

PostExilicProphets 21-10-07b

Let's resume our study now. We're in Zechariah chapter 9, looking at the coming of the King and the incredible amount of meaning that this prophecy has for us because of the conditions in which and under which the Lord Jesus is going to return as that King. And you wouldn't think that it would be as profoundly important for us to understand as it actually is.

Reminds me of the book of Revelation. When I was a kid, I'd go to the Revelation and I'd learned early on that when the voice comes in Revelation chapter 4 verse 1 to John and says, come up here and I'll show you what's going to happen afterward. And then for the next 15 chapters or so, it's in heaven and it's about people in the tribulation.

And I think, well, I'm not going through that. I'm a pre-meal, pre-trib, Bible thumping fundy and I'm not going to be here for any of that noise. So why do I have to know all of this? Until it dawned on me a little bit later on that much as we study the Old Testament to learn thereby as goes Israel in the Old Testament, so goes the church age believer in the new, the nation and many of the ways that God deals with the nation reflect his dealings with us as individual believers, as well as corporately, but largely individually.

And here's a newsflash. Here is an addition to that time honored understanding. The prophet in the Old Testament foreshadows the Holy Spirit in the New Testament when God would send a prophet.

What did the prophet do? Convicting the nation of sin of righteousness of judgment, interpreting the word and the promise of God, revealing specific truths at specific times to specific people for specific purposes. The Old Testament prophet foreshadows the Holy Spirit in the new look at what Zachariah is revealing for us. Look at what Isaiah is revealing for us.

Look at what Moses, both in his the narrative of his life and in the words that he spoke and shared his prayers, his intercession on behalf of Israel, reflecting the Holy Spirit, bringing us, representing us before the throne of God as the Lord Jesus does. So that Old Testament prophet foreshadows the role of the Holy Spirit in communication, in fellowship between God and his people. Now, this also has an effect, a helpful effect, I think, on our understanding of spiritual gifts, because if you remember the list of spiritual gifts and he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry and so on, but apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

And we say, well, some of those have expired. We don't believe in our particular strand of the faith here. We don't believe that God still has apostles that he is gifting in this day and age.

And I personally don't believe that we have prophets. I don't think that now there are some that do. I say, God bless them.

I hope they, if they're right, then I need to be educated. If I'm right, then they need to be

educated. But we're all seeking to serve the same Savior and Lord.

And sometimes our understanding will differ. But this is one of the lines of argument that I would suggest is you needed prophets to appear. You needed personal appearances of the angel of the Lord, of God in incarnate form and angels in incarnate form.

You go back to Genesis and Abraham camped by the oaks of Mamre and God and two angels coming down and revealing God's purposes. Shall I hide from Abraham what I'm about to do? How does God do that today? We don't need prophets. Even in the first generation of the church, you needed prophets because the canon of scripture was not yet complete.

And so they fulfilled the role of delivering the word and interpreting the word. You remember when Agabus goes to Paul and wraps cloth bindings around himself and says, this is what the Holy spirit says to you, Paul, I'm interpreting for you. I'm giving you a spirit of counsel, a spirit of wisdom, a spirit of understanding.

This is what's going to await you. If you keep going to Jerusalem, why did God perpetually warn Paul not to go to Jerusalem? And Paul went anyway, could Paul Marshall's scriptural arguments and belief that read Romans nine, 10 and 11. It, his heart was breaking.

He said, I would give up all of my heavenly rewards for the sake of Israel. Romans chapter nine. I could wish that I myself was a curse from Christ.

Meaning I just take my bare salvation and go in with a rusty old halo and a scratchy skinny white gown. If Israel could be brought to the faith, Paul never lost that, that love for his own people. And you read Romans nine, 10 and 11, and you see that love coming out.

And he says, look, don't despise the branches that have been broken out because of faithlessness. God can graft them in again. And that was Paul's hope and prayer so much so that it warped his judgment.

And when God said, I've got 11 other apostles I'm sending to Israel, I'm sending Peter and Andrew and John and Philip and Bartholomew, James, the less Simon, the less Matthew, all of these guys, I've got 11 apostles that are going to be, what did Jesus tell him? Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. That's what he told him in acts one, eight, you are going to be my witnesses. You 11 in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, Jerusalem first in the list.

Does God need a 12th apostle going to Jerusalem? If Jerusalem has not listened to the first 11, why are they going to listen to the 12th? And you read the, the account in acts when Paul goes to Jerusalem and James, the half brother of the Lord in bagels him into paying for other guys' sacrifices and shaving his head and taking a vow, doing a bunch of strange things that in a, in an attempt to be a man pleaser to try to win them over by showing that he's an observant Jew. When that's not his mission, it's not his function. And it does no good.

He still gets run out of town and nobody comes to Christ because Paul goes back to Jerusalem.

Paul brings this gift from the Gentiles and it embarrasses the Jews. The Gentiles are giving them money.

And all the only thing they'll let Paul do with that money is pay for those guys. Uh, Nazarite vow gifts, which the old Testament law says they are supposed to pay for themselves. It's a via, it's even a violation of the old Testament law.

How does this happen? When Paul has got so much biblical knowledge, he knows his old Testament backwards and forwards. He's a Pharisee raised at the feet of Gamaliel trained in the laws, got enormous chunks of it memorized, met the Lord Jesus on the Damascus road. What did Jesus tell him? I'm sending you to the Gentiles.

That's his commission. We have to remember our purpose. My Admiral Stockdale quote, which never grows old.

Who am I? Why am I here? Why am I here? Why did Jesus save me? Why does God give me breath? Why have I not gone to glory? Could have died a hundred times. Any one of a number of circumstances. Some of them, you can think back to near death experiences.

All of us have almost been head on, almost slipped off the road in ice. Almost. I can think of all kinds of things.

I remember one time, I told you about that garage door where my dad nailed all the stick figures on and there was a mother and a father and four kids and a dog. Well, that same garage door, what my dad did not do was bend the nails over on the inside. And it was one of those lever doors, that comes up and comes down like this.

And the spring was kind of weak. And I was out there one day trying to shut the thing or open the thing or something. All I remember is the door was about two thirds of the way up, but it didn't catch the leverage of the spring to go the rest of the way up.

And it came down and pounded the top of my head hard enough to knock me down. But by the grace of God, the part of the door that hit my head wasn't the all around was nails. And the one part that hit the soft top of my head didn't have nails in it.

If it had, I might be a different person from then till now. I have been shot at. I've had artillery lobbed at me.

I've any number of things. I was in Beirut when many other Marines and sailors lost their lives and I did not. It's the grace of God that I'm alive.

Who am I? Why am I here? If I don't ask myself that question every single day, I run the risk of wasting that day. We are to be redeeming the time because the days left to themselves are evil. If, you know, evil prevails with good men do nothing.

That's true. If we don't start in the morning, Psalm 55, 17, look at Daniel's example. Three times

a day, Daniel stopped.

He's one of the busiest men in the Babylonian empire. Three times a day, he called a halt to everything, all of his responsibilities to Nebuchadnezzar, all of his responsibilities to Darius. Every day, three times a day, Daniel stopped and prayed.

And when people tried to get him in trouble for it, he didn't say, well, you know, maybe I'll take a break. He went to his inner chamber, looked out the window toward Jerusalem, and he prayed, prayed to God. He'd never forgot who he was.

Very likely he was emasculated. Very emasculated were eunuchs. You look at Daniel chapter one, who's in charge of them? Those four, the chief of the eunuchs.

Pretty difficult to believe that he would be in charge of the eunuchs and he's in charge of Daniel and his three friends and they are not eunuchs. You look at what he gave up. You look at what was taken from him in the captivity.

But Daniel never forgot who he was and he never forgot why God put him there. And we have the book of Daniel. We have the example of Daniel.

We have the example of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, more popularly known as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego because Daniel didn't forget who he was. How did he do that? Evening and morning and at noon, he prayed and cried aloud and God heard his voice. We just looked at that prayer last time.

So as we return here to this ministry of the Holy Spirit, exemplified in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is our gift. It's our heritage. It is the promise of the Father.

Jesus told his disciples, stay here until you receive the promise of the Father from on high. Don't do anything until the Holy Spirit comes. That's how you're going to accomplish your mission is in the presence and power of the Spirit, just as he himself had done.

Now, we have a lot of influences on our minds. I've encouraged you to look these up. There are articles in the Harvard Business Review.

There's an article called the Hidden Traps in Decision Making, where they take just eight. I read you a list of 49 or 50 of the different things that shape and mold and tilt and bias what we think are objective thoughts and objective decisions. I want to focus on one of them out of the many I've mentioned, and this is the difference between social norms and market norms.

This is not one you might think of. You can think of confirmation bias. You can think of, you know, what did I hear most recently? What did I hear an authority figure say? What costs me least? And so on.

This one is more subtle, but it is pervasive, and the Word of God addresses it. So we're going to address it. This is social norms versus market norms.

This is in the Daniel Ariely book called Predictably Irrational, and he spends a whole chapter on it. Chapter four in that book addresses this, and it's listed in many other lists of the influences on our thinking. Social versus market.

When someone invites us over for dinner or you invite someone over for dinner and you can spend an enormous amount of time, I've seen that recently with my own two eyes, enormous time and effort and thought and expense even in preparation to lay out a social occasion, a meal, a banquet, Thanksgiving dinner, Christmas dinner, Easter Sunday, whatever it might be. You think ahead. What do the guests like most? What can they eat? Maybe there's something that's off their list.

I can make this gluten-free or I can make it sugar-free or I can make it dairy-free or whatever it might be, and if you've got people with multiple needs, it can be a real balancing act to put stickers on and say, well, this one's gluten-free, this one's sugar-free, this one's dairy-free, this one's everything-free, this is just poi or whatever, but there's a lot of effort that goes into it. Now, you put on this soiree. Everybody's appreciative.

Thank you so much. I really enjoyed it. Good food, good conversation, good fellowship.

How much do I owe you? I want to chip in on the cost of the food. It introduces a jarring note. That is the essence of the difference between social norms and market norms.

When you shift the focus from I'm doing this because I love you, I'm doing this because I enjoy your company, I'm doing this as a gift from me to you. Sometime in the future, the person may want to reciprocate and they would want to present a similar gift of time and effort and preparation and thoughtfulness, and these are exchanged on a friendly basis, on a relationship basis of some kind. We do this for family, we do this for close friends, we do this for guests out of a sense of hospitality, and we don't want to talk money.

Oh, I'm really enjoying this Thanksgiving turkey. Well, you know, that thing cost me 30 bucks. We don't bring up the money side of it.

It's a jarring note because it shifts attention from one to the other. Now, why am I talking about this? Well, this has been demonstrated scientifically, so they're doing this on a college campus. Ariely's experiments, a lot of them are done at MIT and other college campuses with he and his fellow analysts of human behavior.

And so they set up a thing and they said, well, we've got these circles on a computer screen, and you just drag these circles across the screen and land them inside a square and see how many you can do in a minute. So drag is actually five minutes. Drag as many circles as you can across the screen in five minutes.

So the rewards that were given for this task to one group, they said, do this for five minutes, we'll give you five bucks. To another group, they said, if you do as many of these as you can in five minutes, we'll give you 50 cents. And to another group, they said, would you please just do

this for us? We're for the \$5 reward.

The people that they gave 50 cents only dragged 101 circles, a third less. Instead of 150, it was more like 100 because they're only getting paid 50 cents. So their level of diligence was far less motivated.

The people that they asked to do it just because we need your help, 168 circles, more than the people that got paid \$5. Why? I want to help you. They worked harder under the non-monetary social norms.

I'm a good person. You're doing a worthy thing. Let me help you.

More work, more diligently done for that reason than for payment. Here's a real life example that Ariella gives. The AARP, the American Association of Retired Persons, asked lawyers to participate in a program where they would offer their services to needy employees for a discounted price.

Lawyers \$120 an hour, \$150 an hour. They said, look, would you provide your legal services to these employees for a discounted price of \$30 an hour? No lawyers took them up. I'm not working for \$30 an hour.

My time is far more valuable than that. When the program manager went to them instead and said, would you do it pro bono? Would you do it for free? They had an overwhelming response. Why? I feel good about myself.

I think it's a worthy cause. I'm a good guy. I'm a good lawyer.

I'll do it for nothing. Shifting it from monetary basis to a social basis had an astonishingly different result. Now, another conclusion is if you shift things from a social basis to a monetary basis, monetary norms will drive out social norms and do it well and for a long time.

There was a guy teaching martial arts. He was a sensei. And he was teaching a free class for his students.

They were learning, really enjoying it. And the students felt bad that it was for free. And they said, can we pay you? Can we give you something for giving us these classes? And the sensei replied, if he charged them, they couldn't afford him.

He was able to do it on a pro bono basis out of the goodness of his heart. It's a social norm. I'll help these young students.

You start putting it on a monetary footing, you can't afford me. So they ran another experiment, dragging the circles. But this time they said, if you'll drag these circles, we'll give you a box of Godiva chocolates.

Well, those people dragged 169 circles, just like the ones that did it for free, almost the exact

same total. They said, we'll give you a Snickers bar, which is worth about 50 cents. Well, 162 circles, or they said, we'll give you nothing.

And they did the 168 circles again. The conclusion is gifts did not put it on a monetary basis. They were accepting the box of Godiva chocolates.

It didn't matter what the gift was worth. The fact that they were getting a gift kept it in the social arena. You remember what happened when they paid them money? Their performance went down.

So gifts don't constitute a market norm, and they keep things in the social realm. Now you think about, and I'm getting toward my point here, think about the world as it is. Think about companies who are by nature working on a market basis, right? You pay them, they give you a service.

But they know that there's more loyalty and there's more business if they can hook into your social norms. So the most famous example is State Farm. What's their slogan? What's State Farms? They're an insurance company.

What's their slogan? Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there. What are they doing? We want you to think of us as your neighbor. We're not doing it for your insurance premium.

We care about you. They show their representative out there with the tree has fallen on your house or your truck, and there's the guy with the State Farm shirt, and he's nodding sympathetically and, oh, same day claims and all of that. But it's the friendliness.

They don't just put statistics up and say State Farm is faster with getting you a response to your claim than any other company. They don't want it on a monetary basis. They want it on a social basis.

Other companies that do this, you remember the Verizon guy walking around? Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Look at how hard Verizon is working because we care whether or not you have enough bars to get a call out. It's subtle. But they're not saying Verizon has the most coverage.

We've got the cheapest price. We've got the best plan. Can you hear me now? It's social.

I'm testing to be sure that your phone calls are going to go through. Look at how hard I am working on your behalf, not value for the money, best rates, coverage map. Now, Verizon has done commercials where the coverage map, they say, well, here's AT&T, a little spotty blue stuff.

Here's the entire country covered in red. That's Verizon. They're not doing that now because with 5G, AT&T leaped ahead.

AT&T's got the big blue map and Verizon's got the little spotty coverage for 5G. Verizon got

busy doing other things and didn't get their 5G rolled out. But this is very subtle.

Some of us can remember back in the 70s, what was 7-Up's famous tagline? They had a guy from the island somewhere with an accent and he said, 7-Up, the Ancola. The Ancola. Now, from a market perspective, what advantage is there for being Ancola? Is it cheaper? Does it taste better? Has it got nutrition? Is it fizz more? There's no market thing there.

You're different. We're different. We're like you.

You consider yourself unique. We're unique. We're not like every other cola, RC Coca-Cola, Pepsi.

We're not those. We're the Ancola. You will like us because it's social.

And that's why they have the guy from Tobago or wherever he was from, some Caribbean island with his accent talking about and laughing. It's cool to be the Ancola. So when we were at Navy, they came out with a T-shirt that said Annapolis was the Un-College.

I had one of those until it fell apart. It was a cheap shirt. Think about this one.

I haven't heard it in a while, but remember when they would say tricks are for kids? Tricks are for kids. Is it nutritious? Does it have less sugar? Is it not going to make your kid hyper? Is it less expensive? Is it better quality control? Why? It's for kids. We're thinking about your kids.

We're making a cereal just for your kids. They're trying to cross the line into the social norm area. Ever felt like you've chosen a provider of a service or a product and they really hooked you in with, oh, we're on your side.

We're your bank. We're your neighborhood local bank. And then you have a problem.

And when you call them up, you feel like you're a number in a long line and it's very impersonal and they're very thoughtless and unforgiving and unsympathetic. And you think, well, what happened to that disappointment is because we were hooked by the social norm and we have come up against the market norm. Now, why am I belaboring this? You can think of others.

Remember Motel 6? What was their hook? The folksy guy in the country music playing in the background. What did he say? We'll leave the light on for you. We're just folks.

We're good neighbors. We're friends. We're social.

We're watching for you. We're going to leave the light on. What does that say about Motel 6 cleanliness, rates, availability, reservations easier to do, any of that? Seriously? I'm going to pick Motel 6 because do I really think they're going to leave a light bulb burning outside my particular room or which light is it? The light that says no vacancy or what light? It's just, it's folksiness.

It's trying to get you on the market side. Remember Allstate? What was Allstate? You're in good hands with Allstate, even Nike. Nike's one of their more recent taglines is just do it.

What's that got to do with their shoe or their athletic wear or the quality of the elastic or any of the other stuff that they make? They're talking to you. It's personal. We're encouraging you.

We're behind you. Just do it. We're rooting for you.

We're in the stands cheering you on. Just do it. It's subtle, but it's a market norm.

Now, why are we talking about this? Turn with me to 1 John 2. 1 John 2. In verse 14, John says why he is writing. I write to you fathers because you know him who is from the beginning. I've written to you young men because you are strong and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one.

What does that emphasize? We've talked about this in great detail when we did 1 John, but what's the emphasis there? Where is the relationship that John's talking about in those previous verses? Fathers, you know, God, you have a relationship with God, young men, the word of God abides in you. You've got a relationship with God that is conditioned on his word and his promises and his principles and his doctrines and by extension, his spirit. You've overcome the evil one.

Your power comes from God. Now look at verse 15. 1 John 2. 15.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. Where should we reserve our social norm relationships? We know that we are in the world.

We can't escape the world. Paul talks in 2 Corinthians about the fact that, and we'll look at it in a minute, that you can't go out of the world. You can't separate from everything that is worldly.

What is worldliness? It's not being in the world or participating in the world or having social awareness and buying things and selling things and doing a job and having secular occupations and secular activities. We're not just walking around, spouting Bible verses and dropping to our knees and praying and being so heavenly minded that we're no earthly good. So where is the discriminator? Where is the balance point? This is it.

Love not the world. Do not love the things that are in the world. Keep your relationship norms and your market norms straight.

Keep them separate. Don't mix the two. Why? Verse 16.

All that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and the pride of life is not from the father. Where do we get the discernment to see through the fog and the debris and the gum wrappers and dust kicked up by social media and the internet and the news and all the rest of it? How do we cut through all of that to see what is from the and what is not? It's two

words. One starts with holy and the other starts with spirit.

God, the Holy Spirit is the spirit of counsel. He's the spirit of wisdom and he gives us the strength. Once we have identified the things of the world and the things that are in the world to resist them, resist the devil, he will flee from you.

Why? Because I'm courageous or because the spirit of God is so manifest in me, the devil can't stand there. He can't stay there. He can't keep talking.

He can't keep arguing. He can't say, eat the fruit. Look how beautiful it is.

It's desirable to make you wise. You will be like God. If you eat this fruit, the arguments, the blandishments, the emoluments, the promised benefits, the devil flees because of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

That's why we've already looked at Romans 12 to turn to James chapter four, verse four, a few pages back in your Bible, James chapter four, James, first and second Peter, then first John. So go backwards. What causes conflicts and quarrels among you? What causes disputes, arguments, confrontations, disharmony, disunion? What causes it? Don't they come from the passions that are at war within you? What sparks those passions? Sometimes it is the obvious.

Sometimes it is less obvious. Sometimes we are influenced by things we're not even aware of and it inflames our passions. You crave what you do not have.

You kill and covet, but are unable to obtain what you want. This is a bit of hyperbole. You do anything to get what you want.

I would kill for that car. I would kill for that job. I would get, we don't mean it literally, but this is how we express it.

And James says, you crave it. You would kill for it. You want it really bad.

You covet, but you're unable to obtain it. You quarrel and fight. Why? You're trying to obtain it in human strength, by human ingenuity, human artifice, human machination, human manipulation.

You do not have because you do not ask. You're looking in the wrong place. You're looking at the wrong source.

Now, what power? Just stop right here. You do not have because you do not ask. Oh Lord, I want a Maserati.

Oh Lord, I want a Harley Davidson motorcycle. Actually, if I was asking for a motorcycle, I would get a different one, because I don't want to be in the Harley crowd. I would get a Kawasaki.

Kawasaki makes it beautiful. I might even get an Indian if I could find an antique one of the

right vintage. Do I not have a motorcycle because I haven't asked? If I just ask, ask and it shall be given? No.

When you do ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives. Motives. We need our motives fixed.

The word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow, and is a judge, a critic, an analyst of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Now, think about this. The word of God is alive and powerful, sharp like a two-edged sword.

I've got a sword. It's hanging on the wall. I don't have a particularly sharp edge.

It's a ceremonial sword, but let's say it was sharp. Let's say it was two-edged and it had the power to divide asunder my soul and spirit, my joints and marrow, and to judge the thoughts and intents of my heart, but it's hanging on the wall. What is required for a sword to do its work? Somebody's got to be on the handle end of that thing, aiming and operating the business end of it, right? If the word of God is a sharp two-edged sword and can do all these wonderful things for us, who's operating it? God, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus isn't swinging the sword in our soul. God, the Father's not swinging the sword. We are certainly not swinging it.

We're incapable. It's God, the Holy Spirit that uses the sword of the word of God to expose and critique the thoughts and intents of our heart. So if we are asking and not receiving because we are asking with wrong motives, who is conveying those requests before God's throne? Who takes our prayers before the Father with groanings that cannot be uttered? God, the Holy Spirit.

Who can show us the difference between shifting to a market norm? Well, Lord, I've been good. I put money in the offering plate. I prayed for the saints.

I put myself out on behalf of someone else. I'm expecting recompense. Tit for tat.

I did this for you. Now would you please do this for me? What should our spiritual life operate on? It is the motivation that sent Christ to the cross, not because he was going to be paid, not because he was going to be rewarded. He did it out of love for us.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. The world did not pay God enough for God to send his son. Remember the guy with all the barns and silos, thou fool, this night your soul will be required of you.

What does it profit a man? Profit, market norm. If he gains the world but loses his soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? There is nothing we can exchange. God does not operate on market norms because we've got no capital.

We've got nothing he wants. We've got nothing he needs. It is completely grace.

By grace you are saved through faith. It's not of ourselves. It's a gift of God.

Remember what people do in response to a gift versus what they do for a reward? It was interesting, that thing about the Godiva chocolates and the Snickers bar and doing it for nothing. When they said, if you'll do this, I'll give you a box of chocolates. If you do this, I'll give you a Snickers bar.

If you do this, you'd really be helping us out. Everybody worked equally hard. When they did the very same experiment and they said, if you'll do this, I'll give you a \$5 box of chocolates.

If you do this, I'll give you a 50 cent Snicker bar. The performance returned to when it was straight cash, because the gift element disappeared as soon as the cost was introduced. We are this way.

People worked only two thirds as hard when they knew the cost of the gift than when it was just a gift. Subtle. This is the way the world gets into our souls and influences us and operates us, sucks us in, entices us, allures us, seduces us in ways that are often unconscious.

What is our protection against that? It is not simple knowledge of the word of God that does it. It's not enough. It's the spirit, not of knowledge.

It's the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of understanding, the spirit of counsel, strength, and the fear of the Lord. The Holy Spirit takes the word of God and makes it operative, makes it live, makes it the fire and the hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. Remember that, Jeremiah, we've memorized that verse.

Is not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? I'll ask you the same question about a hammer that I asked about the sword. Do hammers just jump up off the... Wouldn't it be great? I need to build a dog house. Hammer, go nail those nails.

Go fix those boards together and stick those shingles on. Hammer requires an operator. Who operates the hammer of God's word? It's God, the Holy Spirit.

When you do ask, James 4, 3, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives to squander it on your passions, on your desires. You adulteresses, verse 4, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity toward God, hostility toward God? Friendship with the world, if we let the world insinuate itself in based on social norms, based on hooking into our feeling of obligation, our feeling of recompense on a friendly basis, friendship with the world is enemyship with God. The only basis for doing our charity, for example, should be looking to the Lord.

I'm looking out for widows and orphans, or veterans, or the handicapped, or whoever it is, not because I feel sympathy for them and somebody made a wonderful social norms appeal on television. God is not glorified in that. Whatever is not of faith is sin.

And if someone appeals to your emotions and shows you these shivering dogs in a cage and snowflakes, and I'm asking myself, why don't they put their cameras down and get some blankets and warm these dogs up instead of filming them? Oh, well, we want to influence people. They're appealing to your social norms. Help this poor little shivering dog.

Help this child at this hospital or whatever. Social norms. If you respond on that basis and God is not in the picture, it's sin.

It's bad stewardship. Oh, wait, but it's charity. We can and should give to charities.

We can and should look out for those who are less fortunate. We can and should look out for animals that are being abused and children that are being abused and people that have got a hard time of it. It's not the what, it's the why.

What is your basis? If you are not doing it as unto the Lord and not unto men, Lord, I feel this is a burden that has been laid on my heart. You've given me a certain amount of resources. I can't contribute to every good cause.

Is this one that would glorify your name? If I have a choice between going to Salvation Army or Goodwill, almost identical in what they offer, which one would I choose, do you think, and why? Goodwill is secular. Salvation Army, at least in name, Salvation Army, Salvation, they're at least incorporating God into their ethos. So given a choice, if I need to go find something cheap, used, and rescue it, I'm going to go to Salvation Army every time because I'm asking God to honor my purchase there by sending those funds to somebody who the Salvation Army is looking out for because of Jesus Christ, not because they're a secular nonprofit.

Do what you do heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men, knowing that God is going to give gifts to you because you are giving gifts to him, not grudgingly or out of necessity. God loves those who cheerfully contribute gifts. What do we have that we did not receive anyway? The least we can do is send something back in God's name for Christ's sake.

God has forgiven us for Christ's sake. Can we not return our charity, our time, our efforts in God's name for Christ's sake? If you give a cup of cold water to somebody in Christ's name, there is a reward attached to it. Why? Not because you gave a cup of cold water.

There's gallons of water you can give. You can go do water reclamation projects in Africa and spend 20 or 30 years doing it. And it is insignificant and inconsequential unless you do it in Jesus name.

How do we get that sense? How do we have that discernment? Where does that counsel and wisdom and understanding and strength come from? Where does that consciousness of God's presence, God's glory, God's interest, God's plan and purpose. It's the presence of the Holy Spirit. That's what he does for us.

That is one that is going to condition a thousand years of rulership from Jerusalem in the

person of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. How much more do we need it? Think about it, though, as you travel the daily grind, analyze opportunities that are being offered, options that are being given, those who proffer goods, services, points of view, opinions. Where is God in this? What is the part of someone who is supposed to be shining as a light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation so that God will be glorified, so that others will see Christ in us and be drawn to that light? It's the best form of evangelism because the Holy Spirit is in us.

We have personal evangelism every day. That's the goal. That's the reason for the Holy Spirit and why he is such a precious, precious gift and promise from the Father.

Look at the Lord Jesus. Look at Isaiah chapter 11. Look at James chapter 4. We don't have time to go to 2 Corinthians, but it is there as well.

We need to be distinct and distinguishable from the world. Love not the world or the things that are in the world. Friendship with the world is enemyship with God, enmity with God.

Got to avoid it. God, the Holy Spirit, gives us the wisdom and the power to do it. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

We're going to pick up and start forward again in the text of Zechariah chapter 9 next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the powerful presence of your Holy Spirit.

We pray that as we reflect on these truths, that they will be impressed on our hearts in a way that will transform us, renew us, and thoroughly equip us for every good work so that we can bear the Spirit's fruit day by day, hour by hour in the time that is left to us in this life. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.