

Distractions

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[0 : 00] Good evening. It's good to be here again. The Lord is good. We're here for a reason tonight.

All of us, including me. God has a purpose. So, I was thinking of where I should start tonight, and so I want to read this verse here out of John chapter 12 and verse 24 through 26.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me. And where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my father honor. See something very special here. This afternoon, I was a little bit tired, and so I laid down and slept for a few minutes, and then our children are making noise and stuff, and I woke up again. And this thought here came to me, came to my mind. And I was thinking of what does that look like. The message I'm going to share tonight is on distraction, being distracted. And I was thinking, you know, what does this look like in a believer's life?

This verse here, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. And in this life, the things that we want to read through here, there are many, many, many, many, many things that would distract us. And I have to think of this corn of wheat, and I have to think of, you know, as a believer, if what I'm concerned about is my outer shell, and I'm always waxing that thing. I'm so distracted about my external shell as this corn kernel.

Isn't that what most of Christianity is all about today? All we're concerned about is that this shell, nothing happens to this outer shell. And here Jesus says, except this thing fall into the ground and die, it does not bring forth fruit. And all who, you know, farm or have farmed, I'm not a farmer, but we know, except we put the corn into the ground, you cannot expect a harvest. You cannot have a sack of corn in your barn or shop and leave it there and expect that next year there's going to be a hundred sacks of corn. You have to go and put that thing into the ground. God is calling us in the day and hour that we live in to be not concerned about our outer shell, but to be concerned about his kingdom, to be about our father's business. Just like Jesus said, he was about his father's business.

[3 : 16] And then this world, like I said, we have many distractions. It's all about the outer shell in this world. The things that are offered to us, it's about the outer shell. Keep that thing. Maintain that thing. It's about you. It's all about you.

Is that what we find in God's word? No. Jesus says that we are not to be concerned about the things in this world. We are not to love the things in this world, but we are to love his kingdom. We are to love his ways. We are to be about his business. And that means that this self has to die. There's things that this outer shell has to decay. It has to completely be done away with. And what will happen then? There will be fruit for God's kingdom. And God will be glorified.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. If it is not dead and in the ground, it cannot bear fruit.

Again, like yesterday, we talked about serving the two kingdoms, either one or the other. That's the same theme that we find in God's word over and over. So let's pray again. Let's get on our knees again.

[4 : 39] And let's really call upon the Lord, each one of us, that God will meet us personally. It's not about me. It's not about you. It's about him.

We're meeting together here to hear what his heart is in this. What is his heart for me personally? Have I too long been taking care of this shell? Have I too long been focused on this shell?

It's time to turn our focus and refocus on God's kingdom. The world is watching. This generation is watching. Who are we? So let's get on our knees and let's cry out to the Lord and ask him to speak through these verses, his word, that he may be seen in our lives and he may change the things that need to be changed in our lives.

So let's get on our knees and pray. May we have spoken to us, God, all these years ago you said this, Lord.

And these verses are not written in here, Lord, for no purpose, God. But as a call, Lord, to be undistracted, God. To allow, Lord, our lives to fall into the ground so that you can have fruit for your kingdom, God.

[6 : 17] And you have said that without mistake here, that if we are willing to do this, we are willing to lay down our lives, there will be fruit, Lord. It's not a lie, God. We can expect this, God.

So if we have been fruitless, God, help us tonight, Lord, to have a new passion, a new vision, God, to allow you to transform us, God. And to be undivided in our attention towards you, God, and whatever it is, God, you have us doing.

That we would work together, Lord, in the time that we live in, that your kingdom, Lord, may be established. We bless you, we praise you, and we thank you, God, for your presence, Lord. We know you're here, God. We know you love us.

And you have a wonderful desire for each one of us, God. We pray, God, in the name of Jesus.

Amen. Amen. I want to start tonight with a story that my wife reminded me of in the last weeks.

And some of you have already heard the story, or at least bits and pieces of it. And it's about being distracted or being undistracted.

[7 : 41] In 1995, there was a family that was traveling, and this family had four children.

The dad is an alcoholic, and they don't worship God. They don't really believe in the things of God, the deep things of God.

And as they're traveling, it's early morning. They had just left the hotel, some maybe 40 minutes or an hour.

It's dark, and there's road construction where they're driving. And they hit a pothole. And because of hitting the pothole, the father, he tries to bring the car into control again, and the car rolls several times, flips over.

Some of the windows are shattered. Nobody flew out of the car, even though this thing was flipping in the air.

[8 : 56] And slowly the children, and they all come to and realize that they need to get out of this car that's sitting on edge. Some through the front windshield, some through the back window.

And the mom is kind of stuck in the car. Her knees are kind of jammed in between the dash and the seat and so on.

And there's a truck driver that's coming down the road. He sees this whole thing happening. And the truck driver immediately stops. I don't know the story of how he felt or what he was going through when he saw this whole thing happening, unfolding in front of him.

But I know that he was touched. He had a burden. He had a desire to allow these people to come in contact with God.

He gave them Bibles. He gave them Bibles. And he was undistracted in his vision.

[10 : 12] He could have been so distracted with his work. The car was off the road. There was no reason that he should have to stop. But he had something else in mind in his work.

It was okay if his shipment was late for whatever he had in his truck. It was okay if, you know, he missed the whole thing. At least by his actions, that's what would have been spoken.

So he stopped all this traffic in this one lane in the construction site there. He came to the car and he lifted the little girls in his arms.

And the little boy, about 10 years old, walked beside him, took them to his truck. And the mother was free by this time too. And he brought them all to the truck and helped them to get into the truck. The father stayed at the scene of the accident, but he went to the nearest truck stop. And there an ambulance came and checked them out to make sure that everybody was okay. Soon the father would come too.

[11 : 23] And the truck driver again, he was just, he was undistracted. He wanted to make sure that his family was okay. And that's where he gave them the Bibles.

Each of the children got a Bible and the parents got one together. And from there he left, never to be seen again.

But he planted something. And the prayers that went up, we don't know. But he had a purpose and he had a vision for this family. And I'm positive that God answered those prayers that he prayed and his actions spoke loudly.

That boy is me. I'm that boy that was in that accident. Amen. And then, just eight and a half to nine years later, the story that I shared with you yesterday unfolded and I came to the Lord.

I share that story with you because God has a purpose for you. And sometime, we might be passing through somewhere and something is there available for us, but we are so distracted and we miss what God has for a purpose for us.

[12:54] But this truck driver, David, how I would long to meet him. It's been 28 years since that happened. And he doesn't know what I experienced and how when I got converted, I believe it, if I'm not mistaken.

That was a New Testament I used to preach to the plants in the greenhouse. God has a purpose for us. He wants us to be those Davids in other people's lives.

But we get so distracted and we have many things that we're running to and fro about and then we miss the opportunity that God has for us.

It might just simply be that you need to be praying for somebody as you pass. I believe that David prayed. He wouldn't give the Bible out.

It's rare that people give out the Scriptures. It's very rare. But can you believe that the same burden that this David had, that is the same burden that God has given me? And I've missed many opportunities.

[14:10] But God has a purpose. I want to start here reading in 1 Corinthians 7, verse 35. And we know that it talks here about marriage and Paul is talking about marriage.

But I believe this verse applies. And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper. And this is the part that I was thinking about here.

That you may serve the Lord without distraction. I want to right away say this to begin with. You can serve the Lord, and I said this yesterday, and I'll say it again, with your business.

You can serve Him with your work, with pounding your nails. Whatever job we have, we need to do that wholeheartedly as unto the Lord. A few weekends ago, I preached a message at home, and I called a part of it that I said, it is not a slothful faith that we have.

The faith that we have is not a slothful faith without distraction. Whether I'm pounding your nails, or I'm preaching the gospel, or I'm giving out Bibles, or I'm whatever it is, or I'm planting, or I'm doing dishes, or I'm changing a diaper, or whatever it is, it is not a slothful faith.

[15:33] We do this as unto the Lord. Sometimes we become distracted, and we miss the point. God has a purpose in why we are working. And we need to do it in an undistracted way, as unto God.

So in any way, the things that we will be reading here tonight, I am not at all promoting that we do not work. That we do not have businesses, those things I am not promoting.

God wants to use those things for His purpose. This truck driver, he had a purpose. His job was driving a truck, but when opportunity arose, he was right there.

Whether he was praying, whether he was handing out God's Word, whatever he was doing, he was about God's business. Whether he had to buy the Bibles or not, God knows.

But his business provided those finances, in a way we can say, that he had the means to do this. And when opportunity arose, he was right there. And that you may serve the Lord without distraction.

[16:41] What do we think of when we think of distractions? We get distracted so easily. It's all about me.

It's about that outer shell I was talking about. Is it really all about me? You look in the mirror and you see that we're aging.

I go to the barber shop. I did this a few weeks ago here. Maybe even just a week ago. A little, a little week ago.

And I look on that black sheet that she put over me and I'm like, wow, there are a lot of white hair. This body's passing away.

If this body, this life that God has given me is going to be sown in God's kingdom, there will be fruit. So it's okay if this is passing away.

[17 : 37] As we look in the mirror, God just wants to remind us, don't be distracted about this. I have something for you beyond this life. He's going to give us a new body. It's going to be glorious what we will receive over there.

So let's not be distracted and be focused on who we are now. Let's be busy about God's work.

Distracted driving costs lives.

Sometimes we become distracted while driving. We get our phones. I do this. I don't know if we have, we necessarily have laws in Mexico or in each state that there will be laws that can't be on your phone.

But we get distracted and all of a sudden there's a car that's driving really slow in front of us and whoa, whoa, what happened? It costs lives. Distracted while cooking causes house fires. I read the other day, I don't know if these statistics are right, but 31% of kitchen fires are because people get distracted.

They put something on the stove and they walk away. And all of a sudden it ends up into a kitchen fire. Distracted while working makes progress on a job slope.

[18 : 46] So we're working and we get distracted with things and the progress just doesn't happen because we're not focused on what we're there for. All over, our whole world is full of distractions.

Luke 21 verse 34, but watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.

For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. There's a day coming, Christ is returning. We believe that, we preach that, we share that with others. Be prepared.

How can you be prepared if we're distracted? Our life needs to be focused on what God has for us. Verse 36, but stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man.

We must remain awake to the Spirit of God. Have our spiritual ears and eyes focused on listening and seeing. And we know the verse, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

[19 : 59] If we are distracted, we'll miss it. Again, going back to the story of David, if you have been distracted, oh, I'm going to be late. If I stop here, he was, I don't know if there was another vehicle stopped in front of him.

He was right there. Stopped this whole line of traffic. He could say, oh, well, make it by. I'm going to go. Otherwise, I'm going to miss my appointment. No, he was not distracted with that.

Jesus says, we hear his voice, but what if we are so distracted that we cannot hear or are listening to someone else and are always filling our ears with other things than his voice? Right here, I want to touch on music.

Music is not bad if it's not bad music. There's good music out there. There's good songs that are very encouraging. But what if it is a habit of ours that we are so distracted with music that every time we get into the car or we get into the house, we always have to have that thing blaring?

Always. And we miss the voice of God. Some years ago, about 16 years ago, I was buying and buying and buying and buying all these CDs.

[21 : 14] I had this Bosch CD player for the job site and every time I get into the car, right away, the music had to be turned on. And when the CD was done, then we had to put the next one in and I mean always.

It had to be loud and I had to be hearing something. And one day, as I'm driving there, the Lord put this on my heart. You have this music blaring so loud and it was not ungodly music.

You have this thing playing so loud that you can't even hear me. So I just, right there, I'm thinking about when we want to hear his voice. Is there never a time that we can give God an opportunity when we can have peace and quiet to give him opportunity to speak to us?

Or are we so distracted that we right away have to get into the car, when we get into the car, the music has to be blaring right away? Again, I'm not saying that music is wrong, but let's be watchful. Let's not be distracted with that thing.

Let's let the Lord give him opportunity to speak to us. There's a time for having music playing, but there's also a time to just shut that thing off and allow the Lord to speak.

[22 : 21] And if we're listening to other things all the time, and we're wondering why we are where we are at spiritually, and why is the Lord not speaking to me, maybe it's because we're not giving

him opportunity. We've been distracted.

Luke 9, verse 62.

Jesus replied, No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God. We have put our hand to the plow for the kingdom of God, and we again become distracted with those things that we laid off.

Jesus says that we are not fit for service in the kingdom of God. But tonight we can examine where are our eyes? Where are we focused? Have we been distracted?

Have we lost sight or vision of the kingdom of God and our purpose for being in God's kingdom?

When we have set out to be a worker for the kingdom of God, we get distracted and start turning back.

[23 : 20] We are not fit for God's kingdom. Jesus is not just suggesting we don't turn back, but he is warning us not to. He says don't.

Very clearly, don't. Don't turn back. And he is not talking about a physical plow. He is not talking about it. He is giving us an example that we can understand.

You have started working for God's kingdom, and now, you have shifted your focus to those things that you already went through. Don't turn back there.

What's going to happen in front of you? You're going to end up running into the ditch, plowing. You cannot plow that way. You have to be focused. Revelation chapter 3, verse 2 and 3.

I'm going to read these verses here in the Amplified. Wake up and strengthen and reaffirm what remains of your faithful commitment to me, which is about to die.

[24 : 32] For I have not found any of your deeds completed in the sight of my God or meeting his requirements. So remember and take to heart the lessons you have received and heard.

Keep and obey them and repent. First words, wake up. Wake up. You're distracted. You're falling asleep.

Change your sinful way of thinking and demonstrate your repentance with new behavior that proves a conscious decision to turn away from sin.

So then, if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief and you will not know at what hour I come to you. What is the purpose in his words here? He does not want us to be distracted when he comes. He wants us to clearly see and be awake and wait for his coming. Again, that can be in pounding your nails, whatever it is. I'm doing this for God's kingdom and I am building God's kingdom.

[25 : 38] I am working for the king. He sees what I'm doing. The testimony that we are at work, whatever it is, there's a testimony.

We are loudly and clearly speaking with how we are working. And if we're slothful, then we have a slothful faith. That is not God's heart.

What does he say? So then, if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief. Let's just hear the words of Jesus. I don't want you to be sleeping when I come.

I want you to be awake. I want you to see me. Where are we? Jesus says to wake up or you will basically be caught off guard and not know the hour of his coming.

Jesus also encourages us to strengthen what remains. We have faith. If we found ourselves distracted, there is opportunity tonight to say to God, you know what?

[26 : 47] I have been distracted. I know. I have loved things more than you. I have shifted my focus away from you, but tonight I am returning to you. I am committing the rest of my life to serve you.

That's what God's heart is here. It's not because he doesn't love us. He shares these things because he loves us. He has purpose for us. He's not hopeless for us.

Maybe the Lord, through his word, is speaking directly to me and would like me to refocus. When we realize we have been distracted, we must refocus on what really is our call in Christ.

What is your call? And later on in the week, I have a message that God put on my heart. We want to talk specifically about some of those things. Jesus is lovingly sharing with the church that they are to strengthen what remains.

This is not because his desire is to cast them out, but because he loves her, like I already shared. It's not his desire that he pushes away. He speaks these things to the church because of his love.

[27 : 56] And how much more in the day that we live in with all the things that are being offered to us, all the distractions of the shell, again, I want to use that, how much more is he speaking these things to us?

Strengthen what remains. Wake up. I'm coming soon. Are you waiting for me? Are you waiting? Or are you busy with something else?

He desires for her to be fruitful. That's what his desire is. We need to remain awake in his kingdom so that we can produce fruit for his kingdom.

I have some examples here that we can clearly understand. Can you imagine a couple that is engaged and the bride is dying, I put in here, or has become careless of the bridegroom, that the bridegroom would have motivation or be looking forward to the wedding?

If the bride does not care about the groom, do you think that the groom is going to be looking forward to the day of the wedding? No. Why do the brides get their dresses ready and they want that thing to be perfect and it's not supposed to have wrinkles and it's supposed to be without spot and they're worried and they're worried about stains?

[29 : 21] I was in a wedding one time, my friend's wedding, and him and his bride, his wife-to-be, they had gone to take some pictures in a park or something and they got her dress stained.

Can you imagine what they were doing just before it was time for the wedding to happen? They had gotten stain removers, different ones, and they were working and scrubbing and stuff. You know what? Maybe it's time that we get some of those cleaners out.

Maybe tonight is the night that we get the cleaners out. We again tell the Lord to wash us in his blood and we say, Lord, we've stained some things. We've allowed there to be stains on this dress. We've gotten distracted. We've been into things that we should not have been in and we want to turn. We want to again be clean for you, Lord, because we're waiting for you to come back.

Example, young lady or young man is busy maintaining other relationships while engaged.

Very sad story in Mexico. There was a couple that was going to be married and the girl was so distracted maintaining other relationships with other young men that the groom called off the wedding.

[30 : 32] Do we want our groom to call off the wedding? Are we going to be focused on that? Matthew 25, verse 1 through 13.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet their bridegroom. And five of them were wise and five were foolish. Why were they foolish? And why were there five that were wise?

And let's look at the story from the angle of being distracted tonight. Five were not distracted. They were focused. What is it going to take that I will be prepared when he comes?

My lamp is going to be full of oil. My wick is going to be trimmed. I'm going to be ready to be burning. When that call comes, I have my lamp ready. It is shining for you, Lord.

Shining for the bridegroom. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them.

Where were their thoughts? What were they distracted with when they should have been focused on having oil in their lamps?

[31 : 55] They were distracted with something else. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh.

Go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, Say, No, not so, lest there be not enough for us and you.

But go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgin, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour where the Son of Man comes.

What is the condition of our lamps tonight? Is there still oil in the lamp? Or have we busied ourselves with others and we have been careless with the lamp that God has given us?

[33 : 05] We have not cared about making sure that there's oil. Walking with God, having a relationship with him, doing the things that he desires from us, being busy about his kingdom.

Or are lamps full tonight? Do we have them ready? Because he's coming. Are the lamps filled? Five were distracted.

They were foolish. The word says they were foolish. When they came to the place where he was, he said, I don't know you. They were distracted. That would be the same answer for all those who get distracted.

They turn their hearts, their lives, and to other things that will pass away. Tonight, the opportunity is there for us if we know that we have been foolish with our lamps and we have not maintained the oil in there.

Walking in his spirit, allowing God to move in our hearts. Tonight, the opportunity is there for us that we can have them filled again. And when he comes, should it be tonight, our lamps will be full and we will be with anticipation, anticipating his coming, just waiting for him to come.

[34 : 24] Lord, I'm ready for you to come. I'm ready. How much oil is in my lamp tonight? 2

Corinthians 11, verse 3, but I'm afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

See what he's writing to the Corinthians back then already? How much more today? A pure devotion to Christ that somehow we're going to be led astray.

It is the enemy's plan. It is Satan's plan that the distractions that this world is coming up with, that we be deceived, that we be led astray. It's the enemy's plan.

He wants the church of Christ to be in shambles. He wants everything to be broken. He wants us to fight, devour, kill each other. He wants everything to be in our path that we get distracted from seeing Christ.

That's what he longs for. But God's heart is not that way. That's why he allows Paul to write these things. Here we have a clear warning about being deceived. I know it doesn't say distracted, but deceived.

[35 : 38] But how do you get deceived? How about you get distracted? You lose focus of what really is important, of that which is eternal. The enemy of God would like us to be led astray.

He does not want us to have a pure devotion to God. Satan's desire is that we be distracted from every angle of our life. God's desire for us is to have a pure, undistracted devotion to Christ.

Our focus is his return and our final redemption. And like I already said, we have work, we have hospitality, we have diapers to change, we have meals to make, we have vehicles to fix, some change oil.

The young man that changed our oil today. And these are not the things we're talking about, about being distracted. But we're talking about having that perspective that we are doing this work for God's kingdom.

Eve was distracted. The first lady on this earth was distracted. She beheld the fruit. And we know the story.

[37 : 00] She was distracted from being faithful to what she knew to be the command of God by the serpent. The serpent lied to her and she trusted the misinformation of the enemy. The serpent came in a pleasant way.

She liked what she heard and became distracted with half-truth. Now, the result? All of humanity is affected by her allowing herself to be distracted from the command of God to untruth.

How many people are following me in my distraction or are being affected? If I am supposed to be a light in this world, as the word of God says, and I am distracted, how many people are being led astray?

Eve was distracted. And every one of us in this room is affected by her distraction. David. He was supposed to be chief in command.

They were at war. And where was he? Where did he find himself? In the heart of allowing himself to indulge in the distraction, he was so distracted with this woman that he was willing to kill her husband on the battlefield with his consent.

[38 : 10] And... He got distracted. He saw this woman there and he called for her. Where should he have been? The story would be different if he had been undivided in his attention.

He should have been in there with his men on the battlefield. But he was distracted. It affected his life. And a man had to die.

Can we take that spiritually and think of when we walk distracted and we're supposed to be the light in this world? We're supposed to walk as Christ did in this world? Are there souls that will be in hell because we have allowed ourselves to be distracted and we misled them?

And instead of being there and showing them the example of Christ, that they missed it because they never saw it in us? We're no different than David.

He had distractions. And how much more do we have distractions today? We have it right at our fingertips if we're willing to just walk there. That we'll feel defeated. It's not God's heart.

[39 : 26] He allowed this woman to totally take his focus off of what he was supposed to be focused on. How different would the story be if he had been busy with taking care of his army's needs?

Focus on the responsibilities before God. The responsibilities that God had given him. God has given us responsibility. And we need to be focused on that responsibility. We know that he sinned against God by allowing himself to be distracted in this way.

Acts chapter 5. Ananias and Sapphira. They were distracted from speaking the truth. They wanted to be seen. They wanted honor and they wanted to still have some extra cash in hand.

They lied to God. They were distracted by self. They could not clearly see. The money was theirs. The field was theirs.

They could do whatever they wanted with the things. They chose to be distracted with wanting to be seen. And we know the result. It killed them. If we continue to be distracted when we are supposed to be giving God our undivided attention, the same thing will happen to us.

[40 : 35] And this is a warning to us. The sin was not their money. But it was what they allowed themselves to be distracted with.

And it cost them their lives and they were carried out. We know the story. The rich young ruler, he was distracted because he owned much property. His property distracted him from following Christ completely.

He loved the world. He loved the things in the world and he could not see the opportunity that he had before him. Samson was distracted with Delilah. God had chosen Samson for a purpose and Samson got distracted with this girl.

She was able to distract him with her false weeping. Oh, you don't love me. Doesn't the world do that to us too? You gotta have this.

You gotta have this. Sounds foolish when I'm doing that but that's what happened. I read the story the other day and I'm like, wow. He got distracted with foolish weeping.

[41 : 40] The world's doing the same thing to us. You cannot live without this thing. You have to have this. And if they don't get our attention in a straight way like that, then how are they weeping?

They're doing everything possible to distract him. What are we willing to give for all these distractions? 2 Timothy 4.10 Demas was spoken of as one who loved this present world.

He got distracted because of the things the world offered him then. Can you imagine? These old timers. What kind of distractions did they have?

It said he loved this present world. How much more does that apply to us today? I won't read this whole portion here but the parable of the sower.

The seed which fell among the thorns. These are the ones who have heard but as they go on their way they are suffocated with the anxieties and riches and pleasures of this life and they bring no fruit to maturity.

[42 : 49] suffocated. These things suffocate. These distractions suffocate. Cares.

Riches. Pleasures of this life. And when that happens no fruit is brought to maturity because all these other things they choke out what God will have.

Matthew 6 verse 34 so do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself.

Each day has enough trouble of its own. Sometimes we get so caught up in what I want to do tomorrow we miss what God has for us today. Okay. Missing prayer time because we are just too busy and late for everything and we pray these selfish 20 second prayers to get by and ease our conscience.

We are distracted by lesser things. Yes there are times when we need to run but is this the normal for us? Prayer meetings what are they for? You miss prayer meeting on a regular basis?

[44 : 04] I'm going to say some bold things. I'm going to say some bold things. Why do you miss prayer meeting? Why do we miss prayer meeting?

I'm going to challenge us. Next time that we want to miss prayer meeting I want you to get on your knees and I want you to ask God if it's okay for you to miss the prayer meeting. See if he's okay with you missing prayer meeting.

Or the church service. Or a brother's meeting. Well I've got too many things to do. I've got to clean up this and I've got to do that and I've got to wash my car or whatever it is.

My car's dirty. All kinds of excuses that we could come up with. Get on your knees and ask God if it's okay to miss the meeting. What's his answer going to be?

I know that those are some strong words but we need to get the reality of what God wants for us. Prayer meetings church services brothers meetings sisters meetings they have purpose.

[45 : 18] The enemy wants to distract us with lesser things so that we miss out what God has in mind. God's heart for us is to be there. Now I want to say this also that there are times when we will not be able to be there but it is not our habit to not be about the things that God has for us.

Our habit is to be in the work of God's kingdom. Somebody might be feeling sick or somebody had a baby or there are things that are reasons why we should not be there.

but these petty excuses that we many times have given before God they need to be done away with. They are distractions from the enemy.

I've been in meetings where people came in and I was like wow they're here in their work clothes. So at least they came.

it's okay. If you're running late it's okay to not be showered. Don't use that as an excuse that you can't come to the meeting.

[46 : 31] Are you about God's business? What if that prayer meeting or that meeting that you're going to have God wants to fill your lamps again to the full with oil but you missed it.

Instead you're sitting at home scrubbing your car or scrubbing your clothes or whatever it is. So next time you desire to miss prayer meeting or whatever meeting it is I challenge you get on your knees and ask God if it's okay.

Ask him if the excuse is valid that you have. And if you have a reason that is right before God I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about in a reasonable way that we do not have excuses why we're not there.

We need each other to stand together especially in the day that we live in. The enemy is seeking to devour and destroy and we see it over and over.

His tactics especially in distractions for the church technology cars houses tools appliances clothing fear wealth health the list goes on and on there are many things and we're not going to go into details about those things.

[47 : 48] It's right to have a car it's right to have a house it's right to have a business all those things are right but don't let that distract you from God's business use that as a tool for God's business. is there hope is there any hope for us with so many distracting things in this world?

hope? Yes. There's hope for us. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego they were faithfully serving.

There was a distraction the music was playing they needed to bow down to this thing and they said we will not we serve God.

There are distractions we bow not down to them but we serve God even though the day is hard even though the furnace is hot even though you know we are spoken evil of it's okay we're about God's business.

Romans 12 verse 2 do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect do you have time to test what God's will is in your life or are you too busy?

If we're that busy that we do not have time to test what God's will is for our life we are too busy and something has distracted us with the busyness of life or are you just so distracted there's just not time for that?

[49 : 15] Therefore since we are surrounded Hebrews 12 verse 1 therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us let's run that race that course Hebrews 12 verse 2 fixing our attention our focus on Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith who in view of the joy set before him just think of how this is worded here the joy that was set before him in view of this he endured the cross disregarding its shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God we have something set before us and that is what we need to be focused on it's eternity

Jesus said this world is passing away the things in this world are passing away if we have them use them for God's kingdom in view being focused didn't allow himself to get distracted we know that

Satan tried hard to distract him tried to distract Christ he said things lied to him used some truth with some lies to distract him but he was not distracted he kept his focus Psalm 86 verse 11 teach me your way Lord that I may rely on your faithfulness give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name an undivided heart what does this look like in our everyday lives John 15 5 I am the vine you are the branches if you remain in me and I in you you will bear much fruit apart from me you can do nothing and I ask the question is there hope for us there's hope for us

God wants to give us this heart that's undivided God wants us to teach us he wants to teach us his ways he wants us to be in the vine he wants us to be in him so that we can bear fruit that's his heart are you or have you been distracted do whatever it takes to refocus re-devote repent devote your life completely to the work of Christ when he returns soon will he find you distracted or burning brightly for him revelations chapter 22 verse 12 behold behold I come and my reward is with me to give every man according to his work as his work shall be sorry he says he's coming quickly and his reward is with him to give every man according as his work shall be you see clearly there is a reward where do you want your focus to be in the second coming do we really want to be blindly distracted with every other thing and miss God's purpose for us excuse me it's time that the church wake up it's time that we refocus and we remember that we have a higher purpose and we do away with lesser things anything that takes the place of Christ as we use it or follow it is a distraction we must not allow the things that we have to distract us to take the place of Christ when we see that we have been distracted we must refocus with purpose on God's will or we will be right back in the distraction it is not just alright to say tonight

Lord I'm going to refocus I'm going to get out of these distractions but we must then work in the thing that God has put before us if he gives us a vision a new burden for his kingdom then we must work there otherwise we'll be right back where we were it's not enough just to turn away and say I'm going to refocus and not do anything about it but it's a direction Lord we're working for your kingdom because Christ will return we are not of those who are asleep spiritually we are awake in 1st Thessalonians 5 we read about that we're not those who are sleeping we're of the day we're awake 2nd Timothy 2 4 no soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him that's the whole purpose we are soldiers for God's kingdom and there are many civilian pursuits but we are soldiers for his kingdom therefore it is our aim to please him who has enlisted us and we focus on what his desire is for so tonight the Lord has spoken to you give him opportunity give him your whole heart and say here I am

Lord I want to be focused on what you want me to be focused on and help me not to be distracted that's what I have for tonight someone who has I have divers and you have ik cuando bes las is to you to a RES SO