

# True Christianity is Seeing God Work, Not Man

by Tim Conway

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*This sermon emphasizes the need for God's presence and glory in the church and in individual lives. It highlights the importance of being sensitive to God's movement, surrendering to His Lordship, and renewing commitment to His Word. The speaker urges for a deep sense of awe, fear, and reverence towards God, seeking His supernatural intervention and power rather than relying on human efforts or programs.*

**Duration:** 1:10:21

**Scripture:** Exodus 40:34, Isaiah 66:2, Psalm 34:8, Acts 2:1, James 4:8

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## Description

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## Transcript

This time here back in the States, I've really devoted a lot of time to the book of Revelation. Carefully, meticulously studying through it. Seeing numerous things that I just have not seen before.

And this study was preceded by an in-depth study of some of the major prophets. And I thought, okay, because I'm studying this the whole time I'm here, I'm going to wrap up my visit here, preach this last Sunday before we go, and I'd bring a message out of Revelation. But you know, as I've been praying, I just don't have any liberty.

And in fact, what I felt most impacted by is just a little... I think it's six words. Here in Galatians 1. Two weeks ago when we were here, I kept thinking about these words over and over and over. I'm just going to use this as a springboard for where I'd like to go today.

But Galatians 1. You can turn in your Bibles there. Verses 22, 23, 24. It's specifically verse 24 that I want us to draw our attention to.

Galatians 1.22, Paul says, "...And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only were hearing it said, He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith He once tried to destroy. And they glorified God because of Me." Now, I've noticed that there are some similar verses

scattered around the New Testament that speak somewhat similar to this.

I want to look at this and look at these other passages. Westminster's Shorter Catechism. Maybe you don't know that right off, but the most famous of the questions posed by the Westminster Divines is the first question.

Anybody know it? What is the chief end of man? And what is it? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever. So according to the Westminster Divines, these churches in Judea, look what they were doing. Verse 24, they glorified God because of Me.

Would you say they were doing what the Westminster Divines thought we ought to do? Apparently so. The chief end. So these Westminster guys would have thought that these folks here in Judea were accomplishing their chief end.

They were glorifying God, it says specifically, because of Paul. Now, sometimes I read in Scripture, you know how it is, you may read something over and over and over and then you read it and you stop dead in your tracks. You can't get away from it.

You keep reading it. You see something. You feel something.

This little statement in Galatians 1.24 did just that to me. They glorified God in Paul. Now, glorified.

Okay, let's think about that. Let's not just assume that we all know what that's all about. Glorified.

Okay, I can look at my lexicons and this is what comes up. To cause the dignity or the worth of someone, and in this case, it's God specifically. To cause the dignity, the worth, and I added in here the perfect attributes of God to become manifest, to become acknowledged.

It's got to do with enhancing the reputation. Not enhancing God Himself. God can enhance us.

You know when it speaks about God glorifying us, God actually clothes us with a splendor we don't have. Now obviously, we don't do that to God, but what we do is we can clothe His reputation with splendor. That's the reality.

Just listen to the biblical verses and what you're going to hear in these verses is glory, but you're also going to hear other words that are synonymous. You'll remember there in Isaiah 6. We heard it just recently in the year that King Uzziah died. Isaiah says, I saw also the Lord high and lifted up.

And these seraphim, they cried out, Holy, Holy, Holy. How does it finish? The whole earth is full of His glory. Now think with it.

Holy, Holy, Holy. We would think that they would say the whole earth is full of His holiness, but they say glory. Okay, if you want to think about what God's glory is, God's just being absolutely altogether different and separate, which is the idea of holiness.

Or this, later in Isaiah, in chapter 35, they shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Now you hear how the synonym just rolls right off there. The glory, the majesty.

And the new King James says the excellency. You know what we're here to do? Proclaim the excellencies. That's what we're talking about.

The excellencies of God, which are the attributes. God is holy in all of His attributes because He's totally unlike anyone else in every one of those attributes. If the Westminster divines are correct, this is the chief thing we need to have right above all else, and certainly Scripture bears this out.

Again in Isaiah, listen, I'm not going to have you turn to all these, but just listen to the Lord. If we could hear this in the depths of our soul. For My name's sake, I defer My anger.

So you can know right away, look, when God acts, He acts in His own behalf. Now it may include our behalf, but when He does what He does, He does it for His name's sake. He does it to bring attention to the excellency of His name and who He is.

He says, that's why I defer My anger. And brethren, I'll tell you, any one of us that are redeemed in this room, if God has deferred His anger and turned it away from us, God is doing this for the sake of His name. He is doing this to put Himself on display.

He's doing this. Brethren, this is one of the reasons why really staring at God's anger and God's wrath and seeing the kind of God that kills sinners in abundance, wipes out whole nations, wipes out whole groups of people, wipes out Sodom and Gomorrah, kills everybody on this earth except for eight souls. You see, it's with the backdrop of that black backdrop that the beauty of salvation.

And God does that on purpose. He says this, for the sake of My praise, I restrain it for you. His anger is restrained for the sake of His praise.

That I may not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver. I have tried you in the furnace of affliction for My own sake, for My own sake.

Twice, I do it. For how should My name be profane? My glory, here it is, I will not give to another. Listen to Me, O Jacob, in Israel whom I called.

I am He. I am the first. I am the last.

My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens. When I call to them, they stand forth together. And this is one of the things we have to come to grips with as we study Scripture.

You see, this is one of the things when you open up the Old Testament, you see God just, He's not playing favorites, and He's wiping out people that rebel against Him. It's one of the things we need to recognize is there's no truth more fundamentally pervasive in the Bible than God's zeal to uphold His name, His glory. And God's passionate about what we think, how we live, how we speak, so as to be able to cause this... In order to be able to cause things about Him to become manifest, to become seen.

Brethren, do you realize we glorify God when the truth about God goes public? That's a real issue. That's how we glorify God. It's not that we add anything to who He is, but we make it known.

We proclaim those excellencies. So, we can be windows through which it shines. We don't robe God with splendor, but we can let it shine out.

And you know the verses. Here's just three. Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10.31. Even Peter, 1 Peter 4. He says, each has received a gift as each has received a gift. Use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's very grace. I'm not talking about just your personality and who you are by nature.

You know what? If you've been genuinely saved, God has done something in you to gift you to channel His grace to other Christians. Spiritual gifts are given for the common good. And what Peter recognizes is this.

Every single Christian's got them. And one of the ways we glorify God is by using these gifts. Whoever speaks as one who speaks oracles of God.

Whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies. When you're serving and you're doing things, when you serve the church, you serve the brethren, nobody else sees. You're doing that in the strength of God.

Listen, it's in order that in everything, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. Or you've got this. This comes from the Sermon on the Mount.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. You see that? It's when what's true about God goes public. They see it.

You do your good works, they look at you and they recognize, hey, those people are not like other people. And God's glorified. So the goal of my life and your life ought to be right here.

Right exactly to live so that when people see me, you see what's happening? When people see me, they don't say, oh, how great Tim is. They're saying, wow, God must have done... You see, that's what happened. They were hearing what? Not that suddenly Saul got religion and Saul turned over a new leaf.

That's not what was happening. It's the excellency. It's the majesty of God.

It's look how glorious He is. And there's a way to live if you want God to be seen for who He is. Now look, you know we don't often think about this.

You know this verse, but you want to make the connection. You know there is a connection in Scripture with sin and the glory of God. We have all sinned and you know the rest.

We've fallen short of the glory of God. Now here's one of the beauties of having lexicons at your availability. Do you know, basically, the falling short means that we lack.

To fall short of the glory of God. The idea is lack. It's need.

It means to lack the excellency or the worth. It's to be devoid, to be without. The idea is not so much this.

It's not that man is somehow trying to glorify God and it's like the arrow that falls short. That's not the picture here. The picture, the reality is that when we sin, we lack what we could have otherwise had.

The idea is very much like we read about in Jeremiah. These people have committed two evils. What have they done? They've forsaken me, the fountain of living waters and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

You see, that's what the issue is here. The issue is that we could have had God and we could have had all that God is and all the gloriousness about Him. We might have immersed ourselves in the wonder of all that, but the thing is we chose something else.

And in fact, Paul says, claiming to be wise, they became fools, exchanged the glory of God for images resembling mortal men and other things, creeping animals and everything. They exchanged it. You see the exchange? Brethren, the truth is this.

We get saved and we hunger and thirst for righteousness. We get saved and we have a desire to draw near to God. We have a desire to find God.

But brethren, I'll tell you, oftentimes, this is one of the things about biographies that creates a healthy discontent in me. When I read these biographies and I see these people experience God in a way that maybe I don't feel like I have or maybe I have in the past, but maybe not recently, it makes me long for that. There is more to be had in God.

I still remember praying Paisan there in Portland, Maine when he was dying. And he said that as he was having his health taken away, his leg hurt so bad, he was thinking seriously about having it amputated in a day when it really hurt to have amputation happen. He could say, as God takes everything away from me, he says, I have never been so happy in my life.

I've never been so fulfilled because God is replacing Himself with everything that He takes away. And brethren, if we really could understand that, sin, this is the great insult. I want that over there rather than having God.

I'm going to take the trivial thing. I'm going to take the imitation. Brethren, I'll tell you, one of the great imitations, and you know we can automatically just think this is somebody else, but one of the great substitutes is man.

Yes, they exchanged God for images of man, but we do the same. We can get to the place where we are happy and we are content to do this. And you know what? We are forgetful people.

And this is a chronic problem in the church. This is great sickness in the church. What is it? It's self-sufficiency.

And I'll tell you, churches, they can have a past and they can live on that past. They can have a present. You can have money coming into the box and you can have numbers coming into the church.

A lot of things can happen. And you know what? We suddenly can get to the place where we can pray, we can have our Bibles, we can have our correct doctrine. The thing is, we can become self-sufficient.

Brethren, if you know yourself, I know myself. We have a tendency towards this. You know this as well as I do.

God has to cut our feet out from under us again and again and again and again in this life. Why? Because this is a chronic problem with us. It's there.

We need to admit it. Brethren, I'll tell you, just coming to the place where we have some recognition once again of our weakness, our desperate case without God, it's enough at times, brethren, to take our breath away. And I know there's a responsibility.

We have a responsibility to come here. Sometimes it can almost become a duty. You know, you show up here.

Brethren, you know what it's like. We can come here and basically we do something. We didn't feel anything, but we came here and we did what we can do.

And as leaders in the church, there's a responsibility. Well, we have to pastor them and we need to study. And you know what? It can almost be like Samson.

He didn't know the Lord left. And you can wake up one day and say, brethren, we don't want that. And this is one of the things that they recognized in the early church.

They recognized, wow, God did something in Saul. Anyway, what strikes me about these early Christians is that they glorified God. Well, how? Look at what it says.

It says, they were only hearing it said, He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith He once tried to destroy and they glorified God because of Me. I mean, what strikes me about this is it doesn't necessarily say that they broke out into singing and praising the Lord. Well, you could read that in there if you want to.

But it doesn't say that specifically. They might have done that, but here's what it says. They were only hearing.

They were hearing. You know what that means? Somebody was talking. What were they saying? Hey, did you hear about the Pharisee Saul? That guy that was being sent by the high priest to go ravage the churches.

Did you hear what God did? Now, you know what? That right there is an amazing reality here. This is one of the things that I was really taken up with two weeks is I just sat there and I looked at the text over and over. I said, brethren, do you realize this? Do you realize when God actually moves and God actually does something, and we look at it and we say, hey, look what God did.

You know what? We glorify Him. Now listen, sometimes you just go through the New Testament and you see these little blurbs and they jump out at me. Listen, I'm not going to have you turn to these, but listen very carefully.

You know this. There was a day Jesus is coming up to a certain town and they're hauling a dead man out. You know the occasion.

And there's a widow. And Jesus goes up to this man. It's his funeral.

His mother standing there. And Jesus says, don't weep. He said, young man, arise.

And do you know what it says? He sat up. I mean, imagine, he's laying there dead. It wasn't in a casket.

This was more like just a, you know, they buried people fast in those days. And he sat up and talked. Now listen to this.

It says, fear sees them all. And they glorified God saying, a great prophet has risen among us. Now did you catch that? They glorified God.

What did they do? They just said, wow. Did you see that? What a prophet that guy is. It says, and they said this, God has visited His people.

But brethren, one of the things that you want to recognize is you know what happens? We can start praising God for that which maybe God wasn't in. Maybe it was just more than anything. It was our motions, our actions, our machinery, our doings, our religion.

You know, that's pretty common today. But what I see here is, you know what they said? They said, hey, Saul, look at him. And Saul says, Paul says, they glorified God in me.

A dead man's raised. And they said, wow, God's visited His people. It says they glorified God by saying this.

Now, you may say, well, it's not hard to perceive that. He was a guy that was dead. Now he's alive.

It's not hard to perceive the transformation. Well, that's right. Isn't that right? I mean, one of the things that we want from the Lord is Lord, please, do things in such a way that we're not squinting and we're not trying to... Did something really happen? Or did it not happen? I mean, he says he's saved, but look at his marriage.

I mean, is it different? Is it not different? He says he's saved. Did things really change with pornography in his life? And lust? Or didn't it change? I mean, she says God did something, but we don't want to be in that place. They were hearing.

These people in the Judean churches, they were hearing. Someone was talking. Somebody was saying something.

And Paul says God was being glorified. Listen to this. You know this.

Peter, he comes back to Jerusalem. This is in Acts 11. And he says, look, I really couldn't help what happened with Cornelius.

Because they're faulting him, you know, because Cornelius was a Gentile. And he's saying, look, this sheet came down from heaven. But brethren, doesn't that describe the early church? We sing, may great grace fall upon us.

I'll tell you something. The place was shaken. I'll tell you something else.

When it's time to go to Cornelius and go to the Gentiles, God's doing something. And what Peter does is he comes back and he's got a report and he can say this. He can say, God has also granted repentance to the Gentiles.

And listen to what it says. It says, they glorified God, saying then to the Gentiles, also God has granted repentance that leads to life. Do you see what's happening? God really did something.

It's not just a mirage. It's not just something that, well, we're trying to force into it that God did something. We hope God did something.

We barely can recognize if God did something. Looks to me like a lot of doings of man, but to find something of God in it. No, it was nothing like that.

They said, and notice, it's just a statement. You just make this indicative statement. God did this.

See, that's the repeated thing that you get. God visited His people. God's glorified.

God saved Saul. God's glorified. Right here, God granted repentance to the Gentiles.

God's glorified. Or this, you remember another occasion. They bring this man to Jesus.

They can't get in the house. They take the tiles off the roof. They lower him down.

You know that account. And it says, he rose and immediately picked up his bed and they were all amazed and glorified God. There it is again.

They glorified God. You just, you see, I find that very intriguing. They glorified God.

Brethren, we don't make these things up. God moved. God acted.

Look what God's doing. The Holy Spirit says that this is what glorifies God. God saved Saul.

The thing about it is this. You and I don't decide what glorifies Him. We can give our opinion.

Anybody can give an opinion. But what you gotta love about this is this is the Holy Spirit saying, look, you wanna know what glorifies God? It's right here. It's not God when He doesn't act and you trying to fill it in the blank.

Oh, praise God. God saved so-and-so. Yeah, but look at their life.

Well, you know, hopefully, and this, or you know, God wanted. We know how things work today. Oh, there's a revival.

People have these revival meetings or whatever. Brethren, what we don't wanna do is be satisfied just to have the machinery in place. We don't wanna be satisfied with that.

Obviously, here we're seeing something more than that. We never, listen, He rose and immediately picked up His bed. They were all amazed and glorified God, saying, we never saw anything like this.

You see, brethren, don't you want that? I mean, look it, this is the God of Christianity. We have to stop in our tracks sometimes and really ask the question, what is the church? Why is the church here? What is the commission of the church? How did the church manage to survive for the last 2,000 years? We need to stop and ask that. Brethren, what you have right here, we never saw anything like this.

And it specifically says that that glorified God. Brethren, that's what I want. I want that.

I love that. I love to see that. If accounts come back from India or from Lebanon, or they come back from Manchester, or I hear them coming back this way towards us, brethren, I wanna hear about things that, you know, not the kind of thing where you kinda crinkle your face and well, was that God or wasn't that God? Brethren, we want this.

We want that kind of thing right there. We never saw anything like this. I mean, come on, if we've got the God of Scripture, isn't that how He portrays Himself? Over and over and over again.

What's the message of Christianity? Is it not about the God who acts? You see, the thing is, I recognize the churches in Judea were glorifying God because of Saul. But I also recognize that God actually did something. It wasn't something just that men did.

If we're gonna glorify God, it's got to do with the glory of God. It's got to do with God showing that glory and us recognizing it and proclaiming it. If there's anything true, it is that we have a God in the Bible who acts.

A God who rises. A God who comes. A God who moves.

And we simply cannot explain the success of the church apart from this God and from His glory. And brethren, that's the message of Christianity. It's about the living God.

It's about His Christ. It's about all that He did and is doing and will do. God is real.

He's the living God. And He is moving. He is doing things.

Oh brethren, don't you want to be right there where He's moving? Wherever that is. I believe, brethren, that He has and is moving here. But brethren, don't take it for granted.

Don't think it's like this everywhere and all the time. And don't believe that you can't lose it. You can.

And it's almost imperceptible. It's like, Samson, I'm going to rise up and I'm going to take these Philistines out. He shook himself, but he didn't know the Spirit had left him.

But brethren, we want to walk carefully. Isaiah 46, 9, I am God and there is no other. I am God and there is none like Him.

And brethren, one of the things I see with a text like this, it's like, Lord, You're not glorified when we... you know what can subtly happen? We did this. We accomplished this. We are this.

Brethren, we are so inclined to give glory to ourselves. And it's subtle. We talk the right way, especially if you're in the right circles and you get the right teaching.

We can talk the right way. I am God and there is no other. There is none like Me.

I mean, that's it. That's what Christianity is all about. Brethren, you have to think here.

This is one of the things I've really been challenged with is I've been thinking about starting this ministry in Manchester. If you've got eyes to see, this is not about COVID. It isn't the advice that I've got to give to the government on these matters.

That's not Christianity. This is Christianity. It's not about the advice that I can share with people in Washington or London.

It's not that. It's not what opinion I have about how they ought to be dealing with this. Brethren, this is Christianity.

What's God doing? It's all about the action of God. Just look at the origin of the Christian church. What she is.

What she's commissioned to do. How she does it. Brethren, do you remember what happened there in Acts 2? Jesus didn't just say to them, well, you know guys, go figure this out for yourself.

Do what you want to do. Manage your affairs yourselves. That's not it.

He said, you know what? I want you to go and I want you to wait. And what happened? Suddenly, there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Those original disciples were simple, uneducated men.

And brethren, you know what the truth of Scripture is. God chooses the things that are not. And He's in the business of that.

And that's exactly what happened. Simple, uneducated, unschooled, unpolished. These are just fishermen.

The Jewish leaders, eh, unlearned Galileans. No money, no credentials, no degrees, no education, no influence, no power, nothing significant, nothing impressive. They were nobodies.

And yet, they did everything that's written in this book. In the New Testament, look at that. I mean, you know, Paul would come to the places and he'd report all the things that God did.

Not the things he did. Brethren, that's what we want. We want that kind of testimony.

Because brethren, it's when that happens and we can truly fall to the back and say, it was all God. No glory to ourselves. No looking at ourselves.

Brethren, it's not what they did. And it's never been that. It's never been that.

They came, you know what happened? They came down, you just imagine that. They came down from the upper room. Imagine if they're trying to create their own religion, their own cult, their own teaching.

They come down from this upper room and what's the first thing that they're going to go out and tell the crowd? Oh, that guy, by the way, that you all know he died. You see, they came down and they said this dead man is the Messiah. He was a Galilean Jew, carpenter, with fishermen for followers.

He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. And it doesn't seem like he was able to stand up before Herod and Pilate and the Jewish leaders, and he's dead. You see, that's the message that they have to proclaim.

Oh, but by the way, he's alive. Well, really, where is he? Well, we can't show him to you. No man is going to invent that.

Because brethren, in the end, it's not about what they did. They basically were witnesses. It's about what God did.

It's about His glory. Brethren, this is the vital thing about the church. I want you to think with me here.

In fact, I want you to turn and look at this. Because one of the things that I recognize is that everything that was written for us in the Old Testament, you know full well, there's various places where we're told it wasn't written for their benefit, it was written for ours. These are examples.

This is for our learning. This is for our instruction. I want you to go back and look at Exodus 40.

Because brethren, there's a reality here. You know that there's a reality in this. This is an example.

Paul would tell us. Written down for our instruction on whom the end of the ages has come. Exodus.

Second book in your Bibles. Exodus 40. Now, you know what happened.

They're out there in the wilderness and God wants this tabernacle erected. That's the heading that I have here. And you know what you have? You have basically verses 1-16 is God's instruction.

You see it. The Lord spoke to Moses saying on the first day of the first month, you shall erect the tabernacle. And it's okay, that goes on through v. 16.

V. 16, Moses did according to all that the Lord commanded him, so he did. So basically, what we get then is first you have God's instruction. Then you have the construction, which is what man did.

And Moses did this and they erect this whole thing. V. 33, He erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar and set up the screen and the gate and the court, and so Moses finished the work. Brethren, if you've got a title like I do in the next section, the glory of God.

See, this is what I'm talking about. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. You see, it's possible for us to have so much.

Do you recognize that a lot of people can be content with stopping at v. 33? You just stop there. All the machinery's in place. The apparatus has been constructed.

Brethren, I'll tell you, a building doesn't make the church, and neither do people in the building sufficiently make the church. Because the reality is that we're talking true temple, true tabernacle. Something had to happen here.

Something did happen. If you stop at v. 33, you've got the building, you've got the stuff, you've got all the machinery's in place. What's wrong? They lack the presence.

One of the greatest dangers is to think that God is glorified when we've reached v. 33. But you see, what has God done? Well, God gave the instructions. That's true.

And you know what? That's necessary. It is necessary for us that we have prescribed manner of functioning provided for us in the Scriptures. We don't want to ignore that.

Certainly, we don't take the position, well, we just sit there and we don't do anything. And we don't heed what God has said in the Scriptures. No, Moses heeded what was said.

But you know what? It wasn't enough until you get to v. 34. Our greatest danger is to be content with the other things. We can just be content that the stuff is in place.

And brethren, look, I know this. From pastoring here 19 years and preaching and in the beginning having a group that was like that big and to have the thing grow and to have God open doors for us, I recognize this. I remember Martin Lloyd-Jones said one of the things people can do to just encourage the preacher is just to be there in your seat on a Sunday.

I recognize there is something that is satisfying, gratifying. There is something that is exciting in numbers. I recognize that.

To see the growth. But I'll tell you, that doesn't necessarily mean that God is at work. You recognize that.

People can gather for many reasons. I've seen people come into this church because they're young and they're lonely and they want to find the social environment to exist in and there's no spirituality in them hardly whatsoever. People come here for lots of different reasons.

Brethren, if we stop there, if we stop with the mechanical construction and the whole thing there in verse 33, look, then all you've done is stopped at man's part. And look, this stuff is given to us for our instruction because this kind of thing is everywhere. It was the same with Elijah, was it not? Elijah, okay, yes, God told him to do that.

Yes, there was a way to confront the 400 prophets of Baal. Yes, you can go and you can set up the altar and you can dig the trench around it and you can douse the thing with water three times. But brethren, you know as well as I do that if the story ended with him constructing the whole thing and that's the end of the deal and what then? Nothing impressive, nothing to glorify God over.

No fire from heaven, we've stopped short. We gotta have the fire. And what happened? The glory came.

Brethren, you know that with the construction of the tabernacle, the construction in Elijah's day on Mount Carmel of the whole altar and everything, man can be active. We can be active. We can be doing many things.

Now look, when God's moving, there may be plenty of activity too. But you know, we can get to the place where the activity is happening, but if we lack sensitivity. You see, this is the real issue here.

We need to be sensitive. In the activity, is God there? Is God really there? Is God moving? Has His glory come? We don't want to, until the glory comes, brethren, you know full well, when the glory comes, what happens? When Moses departs from the tabernacle and his face is glowing. Brethren, when the glory doesn't come, then they glow on our face.

It's not upon our faces. Without the activity of God, the coming of the glory, all is vain. The building, we've gotta have God.

Brethren, these two ideas are always in conflict. And you see this all around us. And we feel the struggle in our own hearts.

Man's idea about religion, over against what? God acting. We can always get buildings. We can always rent places.

We can always have the motions going on. You know, you can have the thing for the Lord's Supper elements. And you can have an offering box.

And you can get people to come in the doors. But brethren, God acting. What's the true character of the church? I tell you, Tozer, I read these words years ago.

They had stuck with me. Tozer said, when you can explain the church, that's a surest indication she's lost her power. When you can explain the church.

You know what he said? He said, as long as there was something about the church that was mysterious, that was supernatural, unexplainable. You know what he's talking about beyond our empirical data? Just

the observations that we can make. When you recognize, wow, things are happening.

That's what we must have. And any notion of Christianity is primarily or mainly the result of something we do. Brethren, that is utterly wrong.

That is not only utterly wrong, it's fatally wrong. Brethren, what I'm preaching basically is as Ruby and I are getting ready to depart, I know we over there as well as you here, we desperately, desperately need this. Are you okay where you have meetings, where you have church life, where you do everything and feel nothing? Or you may get excited by the music.

I mean, maybe music can be excitable. But brethren, I'll tell you this. When God comes in Scripture, it leaves the people full of awe and fear.

One of the other things that Tozer made an observation about is most of the churches, laughter had replaced the sighs and the tears and the cries. The trembling. You know, we can get all social.

It's a big social thing. Everybody's laughing. You know, you can almost try to make that joy.

But sometimes, brethren, one of the greatest indicators that it is just happiness more than a real deep-seated joy is if fear is missing. Brethren, we want that. I can remember one time, I probably was just as unprepared for this as those pastors were.

But I was in China. I was in the underground church. We sat down.

The preacher began to preach. He was preaching in a low voice. Just above a whisper.

And the Spirit of God came in that place. And you know what the feeling is? Not that you want to laugh. You want to hide.

You want to fall on your face. Do we ask what a church truly is? What's it for? How does it function? What makes a church the church? Brethren, it's this. It's the presence of the glory of God.

Because you know what? Those things, that tabernacle, and you know the same thing happened in the temple. Solomon completed that thing and those priests could not stay there. Back years ago in 2003 when Paul Washer was here, he told me the first time that he preached, not on the street, but he was asked to preach a conference.

He said he stood on the platform and he could only say several times something like, God loves you. God loves you. He said that two or three times and he said the presence of God was so great on that platform, he had to leave.

And he ran down the stairs into the basement, fell on his face, began praying. He said through the floorboards he heard like a herd of elephants stampeding. People were falling out of the pews.

Brethren, we've got to have the glory come on the tabernacle. We've got to have the glory in the temple. We can come together and we can feel nothing.

We can basically feel what man can do and how man can excite each other. This is one of the reasons why entertainment and laughter is such a big part of worship today. Because they want people to feel good.

Feel good. Brethren, we're not necessarily aiming to make people feel good. Because I tell you one of the greatest ways you can feel is like Isaiah felt when he saw the Lord high and lifted up.

It devastated him. But I guarantee you he did not walk out of the temple that day with regrets. Why? Because when God draws close and His glory comes close so that we can observe it, we can sense it, we can see it, we can say it to God's glory.

You know what's going to be left in us? Fear and awe and brokenness. And it humbles us. It tears us apart.

It causes us to see God alone is God. You know what happens sometimes? You know that text, what is it? Zechariah. We don't want to despise the day of small things.

And so we talk about that. But brethren, let's not fool ourselves. There's a difference between a day of small things and a day when we can't perceive God working at all.

Well, yes, we may see the apparatus in place, but as far as the glory, where is it? Where's the thing that I can really look at and say, Saul was saved on the road to Damascus. Did you see what God did? The proof of it is so evident. Brethren, this ought to fuel our prayers.

This is one of the reasons why when we pray and pray and pray for certain things and God doesn't answer, it's kind of like Mount Carmel. Lord, please, if You don't send the fire down from heaven, then what can we say? You know what Elijah could say? Where's your God? Perhaps He's on vacation. Perhaps He's busy doing something else.

That's the way we want to be able to talk. As for us, our God sends down fire from heaven. And you know what? When He does that and you say so, it glorifies Him.

But it doesn't glorify Him when He doesn't send down the fire, but you say He sends down the fire. That doesn't glorify Him when you start saying that God has done something that God hasn't done. Brethren, the reality is, we can just try to prop the whole thing up with our programs.

We force the activity. But where's God? Where's He at? Brethren, I'm talking about biblical Christianity. I'm talking about the God who acts.

We see it. We say it. Brethren, do you realize what happened in Scripture? They're sitting in the upper room.

They didn't control that situation. Suddenly, suddenly from heaven, that's what happened. There's a tabernacle.

Suddenly, what happens? Something happens. Brethren, I know when God moves it's not always so sudden, but the reality is, you know that the Christianity of this book, it's the kind of Christianity that grabs hold of people. It controls them.

It masters them. Why? There's a God who actually does something. Paul was mastered on that road to Damascus.

Things happened to him that he could not have... He did not just decide to get religious. This is the way lots of us think. Brethren, if that's the kind of religion you have, it's not the biblical religion.

What we have is this. We never start with man. The Bible doesn't start with man.

How does it start? In the beginning, God created. That's always the way. God does this.

This whole book is dominated by God. And I want this. I'm 55 years old.

The last thing I want to do is live the last part of my life not seeing God work. I want to be in that place. Lord, however you've got to break us, whatever you've got to do to us, whatever sickness you have to take away from us, however, Lord, just we want to see the glory come upon the tabernacle.

Lord, we want it to be that when the preaching is done, everybody doesn't just launch out of their seats. Oh yes, the church of perpetual fellowship. And fellowship is great.

It is needful. It is integral. But brethren, when we can launch out of our seats and immediately forget what's been preached or what's been sung, and we can just, laughter abounds.

And listen, I'm not saying that's all that happens. I know there are good things. But brethren, you know as well as I do.

Some of you, you've sat in meetings. You've sat in meetings where the people didn't move when it was done. Because brethren, there's a difference. There's a difference when a man can just simply put together a good sermon and say doctrinally correct things.

Brethren, the truth is we can get to the place where it's man's activity. It's how we prop the thing up. It's what we did.

It's what we made of it. And where's the Lord? Where is He? Brethren, there was a woman in the Bible. And you may not think much of her simply because of who she was married to.

You know there were these two guys, Hophni and Phinehas. They were the wicked sons of Eli. And you know that whole situation.

Israel goes to battle against the Philistines. They're being defeated. They thought they could use God like a rabbit's foot.

Oh, we're getting defeated. Let's send the ark out there. No, God was not going to be used that way.

And you know what happened? They were defeated. They were overthrown. Devastated.

The ark got taken. Hophni and Phinehas are dead. Eli hears about it and falls over and breaks his neck.

But you get this strange little ending. There's this wife of Phinehas, the daughter-in-law of Eli the high priest. She's in labor.

This whole news kicks off her labor. And you know what? For a Jewish woman to give birth to a son, one of the most joyous things imaginable. But you know what? It means nothing to her.

In fact, she calls the child Ichabod because the glory had departed from Israel. There is a woman, there's a spiritual woman, and she had sensitivity. And you know what? Her happiness did not revolve around having children.

I know her father-in-law and her husband were dead, but you know the first thing it says is her trauma came from the fact that the glory had departed. The ark was gone. And she died.

At a time when a woman should have been rejoiced, she had sensitivity. Brethren, this is the thing. We needed sensitivity to this.

I've mentioned Samson already. Here's this guy. He's got unusual powers.

He's routed the Philistines. But what happened? He lost his sensitivity. I was talking to my family about just the insanity of this guy.

It's like Delilah. Tell me where your power is. My power is here.

If you bind me with these things, my power is gone. And she actually does it. I mean, it's pretty stupid then when she says, no, where is it really? To say, well, you know, it's in my hair.

Like what? Like she's not going to cut his hair off? But what did he do? Samson, the Philistines are upon you! And he shakes himself. But he doesn't know the Lord's left him. Brethren, I'll tell you, we don't have many more rolling sons.

Just a few, at most. The last thing we want is powerless Christianity. The last thing we want is our Christianity not to resemble what we find.

May great grace fall upon us. There's another time, Jacob. You remember when he's fleeing from his brother? His mother and father told him, go to Laban.

He's out there in Bethel. And the glory of God comes into that place. Do you know what it says? Fear filled him.

Remember when Jesus raised that dead man and He sat up the widow's son? They glorified God. God has visited us. But it said fear seized them.

Brethren, this is one of the indications of where the glory of God comes. It strikes people with awe. It strikes people with a deep... That's Peter! That's all those disciples in the boat when Jesus calms the storm.

They're gripped with fear. Brethren, that's what we want. You know what one of the problems is? We're much too healthy.

We're much too pleased with ourselves and our organization. And you read of revival, and you know what? God comes in and He seems to bust that stuff apart. There's a humbling.

There's a breaking. There's a bending. And I just ask this, are we sensitive to it? Brethren, the early church... You think about the day we live in.

I'm seeing this over in England. The early church wasn't protesting the overreach of Nero. That wasn't it.

They weren't considering what resolution they needed to send to the Senate in Rome. That's not it. They weren't expressing their opinions about current affairs.

What controlled them, what gripped them was the fact that God was moving. I mean, can you imagine it? God has granted repentance to the Gentiles. God saved Saul on the Damascus Road.

Look what's happening. Look what God's doing. You know what turns the world upside down? It's people that are coming face to face with the presence of God.

It's not going to happen in our own strength. And it's not going to happen because we've figured out how to build this machinery. Brethren, this is God's world.

This is God's church. It's God's Christ. I mean, He owns it all.

He's in control. The wonderful works of God. This is how it's always been.

Let men do their best. We can't do anything without God. Right there in the beginning, God had to come into the garden.

Did He not? Adam wasn't going to figure this thing out. It took God to come in and say, where are You? What have You done? And clothe Him and give Him promise. You see, it's always that.

It's always God initiating the thing. It's always God making it happen. There's an ark.

Eight souls are saved. Yeah, but no one didn't dream that up. Brethren, it's never been that way.

Those guys in the upper room did not dream that up. Certainly, they never dreamed up this message. Nobody in their right mind would dream up this message unless it was true and it was the way that God has designed.

It took God to call Abram out of Haran. God had to go send Jonah. Even though Jonah doesn't even want to go, it's God sending him in there to Nineveh.

The Bible is all about God moving, God working. Even the tower of Babel. The tower of Babel.

Isn't that a lot like today? What we can do. Oh, we're going to do this. We're going to do that.

We're going to build this tower. But even then, God came. God confounded it.

It was God who showed up. And He wasn't pleased with it to be sure. Do you recognize what this is? This is God interfering with man.

I know interfering almost has a negative, but it's God stopping us in our tracks. Isn't that what we want? Lord, open doors that we can't open. Stop us in our tracks.

Lord, if we're off, if we're wrong, if we're not, Lord, just please use us. Please come near. Lord, we want to glorify You.

We really want to glorify You. We want to see what it is that You're doing. We want to be able to observe it and we want to be able to report it.

Don't you love to be able to do that? Proclaim what God has done. Brethren, this is it. How did all that happen? Look, there's only one answer.

You can think of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37. This is Christianity. It's His action.

Are they going to live? He knows. It comes down to this. Thank God for such a message as we have.

We actually have a Christianity. We have a religion where God moves, where God acts, where God saves, where God comes. Brethren, 3,000 saved.

5,000 saved. And you know what the Bible says? All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. Brethren, have you met this God? This is the real question.

Have you felt the touch of this God on your soul? Has something happened to you that you could not do in yourself? Are you aware that God has done something in Christ to you? Is it all something you do? Brethren, how are we going to break the power of lust in people? What's going to do that? What's going to set marriages right? What's going to radically transform us? What's going to turn somebody like Saul into somebody who's now preaching what he used to attack before and so radically change him? I want to see changes. Brethren, Ruby and I are headed into Manchester. I want to see that city turned upside down.

And I feel my weakness. Like, Lord, I can't do this. I can't make happen here what I want to see happen.

Brethren, I just end with this. What do we have to do? I mean, one of the starting points, one of the absolutely essential, first great essential really, is really being convinced without God, we cannot do anything. The second thing is this.

God says to this man, will I look? In other words, God is promising to act in behalf of certain men and women. Do you know what Isaiah tells us? Who that person is? Who is it? He trembles at His Word. That means you're obedient.

Brethren, I'll tell you this. Renew your commitment to the Lordship of Christ. One of the things we have to proclaim in the very beginning is that Christ is Lord.

And Christ says, why do you call Me Lord, Lord? And you don't do what I say. See, brethren, if you're really convinced of His Lordship, you're convinced of surrender to Him. Brethren, we need to recognize we are nothing without Him.

Brethren, we need a new commitment to His Word. But then the last thing I would say is this. Brethren, we want to plead with Him to come.

Don't be content until you're aware. Moses, I'll tell you, he was afraid to go in there when God came. We need the fear of God.

Plead, brethren. Plead. Don't be satisfied.

Listen, if you can pick up a George Whitefield volume and read in there about things that happened, but we just simply don't seem like we experienced today, don't be satisfied with that. Brethren, I can tell you, I think we've experienced things here that a lot of places don't experience. But I know this, you can't live on yesterday's manna.

I can't live on it. We need God to come. The awe.

The fear. Brethren, that which is going to cause us to fall out of our seats on our face. We want that mysterious aspect of the church.

We want to know the meetings where we're shaken. Where there's a new fear. There's a new reverence.

There's new conviction. Where there's a sense that God has drawn close. Where it doesn't leave everybody thinking that they want to get up and just see how fast they can start talking to other people.

But where you really feel like, I want to get out of here and be alone. Brethren, we need this. We need this reality.

We need God with us, brethren. A sensible sense of His presence. We need God to rend the heavens.

Don't be satisfied. I'm absolutely convinced, and if I could ask you for one thing to pray for us as we leave, I would really ask that you pray for what you find there in the Old Testament minor prophet. A spirit of prayer and supplication.

I feel like, if anything, the battle is to be won on our knees. And even there, brethren, there are times when God has drawn close in my life that has stirred in me a burden to pray that I can't get away from. It's like when I'm done praying, I can't be done praying because it's almost like there's a dam of water that just needs to come out and it's only able to come out in just little bits.

And brethren, even here, you're being called to a week of prayer and fasting. Brethren, you know as well as I do that there's a difference when you're forcing yourself not to eat when you want to eat, to pray when you don't really want to pray, over against when you feel a burden come upon you and press you where you can't shake it. And when you go to prayer, it's like minutes turn into hours.

You know what I'm talking about, some of you. Brethren, God does that. We need God in that.

And I'll tell you what, if that happens in your week of prayer and fasting, that gives you great hope that in this coming year, those things you pray for are going to be answered and that there are going to be greater expressions of the manifestation of God. Brethren, we want to be in the place where we can truly say, look what God did. Not this unimpressive thing where you're looking at somebody and it's like what's with that kind of Christianity? That's not the Saul kind of Christianity.

That's where we're halfway looking at the person and what, are we going to have to discipline them? What is this? What is this? They prayed and the place was shaken. Lord, however You might shake the place today. Lord, we need to be shaken.

Don't we have some here that ran well, ran better yesterday than today? Are some of you beginning to coast? Brethren, don't be content. Don't be content with that. Don't be content with being more involved in your hobbies now.

Don't be content to pursue money more now. You're not taking this thing as serious as you did in the past. If there's somebody that needs to fall down before the Lord, brethren, plead.

Week of prayer and fasting, plead with them. More than you need more money in that box or more numbers in this church, you need God here and moving and acting in ways that you can see, that are tangible, that will set you on your knees and on your faces. Brethren, is that not what we want? Brethren, when you can actually hear about the cross and this Lord's Supper and it just... I mean, something is happening to you that is supernatural.

We need the supernatural. You don't want to be content because that's what's here. Everything you read about here, it's not just what man's doing, it's what God's doing.

It's God. It's always God. He's always the one initiating it all.

Father, that's what we're asking for. Please, please don't abandon us. Please don't forsake us.

Please, Lord, do something. Do something that will set us to glorifying You as we describe and proclaim among ourselves and to others. Wow! Look what God has done.

Father, please hear us. I pray in Christ's name, Amen.

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