Zealous for Good Works

Ps Mike Connell
Mike Connell Ministries



CONNELL MINISTRIES 2012 Sermon

Zealous for Good Works

Audio Transcript of a Regular Sunday Sermon

Pastor Mike Connell

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Smashwords Edition

Summary: *Your life is short when you compare it to the times, seasons and ages that are ahead. The Bible tells us clearly there's a millennial age when Christ will come, our life here is our stewardship for that age. The work to get saved has been done by Jesus, but after that He calls us to do something with our life. All the hardship now is nothing compared to what God has prepared for those who love him*



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Your life is short when you compare it to the times, seasons and ages that are ahead. The Bible tells us clearly there's a millennial age when Christ will come, our life here is our stewardship for that age. The work to get saved has been done by Jesus, but after that He calls us to do something with our life. All the hardship now is nothing compared to what God has prepared for those who love him

We've been having a great series recently looking at eternity. What I want to do is, I want us to open your Bible with me in Titus, Chapter 2. I want to continue from where I was, but I'm starting another a series. It's mainly because what I was sharing is: I've tried to lift your perspective about eternity. I want to just use one more illustration that may help to do that, I just need one man to help me, just one guy. Quickly, one guy. Len, you'll do. Oh here's one, Ian. Ian will be great. Now I want you to watch this and all you're going to have to do Ian, I want you just to stand here and I want you just to take one step - not even a big step - about one foot. Just take one foot forward, okay. Just stop there.

Your life in relationship to the millennial reign represents that one step that Ian just took now and compared to the millennial reign, just go out about two and a half to three kilometres and you get how much your life is in relationship to what God has just in the millennium for us. So if you think your life is long, it's short when you compare it to the times and seasons and ages that are ahead. The Bible tells us very clearly there's a millennial age when Christ will come and our life here is our stewardship for that age. Your life is so short, one step, compared to nearly three kilometres. Think about that.

So this life we've got is incredibly short. It's over very quick and it is your apprenticeship. Where you benefit from it is where you actually fulfil your apprenticeship which will be in eternity. We need to get an eternal

perspective. Don't think short term and about what God can do for me today and tomorrow. Begin to think what I can be and prepare in my life for eternity, because that's only the millennial reign. That's only 1000 years. It goes on for ages and ages and ages and forever and forever, but at least that bit you can get a perspective. One step, two and a half to three kilometres. You see the comparison. Let's make our lives count now.

All the hardship now is nothing compared to what God has prepared for those who love him. Amen! Gives you a bit of perspective. Thank you Ian. Okay, open your Bibles to Titus, Chapter 2 and I want to just speak and start to share with us over the next two or three Sundays as I can; I want to speak to us about this theme, Zealous for Good Works. How many felt the women today as they shared about what they were doing? Could you feel the passion in there and the fire and the love? That's what I'm talking about - zealous to do something for God. And the question is, well of course we shared in Ephesians, Chapter 2 and Verse 8 and 9 how the work to get saved has been done by Jesus, but after that He calls us to do something with our life.

And we saw how Jesus has prepared for us good works, that He prepared before we were born, and one of the staff said well: how do I discover what those good works are and then walk in them? That's a good question isn't it? So we want to answer that question as best we can. It's given me a lot of food for thought and so I want to just spread it out over a couple of Sundays because I have the feeling and sense in my spirit that God is trying to shift this as a church. So for about six weeks we've been trying to gain eternal perspective, so you begin to make your life count. Now we need to get some applications around it, so I want to just start to look over the next two or three weeks or whatever, at a series and we're looking at being passionate or zealous to do good stuff, to do good works.

So what I want to do today is I want to just lay some foundation around that. If I don't do that everyone ends up running around doing this and that and striving and they miss the whole point, so I want us to get first of all a good foundation for this. So I'm going to outline - what I outline today is going to help you get perspective and understanding and we're going

to anchor it around two key things you'll need to know. So I know this will be of great help for you, but we want to lay it out systematically, so in Titus, Chapter 2, let's read it. Verse 16, it says they profess to know God but in works deny him, so He's saying that there are some people who say they know the Lord, but actually the lifestyle or what they do actually denies that that's a reality.

Now we go down here, we go into Chapter 2, Verse 14. Now He gave himself for us that He might redeem us from every inequity and purify for himself His own peculiar people or special people, zealous for good works. He gave Himself for us. He loved us. He gave Himself for us for a purpose, so in these verses here we see that Jesus gave Himself or He gave His whole life for something. Now you've got to ask yourself, what did He give His life for? Was it to just do something in the Heavens? No, I think more than that.

He gave Himself for us that He might redeem for Himself, so God, Jesus got something in this that He gets or He's looking for and it says that He might redeem us; in other words He gave Himself to totally pay a ransom price that something could be established and happen as a result of that, so this is what Jesus is looking for. He's looking for a special, unusual people. The word special (or particular) literally means to be distinct, unique or beyond usual, so what the Bible is saying here is Jesus redeemed you so you would be special, unique, quite different and unusual compared to everyone else in the community.

What makes you unusual and different is this; that you are - look at this - purified for Himself, His own special people, zealous for good works, passionate to do something and we're going to identify exactly what it is, the things that God wants us to do. Today I want to remove some of the difficulty from it by showing you it's not all spiritual stuff, and I want you to get very clearly two frameworks of what God is looking for you to do. Then we'll begin to unravel it and show you. Ultimately then it's up to each one of us. Notice what it says here in Chapter 3, Verse 8. This is a faithful saying and I want to affirm constantly, in other words I want you to constantly be reminded that those who have believed in God - that's us - be careful to maintain good works. Be careful to do it.

So He said this is God's purpose, is that people who'll be filled with good works - whatever that means - and He says, twice now He says in Verse 8, He says I want you who have believed in God be careful that you maintain good works. In other words be careful that there's fruit in your life for your Christian life and it shows up in what you're doing. Notice again in Verse 14 He says the same thing; let our people also learn to maintain good works, not only to meet needs or problems or issues that people have, but so you may not be unfruitful. We'll come back to that right at the very end.

So what God is saying here is that it's His purpose that we be productive, unique, unusual, that we stand out because of all people in the world, we are interested in the cause of the poor and the needy. We're interested in the cause of justice. We're interested in the cause of the community. We are not about having meetings to get blessed. We are about making a difference in the community and so He said let your light shine before men so that they see your good works. If you have a look through history the people who started the schools, the people who started the hospitals, the people who did good works; it came out of revivals. It came out of the life of God overflowing to meet the needs of the poor, the oppressed and those who had been treated unjustly.

This is the foundation of our faith, and over the next few sessions we're going to explore that a little more clearly, what that means to you as an individual. Now, there are three reasons why it's important to maintain good works, three reasons. I want to give them to you, so helpful to have these and then we're going to look into two foundations. Number one, here's the first reason. The first reason it's important for you to be productive or have good works operating in your life or to be doing something that's of benefit to others. We just put it like that; doing something that benefits others. Number one, divine design. You're designed for it. You'll never be happy in your life unless you do.

There's no such thing as a self-centred selfish life, that's a happy life. It's an illusion. We are designed - have you noticed when you did something really kind to bless someone, how good you felt? The joy that comes out of it - where did it come from? It come out of being aligned with Heaven and doing what God called you to do. Ephesians 2:10, He has created us

for good works. You're created not to just sit in meetings and pray and do stuff like that. You're created to be busy with your life and be very productive with your life. Everyone is designed for that, to be productive in some kind of way, designed for good works.

So number one, one reason we need to be doing things that bring benefit and blessing to others, number one is the way God's designed us, part of His purpose. Number two is because something is at stake, and that's always a good stick isn't it, aye? That's always a good thing. There's something is at stake. Eternal rewards are at stake. I want you to look at two verses. The first one's found in Revelations 22, Verse 12. This is what it says. It says behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me to give everyone according to His work. How much clearer could you get? It's talking about the second coming of the Lord and it says when He comes He has in mind rewarding or acknowledging what His people have done to make the world a better place.

So teachings that cause you to trust your future, that somehow God's going to whisk you out of it, actually bring you into a place of deception and passivity and stop you becoming engaged in what God wants us to be engaged in. There's many verses. I'll give you one more, Matthew 16:27. For the Son of man will come and the glory of His Father and with His angels and He will reward each one according to their works. Nothing could be clearer. Your life now counts, day by day, minute by minute, what you do does make a difference. What you do counts. The word reward, most times Jesus uses it, the word is the word misthos, meaning pay. That's not a bad word is it? Meaning a pay or an acknowledgement of the services someone has given, so at the end of the week you turn up at the office and you've worked for a whole week. You know that you will receive a reward, you'll receive pay.

So the word that's translated reward really means something that you are entitled or out of God's benefit He wants to give to you because of what you have done. It's totally connected to what you've done, not your good intentions. What did you do? Okay, we getting the idea? So number two reason is because eternal rewards are at stake. God wants - remember, you are on your apprenticeship now and so God is wanting to reward or acknowledge your success in your apprenticeship by appropriate reward

in the millennium and for eternity. So if you're pretty poor in your apprenticeship you can't be expecting you'll be promoted too much. Makes sense doesn't it?

So the third reason is that there's accountability, that the kingdom of Heaven is not a democracy. It's a kingdom with a king and we're accountable to a king, so we're accountable. Accountability's a part of life and notice this in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 3 and it says Verse 11; no other foundation can anyone lay which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. If anyone builds on the foundation - so to build on a foundation means you're starting to do something, so you have become saved by faith. It's been given to you, salvation's given to you. Now the question is what are you doing with your life? What are you doing to build your life?

Now coming to meetings is a help but it won't complete the task of building your life. To build your life requires your own personal engagement with God, time in the word of God and intentionally giving yourself to learn and to grow. All of us are needing to learn and grow. I'm still having to learn and grow. It's called a life journey. It's called being a disciple or a follower of Christ. It's a life of learning and being taught by Him and growing, but you can intentionally apply yourself to it, and to intentionally apply yourself means we've now become a disciple of Jesus. We're letting Jesus help us in our journey grow and become more mature and that will involve prayer; it'll involve the word of God, it will involve service of some kind because you can't grow in isolation, and you can't grow without putting your hand to something.

So when we do something, when we start to apply ourselves, whether it's some part of building the church, some part of doing something for extending the kingdom, in that environment God can grow us. We all need to be committed to personal growth. No one is beyond a group because when in groups the best growth takes place, but it doesn't take place just in a group. Somehow it works out in your day to day life. You've got to be doing something, so tomorrow if you do the same things you did today, probably you won't grow.

Think about it. Think about it. It's really quite important so He said each one's work will become clear, so right now you've got no idea how good a

job I'm doing, and I have no idea how effective you are for what God has given you to do. But it says that day will make it clear, so I'm not called to judge you for what you're doing. I'm called to inspire you to go further. See, so it says the day will declare everyone's work but it will be revealed by fire and the fire will test each one's work, what kind of work it is. So now we begin to get an insight - it's not just that you're busy doing something. There's certain sorts of work actually God will acknowledge and we're going to see in a moment some sorts of work He doesn't acknowledge at all.

But everyone's work will pass through testing, so you can fool me and fool someone else part of the time but you can't fool Heaven who sees every - God sees everything. So He's looking at all that you do and why you do it and how you do it. See, we can't always see why you do things and we can't always see how you've done it. We can't even tell whether you did your best or did a half job. No one really knows. We can't even tell whether you're doing all the things that God called you to do, because this is part of your personal walk with God. But what we can say definitively is this; that God will test everyone's work and then - it doesn't matter what you think - He will have a good look over what you've done and He will be able to test out your work.

And the Bible says if your work be wood, hay, stubble, it'll all go up in smoke. There it is - and it says but, if the work endures you'll receive a reward. Anyone's work is burnt, then you'll suffer loss. But He'll be saved it even by fire, and so it says you can build gold, silver, precious stone; wood, hay, straw. So what He's saying is that in our life we build our life personally and also we're involved, engaged in the serving of God. Doesn't matter where you are, there's no such thing as part time service for God. Everyone has a full time call. Everyone has a full time call. You are a full time minister of God, see, and so what you do with your life to build your life with God and then to work to advance His cause, to reach people, influence people, touch people, that is your work.

Your work involves what you do with your life. So for some it'll partly involve a marriage, it'll partly involve a family, it'll partly involve their workplace. For some it'll partly involve the community. Every one of us has got a work that God has got us to put our hand to and it varies from

person to person as we'll see a little in another session. Now God will evaluate how you did the work and what work you did and why you did the work, so He says you can build it with wood, hay, stubble. It'll all go up in smoke - or gold, silver, precious stones. Gold, silver, precious stones tend to be the things which God has formed in the earth under heat and pressure, and the other - wood, hay, stubble - is the stuff that grows in the earth that doesn't abide anything. It just goes up in smoke.

It always speaks of humanity, human motivations and whatever and so it says - notice what it tells us then; if you work abide. In other words, when God scans your life to have a look at you, He is able to penetrate everything you've done and why you did it and how you did it. He saw everything no one saw and He says I see what you've done in secret. Welcome, well done. Enter the joy of the Lord, enter into reward. Isn't that fantastic?

But He says there's also the possibility that you'll go up in smoke, or your work will go up in smoke and He said, notice what it says here, Verse 15; if anyone's work is burned He will suffer loss, so it is possible and the Bible speaks very clearly, that you can suffer the loss of the things God intended you to have in eternity. If any man's work be burnt He will suffer loss. Will he be saved? Yes, he will. He will be saved. The Bible's very clear. He will be saved. Probably the best way I could describe it is like this; you spent your life building a house and having done all and worked and spent this and that, then one day there's an electrical problem and the house just burns to the ground. Fortunately you get out of it and you're smelling of smoke and your garments are burnt with smoke, but you're saved! But what is there? There's no house left! Your whole life went up in smoke! Whoa! Life is too precious to let it go up in smoke! Life is far too precious. If you're over 60 it's even more precious!

Isn't that true? That's the truth isn't it, so there's three reasons why it's important to maintain good works. See? Okay, now here we're onto the foundations for the works. I want you to come with me to Matthew 7:21. This is a bit of a shock but I woke up this morning, the Lord just was pounding this verse into me and I thought oh my, so I had to change what I was going to do. That's alright. I don't mind - so He gave me some better ideas than I had. That was very helpful. I like that, very helpful.

Okay, here it is, Matthew 7. Now you know these verses, now verse 21; Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day Lord, Lord, haven't we prophesised in your name, cast out demons in your name, done many wonders in your name and I'll declare to them I never knew you depart from me who practise lawlessness.

Now here's the first thing is to see the context. This is part of Jesus' teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, so He's teaching His disciples and followers and he's talking about the culture, attitudes and values of the kingdom of Heaven and what it requires to live as a citizen of that kingdom and bring Heaven to earth. That's what this is all about, so now He's come to the very end of His message and He's about to draw some conclusions. Here's first of all a warning He gives and secondly a conclusion. The first thing He tells us, He said not everyone who says Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, so to enter the kingdom of Heaven is the key issue at stake.

Now, notice this. He's not talking about getting saved. You have to understand that. If you try to approach it from the point of view about salvation you're going to miss it altogether, because He's saying - notice what He's saying - He said not everyone who says Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of Heaven. But He says many shall say to me in that day, so what day is He talking about? He's not talking about the day He's talking. He's talking about that day. He's talking about the day of His return. The day of the Lord, and so many will say on that day. In other words, when He comes there's a lot of people going to say Lord, Lord, we prophesied. We cast out demons. We did miracles - and He will say I didn't know you. You worked inequity.

Now that's a real hard thing to handle. So He's talking about to Pentecostal people particularly, because they tend to focus on prophesying and praying in tongues and doing things like that, and He's talking about spirit people really. Now I want you to have a look at what He says there, He says on that day so it's the day of His coming. Now what He's saying, many will say Lord, Lord. Now these are obviously believers. How do we know they're believers? Because He said they

prophesied, they work miracles and they cast out demons. You cannot cast out demons by methodology. Acts 19, they tried to copy the method. It didn't work. They were not saved. They couldn't do it. You can't do these things of prophesying and casting out demons and miracles in the name of Jesus unless you are a believer. So let's re-read it.

Many believers who've had a spiritual ministry and saw the supernatural operating will say in that day Lord, Lord, and He will say to them I'm sorry, I didn't know you. You worked inequity. Now that's a hard one to understand isn't it, because we think if someone is moving in the power of the Spirit, that means everything's right with God. No. What it does mean is they have faith for the miracle. It does not mean everything about their character and motivation is right with God, and you'll see in a moment what God is looking for is the character and the motivation and the relationship with him. So undergirding everything that we do for the Lord is firstly intimacy in relationship with Him and response to Him and the second is the motivation, what is causing us to do what we're doing. They're foundational, so if I just talk to you about works and don't address this issue, you just get into a frenzy of busyness and striving and you'll miss what's foundational for a fruitful life, which is our relationship with Him.

If you look in this you'll see very, very clearly, He said the one's that enter the kingdom of Heaven are those who do the will of the Father, so it's possible for you to run off on your own, doing all kinds of great and good things and God honours it because He's a God who honours His name, but it doesn't mean you're aligned with what He had for your life. Just because you're enjoying blessing in your life does not mean you're in the favour of God. You're blessed because He blesses everyone who comes to Him. We are blessed because of what Jesus did. Now our responsibility is to align with Heaven to what God wants for each of our lives and for you it's different to me. No one can tell you what that work is. That requires personal relationship with God and connecting to God's destiny for you personally, otherwise you end up with things like we'll just follow the dream in your heart. But that's only a partial truth. If I followed the dream in my heart I'd be fishing up in Warkworth.

Congregation: [Laughter]

Isn't that true? Or I'd be away overseas somewhere. If I'd followed the dream in my heart I'd be up in the Gold Coast doing something. In other words there are lots of dreams in the heart, but it doesn't mean to say they come from God. In fact actually He's talking here - notice what Jesus said - it's those who do the will of the Father. This requires an engagement with God to know what He wants you to do and that will mean the end of some things you did want to do. It means the cross, it means you will follow Him no matter what it is. You're laying down the rights to your life and you're walking in what He's called you to do, not what everyone thinks is a good idea or necessarily what you would like to do. Getting the idea?

You're going to see this over and over and over again, so teachings on dreams and visions, we'll come to that a little bit later, on the whole thing of desires of the heart. We'll get to that in another session, but you've got to get this foundation right first otherwise you'll run off to all kinds of things and you'll actually waste the years of your life when you should be productive.

Okay, we all ready? Okay, so let's go on a little bit further, getting in deep on this one here. Alright then, so what are the two key issues? Here they are; I will declare to them - now He says it so - I love Jesus. He actually makes it real clear. He said two things; I didn't know you, and two, you worked inequity. So we just need to understand what they are and one of the things in the Bible, if you're not sure what something means go look somewhere else and see if it turned up somewhere else, because if it turns up somewhere else the chances are He cast the light on it that you didn't see in this particular passage. So when you look at, I never knew you, well how on earth did they do the miracles? What is He talking about? And workers of inequity, they're doing miracles working inequity. How does that all work out?

I'll just open up really quickly for you and you'll see it just in a glance, which is what the Lord just dropped into my heart today and notice what He said; I never knew you. That word know is to know intimately, to know as a friend and Jesus brought people into friendship who first learned obedience. He said I no longer call you servants - servant doesn't know what His master does. He follows instructions. I now call you friends, so

after a period of serving as servants they grew into friendship with Jesus. So this is about friendship with Jesus, okay. Now let's just take it a little bit further. The only other place that I noticed where this turns up, I never knew you, interestingly enough it turns up in Matthew 25:12 with the 10 virgins, the five wise and five foolish and remember the issue there with the five wise and foolish virgins is the whole issue and we taught on this in depth was intimacy with God.

They were all virgins, meaning they were all believers, but five were wise, five were foolish. The five wise prepared their lives and ensured they had oil in a vessel. The five who were foolish made no preparation in their life. Were they all virgins? Yes. Were they all in covenant relationship? Yes, they were. However, five prepared, and the preparation involved the getting of oil which is always symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Or putting it another way, they took the time and effort to spend time gaining intimacy, gaining revelation, gaining insight from God. They gained the flow of the Spirit by a personal life dedicated and connected to the Lord. Remember the five foolish ones said, they said hey listen, will give us some of yours? They said no, no, we can't give it to you. No, no, no. You've got to go and buy it yourself.

So intimacy with God got to buy for yourself. There's no one praying for you can do it for you. We can bring to you the fruit of our intimacy, but you've got to develop your own and so number one, see intimacy with God and you remember that He said to the five foolish virgins, He said very, very clearly - it says to them - and this is what He said to them. He said, actually I didn't know you. Knock, knock, knock, knock, let us in. No, no, no, no, it's too late. The season of opportunity is over, there's a consequence of not doing this, so the very clear one there is personal intimacy, a loving relationship with Jesus, where you're connected to Him and yielded to Him in a relationship like husband and wife. It's like a lover of my soul. It's becoming intimate with Him and sharing my life with Him and learning to surrender and talk over the struggles of life with Him.

We could do some things on that sometime, but - remember Mary and Martha? Now Mary got very, very busy doing stuff, Martha got busy doing stuff in Luke 10:38 - and Mary got very busy listening to Jesus and then Martha got all wound up with all her serving and she's so wound up,

stressed out, burned out, everything. She complains and gets bad attitudes and Jesus said to her, Mary chose the good thing. Now it's not either/or. It's an issue of priority, so it's not saying that you shouldn't do something. It's saying your first priority is the relationship out of which the works flow. Jesus said I don't do anything except what I see the Father doing. Now we need to explain that - not today, but I'll do it in another session.

What He did was He said I am moved in my life by Heaven's agenda. I do not have a thing of my own. I haven't come here to do my will. I've come here to do the will of the Father. I haven't come to just sort of - in fact He wrestled even with it in the garden. Remember Him saying Father, if it's possible I'd rather not do this but not my will, your will be done. So the first thing you see is, remember what Jesus said at the beginning of this passage? He said to enter the kingdom requires you do the will of the Father. Now, you notice that may involve church meetings and church roles and may involve doing this and that, but actually no one can really know. The only one who can really know is you if you're listening to God, because how it outworks will be different for each person. So number one is intimacy. I need to be in relationship where I'm hearing with it from the Lord.

Now if you notice straight after this He follows it on and applies it. He said now I'm going to tell you a story so you can get it. Anyone who hears these words of mine and does them, be like the man who built on a rock. He doesn't fall over at the end of the day. The man who listens to them, doesn't do anything, He said well that man, he's going to find His whole life everything he's built will fall over at the end of it when it's evaluated and the storm comes along. It's very, very clear. It's about hearing God and flowing with what He has for your life, therefore the responsibility of every believer is a personal intimacy with the Lord, listening, hearing and saying yes Lord, what you want, that's what I'll do. Lord, what you've got for me, that's better than my plan for me. I'm happy to go along with your plan. Get the idea?

The second thing is, He says those who work inequity. You who worked inequity - so hard to think believers would be working inequity but apparently it's so. The word inequity means to be without law or to be

lawless or independent, or literally, to have no one speaking into your life. In other words, you do your own thing. Hello? Church is full of that? Kingdom of God's full of people doing their own thing and they think God's going to bless them for it. Well He will bless the work they do to a point because He's a God who blesses, but will they give account? Oh my yes. I want to be found that day, so the word there means literally to be without law.

Now I want to show you one other place I found someone who was caught out and actually confronted over this very issue, then we'll finish with this. Are you ready? Just come with me to Acts, Chapter 8. When you see this story this'll help you understand what it means and then you'll get a better idea of what we're talking about. You'll see it very, very clearly. Okay, in Acts, Chapter 8. So the first is personal intimacy, second is purity of motivation, pure love for people, pure love for the Lord, pure love for people, loving God passionately, listening to him, responding to him, loving people out of a pure heart - not trying to use them to get them to do something you want them to do. It'll come down to something simple like love the Lord with all your heart, love your neighbour as yourself.

Here it is in Acts, Chapter 8. Now just bearing in mind the working of inequity, in Acts, Chapter 8, Verse 9; There was a certain man called Simon who previously practised sorcery in the city, astounding the people of Samaria, giving out that He was some important one to whom everyone gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying this man is the great power of God. They gave heed to him because he'd astonished them with His sorceries, but then they believed in Jesus when He preached things about the kingdom of God in the name of Jesus and men and women were baptised and Simon himself also believed and was baptised and continued with Phillip and was amazed seeing the miracles and signs. Notice the statement, He also believed and was baptised.

Okay, now we'll go on. The apostles heard that and so on and so forth. Now Verse 17, they laid hands on them and they received the Holy spirit, but when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles hands the Holy spirit was given, He offered them money, saying give me this power that I might - anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy spirit. He

said your money perished with you because you thought the gift of God could be purchased with money. You have neither part or portion in this matter for your heart is not right with God. Repent of this wickedness and perhaps God will forgive the thought of your heart, for I see you are poisoned with bitterness and in the bond of inequity.

Now I want you to just get this because when we look at that, we just read Simon the sorcerer and we switch off and it's nothing to do with us. I want you to just re-engage and have a look at it. The first thing is he was a person with huge influence and leadership in the community. Actually everyone was listening to him. Now how did He get it? Guess how he got it? He got influence with people by using supernatural power. He tapped into the occult and he could get people astonished with what he did and so, what they did then was - notice it says he gave out that he was important. So what's going on here? Very simply this; he's a man who's rejected, a man with injustice and disappointments in his life and in order to try and find a sense of purpose and significance and identity and value, he begins to access the occult realm to try and put out to people he's important. So his whole motivation is to use the power that's available to build his own influence, reputation and standing with people.

Now he gets saved and he gets saved. He believed on Lord Jesus Christ and he was baptised. If you believe in your heart, you're baptised, you'll be saved. There's no doubt about it. He was a saved man. Now he looks and he's a follower. Not only that, he's following the disciples. He's joined in the crowd and he's following, so you'd say he's a person who once was out there in the world, he got saved, got water baptised, he's now in the church and now he's following on, watching what God is doing and he's learning as he goes. Now notice what he does. He sees that when the apostles lay hands power comes. He thinks I want power!

Let's just put it a different way. Oh, I want the anointing! I want the power that's on you! You can't believe how many people come up and say I want you to lay hands on me! Give me a double portion of your anointing! I say no, I won't...

Congregation: [Laughter]

And I won't. I won't, and the reason I had a guy do that one meeting, he come up - actually did it at three meetings in a row, one after the other; come up and said I want the double portion. I want the double portion, pastor pray for me, pray for the double portion! I said no. He went away disappointed. He come up again the next night, same thing. No! And the third time He come up, I said no! No, no, no! I won't. He said why? I said very simply, I said first of all if I had double I'd have it for myself.

Congregation: [Laughter]

Okay. Now what I really - what I said to him was this; I said I've been watching you for three nights in a row and I've noticed we've had hundreds of people in need, hundreds of people weeping, being delivered, ministered to and I saw you with your suit and a big Bible wandering around. Not once did you ever put your arm around anyone, hug them, come alongside them, help them, minister them, comfort them, do anything to indicate you were interested in people. I said why would God anoint you with power, when all you're interested in is just promoting yourself?

Now this is what the issue with this guy was. He wanted power to promote himself and Peter put his finger straight on it and he said you cannot use the power or the gifts of the Spirit. You can't use the prophetic dimension. You can't use the flow of the Holy Spirit to establish your identity and make yourself very important. He said I see what the real problem is; in your heart is a deep rooted bitterness and you've never resolved it, and he said also you're in the bondage of inequity. You're operating without respect for God's way, God's principles, God's timing. You're just trying to promote yourself - and that word bond means this. When a Roman soldier had a prisoner, what they would do is they would put a chain on the Roman soldier's left hand and they'd link it to the prisoner's right hand, so the prisoner always was linked to a soldier.

The soldier had the sword. He could just hit him anytime, bring him back into line, so the word bond is describing something like this. He said I see that your right hand or right arm, the works in your life are thoroughly chained and in slavery to an independent, rebellious root in your life that comes out of bitterness and hurt, and you were just wanting to use the

gifts and good things of God to promote yourself and to give out to people you're important. You're trying to establish your identity, and he said there's no way you can have a part of this. So that's the only other place I found where that inequity is, apart from the issue with Saul.

So get back to it again; two things that are foundational for me to produce good works - one, I need a personal relationship where I'm listening to the Lord and listening to what He has to say, and two, the second thing is, I need to let God work in my heart concerning my motives for what I do. Otherwise what I'll do is I'll just be like everyone in the world and I'll use people to get me ahead. This is a chronic sickness within the body of Christ, where people use gifts and roles in order to promote or advance themselves and fail to see that this is inequity that will cost you everything. All gains will be temporary, but in eternity they will be seen for what they are and your reward which only God can give will certainly be lost.

We need to let God work in our heart so that we have an authentic and genuine love and what we do is a genuine desire to serve. We give because we love God and we're so grateful to Him, we want to overflow with a serving spirit and there's no agenda - and that is what makes the works we do different, because inside them is no agenda. How many of you have had someone do something for you and after they did it you thought that was wonderful, thank you. That was really kind, that was really loving - and then before you know it there's a hook in it and there was always an agenda in it. Now the agenda comes out and they're pulling on you to do something? That just sucks. All the joy is taken out of the thing. You feel poisoned by the thing inside, manipulated by it and you hate it.

See now what he's saying is that the works we do, God will be honoured because there's something about them is really fresh. They come out of relationship with Jesus and there's a purity of love and serving involved in it. Now isn't that fantastic? Isn't that a great thing? So before we do anything on looking at what the works are that God calls you to do, this is the foundation to lay in your life. Number one, intimacy with God. Number two, let God work on the motivation, why am I doing what I'm doing? Am I doing it to be seen by men? It doesn't cut. That's what this guy Simon

did. He did it to be seen by people, so if I'm doing it to be seen by men I'll only do it when the Pastor's around or a leader's around. I'll be sucking up and making sweet sounds and kind of things like that and trying to impress - but we're not to impress men. We're to impress God with a right heart and right attitude. We say Amen...

Congregation: Amen.

...and just close our eyes right now, just close... just for a moment I want to ask this question; is there anyone here who's never begun this fantastic journey of walking with Jesus Christ? You know the Bible tells, we're born into this life separated from God. Without the life of God, without a sense of destiny, struggling to try and find things to meet what can only be met by relationship with God. Jesus came into this world and paid the price for the power of sin to be broken, and for our lives to be free to come into relationship, but it does require something. It requires one, we recognise our condition that I'm walking apart from God. That's the condition of sin, that Jesus has made provision by dying on the cross and rising from the dead, and I'm willing to receive him into my life to give me a fresh start, and so I can become connected to Heaven and begin the journey walking with God and into my destiny.

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction
· Tit.2:14 “who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for Himself, His own special people, zealous for good works”
· Jesus gave up His life on the Cross for a purpose – not just to get us to heaven.
· He redeemed us – pay the full ransom price to free a captive – for a purpose.
· Jesus wants us to be a people that are unique, special (lit. beyond usual, belonging to God)
· “Zealous” = NT2207 Burning with passion, strongly contending for something.\We are called to be busy, proactive, passionately advancing the Kingdom of God.
· Tit.3:8 “… those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works”
· Tit.3:14 “Let our people learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs that they be not unfruitful”.

2. Three Reasons why it is Important to Maintain Good Works
(i) Divine Design and Purpose – Gold has prepared good works unique to each of us.
· Eph.2:10 “..created in Christ Jesus unto good works that God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”.
(ii) Eternal Rewards are at stake – God desires to reward us, acknowledge our work.

· Mt.16:27 “Fer the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels and then He will reward each according to his works.
· Rev. 22:12 “Behold I am coming quickly, and my Reward is with me, to give to everyone according to his work”. (Reward = NT3408 = wages, pay for services).
(iii) Accountability is required – God will evaluate what we have done with our life.
· 1 Cor.3:11-15 “If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. Reward =NT3408= wages, pay for services).
· Jesus Himself will evaluate what we have done – our works – what sort of work.
· Our works may fail to qualify for a reward, but we are still saved.
· Jesus evaluated the works of the 7 churches of Revelation and made promises of reward. (Rev. 2:2 “I know your works”).

3. Two Foundations for Good Works
· Mt.7:21-29 “Not everyone who says Lord, Lord shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven but he who does the Will of my Father in heaven”.

(a) Context: The Sermon on the Mount – this is the conclusion.
· Jesus has been teaching the culture, heart attitudes and values of the Kingdom.
· He is now addressing the issue of how we respond to his teaching – what we do.

(b) Vs21 “Entrance to the Kingdom” is the key issue at stake.
· He is not talking about “getting saved” = we are saved by grace through faith without any works (Eoh.2:8-9).
· He is talking about entering (experiencing) the Kingdom of Heaven now in our personal life but more importantly the millennium and eternal Kingdom.
(c) Vs22 “That day” refers to the day of His coming to establish His Kingdom on earth.
· In “that day” He will evaluate what we have done – “what sort of work”.
(d) Supernatural Ministry does not necessarily qualify us for Kingdom Entrance.
· V22 “Many will say” Lord, Lord – these are saved believers who call Jesus Lord.
· Note their works: Prophesy, Deliverance, Miracles = Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
· These are done in Jesus name by faith (you cannot do deliverance by methods – Acts 19:13).
(e) Two key issues at stake.
· Vs23 I will declare to them I never knew you; depart from me you that work iniquity. Personal Intimacy Loving relationship with Jesus
· Vs23 “I never knew you” = I did not know you as a friend.
· The other place Jesus makes this statement is in Math.25:12 ‘I do not know you’.
· 5x foolish virgins failed to prepare themselves, to purchase oil of intimacy.
· Our first call and work is to love the Lord with all our heart.
· This means relating to Him, hearing His voice, sharing our heart and life with Him.
· E.g. Lk10:39 Mary and Martha – Mary placed intimacy – hearing Jesus before works. Purity of Motivation Authentic love for people
· Vs23 “You that work iniquity”.
· Iniquity =NT458= without law, lawless, independent, illegal, contempt for law or authority.
· The key issue is fulfilling the will of God (Mt.7:21) not doing good works and expecting God to be impressed.
· E.g. Acts 8:9-23 “I see you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity”
· Simon was a person with great influence and importance. He used occult power to help him gain the influence and recognition.
· Vs9 “He gave out that he was great” = self-promotion.
· Vs13 He became a believer, was baptised and followed Philip.

· He wanted the power of God not to honour God and serve people but to promote himself.
· He failed to understand the need to serve out of love so God is honoured.
· Roots Bitterness – rejection and injustice was poisoning his perspective.
Iniquity – not yielded to the will or authority of God.
- Desired to use God to advance position, reputation, finances.
· "Bond" = Roman Soldier would chain prisoner's right hand to his left hand.
· His works were "dead works" moved by selfish agenda.
· Cf Jn.5:38 "I have come down from Heaven not to do my will but the will of Him who sent me.
· Mt.7:24 "He that hears these sayings of mine and does them – stable

4. Focus on Knowing Jesus and Developing Character
2 Peter 1:2-11
· Build intimacy daily with the Lord
· Commit to personal growth in Godliness
· Results i) Not barren or unfruitful (v8)
ii) Not stumble (v10)
iii) Abundant entrance to Kingdom (v11)

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