

Superficial Religion!

Overview

That needs to be a prayer of every one of us. We're never near enough. We need to be drawn nearer and the way to the nearness is the cross. I speak this morning about superficial religion. Superficial. Shallow, tedious, boring, lacking passion. It was the Lord through Moses, instructions about certain celebrations throughout the year, most of them taking place in the fall time. There were special kinds of offerings. There were drink offerings.

There were grain offerings. Sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice. These were all ordered by the Lord.

But it would be maybe strange to read what Jeremiah said on behalf of the Lord. There's no use now in burning sweet incense from Sheba before me. Keep your expensive perfumes.

I cannot accept your offerings. They do not have a sweet fragrance for me. Jeremiah 6 20.

Then Hosea, known as one of the minor prophets in chapter six. I desire mercy, not your sacrifice. I desire the knowledge of God more than your burnt offerings.

Hosea chapter five. I hate, I despise your religious festivals. Your assemblies are a stench to me.

Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring me choice fellowship offerings, I have no regard for them. By the time Jesus was walking along the shores of Galilee, religion in Israel was just, was just something that we would say, well, you do it on Sunday mornings from 11 to 12.

While others go twice a year, Christmas and Easter. I don't know why people show up for Christmas and Easter. Well, it's a tradition.

Bingo. Bingo. So many church services today will start sharply at 11 and dull at 12.

It's about three years ago that I slipped away on a Sunday morning and I visited another church just to see how church happens elsewhere. I was just intrigued. The congregation did not sing.

There was this big screen up here, quite a large one, and there was a small choir and they were singing some old hymns. I looked at the congregation. Their mouths weren't even moving.

They were letting them do the singing. That was their worship time. The people were not engaging.

They were not a part of it. The highlight of that morning service, I know it was the highlight because it was announced the same. There was a table down in front of the pulpit and there was a candle.

And the minister said, and now we'll have the lighting of the Christ candle. Jeremy, will you come and light the candle? Somebody over here on a piano played soft music as somebody came up and flicked his bick and he lit the Christ candle. And then there was a prayer said over the Christ candle.

That was the high point of the gathering. And then the minister read something that was the message of the week. I think from their headquarters, they send out 52 messages, 52 Sundays.

I sat there just thinking, if I could leave here now without being noticed, I didn't want to make a fuss. But I actually sat there thinking, why are these people here? What are they getting out of this? What? They weren't participating. They weren't even singing.

They weren't worshiping. And it was not a sermon. There was no challenge in the sermon.

It was like, God's okay. You're okay. We're all okay.

That wasn't the topic, but that's what came across. We're all okay. When the meeting was over, I stayed to the end.

As the people were leaving, they were nodding at each other. Kind of like, you were nodding during the whole time. And now they're nodding.

There was no fellowship. There was no connection. To me, there was no connection vertically.

And to me, there was no connection horizontally. I don't mention that church because I'm not disparaging them. I'm just saying, wow.

And that's not to say that we do it right. But who does it right? Who has the right thermometer to say, well, this is the way. But for me, we work at getting it right.

We sing our songs. We read our scripture. We give a nice sermon.

Pastor, that was a nice sermon. I really liked that sermon. But yes, we do it all.

And how does the Lord receive this? You know, I've been preaching about how the Lord said, I want to live among you. Abraham was walking alone with God. Isaac walked alone with God.

Jacob walked alone with God. Moses walked alone with God. And the people had to follow and trust them.

But then the Lord said, I want to be among you. That was that was an earthquake time. And he showed up among them.

And if they had done things just in like in rote, you know, quote the verse and sing the chorus, that would have been so empty. The Lord was among them, among them and among them. And and it was a high time was a glorious time.

And I long when when I come into the house, I long to know that he's among us. I long to sense his presence among us. I think you know what I'm talking about there.

Superficial religion, Jesus came amongst them. And it wasn't the people's fault. They followed the leader.

They followed the leader. I had a pastor in another city. I preached for him on a Sunday.

He was quite enthralled with. I was only there for morning and night. And in the afternoon, so we have to talk, we have to talk.

He said, I know about you. I know about your history, whatever, whatever. And he said, I know you've always had growing churches.

David, how do you get people to do evangelism? And I said, well, I talked to me. He said, well, he said, I've done this program. I got it out of somewhere in Florida called Evangelism Explosion.

And he said, I taught them. I was familiar with the book, familiar with the plan. And he said, I did all that.

And then he said, we had this other plan. Then we had this other plan, this other plan. He said, we have no one person get saved in 15 years.

He said, our baptistry has been dry for 15 years. How do I get the people doing it? I said, you don't want to know. Yes, I do.

Come on. Just tell me, what would you do? I said, well, I'd be a leader that the people could follow. What do you mean by that? I said, you just told me that in the last 15 years, you did not lead one person to Christ.

That's what you just told me. I said, be a leader that people can follow. Demonstrate for the people.

I said, you've got to get passionate, Pastor. You've got to lead the way by example. When Jesus came into Israel, you had all of these Pharisees who were the top dogs of everything.

And and their whole program was to make sure that everybody marched to their step. This is the way we walk with God. This is the way we walk everything.

And I'm sure that every one of them had a big mirror in the house. And every morning they'd stand and look in the mirror. How do I look? I paid my tithes.

I prayed my ten minutes this morning and I got out my special verse and I read my verse. I always read one verse per day and looking in the mirror. How do I look? How do I look? I oh, I think I look good.

Jesus even recorded for us that this fellow went to the altar and said, you must be proud of me, Lord. I'm not like that pathetic guy over there. I do everything right.

You've got to be. I sing in the choir. I bake the cherry pie for the.

I love cherry pie. I baked a cherry pie for the pastor. I made him happy.

I never give anybody a rough time. I go to the business meetings. I do this.

I do it. You've got to be proud of me. And then there's this other guy over here that's pounding himself on the chest and saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Jesus said, I like that guy. So by the time Jesus shows up, they're still doing sacrifices in the in the temple. How many sacrifices all day long? The sacrifices were happening in the temple.

Blood was written, you're running in the streets because that's what the Lord said. What was the what was the bleeding sacrifice all about? It was about our shortcomings. That's why this animal died in my stead.

I should be paying for my sin. But this animal identify with this animal and put my hand on his head. And as they're slaying it, it's going to pay the price for me.

It was all about my recognition that I'm a failure to God. But people were just it was just doing it. They bring the goat, put their hand on the head.

Yeah, OK, OK, I got good. I got I got rid of that. I got rid of that.

It's like the fellow who went to a confessional and he said, Father, I have sinned. And the father said, oh, what did you do? He said, well, as you know, there's been a lot of shortness of rain this year, and he said, I don't understand that. But he said, my fields, he said, hardly got any rain at all.

And he said, somehow my neighbor got better rain. He said he got a better hay crop. Yes.

Well, he said after he gathered his hay, he said he parked his wagon near the fence. Yes. Well, I jumped over the fence and I took half the load of hay.

What am I going to do, father? What am I going to do, father? He said, well, you can't do that. Yes. He said, well, I want you to say this kind of prayer and light five candles.

He said, OK. He said, what if I say that prayer and I light 10 candles and I throw some more shekels in the offering? Why would you want to do that? He said, I could use the other half load. He thought it was just, oh, yeah, I did something wrong, but I knew I could get away with it.

That's what's happening in our whole justice system now. You can go rob a bank, show up in front of the judge. And he says, well, you go out in the street and we'll set you up.

A year from now, you have to face the jury. And we got people running on the streets there. There's no problem.

Just that they won't they won't do a slap on the wrist. So there was no life in the church. But here we have in in Hebrews chapter 10.

Jesus comes to make a difference. For the law having a shadow of the good things to come. So Moses law was a shadow of something good that was to come.

The law was a clay model. Of what what the kingdom of God and what the church, what the people of God were going to be, it was just a clay model and it wasn't finished properly, it was kind of rough. The law having a shadow of the good things to come.

But not the real good image of the things. That law could never make. Them perfect, could never.

With these sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, cannot make those approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered if the if the sacrifice had done the job with it, would the priest have to do it again and again? For the worshipers, once purified, would have no more conscience of sin. But in those sacrifices, there's a reminder of sins every year.

For it's not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sins. Therefore, he, Jesus. He came into the world.

Saying sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. You had no pleasure. Then I said, behold, I have come in the book, in the volume of the book.

It is written of me to do your will, O God. Previously saying sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings and offerings for sin, you did not desire nor had any pleasure in them. Why did God not have pleasure? Because their heart wasn't in it.

They were showing up at 11, but their heart wasn't there. Then he, Jesus said, behold, I have come to do your will, O God. He takes away the first, the law, that he may establish the second grace.

By that will, we have been sanctified. I've come to do your will. And when your will was accomplished.

We have been sanctified. I need to pause here. I need to pause.

Justification is instant. He declares us justified. We accept Jesus as our savior.

The spirit of God comes within. He washes us. He cleans us.

He gives us a pure heart. And God sees us as justified. Sanctification is an ongoing process.

Sanctification is that what we go through to keep our heart cleansed, to confess our sins. One of the admonitions in the New Testament, confess your sins one to another. That'll keep you honest.

But here we have the writer of the Hebrews saying that through that sacrifice, when the will of God had been completed by Jesus, we were suddenly sanctified. Sanctified, but sanctified is an ongoing process. And here's how I read it.

Sanctified, we are positionally. I'm getting kind of high minded with you here. Forgive me.

The Lord sees us as sanctified. He doesn't see us as sinners today. I've always had a problem with a song in the past.

And I know who wrote it. I know they meant well. And there's nothing terribly wrong with it.

But I have a hard time even listening to that song that the main caption, the main chorus, the main sentence of that is, I'm just a sinner saved by grace. That would have been true for the first hour after I gave my life to Christ. I'm 80 years of age.

I'm not just a sinner. That's not how the sentence should be. Yes, I was a sinner, but now I'm a child of God, saved, walking with the Lord and continuously being sanctified.

I'm not just a sinner saved by grace. There's truth to it. But I'm troubled with that being, that's not my calling card.

Who are you? I'm just a sinner, but I'm saved by grace. Who are you, David? I'm a son of the king, and I'm looking for the upper taker. I'm not going to give any more time or any more money to the undertaker.

I'm going up. So in verse 10, by that will, I have come to do your will. What was the will? Now, let's remember that Jesus was not a peasant and the father is the dictator.

There's nothing like that. I don't do anything without checking with my father. I come to do thy will.

Who is the thy? I've come to do thy will. I thought about putting my three chairs up here. Those of you coming here for a while are familiar with my three chairs, that the father, the son, the Holy Spirit.

And when I put them up here, I often put them in a line. Father, you know, father here, the son on the right, Holy Spirit on the left. But to me, that's three people not getting along.

So I turn the chairs so that they're turning inward, looking at each other. That is the Trinity. And so, though it's in the volume of the book, I've come to do thy will.

Jesus is part of the thy. He's part of the thy. He's with the father, son, Holy Spirit.

This is a challenge for our minds, because we like to divide everything up and separate it into little categories. But while Jesus is with us here, in his heart and his spirit, he was also with the father, because you can't separate the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. They are one.

So the will of God the father is the will of God the son, is the will of God the Holy Spirit. I've come to do thy will. And when your will, verse 10, was accomplished, find your place, Dave.

Behold, I've come to do your will, O God. He takes away the first, the law, that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are now sanctified, but tomorrow you've got to be more sanctified.

God sees you as sanctified. He doesn't see you as a sinner today, saved by grace. Luke, Luke 14, Luke 15, the prodigal son.

The son came home and said, don't call me son. I'm not worthy to be called son. The father ignored that son.

He ignored that, freaking, don't call me son. I'm not worthy. And the father says, kill the fatted calf.

Put my favorite ring on him. Give this kid a bath. He stinks like, where have you been with the pigs? Give him a bath.

Give him fresh clothes. The guy was totally blown away. You're treating me like a son.

I'm not worthy. You're my son. You're my son.

Don't call yourself unworthy anymore. And from that day on, until that moment, he was known as the wayward son. He was known as a prodigal son.

He was known as a ruffian. He was known as a terrorizer. He was known as the drunkard.

He was known as the womanizer. But one minute after he got home, this is my son. Is this the bad kid? Don't call him the bad kid.

This is my son. Yes, he did bad, but he's my son. Now, was this son perfect? No.

In the father's eyes, that daddy, he's positionally worth the effort. I see him as my son. Yes, he did wrong.

Yes, you knew all about it. But I see him now as totally redeemed and restored unto me. He was never again reminded, I really remember what you did.

Somebody would have got a slap up the side of the head if they'd said, oh, I met that ruffian kid of yours. Don't say that about my son. So now we're declared to be sanctified.

And I love the wording of the apostle Peter, where he talks about being us partakers of the divine nature, partakers. Again, this is a passionate thing. It's a real thing, and it's an experience.

It's not like joining a club. When you join the membership of this church, if you choose to do so, five minutes after somebody says, well, you're a member, you're not going to say, wow, I feel great. I'm going to go and buy myself a brand new suit.

I feel, I need to look like I feel. You're not going to feel any different. I'm turning 80 years of age coming up.

I said, don't remind me, I've already broken my own rule. I'm turning 80 in a couple of weeks. I don't think on my 80th birthday, I'm going to feel any different than I did on my 79th.

It just doesn't work that way, mama. Sanctification is not a feeling. It's a position.

What a difference. What a difference. In the Old Testament, you have to continuously go to the priest and say, I've sinned.

I stole a half load of hay. I did wrong. You had to be reminded and reminded and reminded.

Who's that guy over there? He's the guy that has to always go to the priest and confess. He's always stealing somebody else's hay. He stole a horse.

He stole this. He stole that. He's a bad fellow.

No, God sees us as sanctified. Not perfect. He's gone to prepare a place for you.

With all of your warts, now your wrinkles, as gravity is conquering you, He loves you. He loves you more than you can know. And He makes room for you.

And when you step out of line, you bad kid. No, no. He kind of dusts you off and helps you to get up.

Wasn't it fun helping your little one to learn how to walk? I don't know if that new one down in Niagara. She is that one. That's a girl, right? Is that one walking yet? See, she keeps me informed.

I don't even know how many we have anymore. But it was so much fun watching our little Sherry walk. She does more than walk.

She rides motorcycles and gets in accidents now. But when she was learning to walk, when she fell down, I said, get up off your feet. No, you went over.

Maybe she had a little boo-boo. So I kissed her knee so constantly. Daddy, make it better.

And you pick the child up. You treat them like a child. You're caring.

You're loving. She'd get up about the third step. We had a side split.

Get up about the third step. And I'd say, okay, come to daddy. And that little rascal would leap into my arms.

The trust was incredible. The morning that we took her home from the hospital, April was worn out. She'd gone through this delivery process.

And it's a Sunday afternoon. And I'm putting on my tie. What are you doing? I said, we're going to church.

Oh, you can go. I'm not going. Oh, no, no.

You, baby, we have to go to church. What? Oh, yeah, we got to go show this kid off. She's completely worn out.

No, I got to take this baby to church. I took the baby to the child. We went.

Poor little April dragging herself along behind me. And I'm going around and I'm unfolding the blanket. I'm saying, look at the toes.

Look at that. Five on each foot. Five toes.

Look at the little eyes. I was so proud of that little bumpkin. I was so, that's how God feels about you.

You're not a sinner saved by grace. You are a child of God. Your name is written in the Lamb's book of life.

And you are now a partaker of his divine nature. Think about those words. Partakers.

He said, you need to eat my flesh and drink my blood, not be cannibals. He meant you need to partake of my divine nature. Receive my divine nature.

It's not like you join the church and you get a piece of paper. Good. I'm a member.

No, no, no, no, no, no. This is a divine passage. You'll never be the same.

There's a song that the Brooklyn Tabernacle used to sing. Boy, did that song go. That choir, they clap in the offbeat.

You know enough about music to, Al, you know about the offbeat. You're prone to play on the onbeat, to clap. But that choir knows how to play.

And they'd be singing Jesus on the inside, working on the outside. I took David Tapley, his son, pastors down the road. I took David Tapley with me to Uganda.

I never told David we're going through terror territory. I never told him that we could get blown up. We could get snipered right now.

He was out of his mind. I had a little play, a little cassette. It was in the dash of my Pajero Jeep.

And he's got the window down, and he's banging on the skin of the door. Jesus on the inside, working on the outside. And guys in the bush had to be going like this, trying to pick him off.

It was incredible. But that is exact. We made it alive, of course.

We stopped after we got past that area, and we had a celebration. We had a drink of Adam's ale. We were celebrating.

We got through. We didn't get picked off. Jesus is on the inside.

And he's working on the outside. That's the process of sanctification. God sees you on the inside, and we behold each other on the outside.

The word of God tells us that now that we're Christians, we are to know each other no longer in the flesh. What does that mean? It means, Nick, it is as angelic as you look. And those spindly legs hanging out outside of those short trousers.

We're tempted to look at you and say, did he trim his beard today? Right? We look on the outside. That's looking, examining each other in the flesh. I'll tell you a little secret.

You're going to have a hard time believing this. But I'm not perfect. I make mistakes.

I heard people groaning. You stop that. But here's the thing.

Every one of us are capable of making mistakes. Every one of us are capable of error. But what I'm to do as a born again Christian, as your friend, the word of God says, love one another, support one another, admonish one another, encourage one another.

Don't judge one another. From now on, I'm not to look at you according to your flesh. I'm to look at you according to the man, the woman that you are.

I'm supposed to look past the facade and see what God sees. What does God see somebody worth his son for? And now you have a heavenly treasure inside that bag of bones you call your body. You have this glorious treasure in an earthen vessel.

The earthen vessel will never be perfect. In fact, it's fading more every day. Ladies use lipstick, whatever you need to do.

The men give up. Jesus on the inside. He's working on the outside.

We're partakers of the divine nature. And I'm going to step, I'm going to walk on some thin ice here. I believe that the sanctification is permanent.

Pastor, do you believe in that theology called eternal security? I'll put it this way. I know I'm secure. I just don't know about you.

Is that okay? I believe in eternal security. Am I going to heaven? You bet your green apples I'm going to heaven. Is there any doubt? Why would there be some doubt? Why would there be some doubt? I'm a child of God.

Nobody is going to pluck me out of his hand. I fail, but he forgives. In fact, he forgives before I ask.

He forgives before I ask. By one man's disobedience, Roman 5:19, Adam. By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners.

You say, why doesn't it say all? All is implied. One man sinned on that day in the garden of Eden and many more in him. How many? All, all.

By one man's disobedience. You see, Adam in the garden of Eden was totally dependent upon God, totally committed in love to God, and totally dependent upon God. But on the day in which the man and the woman partook of that which was forbidden, they were claiming in a reckless way their independence.

Their love for God was darkened. The man who was madly in love with God now hid in the bushes, hoping he wouldn't be found. Didn't want to hear the voice of the one, the voice that he always craved.

And he declared his independence through this act of disobedience. When you're reading the New Testament, watch for this word, connected with Jesus, though he was the eternal one, yet he learned obedience by the thing which he suffered. Did I quote that right? I was close enough? Just like I said it.

By one man. Think of it this way. My father had a funny way of talking, and my son-in-law made fun of him all the time.

He called my dad Elmer, as in fud, because on my father's side, all the men rounded their R's, so that it actually sounded like a W. So my dad's name was Reginald. But when we visited my uncle Ernie near Brantford, when we visited my uncle Ernie, my uncle Ernie was sitting there with a big stogie, and when we walk into that big farmhouse, he'd say, well, hello there, witch, how you doing anyhow? My dad went from Reg to Wedge, twat, dat, wabbit. Now watch this.

My kids didn't pick it. If they did, my wife says I have selective hearing. Maybe I didn't hear it.

But my brother Don has two daughters, and the younger, her name is Jody. I used to tease her no end. I'd say, Jody, who's your favorite cowboy? Watch this.

My brother never rounded his R's, but little Jody, who's your favorite cowboy? Woywodges. I don't know how you explain that. Is it DNA? I don't know.

I don't know how that works. But I know how this works. By one man's sin, his DNA changed in that garden.

He was made perfect, but now he was clouded. Love has been tossed to the side, independent, disobedient. His DNA changed, and every child that came out of her womb had that DNA, and you were born with that DNA.

But this morning, you're not a person with a damaged DNA. You're a child of God, saved, sanctified, and on your way to glory. You've been a partaker of the divine nature which eradicated that ugly DNA.

You now have a predisposition to chase the things of the Lord. It's glorious, and it's marvelous. You say, Pastor Dave, what about Romans? Is it Romans 6 where the apostle says, well, that which I want to do, I present it with me.

He's talking about in his unregenerate state. Paul did not live suffering all the time, never doing what God wanted him to do. There wasn't a man more angelic than that fellow, and yes, I believe that he stunk like everybody else when he worked up a sweat, but he was a man of God, and he was talking about a person who's unregenerate, who tries to do what's good, but it's not in them.

Their DNA is still spoiled. But when you give your heart and your life to Christ, somebody did that recently, and he knows I'm talking about him today. When you gave your life to Christ, whether you know it yet or not, your DNA has been adjusted.

You're a new man. You're called a new creature in Christ Jesus. Just a sinner does not match new creature in Jesus.

Pastor, we wish you'd get a little more passionate. We're having a hard time hearing you. Just speak a little bit louder.

Watch this. Romans 5.19. I'm going to quit. I'm going to quit.

By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. So, by the one man's obedience, many will be made righteous. Not all.

It says by one man, many were made sinners. But by the new man, the new covenant maker, many will be made righteous. Finally, Romans 6.34. Romans 6, chapter 6, verse 3. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ, I haven't been baptized, Pastor.

Am I in trouble? This is a different baptism. This is a different baptism. When you gave your life to Christ.

See, baptistry, it means immersed, not sprinkled. Hello. The word baptized, baptizo, it means totally immersed.

When you gave your life to Christ, the Holy Spirit immersed you in the finished work of the cross. You were immersed. And so, that's why the apostle says, don't you know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ, Jesus, were baptized into his death.

Baptized into Christ, baptized into his death. My time's gone. I'll finish this.

I've told this so many times, but some of you are new. So, here we go. My father, my mother got married.

My dad joined the Navy. My dad went to the coast, Navy. Served in the war.

Never was in active battlement. It's too long a story. It doesn't matter.

My dad served in the Navy, and he came back in one piece. Biologically, I was in him. Does that make sense? Biologically, I was in him.

If my dad had not come back from the East Coast, if he had died on a submarine, I would not be here today. I was present. I was in his genes.

I'm just glad I learned to roll my R's correctly. I was in him. We are now in Christ.

So, while I was not aware, I was just in my daddy's nature. I was in his genes. So, when my dad was on the East Coast, I was in his person, in his genes.

When you were baptized into Christ, you were baptized into the payment for your sin, the cross. In him, you were planted in a grave. And three days later, you arose again.

That's what the water baptismal specifies. What it's showing. Dead with Christ, walking in newness of life.

Not a sinner saved by grace. Walking in newness of life. On the outside, not perfect.

But the inside, you're seen as sanctified. Are you okay with that? Would you come? And we're gonna sing it one more time, and then we're gonna go. Linda, I said, Linda, let's sing it before I preach, and let's sing it again.

Remember this when you're reading the book of Hebrews. Please start reading it with me. Read the book of Hebrews.

Remember, it's written to Jews who had given their lives to Christ, were suffering immeasurable persecution, and were now threatening to go back to Judaism. And Paul writes an entire epistle to them and says, please, don't you know what you've got? You've been partakers of the divine nature. You're now sanctified.

God sees you as a child of God. Heaven is awaiting you. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for you.

I mean, look what you're doing. They were wandering far from him. They were drifting from Jesus.

And what I read there is that if they'd left, he won them. It will be impossible for you to come back. If you trample under your feet the blood of Jesus Christ, there is no possibility of remission.

So, Pastor Dave, is it possible for me to lose my salvation? I told you a while ago, I'm eternally secure. I'm fine. How are you doing? It says there in the book of Hebrews, you drop the ball now, you might be done.

So you need to continuously draw nearer. Let's stand. How many do know this song? I thought I was picking a right.

Oh, good, good, good, good. Then, oh, you know it too. God, this is wonderful.

Let's sing it.