. You have some understanding. But brothers and sisters, do you touch God? Does God touch you? How much of God is in all your daily living? How much of God is in your daily prayer? How much of God is in your daily reading of the Word? How much of God is your serving the Lord? How much? I am afraid, most of what we consider as spiritual reality is religion.

God is not in it. If God is not in it, in a living way, it is religion. It is not spiritual reality.

Secondly, orthodoxy versus spiritual reality. We often take orthodoxy as reality. If you can trace back your religion, back to the apostles, or back to the church fathers, you think you have the real thing.

You know, the Church of Christ, I am not trying to criticize anyone. I am just trying to present a contrast. You know, the Church of Christ, they advertise that they go back to the time of the apostles.

The orthodox, the Greek orthodox church, they trace back their origin to the church fathers. We think that if we can trace back, far enough, to the ancient time, there is a certain authority there. There is a certain assurance there, that is bound to be real.

So-called mainline Christianity. Think of Judaism. Judaism began, or before Judaism was born.

It was really a living revelation. The God of glory appeared to Abraham. Even in the time of Moses, it was living revelation.

God's book on the Mount of Sinai, the Ten Words, it began with living revelation. A living faith. But gradually, as time went on, you find that living revelation had degenerated into something that is merely orthodox.

It is correct, but there is no life. Then you find the tradition of the fathers. Now in the beginning, when these fathers, rabbis, great rabbis, raised up by God to interpret the Old Testament, try to apply the principles of the Old Testament to people's daily life, and then generation after generation, you find that other rabbis were raised up.

They did not interpret the original word of God. They interpret the interpretation of the rabbis before them. So you'll find interpretation after interpretation, application after application, here a little, there a little, little precept here, little precept there, added and added and added, until it became Judaism, a system, orthodox, a dead.

Our Lord Jesus said, the flesh prophesied. It is the spirit that gives life. The Apostle Paul said, the letter kill, the spirit quickens.

They have all the letter, correct, orthodox, but that doesn't mean they have the reality. I think Saul of Tarsus, the Pharisee, is a good example. He was so orthodox, he persecuted the church, but when the Lord met him on the road of Damascus, he realized he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, an insolent overbearing, the chief of sinners.

Brothers and sisters, never consider orthodoxy as, I can think of some dear brothers, greatly used by the Lord at one time. Now they belong to the Greek Orthodox Church. They became bishop and priest there.

Why? Because they try to be orthodox. They try to trace the origin of their faith, and they trace back to the Church Fathers. They say, only the Church Fathers could interpret the Bible, so they follow the Church Fathers.

Orthodoxy does not give you spiritual reality. It is a substitute for spiritual reality, and how many just rest upon their oxytocin. Even among our missed brothers and sisters, we think we are very orthodox.

I'm speaking especially to those who came from the Far East. We thought we were the people. Shame, shame.

In the beginning it was living, but now it is dead. It kills. It does not quicken.

What's the use of being orthodox, if we lose the reality? Let us not deceive ourselves, but wake up and seek for spiritual reality. Thirdly, appearance versus spiritual reality. There is nothing wrong with appearance.

There is a need for appearance. If it's only something within, and it's never been expressed without, what's the use of it? But brothers and sisters, appearance should be the product of reality. Because there is reality within, therefore it appears.

It is not something that you try to make up, try to imitate. It is something that comes from within. You cannot help it.

A Chinese proverb said, what is real inside, it will appear outside. But brothers and sisters, how deceiving that you can have an appearance, but not the reality. As the apostle says, in the last days, there will be people who have the form of godliness, without the power.

The form is there, the external appearance is there, but where's the power? Is it make-belief? How appearance deceive us. It is easy to put up an appearance. On Sunday, you can put on your Sunday best.

But brothers and sisters, is this something that you make up, pretend, put on a facade? You're not really what you appear to be. But inside is a different story. That's the reason why when our Lord was on earth, he was a friend of sinners and publicans.

But he denounced the hypocrites in very strong terms. Why? Because they put up an appearance, but without the reality within them. They stand on the corner of the street, pray long prayers to be seen of men.

They enlarge their phylacteries. They want people to see that they are very spiritual. But it's false.

I think also of the book of Hebrews. You know, the book of Hebrews tells us that in the Old Testament time, all these you'll find there are shadows. But the reality is Christ.

Moses is a very real person. But Moses is a type of Christ. In other words, he is telling us of the one that is coming.

The Aaronic priesthood is a shadow. It tells us of the priesthood of our Lord Jesus, according to the order of Melchizedek. The temple and all the services in the temple, they are the types and shadows.

Speaking of the one who is coming, all the sacrifices are shadows. And brothers and sisters, when Christ is come, then the shadow disappears. But unfortunately you'll find those Jews, they reject, they keep.

We are disciples of Moses. They do not know that Moses speaks of the coming one. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appear.

But when Peter tried to put them on the same footing as our Lord Jesus, God dismissed them right away. Christ is the reality. Shadows shall pass.

But the reality is Christ. Brothers and sisters, even in Christianity, you know there are many shadows. Great leaders, great teachings, great methods, great forms, great system.

All these things are shadows. Christ has come. Therefore we should not go back to the shadow.

We should go on with Christ, the reality. Number four, carnality versus spiritual reality. You know our flesh is a great imitator.

How our flesh imitates anything that is spiritual reality. Oftentimes we find that our emotion, actually it is of the flesh. We think that's of the spirit, that's real.

I sometimes heard people say, I just want to be real. I get angry because I want to be real. If I try to hide my anger within me, I am not real.

Now is there reality? Is there spiritual reality? It is carnality. It is an imitation. The Bible says, be angry and sin not.

So you say, I am angry. But if you sin, yourself being touched, provoked, irritated, lots of emotional things. We find Christianity today comes from the flesh.

Is an imitation. The Bible says we live by faith, not by feeling. But how we go for feeling.

Now it is true, there is spiritual feeling too. But in our soul, how it imitates our spiritual feeling. And humanly it is impossible to distinguish.

Our mind, we think we have the mind of Christ. But is it the mind of Christ? Or it is just our own mind. Self is at the back of it.

Our will, the same thing. We think that we really will the will of God. Now if we really do, we shall know.

But often times we substitute. Carnality is such a big problem among God's people. You know the whole book of Malachi is a book of obsession.

Our mind can be so obsessed that we think we are spiritual. And yet we are carnal all the time. You find an argument, a controversy between God and the remnant.

God said, I love you. And they said, where do you love us? God said, you defile me. They said, where do we defile you? They offer the lame, the crippled, the sick, the worst of their animals.

And they think they are serving God. God said, you rob me. They said, where do we rob you? You find the whole book of their mind.

They just cannot see through, cannot see the truth. They think that they do everything. In Romans chapter 8 we are told that the mind of the flesh is not subject to God, to the law of God.

And it cannot subject itself to God. And the mind of the flesh cannot please God. Anything that is carnal, anything that is natural, anything that comes from our Adamic nature, from the old creation, brothers and sisters, all these have to be shaken off.

And finally, I would like to mention the world versus spiritual reality. Our brother mentioned last night, the world is very real. Marriage is real.

Sickness is real. Death is real. All these are very real.

You cannot take a kind of attitude and say, well, these are not real, like the Christian scientist. You are deceiving yourself. So far as the world is concerned, it is real.

But brothers and sisters, the Bible said, we are in the world, but we are not of the world. And because we are not of the world, to us the world is a liar. The world is under the devil, who is a liar.

And he used that world system to lie to mankind, cheating them, thinking that all these things, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, they are the things that are real, that you should seek after. Is that true? Love not the world, nor the things of the world, because the world and all its things are passing. They are not eternal, they are not lasting.

Anything that is passing is not spiritually real. We are in the world, we have to be in touch with it, we have to use the things in this world. But brothers and sisters, what is our attitude? Are we seeking for these things as if they are real? Position? Power? Success? Wealth? Are they real? You are chasing shadows.

Our attitude towards the things of the world is, we use them as if they do not belong to us. Brothers and sisters, the world is not spiritually real. So what is reality? What is spiritual reality? Now this morning we will conclude with a few criteria.

Number one, I have to borrow a little time. Spiritual reality is spiritual. Clear? Anything that is not spiritual, that is not of the spirit of God, is not real.

The physical, the material, the all creation, all these will be burned up. Only that which is spiritual, of the spirit of God, that alone is real. If it comes from man, if it is of the flesh, it is not spiritually real.

It is not reality, a facade, a pretense, a counterfeit. Number two, spiritual reality is of life. Anything that is not of life, by life I mean divine life, God's life.

Anything that is not of life, is not spiritually real. Knowledge, appearance, form, anything that is not the manifestation of life from within, is not spiritually real. You may have a good knowledge of the Bible, an exact, correct, but if there is no life in it, it is superficial.

It does not reach the spirit, it will not last forever. Number three, spiritual reality must be of substance. It must be something solid, not abstract, not for speculation, imagination, even for our mental exercises.

It is the real thing, as our brother mentioned last night, real thing, something of substance. There is something there, and if you have it, you know it. If it is not there, it is not there.

You can talk about it, you can even teach it. If it is not there, it is not there. And finally, spiritual reality is of God.

God is the only spiritual, so measure spiritual reality with these four criteria, and I believe you will come to what it really is. Now today is just an introduction. God willing, we will talk about where can you find spiritual reality, and how do you get it.

So pray that the Lord will open up his word to us. Let us pray. Lord, thou searchest our hearts, thou knowest that we do not come here just to discuss something, we come here to seek for thee, for reality.

Oh, hear the heart cry of every heart. Reveal thyself to us. We have seen signs and wonders, for now we want to know thee.

We want to know thee, the only true God, and the one whom thou hast sent, our Lord Jesus. This is eternal life. Hear her cry, in the name of our Lord Jesus.

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