

WCCC 2024

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Moses treasured the reproach of Christ (3)

I would like to share with you this third aspect regarding the reproach of Christ that His servants undergo. So we want to look at 3 portions of scripture. If you'd join me we will go back to Hebrews 3 where Moses is introduced.

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end."
Hebrews 3:1-6 NASB1995

And then we join the testimony of Stephen regarding Moses in Acts 7:36-39.

"This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren.' This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you. Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt,"
Acts 7:36-39 NASB1995

And then we look at 1 Peter 4:12.

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you."
1 Peter 4:12-14 NASB1995

Our Father we gather together in the Lord's house. We are the Lord's house and we want to receive a further Word. We depend upon the Holy Spirit for the liberty to share the Word of God. And for us, as we receive the meat of the Word of God. We thank you for the blessings we have received

throughout the conference. Send us out with great joy and blessing. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

In the letter to Hebrews, Moses is used as an example of one who ran the race faithfully. I was asked to share specifically on this phrase: "That Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures of Egypt". Now the whole book of Hebrews is one great exhortation telling us to run the race because the kingdom is coming soon.

The coming of the kingdom depends on faithful ones running the race until He comes. We can't imagine what would have happened if Moses hadn't run the race. How would the children of Israel ever come out of Egypt? But God chose him in His great, wider plan for the redemption of the children of Israel from Egypt.

When Moses was called he had little idea of the vastness of what God was asking him to do. As we saw last time, when God finally told him the plan, he said, "no, no, no, I can't do that." And that was the very sign that he was ready.

God says, "I want you to go down to Egypt and get 2 million people and bring them out impossibly through the Red Sea."

Moses says, "I can't do that. I shepherd sheep!". And God said, "Amen Moses. Go."

That is what He does to us. If we understand our purpose as servants of God, He is asking us to do things impossible out of our natural strength. And one day, as we faithfully steward our service to the Lord, our Lord will suddenly come and we will realize that our little part was much more important than we ever realized.

As we just mentioned and will talk about more this time, the context our brother Godwin brought before us, is that this is presently a time of devastation here in the Americas regarding the church. I wonder what you think our Lord Jesus thinks. He who prayed the wonderful prayer that the church be one. And then as we just sang, for the Lord to see heresies and schisms all through the church. How does the Lord come back for the single bride when she is all divided up?

The landscape of the church on a wider basis seems to be in a catastrophe. But may we look to Jesus until we see the Lord working in the midst of devastation. He will have His testimony on this earth.

So we want to look at Moses one more time. Here he is the faithful servant running the race. Remember, down in Egypt, at 40 years, he was a military man, an engineer, a son of Pharaoh's daughter. But the Lord's purposes run deeper than just those who care for us. Moses was attached to God's chosen people of Abraham. I am sure he was completely surprised that something rose up in him with such strength that he killed an Egyptian who was assaulting one of his Hebrew brethren. From that moment on, Moses bore the reproach of Christ, because the children of Israel are the ones out of whom the Messiah would come. And all of his great future in Egypt was wiped out in one moment as Egypt hated Moses, and as Pharaoh was determined to kill him.

So Moses fled to the desert of Midian and began to shepherd some sheep. He met and fell in love with his wife Zipporah and had 2 kids. And for 40 years, he spoke to these ones who only bleated back. 40 years of bleating. And the Lord was whittling down this great man Moses. Down to just an average shepherd.

We saw a second aspect to this matter of esteeming the reproach of Christ.

Esteeming the reproach of Christ means taking Christ and His people over the world. I understand from our brother this morning that we have more than half our congregation under 40 years old. Now these are the ones that the enemy is trying to gain into the world. He has laid out all kinds of promises for you - of promotions, of money and of 2 and a half children.

I know many came to America believing the American dream. There never was an American dream. There were people who began this nation because they wanted to serve God. And God blessed them and prospered their way. He didn't say "embrace the American dream". But they built a nation with enough foundation of morality and godliness that this nation has prospered.

Now people are busting down the border wall to get into this country, but they have no love of God. They are glad that you have gotten rich, and they want to get rich off you. But the American dream is being lost because we have lost our foundations. It has become an empty dream, and people find themselves with a lot of money and a lot of expenses. Enslaved by the world.

So before you turn 40, how about turning your back on that? It may have been a long time since your baptism, but it is a good idea to sing again "I have decided to follow Jesus, with the world behind me."

I love the way the Lord does strange things. If you refuse the treasures of Egypt, then the Lord will say "yes my servant, I will make you rich. Because you will use it to serve Him." God is not stingy. He does not say that good Christians should be poor. But good Christians are those who serve the Lord first, who seek the kingdom first, who are seeking the treasures in heaven first. And what does the Bible say? All these Mercedes-Benz shall be added unto you.

So Moses forsook the world, and in the end he ended up rich. But his money made no matter. He was pursuing heavenly things. But once he made that stand against Egypt, the Lord delayed his ministry another 40 years. We spoke about this last time - how the Lord had to bring the cross upon his self-life. The cross, the great divine veto, on our self-life and things that are not of Christ.

When the Lord brings His cross to bear on us, at first we will hate it. Let's take a vote, how many of you like to die? Nobody wants to die. I used to sing a song a long time ago, "Everyone wants to get to heaven, but nobody wants to die."

But when you come to a place where you esteem the work of the cross in your life, then the Lord brings you to resurrection ground. You remember that vision that turned Moses' ministry into a run. He saw in the desert that he was an old, ugly, useless bush. And God was saying, "ok Moses, run bush, run! And you will run with the fire of God upon you. Run and I will speak through you, you useless bush."

As I tell the young people, his name changed from Moses to just Mo. "God I can't do anything as a bush." And God said, "I can do everything if I have a bush to use." So Moses stood before Pharaoh and Moses trembled because Moses was as god before him, although he was just an old bush. So Moses became the great apostle of the Old Testament who brought the children through the Red Sea and into freedom from bondage.

Let us just be clear: who can bring 2 million people out of Egypt? Only God can do God's work. But He does it through the word of Moses. Isn't it incredible? That this little bush just says "crackle crackle" and God moves 2 million people out of Egypt. The crackle is the sound the fire makes. Only God through His servant Moses could do that.

Did you really think that Mo could have produced the ten plagues? Moses did not have the power to bring one mosquito into Egypt. But at the word of the bush, the lice came. The frogs came. The river turned to blood. You know the plagues. And Moses stood before Pharaoh and said, "if you do not let my people go, the death angel will pass over Egypt and take out all your firstborn children."

I hope you see that this is what it means to be a servant of the Lord. You can do nothing except what He tells you to do, and He does the rest.

And Moses lifted up Aaron's rod, and the Red Sea pushed back. Any of you servants of God who tried that probably failed miserably. It was God who opened the way.

One of the first best songs that made number one on the pop charts after they got through the Red Sea was

I will sing unto the Lord
For He has triumphed gloriously
The horse and the rider
Gone into the sea

And Miriam was a better songwriter and she wrote

Oh who is like unto Thee
O Lord among the gods
Who is like unto Thee
Glorious in holiness?

In Exodus 15 you find this song. They knew it was God who did these things. Praise God the children came out of Egypt. As we read in Acts 7:36 He brought them after He had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea, and then in the wilderness 40 years.

I think it has become apparent to you that the writer in Hebrews is comparing Moses to Jesus. Now Jesus is the Apostle who is the beginner of our faith and High Priest, the finisher of our faith, of a heavenly calling. But Moses was also an apostle and priest of the children of Israel.

So we see in this parallel description that Moses is used to lay the apostolic foundation for the children of Israel just as Jesus laid the foundation for the church.

Now we mention some of the apostolic things Moses did to produce this nation of Israel.

When they came through the Red Sea and unto Mount Sinai 50 days later, God called Moses up on the mountain and said, "I want you to share with the children the whole counsel of God. I want my children to begin by understanding in a heavenly vision, their destiny." So we read in Exodus 19:3.

"Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.'"

Exodus 19:3-6 NASB1995

"Sons of Israel, why did I bring you out of the Red Sea and carry you on eagle's wings?" One of the Jewish kids who always got stars for answering right in Sunday School said, "you brought us through the Red Sea because you loved us!"

How many of you know that answer is right? But that is not the whole story. God says, "yes, I love you and saved you. But I am going to make you a chosen race, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a people of my own possession. That is your destiny. If you will obey my voice and my covenant."

God revealed His heart for the first time to the children of Israel as being full of mercy that endures forever. Of course we know the children of Israel failed in the wilderness, and in this destiny. That is why God had to raise up Brother Ted Peng to tell us that it was fulfilled in 1 Peter 2:9.

Jesus the great Apostle of our faith has called us again to be a chosen race, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, and He will accomplish it.

The second thing that the apostolic foundation needed was for the Holy Spirit to dwell on the house of God. So Exodus 13:21 says,

"The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

Exodus 13:21-22 NASB1995

This little traveling band of Israel going through the wilderness was hated by Egypt and the rest of the world. We already heard how Balaam was sent. "We are going to give you \$200k and a Mercedes-Benz if you will curse the people of Israel!". Balaam stood on a mountain and looked down on these 2 million measly shepherds. Then he saw something in the middle; something kind of a tent. And over the tent was a fire, and it made the superstitious enemies afraid to go near this little traveling band.

Thirdly, Moses, as an apostle laid the foundation of the Word of God to the children of Israel as he received the covenant of God on Mount Sinai. The people had a basis - a covenant - for blessing. The Word of God must be laid as a foundation even as the apostles laid the foundation of Christ in the church. Without the Word of God, the children of God cannot travel far.

Fourth, Moses came before the Lord and received the tabernacle, the house of God, the place of fellowship. God said, "I want to dwell with my people. Make me a house according to the pattern I showed you on the mountain." And so we see the church born on Pentecost, and the apostles building the church by the power of God.

Fifth, the apostle Moses, through the book of Leviticus which took 2 months to write, shared with the children of Israel how they might have fellowship with this living God. They needed these sacrifices to have fellowship. They needed to gather for these feasts to fellowship. And they must learn the difference between that which is holy and that which is common.

And finally the sixth foundation of Moses the apostle. At the beginning of the book of Numbers, they took a census of everyone who is in the book of life. So a census was taken. And Moses took that census and lined them all up in order. Because Moses the apostle, ordered the church in the wilderness. It starts with Christ in the middle of the tabernacle - the ark. And this family of Levites would stand here, and everyone would have their place. These 3 tribes here, the next 3 here, and the next 3 there.

This was Moses the apostle. What a wonderful servanthood this was. And after he laid the foundation, it says "Moses dwelt in the wilderness for 38 years with these children." Now as an apostle, the foundational work was done in 2 years, starting in Egypt and after Mount Sinai.

But now we see for the 40 years in the wilderness, Moses was their priest. Apostles come to save and lay foundations. But priests come to bring them to glory and to perfect people in holiness. If the apostleship is based on resurrection life, the priesthood is based on ascended life. Why do I say "ascended life"? Because a priest no longer lives for himself, but he lives to intercede for the children of God.

We see in the book of Hebrews as the writer spells these things out, that his burden is for Christians to understand that Jesus was both your Apostle, and now your High Priest who would bring many sons to glory. The four gospels tell us well of Jesus, the Apostle of our salvation. But the book of Hebrews shows us uniquely how Christ becomes our High Priest to bring us to God.

So there is a section that begins at that end of Hebrews 4 and goes on all the way to the middle of Hebrews 10. From the beginning to the end, it says the same thing. "Because of our High Priest, we must draw near to the throne of our Father who is in heaven."

As soon as He says that these Jewish Christians say, "Oh I cannot come into the presence of the unknown One, of the unspeakable One, of the great transcendent One!" And so the writer of Hebrews spends chapter after chapter telling us that Jesus is just like you. Jesus was tempted,

just like you. Jesus suffers, just like you. Jesus understands you. These are the qualifications of being a priest for the people of God.

You have to get Jesus out of the sky, just as divine and to see Him as divinely human. This priest can be touched by the feeling of your infirmities.

Now throughout the Jewish tradition, they have always believed that the greatest friend of the Jews was Aaron. Now we kind of consider Aaron kind of a bozo because he did a lot of things wrong. Aaron did a lot of things wrong, but a lot of people saw that Aaron did a lot of things wrong.

One of the qualifications of a priest is that you are a friend to those who come. So here comes a Jewish shepherd to the feast. His name is Samuel, and he is afraid to go into the tent because he is afraid he would get nuked by the holy God. But the priest comes outside of the tent curtain and says, "Hey Sam, I'll help you come on in. You've got an offering. Let's go in together. I'm going to hack it up and we will put it up on the fire and you will smell the fragrance of your sacrifice. Now I know you are afraid of that cloud and that fire on top of the tabernacle. Here, hold my hand. I'm a holy priest. God won't nuke me and you. Come on in. Make your sacrifice."

That is what a priest does. He intercedes. There is a whole other side to Jesus that Christians don't know. I can't find a Christian who doesn't love to sing "What a friend we have in Jesus", but most Christians have no idea just how friendly Jesus is to those who come. That is why in Hebrews - it is the only book - that when the Lord is mentioned, it is just that one name "Jesus", to emphasize His humanity.

The great beginning of the book of Hebrews makes no doubt that Jesus is the Son of God, and He is divine and He is of the very essence of God and the angels worship Him, but now it says that He is also a man.

Christian, are you in a time of trouble? Let the High Priest bring you before God the Father. "But I don't even know God the Father. I have never ever seen Him. He is the unseen One. I believe in him."

Jesus says, "I am the Way to the Father. Come on I'll take your hand." And we come into the throne room, and there is the Father sitting on His throne. And the High Priest is by your side, interceding for you. Because what do you find at the Father's throne? You find grace and mercy to help in a time of need.

I know most of you have the picture in your mind that Jesus is sitting on that throne of grace, but that is not at all how the Jewish Christians would understand it. It is not the way the writer meant it. Although I have to give you partial credit that He might have been sitting on the right hand of the throne of God.

Maybe you think Jesus would then say "now here is the Father, and I am going to sit down beside Him". I think when that happens, some of you would run the race so quickly out of there.

We can't grow up unless we come to know God the Father. Jesus said that enough times while on this earth: "I have come to show the Father." I have heard so many Christians who rightly

pray "thank you Jesus, you are the Lamb of God". You are absolutely right. But how many of you pray "Our Father, we come to you through Jesus Christ."

The Father is the mover and shaker in the kingdom of God. And we won't serve the Lord for long until He has brought us in before the Father to do business with Him whom we have to do.

Now we are back to Moses and we find that final 40 years of Moses. He is a priest interceding for the children of Israel. As a priest he discovers the third dimension of the reproach of Christ.

First, you discover that the world hates you when you belong to Christ.

Second, you learn that we must esteem the reproach of the cross for the Lord to do His work.

But now we see that as a priest of God, Moses once again faced the reproach of Christ. Not a reproach by the world or Satan. Not a reproach of our flesh. But a reproach of Christ because of our zeal for the house of God.

Remember the other time when we looked at Psalm 69 where David cries out about his being zealous about the house of God and bearing reproach. David says, "It is for your sake that I borne reproach. Dishonor has covered my face. For the zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproach of those who reproach you has fallen on me."

David was so zealous to see the house of God. He could bear with the fact his enemies hated him. But even his best friends have lifted up their heel against him and became his enemy. He is suffering some loneliness and some separation from his own family because of his zeal for the house of God.

And so when Jesus went in and cleansed the temple, this scripture from Psalm 29 was put in the record of the gospels. They remembered that Jesus cleansed the temple because the zeal for the Father's house was so important to Him. This is indeed a third level of suffering that a Christian understands.

But it is a mystery. How can you be reproached by God's children? How can God's people despise God's servants? But you will find, if you truly have a zeal to see the house of God, you will face reproach.

You do understand why. That house of God is the central part of God's eternal purpose. We see it fulfilled in Revelation 21. It says, "behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people forever and ever and ever." This is God's desire to dwell among men. But if this house is to be His dwelling place and our dwelling place, then it must be a holy place and not a place for merchandise.

How could these things be?

You can talk to Christians:

"Are you saved?"

"I'm saved."

"I'm saved too."

"Do you read your Bible?"

"Yeah I read the Bible."

"We can get along fine."

Then they say to you, "oh by the way, what church do you go to?"

For many of you, immediately you are in trouble.

"You see, I go to this group, it's like a fellowship."

Maybe they'll say, "Oh a fellowship! Who's the pastor?"

"We don't have a pastor."

"When did you join?"

"Well, you don't really join."

Or if you bring one of your friends to the meeting and they ask, "How come nobody led the meeting? People just chose songs, and then there's that crazy woman who prayed for 5 minutes. What's going on?"

I hope you understand what I mean. I hope you have a zeal for the house of God. I hope you don't meet because it's convenient and you speak Mandarin. There's a lot of those groups. But who has a zeal for the house of God?

I love to go meet with my brothers in Flushing, out there in Queens. There are about 299 Chinese folks and me. But I don't see it as a language church. Because there are people zealous for the house of God. I tell them, "I am too old to come out here to speak anymore, but you guys are zealous for the house of God and I really enjoy being with you."

I have faced the reproach of many friends. In the denomination I was in, I was supposedly a good preacher. But when I left the denomination, suddenly I was despised.

Maybe one of the best teachers in the 20th century was T. Austin Sparks. He was trained under G. Campbell Morgan and some great teachers and had a great ministry until he was zealous for the house of God. And then every church in England was closed to him.

This is the mystery, because we become rejected by God's people. The church is where people come together, it will never be perfect. God has no high standards, just don't wear a skirt that is too short, that's all.

Believe me. God sees every schism, every heresy. It breaks the heart of our God who is praying for the unity of the church. This is what it means to face the reproach of Christ for the zeal of this house.

So there was Moses who got out there beyond the Red Sea and established a foundation. Then what happened? Stephen tells the story in Acts 7:38.

"This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you. Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, saying to Aaron, 'Make for us gods who will go before us; for this Moses who led us out of the land of Egypt—we do not know what happened to him.' At that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'It was not to Me that you offered victims and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, was it, O house of Israel? You also took along the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of the god Rompha, the images which you made to worship. I also will remove you beyond Babylon.'"

Acts 7:38-43 NASB1995

Moses broke the ten commandments to stones because the children of Israel broke his priestly heart. Then his reward for being a priest to bring the children into the land was that the children would begin to murmur for 38 years.

"Oh we want to go back to Egypt, Moses! There was dimsum back in Egypt! We want water! We don't like that water! We want better water! We don't have food! We don't like this food. We want quail!"

Everything they reviled, and reproached, and reproached. And Moses led and led.

As if it didn't come close enough to home, Miriam and Aaron rebelled against Moses. "Who are you, big shot?"

All Moses did was lay down his life.

And of course the Levites rebelled. Abiram and Korah were brought into the ground for their rebellion against Moses.

Then the ten evil spies convinced the children not to go in. And they wouldn't believe [Joshua and Caleb].

God said at that point at Kadesh Barnea, "you guys have tested me ten times. I'm telling you, that's it. I swear in my wrath, you shall not enter into my rest." And so they went on and fell short as they circled in the wilderness, until a serpent had to be set up on the pole to save people's lives.

For 38 years, what did Moses do in the midst of this rebellion? Children so carnal, children so selfish, so small, petty and divisive? Moses fell on his face before God for 38 years.

It's true sometimes Moses said, "God, I have had enough. These people, they are not mine. I don't know whose they are." But you see, the priest's heart is loaded. He doesn't live for himself anymore. He couldn't abandon his children.

And here are these children, acting so poorly in the house of God. Here is Moses saying, "God, forgive them, or blot me out. Lord, please heal my sister Miriam of her leprosy. Lord if you don't go, I won't go. Jehovah, what will the nations around think if you abandon these children?"

There is only one high priest greater than that and it is our Lord Jesus. You know He is interceding before the throne of God the Father on our rebellious behalf. With an unending zeal for the house of God, His bride.

As the scriptures clearly say, Jesus is much greater than Moses. Moses in the end reproached Christ by striking the rock. And that was the end of his priesthood.

"You dishonored me before my people after all that I have done for you?"

Meanwhile, in the midst of 38 years of bellyaching, what did God do? With longsuffering He continued to lead the children through 42 stations until they could get across the Jordan river. The cloud and the fire remained over them, though I have no idea why. The Father provided for them all those years with many types of His Son who was to come. He provided manna from heaven to speak of His Son. And He provided water from the rock to speak of the living water of His Son. And He placed before them Aaron's budding rod to show them of Christ's resurrection. And He lifted up the serpent upon the pole to speak of Christ's coming sacrifice.

We talk about a God of mercy and love. And we see what goes on in the house of God today. Is it any wonder that Paul, as a great intercessor, went through what he went through? Yes he was hated by the world. Yes, he was hated by his own people, the Jews. But this intercessor Paul, what did he say about that?

"I could wish myself accursed from salvation if I could just see my Jewish brethren saved." And when he went to Corinth and spilled his blood there for a year and a half, immediately men rose up - smart guys who went to the university of philosophy who thought they knew more than Paul. And the Christians in Galatia reproached Paul because Paul told them, "you have been circumcised by Christ, you don't need to be circumcised by men!". And he was reproached for it.

In his last visit to the elders of Ephesus, he said, "I am going to tell you, I told you the whole counsel of God, but wolves will come out of your midst and tear the flock of God. So be on your guard."

If you think perhaps I am overdoing it by saying that the church is in bad shape, when we see the church around us and everything is cool; what are you going to do about the second half of 2 Timothy which talks about the last days? Or Jude that says we have to fight for the faith

because people have snuck in our midst. Or 2 Peter where it says that there are people among us who say "there is no judgment. Where is this God who is going to come right now?"

Brothers and sisters, the church is in devastation. Are you part of the reproach, or are you one receiving reproach? Are you one defiling the house of God, or one sanctifying the house of God?

Today, in so many of the churches, if you speak the Word of God and say, "I believe the Word of God", you suffer reproach.

Jeremiah 20, he cries out, "Lord, you deceived me! You have overcome me! I have become a laughing stock because of reproach when I speak the Word of God."

I was so thrilled when I heard the President of this university say that "we stand by Bible principles regarding morals and ethics and life."

I want to make a little correction here in case you get the wrong idea. The Lord loves this church and everybody in the church - every born again believer. And out of every church there will shine overcomers. But they will bear reproach.

What does the writer of Hebrews say that someone zealous for the house of God should do?

"Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come."

Hebrews 13:12-14 NASB1995

Do you have zeal for the house of God? Do you love the house of God even in its tattered condition?

Almost every historical person that we talk about who recovered something of the church, they were reproached for their zeal for the house of God. When Martin Luther stood up for the gospel of salvation, the church came against him to kill him.

Then when the Anabaptists said, "you must be baptized as a believer", then the Lutherans persecuted the Anabaptists. The Church of England kicked out Wesley for preaching the gospel.

This is what we mean by devastation.

Gradually we see the mystery of the kingdom worked out in the church. So in the church, there is wheat and there are tares. In the church there are those sticking in the leaven of divisiveness, and disputes on all kinds of things.

We have run of time, but what can I tell you? Here is what I say. Be faithful to the Lord. You have a choice. You can look at the outward appearance of the desolation around you, or you can see the Lord in the midst of His church.

The whole book of Revelation is a revelation to the servants of God to see Jesus in the midst of every situation. So you see Laodemia, you see Pergamum, but you see Christ in the midst of them.

I was talking to a dear brother from some church. This church has a couple of those people who caused a lot of trouble.

I said, "How are you dealing with this situation, with this sort of divisive thing going on?"

Do you know what he said? He said, "When I look at the church, I look for the gold." Within the church there is gold. The church is a lampstand of gold. Jesus is working on this lampstand of gold.

You can spend all your time working with the chaff, or spend your time fellowshiping with those who are gold. They bear the testimony of Jesus.

Here's a little running exercise: we run with endurance because we see Jesus out ahead of us; the unseen One in difficult situations. In the midst of the ups and downs of churches and denominations, what you do is you see the Lord is recovering His church. If you want to be a servant of the Lord, you need to keep your eyes on Jesus and what He is doing.

We can preach for hours and hours about what is wrong with this denomination or that denomination but that doesn't get us anywhere. You know what the joy of my life is? To go to India and see Jesus in the church. To go to Russia and see Jesus in His church.

They got a lot of messed up stuff going on there, but you can see Jesus in the church.

Do you see Jesus in the house of God? He hasn't moved. It is His house. Despite the fact we often can't see, He is the One who is washing, and preparing, and removing wrinkles, and getting ready to present the Church as the bride.

And so as we look and serve in these last days, when you meet a saint at work, see Jesus in them and try to build them up. And to the degree you can help people stand on clearer ground of the house without compromise, to the degree they are open, lead them, take them into a deeper fullness. Be like Aquila and Priscilla who showed Apollos the more perfect way.

The last great thing we will come to see in the midst of our service with reproach is something Christians still don't like: what happens just before the wedding of the Lamb?

How many of you want to be there for the wedding of the Lamb? Revelation 19, Hallelujah, for the Lord our God the Almighty reigns, because the Bride has finally made herself ready. But as you live bearing the reproach of Christ, you will also come to say the Hallelujah before that one.

"Hallelujah, because the Lord has judged the harlot Babylon."

You and I can't separate the wheat and the tares, but there will come a great day of judgment that will separate all the things. And because we love our righteous God, we love His judgment. We love the judgment of God because only He can set everything right.

That is why judgment must begin in the house of God. He has zeal for His house. Do you have zeal for His house? I hope your church life isn't casual. I hope you serve the Lord.

May the Lord bless you. It is wonderful to be with you in these days.

Lord, one day when we are busy bearing the reproach of our self-life, bearing the reproach of the church, we will hear you calling and we will turn. And all the things that are so messed up that humans cannot fix will be fixed in an instant. Oh God, gracious, faithful, saving God! You have zeal for your house. Help us to be those who serve you in this way. For the sake of the coming of our Lord Jesus we pray, Amen

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