

Message #24 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"You Are Their Example"

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Broadcast Schedule

WBRI - AM 1500 - Indianapolis, IN - Sun. 9:00am

KCNW AM 1380 - Kansas City, KS - Sun. 8:30am

KXKS AM 1190 - Albuquerque, NM - Sun. 8:30am

KWDF AM 840 - Alexandria, LA - Sun. 12:00pm

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Also, Internet Stream - www.am1500wlqv.com

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about you. If you're listening to me right now, then chances are you're listening to me on the radio rather than on the CD. And if so, that says something interesting about you. Did you know that a great number of Christians never listen to Christian radio? In fact, most people who call themselves Christians listen to secular programming, whether it's on the radio or television. But if you're listening to me, you are actually one of the minority people who are looking for something more than that which the world offers. This is significant in that much of what I have to say really doesn't apply to you, but actually applies to those Christians who never listen to Christian radio.

There are really two kinds of people who are designated as Christians. The Bible is very clear in telling us that when Jesus comes, he will separate the sheep from the goats. Now this is not a specific viewpoint, but generally speaking, I would suggest that if you're listening to this program, you are a sheep, and not a goat. And if Jesus came back today, this might indicate that when he harvested the world, you being a sheep and not a goat, he would set you at his right hand. But there would be many people who are designated as Christians that he would separate from the flock and set at his left hand. This is the same concept as the parable of the wheat and tares, where at the time of harvest the wheat and tares are harvested together, and then the tares are separated from the wheat, the wheat is put into the barn for storage, and the tares are put in a pile to be burned.

You might wonder why I am saying that you will be considered a sheep rather than a goat, or in other words, that you will be considered wheat rather than a tare. But the reason I'm saying this is that your relationship with God means more to you than what the world means to you, and that means that your desire for Jesus is great enough to cause you to set aside the secular programming and listen to religious programming. People who really don't care about Jesus all that much aren't interested in religious programming. Only those who want more of Jesus will search for more of that which talks and sings of him. And that's what you have done today. You have turned your radio on, or maybe you have put the CD in your CD player, and began to listen in hope that you could garner just a little bit more information which would increase your faith and build your relationship with Jesus Christ.

And this is good for you, but what about all those others who are designated as Christians who never turn to religious programming, either on the radio, or on the television? What is going to happen to them when Jesus comes back? When they stand before him and he says to them, "why didn't you search for me with all your heart," what will they say? Actually, no one will be able to say anything that counts, for it won't matter what anyone says to Jesus, but what will matter is what Jesus will say to them. The worst thing a person could ever hear Jesus say is, "depart from me you worker of iniquity, I never knew you."

And this is the reason that we here, at Preparation Ministries, created this program of Scripture Beneath the Surface. We don't want people to be rejected by Jesus Christ when he returns for us in the clouds of heaven. And I'm sure you don't either. No one wants their friends and acquaintances to be judged unworthy of eternal life in heaven. But this is exactly what will happen at the end of days, for the Bible is very explicit concerning what it says in Matthew 7:22, that there will be many who will profess that they are children of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, but that Jesus will tell them that they are mistaken.

So what are we Christians to do about friends and acquaintances who seem so unconcerned about the things of Jesus, about the things of God? Well, for starters, we can tell them that there is more to life than television, hobbies, crafts, sports, clothes, vacations, and automobiles. We can tell them that if they expect to receive eternal life with Jesus Christ, then they have to choose to have that life with Jesus Christ now, while they are still here on earth. We can tell them that when they spend their time with the secular things of this world, it just proves how they really want to spend eternity. Chances are, they really don't want to spend eternity in heaven with heavenly things, but they want to spend eternity in heaven with earthly things. But we can tell them that there isn't much time, and that Jesus is coming soon. And maybe that will help somewhat, but it probably won't be enough, because in order for people to recognize what is wrong in themselves, they need to see what is right in someone else.

Each one of us is an example to others, whether we want to be or not. No matter what you do, or what you say, people are watching you and listening to you. When they see you do something, they compare it with themselves. And when they hear you say something, they compare it with what they think. That's the way humans operate. Whether we like to admit it or not, we learn an

awful lot about who we are by how others around us act and speak. But this is not all bad, because sometimes when we see others doing something in particular, or saying certain things, it catches our attention and makes us think. And making people think is the best thing you can do outside of praying for them. That is, as long as what you make people think is for their good. Of course, if you set a bad example for them, you will make them think. It may even make them change for the better because they decided they didn't want to be like you, but your reward will not be forthcoming in the manner you would hope it to be. But if people are going to watch you, then I would hope that you would desire that they see Jesus in you so that they might benefit the most from your example. So, what kind of an example are you going to be? Are you going to be someone whose words and actions are so closely aligned with those people who call themselves Christians, but have no real relationship with Jesus Christ, that the people cannot tell that you are different from them? Are you going to fit in well enough so that others will not recognize that you are sold out to God? Of course, if no one can recognize that you are sold out to God, then you really aren't sold out to God.

Sad to say, that in today's church, there is an extreme vacuum for the living Word of God. No, there is plenty of the word of God, but not a lot of living Word of God. It means that sermons are preached, and there are plenty of people in the churches to hear the sermons, but the sermons, in many cases, are dead, as are most of the people in the pews. You might question why I can say that most of the people in the pews are dead, and I don't blame you for questioning, but you can test what I say, whether it is true or not, by taking a look at the concept of revival. I think you would agree with me that in the churches today there is prayer being made for revival in God's church. My question to you would be, "if we're alive, then why are we praying for revival?"

To be revived is to come back from a state of being unconscious or dead. When a person revives, they actually come back into an awareness of reality, whereas they had previously been unaware of their surroundings. This is what happens during a spiritual revival. The people become spiritually aware, where they previously had been spiritually unconscious or spiritually dead. Once revival takes place in the church, people become spiritually aware of things they were not aware of previous to the revival.

Think of this. If the church is in a state which calls for revival, then they are unaware of what is taking place around them in the spiritual realm. But then, Christians no longer believe in true revival. When they pray for revival, they are actually just praying that the wicked will be saved. This does not bring revival to the church, but rather to the community. That's not revival, that's an evangelistic crusade. There's a big difference between an evangelistic crusade and a revival. True, in an evangelistic crusade, the people who are outside of the church are in a state of being unaware of what is actually reality. And they do get revived in that sense, but that does nothing for the church, that does nothing for Christians.

What the church needs is both revival and an evangelistic crusade. But the revival must come first, and then there is hope that an evangelistic crusade will not only bring the unsaved to a place

of repentance, but also to a place of firm establishment in the faith. When the wicked repent and come to the Lord, they must have many good examples for their eyes and ears in order to become firmly established in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Statistics will show you that in most situations of evangelistic crusade, between 70% and 80% of these people turn back away from the Lord after a very short time. That is a very sobering statistic. In fact, many never darken the inside of a church again, at least until the next crusade. That's because they are baby Christians, and as such, they are not really that good at recognizing the difference between that which is true Christianity and that which is worldly Christianity. What they really need is a manifestation, an outward show, of what Christianity is all about. This means they need examples of other Christians who are not just Christians in name only, but are sincere seekers and searchers of Jesus Christ, building a firm foundation to their relationship with him. What they really need are Christians who are Christians to the extent that they are peculiar, they are odd, they are different, they are unusual.

This is what it tells us in 2 Corinthians 6:17, which is to come out from among those who are worldly, and be separate. In fact, if we look at 2 Corinthians 7:1, we read that we are to be about the business of perfecting holiness. This doesn't mean a general attitude of being holy, but actually working toward the goal of perfecting it. Holiness is extremely important for Christians, for Hebrews 12:14 says that without holiness no man will see the Lord.

So what is holiness? Although holiness is closely related to righteousness, it's not the same thing. Righteousness is the act of being right. But holiness is being separated out for a specific purpose. Our purpose is to serve the Lord. If we are holy unto the Lord, than our purpose is to be about the Lord's business. This is why Jesus told his parents, when they found him in the temple when he was 12 years old, that he must be about his Father's business. That's what we must be about, is the Father's business. We are the body of Christ, which is more than just the church. Just as Jesus was the body which outwardly showed God to human beings in the earth, we have now that same responsibility. Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and is no longer able to, outwardly show, the Father, that is, unless we accept that role and become the body of Christ. When we do become the body of Christ, then others can see the Father through us.

But how are baby Christians to recognize what true Christianity is if they don't have a clear example of true Christianity? How are baby Christians to recognize what is true holiness if they don't have a clear example of true holiness? If we are not in the business of perfecting holiness, then how can we demonstrate it to others? And not every person who is a baby Christians has just been recently saved, for there are many who have been in the church for many years who are still babies. The person sitting down the pew from you on your right may not have their feet on such a firm foundation as you think. If your ears could be enhanced to be able to hear the thoughts or whispers of people in church, you might be surprised at some of the things that were going through their minds, or whispered to the person beside them. In fact, just for the fun of it, why don't we listen in on some of the comments as we pass from pew to pew in our local church. Here goes.

“Did you see what he's driving?” “I can't wait to be on my own. Then I won't have to be here.” “Wasn't that game last night great?” “Yeah, some super plays.” “Nice new toy you've got there.” “Yeah, my wife was hot when I got it.” “It's past noon, and he's still preaching.” “I wish I'd gone fishing this morning instead of coming here.” “Do you want to go shopping today?” “Sure, let's go to the mall and hang out.” “Yawn, I'm not a morning person.” “Potluck next Sunday. All right! Church will be good then.” “I shouldn't have stayed up so late last night watching that show. I can hardly keep my eyes open.” “That sun is really bright. I think I'll skip church tonight.”

Well, these are probably not unusual comments from people during church. Of course, interspersed among the negative comments are the comments from people like you who are searching for more of God, and have come to church for that purpose. So we might also hear comments such as this. “Thank you Lord for revealing yourself to me.” “Lord, how may I serve you?” “Check my heart, Lord.” “I need more of you, Lord.” “Lord, please give me more knowledge and wisdom.” “Praise your name, Lord Jesus.” “Show me your will, God. That's what I want most.”

Comments like these are what the Lord is looking for, for he knows that comments like these come from a heart that is yearning for more of him. He knows that comments like these are born out of a true love for him, rather than for the world. But this combination of negative and positive comments are in every church, for Satan is in every church also. In fact, many people don't realize that the place they occupy in their religious endeavor is actually at the feet of Satan, bowing down to him before his throne. For Satan sits in the temple of God today, showing himself as if he were God. The religion that most confessing Christians follow is one that worships Satan rather than God, for most are actually walking the broad path to destruction instead of the narrow path, through the narrow gate, which leads to life eternal.

It is only going to be a short time before things in the world will drag those people down to the sea of destruction who have no real love for the things of God. Without pure examples of Jesus, without fellow Christians who will set clear examples of the word of God, many of these confessing Christians will be lost. But scripture tells us that in the time of great tribulation there will be a great multitude who will wash their robes in the blood of the lamb. Interestingly enough, chapter 7 of Revelation does not tell us that those who come out of great tribulation will receive robes, but rather that they will wash their robes. There are many in the church today who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, but have never turned away from their earthly lifestyle. Although they have received robes of righteousness through Jesus Christ, they have turned back to their former lifestyle, and their robes have become soiled from the muck and mire of the earth. Jesus Christ is coming back for a church without spot or wrinkle, he is coming back for a church whose robes are pure white. He is coming back for those who seek the perfection of holiness, and not just the initial salvation and the attendance of church on Sunday morning.

We are responsible for those who sit in the other pews. We cannot close our eyes and pretend that everything is all right with them. The Bible tells us that we can recognize other Christians

by their fruits. There is a great tendency in the church today to accept anyone as a fellow Christian if they confess with their mouth that Jesus Christ is their savior. But when we read scripture where God refers to people who confess him with their mouth, but whose heart is far from him, than we know that what you confess with your mouth is not enough. We know that what you confess with your mouth has to be born out of a sincere heart, for if it isn't, than it is just a lie. We can say anything we want to, but it isn't real until it comes from deep within us, from our hearts. As Christians, we need to be about our Father's business. As Christians we need to become a pure example just as Jesus Christ was a pure example. If we are to be the body of Christ, than we need to set an example just as Jesus did.

Matthew 24, tells us that the abomination of desolation will make its presence known in the temple of God, and it warns Christians, that when they see this mystery, sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God, then we are to flee to the mountain's. In 2 Thessalonians 2, it tells us that this abomination of desolation is the man of sin, that son of perdition; which means, son of destruction. This is Satan sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

When the Bible tells Christians to flee when their eyes finally behold the abomination of desolation, it means that we are to flee from the worldly form of Christianity which has become firmly established in today's church. It is telling us that we must move away from all those things which drag us down into the muck and mire of the world. There is so much of this world that tempts us, and the image of the beast, which is the secular television and movie images, is destroying Christians left and right. Many Christians will fall down slain, but, many can be saved from destruction by washing their robes in the blood of the lamb. The ones who can be saved are those who really do love the Lord, and therefore will recognize how much evil is at work in the church, and will begin to separate themselves from all that is worldly, changing their lifestyles to lifestyles which seek for the perfection of holiness. If those Christians, including you, who want more of the Lord, will finally recognize that the evil in the church today must be overcome, and will begin to become a peculiar people, separating themselves to the work of the Lord, than those other Christians who are not as earnest, will see your example, and it will help them to also see the abomination of desolation, and the mystery of iniquity, sitting in the temple of God.

God is just about ready to take his people home, but first, he must get them ready for his coming, for he is coming for a church without spot or wrinkle. We cannot just wait around for the rapture, for at this time of the end we are being called to wash our robes in preparation for our Lord's soon return. It is time to prepare. You, the Christians who truly do desire more of the Lord, will be the front line of this army. As you go forth, the other Christians whose hearts are not cold, will follow you. But they will only follow you when they see a clear example of holiness, otherwise, they will never recognize how unholy they are now. If someone will begin to take a stand, begin to establish pure holiness, pure separation for the purposes of God, then the others will follow. But, someone has to be first. Why not you?