

Saviour and Lord

This is a message that has burned in my heart. I have not been able to shake it. I really feel God wants to say something today and I feel a great sense of responsibility to present this to you with clarity.

This is a message about and to our nation and culture - but also about and to the church. And in many ways this message is a lament.

I don't apologise for that - sometimes that is what we need.

This is not a lament without hope. I believe we are being called to repentance and when we turn, the situation will change.

You see our nation is in a desperate state - but so is the western church.

For too long the church has been putting the blame on our politicians and our leaders for the way our nation has moved away from God. But we are looking in the wrong place.

We do not have a weak church because our nation is corrupted. Our nation is corrupted because we have a weak church - a church that has compromised its commitment, in its values and in its reverence and passion for Jesus.

But it's very easy when talking about this to think we are talking about THEM. About other churches that are getting it wrong, or other people and the state THEY are in.

But that's just transference. It's the easy option when you hear a message that the church needs to repent and to put it on others.

I'd ask that we try not to do that. This is about the nation and the church as a whole, but this should be personal. It's to US.

Do not think of others as you hear today - but challenge yourself - your own heart and your own attitudes.

This is not a message where we can get to the end and be pleased everybody else has had a reality check. I'm sure we've all done that. I have. Thought I hope "insert name here" heard that.

But we need a reality check too. I do.

Also, before we start we need to understand the difference between condemning and convicting. These two things are different.

God did not send His son to condemn the world but to save it. Jesus also said when the Holy Spirit comes, He will convict the world of sin.

We know as Christians there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ. But there should be conviction.

But here's what we do - when conviction comes - if it's hard we can brush it off as condemnation and therefore don't listen to it.

If you think you are getting condemned you will switch off. If you take it as conviction you will take it on board and do something about it.

This is not about condemning - but convicting. Condemning puts us down. Conviction sets us free.

God wants to speak into this state we are in. And He wants to say something from the book of Malachi. We will be looking at Malachi 1.

Just a bit of background before we get to the reading:

When Malachi was written Edom (the nation of Esau) had just recently fallen.

Israel was in a bad state at this time. They had corrupt priests and there was a deep lack in the people, particularly in the area of tithes - although that, as we will see was a symptom of a larger problem.

And God spoke through Malachi. It would be mild to say He was angry with them.

So angry that after this book it would be 400 years before He spoke again.

An interesting thing to note here, there is more of God speaking in this book than in any of the other prophetic books. Of it's 55 verses 47 (85%) are direct words of God.

This makes it a book worthy of attention.

So, Israel had come back to the land - out of their long exile.

Nehemiah had rebuilt the walls, but Jerusalem was not in a great state - the temple was rebuilt but so small compared to Solomon's and the presence of God that used to rest in there wasn't in there anymore. The palace had been rebuilt but there was no king.

It was built - but it was spiritually empty.

The people were disillusioned.

And as often happens in these cases, they'd grown cold to God.

In exile they had learned their lesson about idols - Israel would never again return to foreign gods, which you'd think would be good news.

But no, instead of idols they found religion.

They had got formal about God. Their hearts were not in it, even if they were doing all the external stuff.

They were asking, what is the bare minimum I can get by on giving to God, in time, attention and money?

God was not a priority in their lives at all.

And the priests were like the people - they really weren't bothered how many people turned up - just as long as they got through it and got paid.

If they could draw a crowd by giving them life lessons, then that's great - but don't challenge them too hard or they won't come.

Services were done in a casual and careless way - they were not giving anything like their best.

The attitude of the people when it came to serving God was "let's just get through this and go home'.

I've got more important things to do.

As we will see - the parallels with the western church today are staggering.

I've used the message here for this first read through - rare for me, but the language is so vivid in this version - some parts have been updated in a way that doesn't reflect the original context - which I will point out some as we read.

For those who don't know the message too well, it's a strange book.

It's not a translation, or even a paraphrase of the bible. It's the work of a guy called Eugene Peterson and it's like a rewriting in an attempt to make the bible more understandable to people who don't know it.

So it's not really something you can treat as a real bible - but that doesn't mean it isn't sometimes helpful when it comes to explaining things and it doesn't mean God can't reveal things through it.

As we go on, we will compare it to other versions. And when we get into the bulk of the sermon - I will not be using the Message but the ESV.

Mal: 1:1-14

God said, "I love you."

You replied, "Really? How have you loved us?"

"Look at history" (this is God's answer). "Look at how differently I've treated you, Jacob, from Esau: I loved Jacob and hated Esau. I reduced pretentious Esau to a molehill, turned his whole country into a ghost town."

When Edom (Esau) said, "We've been knocked down, but we'll get up and start over, good as new," God-of-the-Angel-Armies (OTHER VERSIONS SAY THE LORD OF HOSTS - SAME MEANING) said, "Just try it and see how far you get. When I knock you down, you stay down. People will take one look at you and say, 'Land of Evil!' and 'the God-cursed tribe!'"

"Yes, take a good look. Then you'll see how faithfully I've loved you and you'll want even more, saying, 'May God be even greater, beyond the borders of Israel!'"

"Isn't it true that a son honours his father and a worker his master? So if I'm your Father, where's the honour? If I'm your Master, where's the respect? (SOME VERSIONS SAY FEAR HERE)" God-of-the-Angel-Armies is calling you on the carpet: "You priests despise me!"

"You say, 'Not so! How do we despise you?'"

"By your shoddy, sloppy, defiling worship."

"You ask, 'What do you mean, "defiling"? What's defiling about it?'"

"When you say, 'The altar of God is not important anymore; worship of God is no longer a priority,' that's defiling. And when you offer worthless animals for sacrifices in worship, animals that you're trying to get rid of—blind and sick and crippled animals— isn't that defiling? Try a trick like that with your banker or your senator (GOVERNOR IN CORRECT TEXT)—how far do you think it will get you?" God-of-the-Angel-Armies asks you.

“Get on your knees and pray that I will be gracious to you. You priests have gotten everyone in trouble. With this kind of conduct, do you think I’ll pay attention to you?” God-of-the-Angel-Armies asks you.

“Why doesn’t one of you just shut the Temple doors and lock them? Then none of you can get in and play at religion with this silly, empty-headed worship. I am not pleased. The God-of-the-Angel-Armies is not pleased. And I don’t want any more of this so-called worship!

“I am honoured all over the world. And there are people who know how to worship me all over the world, who honour me by bringing their best to me. They’re saying it everywhere: ‘God is greater, this God-of-the-Angel-Armies.’ (ALL IN THE WRONG TENSE)

“All except you. Instead of honouring me, you profane me. You profane me when you say, ‘Worship is not important, and what we bring to worship is of no account,’ and when you say, ‘I’m bored—this doesn’t do anything for me.’ You act so superior, sticking your noses in the air—act superior to me, God-of-the-Angel-Armies! And when you do offer something to me, it’s a hand-me-down, or broken, or useless. Do you think I’m going to accept it? This is God speaking to you!

“A curse on the person who makes a big show of doing something great for me—an expensive sacrifice, say—and then at the last minute brings in something puny and worthless! I’m a great king, God-of-the-Angel-Armies, honoured far and wide, and I’ll not put up with it!”

Harsh. Blunt. And if you approach it with the right attitude, extremely challenging.

I’d like for us to consider some thoughts that I believe directly apply to the nation and the church today.

Again - this is not about other people. Don’t look at others through this lens - but ourselves.

Also, yes this an old Testament passage. That does not mean it’s not still applicable to the people of God today.

Jesus said:

John 14:15

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Let’s not make the silly assumption that Jesus did not care about obedience, reverence and respect. And that’s what this part of Malachi is all about.

People don’t want a Lord

FROM THE ESV

Mal 1:6

A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honour? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name.

There is a spirit over a generation today - actually over multiple generations.

I don't know if you've ever come across the word Zeitgeist. People use it to talk about a set of ideals or beliefs that motivate the members of society in a particular time.

You'd describe something that captures how a generation feels as capturing the Zeitgeist.

The German word Zeitgeist is translated literally as "time mind" or "time spirit".

The term means, the spirit of the age. I don't think it's worded that way intentionally - but the word reveals what is really going on.

Right across the western world today - people are deceived by a mindset that comes from the Enemy.

And it's a Spirit of rebellion that rejects the authority, reverence and sovereignty of God.

You don't have to look far to see people have a problem with authority and submission today.

The Baby Boomers rejected the ideals and authority of those who came before - a generation that caught the problem of Religion. They rejected it with a philosophy of do what you want...

Generation X rejected it too. They got angry against the system that they felt overlooked them. They wanted to break free from the chains they thought the system put on them.

And now we are in the Millennial Generation. They have not so much rejected authority but have grown up in a world where it's not been respected or even existed for at least two generations.

And the prevailing thought of the current generation is there is no good and bad - all you can do is be true to yourself - whatever that might mean.

Life is to be experienced - so try everything and if someone says that's wrong, then they are bad people. That's the only exception to the "there is no good or bad rule".

It's left an entire generation confused about its values and accepting of things that should never be acceptable.

And this spirit - this line of thought has crept into the church - who have done little to stop it.

Some churches are still wondering what to do with the baby boomers, let alone millennials. Other churches have just gone along with the flow in the name of relevance.

It's a mindset that has grown and grown and today it effects every area of society.

There is a mistrust of authority - and the idea of a God who tells you what to do... it's seen as unacceptable.

Films and Media and influence our thought - but they also do a very good job of revealing what the current thinking is - they tap into it.

The concept of a God who is in control... well you can see that kind of God is represented at the bad guy - the one in the wrong. Because limiting people's choice is seen as wrong.

Prometheus is about a creator that doesn't care about the creation. The Truman show is about an overseer who does not understand what we really want, The Northern Lights Childrens books are about the idea that a God who controls is no longer relevant and so has to die...The new X-Men proudly proclaims in its trailers that it's all about people fighting against a god. And the World's End sums it up very well.

In a conversation with the all powerful being who is controlling humanity because it knows best, called the network, Simon Pegg's character replies with this:

“Face it, we are the human race and we don't like being told what to do!”.

What a line that sums up the place we are in. That sums up the attitude of the world and the church - it captures the zeitgeist of the world today.

How many people have tried to confront a person who is causing disruption only to be told, “You can't tell me what to do.”

That's the mantra of a lost generation.

You see this is the problem - in the world and in the church.

People want a saviour. But they do not want a Lord.

People are desperate, crying out for someone to help and save them. To lift them from the desperate state that they are in.

And when they hear of a saviour - one who can bring redemption, they want it so much. When we tell them about that Jesus - the idea is appealing.

But the idea that you make this saviour Lord, the Boss, our Master. That idea repels them.

Many when they respond to a call are accepting a saviour but not a Lord.

We want God almatey rather than God almighty.

And the church has obliged - remaking God in that image. He is there simply to help and jump to our every whim without challenging us over sin.

We have sold a Jesus who's sole purpose is to help us out of problems and make us feel better.

And we've got so lost.

You cannot have Jesus as your saviour without making Him Lord. It simply will not work and leave you disillusioned and disappointed and bored with the whole thing.

You may even start to think - well this whole Jesus thing isn't really working for me.

And that's kind of the point - Jesus isn't meant to work for you. You are meant to work for Him.

If Jesus is simply a means to an end for you, then you will always be dissatisfied with Him, because Jesus will not be simply a means to an end. He is the end. He is the Goal.

He will not play second fiddle to your opinion or wants.

When we are saved - we don't just believe in Him - we believe He IS Lord. Whoever believes Jesus Christ is LORD... shall be saved. Lord. That means we submit to Him as our master.

But too often we don't. Often we think like this:

I want to give my life but I don't want to do this - I don't want to have to change.

Jesus be my saviour - but don't tell me what to do.

Lord I am ready to serve but don't ask me to tithe. Or I am tithing but don't make me serve.

God you have my wallet and my time but don't you dare ask for my sexuality.

Lord I will read my bible - but don't ask me to go to church on a nice day or a bank holiday.

Lord I am loyal to your church, until they tell me something I don't like - then I can take my loyalty elsewhere.

Meet me on my terms.

Half measures.

Tell me you love me but don't tell me to change.

Respect, submission and honour have gone out of the window.

God is saying to His people once again - So if I'm your Father, where's the honour? If I'm your Master, where's the respect?

Where is the sense of awe at His presence - how can we treat the almighty so casually?

Jesus deserves more than a thank you for saving me. If He is Lord, where is the honour? Where is the sense of reverence before Him?

Look at the world today - Allah gets more reverence and respect in this world and he is demonic spirit! If people can revere a fraud, where's the respect for the Lord?

Where is the submission?

You know there is so little submission in church nowadays to leadership and it's little surprise, because we are not even submitting to Him!

Acts 5:31

God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Leader and Saviour.

Let me shock you. The Gospel is NOT you are a beautiful snowflake and Jesus just wants your best friend because you are so amazing. No it's you are fallen and lost and He is your only hope!

Now it's good and true to say I am a friend of God. Jesus said I no longer call you servants, I now call you friends - but in no way does that bring Jesus down to a lower level of respect and honour.

You are a friend of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords - that is a different level of friendship than Joe Bloggs down the street - and you can't treat Jesus as if your friendship is on that same level.

Just imagine for a moment - that you ended up through whatever circumstances that you made friends with the Queen. Does she ever stop being Queen even though you are friends - would you ever disrespect her? Of course not!

So why do we treat God like the friend we keep hoping won't call? Like the friend who's always asking too much so we keep out of His way?

He's not your mate. He's not your buddy.

Why not? Because you don't revere your buddy. You are not lost in awe when it's your mate.

I've seen Christians wearing a "Jesus is my Homeboy" T Shirt. Seriously - don't treat Him like he's ordinary! Or like a joke. Jesus is more than a funny slogan - He is king of kings and Lord of Lords!

We cannot have a casual attitude to Jesus. We say Lord with our lips - but where's the action to go with that?

Yes He has called you friend - but that doesn't stop him being your Lord.

If He is your father - where is the honour? Where is the sense of reverence when you come to worship? Where is the sense of placing Him first in your life?

First means Above All Else.

When we come into church to worship - do we come lazily and casual like it doesn't matter - or do we come prepared to meet the most wonderful, almighty creator who rules over all?

Do we arrive just in time and start worshipping hassled, or come with enough time to prepare our hearts, to still our souls, ready to meet with Him?

When you worship, is your focus on God or your phone?

If we are going to call Him Lord - then we need to make Him Lord.

And some of us - we've been happy to have a saviour - but we've not let Jesus tell us what to do.

Some never really made him Lord, you just wanted to be saved. We've wanted to be part of His club - just as long as that club doesn't have rules.

Some used to make Him Lord, but now are just saying it.

That needs to stop. Today.

Just like in Malachi - God is calling us to the carpet. Calling us to our knees in repentance.

Will you give it all over to Him? Will you cease your striving towards self sufficiency?

Where is the reverence?

It seems we've fallen into the trap Israel had fallen into. Their worship at this time - it wasn't serious. It was frivolous.

Maybe they even enjoyed it on a surface level.

If church has become just another form of entertainment that we consume and don't think about much afterwards then we are in trouble.

Mal 1:6-9

But you say, 'How have we despised your name?' By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, 'How have we polluted you?' By saying that the Lord's table may be despised. When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favour? says the Lord of hosts. And now entreat the favour of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favour to any of you? says the Lord of hosts.

God is saying - you have despised me. How? Shoddy - sloppy worship is how the message puts it - the ESV says polluted.

By saying - coming together to worship - life in the church - growing in God - by saying this stuff isn't important anymore and doesn't need my best - that is defiling!

Real, honest worship is getting replaced with entertainment.

Outreach has become the church trying to entertain people into the kingdom. As long as we put on a good show, some people will respond.

We are told as part of our training as ministers - know your audience. Like outreach is some kind of marketing exercise. I understand the need to know the audience - don't misunderstand, but we don't pander to it. The audience doesn't know what it needs.

We've let the world into church in the hope that the world will change - but it hasn't - the church changed instead.

I was at a conference - and the band were playing a song in the background as people came in. And I recognised it, even though it was just the tune without words - it was a song about "staying up all night to get lucky".

Essentially it is a song about someone trying to sleep around. Totally inappropriate for leading into a time of worship. Defiling. Polluting.

And the host for the meeting gets up and gets everyone in the room dancing to it. A room full - hundreds of pastors and preachers dancing to this song. And I thought - what on earth is happening?

Now I'm assuming the guy hosting the meeting just didn't recognise the song. No big deal. The you can't tell me the band didn't know.

I've seen worship teams getting a meeting going with a song that's about sex just because the word Hallelujah is in it. Don't tell me the band are that naive.

Where is the reverence? Where is the honour?

Where is the sense of awe before God?

If coming to church was just about entertainment then this would not matter.

Church is so concerned about being cool and awesome it's forgetting to be holy!

We are making the altar of God less important. It's defiling! It's dishonourable!

Israel was offering cheap sacrifices - they were giving God their second best - sometimes even their worst.

It's only church - it doesn't matter.

I'm too busy - this isn't important.

This needs to be over quick as I've got better things to do.

If you are too busy for God you are too busy. Stop it. Step back and stop giving God your second hand, cast off, cheap, pound shop worship.

When worship of God is no longer important - that's defiling. Not my words. God's.

Try that with your manager. The message uses the term manager here, which I like because it brings it home - try giving your boss the commitment you give to God and see how far that gets you, but manager is not the term used in other versions.

It's governor. And the context is the Persian governor. They were giving Him the best. And they were giving God the left overs.

Update that - and you see many giving their boss their best and God just what is left.

God doesn't want your left over time, devotion, energy or money. He wants your best. He doesn't want your scraps.

God responded to their shoddy worship by saying - Get on your knees and pray I will be gracious. With this kind of conduct, do you think I will pay attention to you?

Or in the ESV - let us entreat the favour of God that He may be gracious. With such a gift, will He show favour?

God forgive us for defiling the altar. Forgive us for our second best.

That has to change. Today. Cheap worship is not worship at all.

The priests were not helping. They didn't tackle any of this stuff - no they just wanted to keep the people happy - so it went unchallenged.

Mal 2:7-9

For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts, and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction."

All they gave were popular sermons. Stuff to make you feel good.

You are amazing! Yeah! You can do it!

God just wants to love on you! Time to reclaim your destiny!

This is how God can make you prosper!

They were telling people what they wanted to hear rather than teaching the law.

I know this message is hard. I know there are some things in it that seem brutal. But I have to say this, or I'm part of the problem.

It's my job to preach the truth. And that means sometimes stuff really has to be challenged.

When God's workers don't do that - then they carry the responsibility for the disobedience.

Where is the commitment and passion?

So far we've looked at the respect - we've looked at the reverence and fear.

But God wants to challenge more areas:

Where is the commitment and the passion in His church?

Now, don't get this wrong - in some churches there is plenty of commitment and passion - but for the Church. Not for God.

A commitment to a cause, a group - a need, been part of something, just to having an awesome time and instagramming it all - but if's that the extent of it - if that's all we are about, we'd best not bother.

We see so many hands go up - Jesus save me! Genuine decisions. But where is the follow through? Where is the growth?

Some can go years and never commit to anything beyond putting their hand up and coming forward for prayer every now and then.

Part of this problem comes back to making Him Lord, part of it is just a plain hesitation - not feeling ready to serve or commit.

If you've been saying "I'm not ready for a while now..." Just be aware you could be saying that the rest of your life if you are not careful.

What is ready? The Holy Spirit is ready. Have you got the Holy Spirit? Then you are ready.

Hesitancy needs to stop - what we are involved in is serious - it's not a game. And reluctance will hinder you right up until the moment you make a choice to change. Be ready.

God does not want your second best.

Mal 1:10

Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand.

In the message it says - why doesn't one of you just shut the Temple doors and lock them? Then none of you can get in and play at religion with this silly, empty-headed worship. I am not pleased. The God-of-the-Angel-Armies is not pleased. And I don't want any more of this so-called worship!

He doesn't want the second hand. He doesn't want the time you've got left after everything else. He doesn't want the things you don't care about. He does not want reluctance in his people.

He wants a church that will commit to Him! Oh that we would be that church!

He'd rather we shut the doors than play games with Him.

Bear in mind he is suggesting shutting the doors to the temple, the only place to offer sacrifice at that time.

This isn't God sulking and saying just close a church down - then waiting for people to start a new one. NO, shutting the temple (even though this temple did not have the presence) was God saying, enough - I'm done.

It's God saying, I'd rather there was no worship than this second hand, silly empty headed stuff. Because this stuff doesn't mean anything!

If you are playing games - if your worship is more about you enjoying it then glorifying Him - He'd rather you did not bother at all. He doesn't want that.

He wants passion for Him, not us to have a good feeling.

So many worship songs today are nothing of the sort - they are about how God helps us, loves us, makes us feel all warm and fuzzy.

Songs about how well we are doing by coming to church and singing - songs about the battles we have won - that isn't worship.

We should be singing about how amazing He is - how awesome he is. That He is worthy of all of our passion. That He is the greatest.

God wants passion - honour and commitment in our worship.

The bible tells us not to forsake coming together. When Jesus described the church, he used the word Ekklesia - which as we heard last week means an Assembly.

We used to think church was the building. We were wrong - it's the people. But this is what we've done - we've made it the people individually rather than the people corporately. You can't assemble alone.

We then started to say - church isn't just Sunday. Correct - but it includes the times of coming together on a Sunday.

We've started to use that line of thought as a reason to minimise the importance of coming together - like it's optional. But that's not how it's supposed to be.

When you minimise the importance of this time - isn't that defiling?

I'm not saying you should have 100% attendance or you are a bad Christian - or even 90% like at schools.... what I'm saying if this is important - make it important.

Please let me bring you back to where we started. Don't make this about others - but look for yourself in here.

The world needs more than a Saviour. It needs a Lord.

We cannot allow our attitude towards God become lax, lazy and casual.

We cannot be in a position where the altar of the Lord doesn't matter to us anymore.

We cannot allow what we think to be more important than what He has said.

We cannot allow ourselves to forget who He is.

We cannot allow our times of worship to become a formality or a chore.

And it's happening all around us. No wonder the millennial generation finds it so hard - Generation X and the baby boomers have left a trail of ambiguity and disobedience in their wake.

One generation said why bother with God? The next one comes along and says, why bother to be good? Then next says there is no such thing as good or God.

Where does that lead? To a generation that says' YOLO - let's experience everything here and now, because nothing else matters.

This may be an old testament passage but it is still very relevant. You can see how bad things were getting in Israel.

People were abandoning their wives and trading them for younger models - which meant Jerusalem was filled with abandoned women and there was no welfare state to help.

The nation had moral slide away from God and as a result they were in a state.

There was no government to blame so they blamed God.

They started to say, God doesn't care about us so we don't care about Him.

They had reached a stage where they simply just could not be bothered with God any more.

Looking at this nation at this time - you can see it today.

A church bereft of its power because it's let sin and compromise in. A church that can't be bothered. And somehow it's all God's fault.

We may ask, how have we dishonoured? How have we defiled?

Through our shoddy, second hand devotion.

Through giving Him what is left in our lives rather than the first.

He is the God of heaven, the Lord of the angel armies. We can't treat him like a friend we only see sometimes and use as a doormat when it suits us.

He is the Awesome, amazing one. Not Joe Bloggs.

Everything that exists - he made. Not only that He sustained it all. Without Him, there would be nothing.

He knows the hairs on your head and the thoughts inside it. He loves with a love we could never even imagine. He is magnificent.

And He is calling us to the carpet.

I don't know where the message gets that phrase from - I can't see it in any form in other translations - but you know what? I love it. It's so on the nose.

He is calling us to repent. Not because he's mean, but because He wants to set us free. True freedom can only be found in Him - when He has the right place in our lives.

He's calling His church to the carpet. And this is a challenge to you - not the person next to you. Is he more than just your saviour? Is he your Lord?

Jesus is either Lord of all - or not Lord at all. Easy to say. Needs more than saying.

Jesus must be the Saviour of our hearts and the Lord of our lives. We were once slaves of sin, but Christ has set us free to be slaves of righteousness. He is Lord and Master, and we are His slaves, like it or not.

Deny yourself - take up your cross. Follow Him.

Where is the fear and reverence? If you don't have fear - a trembling when you consider Him - then you haven't realised how huge He is.

Jesus said there will be many who say Lord Lord, and He will say I did not know you. There are many who say Lord - without making Him Lord.

Making Him Lord means giving Him the primary place in your life.

Give Him all the glory. All the honour. All your life. Don't just call Him Lord, make Him Lord.

If you've given Him parts of your life, but not others - you need to give it up.

There needs to be Repentance for second hand devotion - repentance for getting religion - for putting other things before God.

God is asking you "Will you make me first? Will I be your priority?"

He is tired of getting our second best. He doesn't want it.

We need to repent for not caring for the lost like He does - for treating this time that we come to worship Him as casual or not important.

Have you grown cold? Have you left your first love? Then He is calling you to the carpet.

He wants our worship to be passionate. He wants commitment. He wants us to be devoted to Him.

He will be revered - respected and obeyed.

Otherwise - we might as well shut the doors.