**The Jesus Life – Session three**

**“Buy from me gold”**

1. **God invites us to buy from Him “Gold”.**

1a) Some Christian people are truly amazing. They are filled with the life and character of God.

1b) Godliness can take many different forms in different people. For example, love and humility in Mother Theresa, faith in George Muller, miracles in Reinhard Bonnke, or sacrifice in the church leaders in places like China or Iran.

1c) People like this carry a supernatural presence about them, a fullness of God in their character, a fruitfulness over their life that can’t be explained through normal human processes.

1. **God Shows no Favoritism**

2a) If Jesus lives in the heart of every believer, why is it that some believers have lots of “spiritual gold”, and others have very little? Is it because God loves them more? Or that God gives more to them to than to others? No.

2b) God shows no favouritism. “God “will repay each person according to what they have done.” To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. For **God does not show favouritism.” (**Romans 2, 6-11)

2c) These differences cannot be explained because of human reasons. It’s not that these people are better educated, or more gifted. It is because these believers have worked on their life in such a way that there is simply more of God in them.

2d) In Jesus’ parable of the sower, every seed is the same. Every seed has the potential to reproduce 100 fold. The fruitfulness of the seed depends on the ground on which it falls – the path, or the stony ground, among the thorns, or on the good soil. Even on the good ground its fruitfulness is determined by how much sun and water it gets and how much the soil is fertilised.

2e) If we don’t fill our life with God now, **it’s not because of God’s choice** but because of our own choices. Those choices will have implications of our life for billions of years into the future.

1. **Whilst the ground is level at the cross, there are different rewards in heaven and different degrees of closeness to God on the earth**

3a) Jesus is only the way in for all of us. We’re all sinners saved by grace. However the bible is really clear that there are different rewards for believers in heaven and degrees of glory that will be given to believers. That is determined by how we live and what we do for God here on the earth.

3b) “No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.”. (1 Cor. 3, 11-15).

3c) In other words, everyone who gives their life to Jesus will be saved and go to heaven. But God will go through our lives and see what we’ve done for Him. He will examine our motives to see if we really are as “Christian” on the inside as on the outside.

3d) Some people will get into heaven by the skin of their teeth, having lost everything that they’ve given their life to. Others will take an abundance of great treasure with them, a great reward, which they will enjoy for billions of years.

3e) Spiritual treasure is not just about having a greater reward in heaven. It’s about being more full of God in this life. Being closer to Him, living more like Jesus now. touching more lives for Him.

1. **What does the Bible tell us about Gold?**

4a) The Bible has 441 references to Gold. Gold was the most precious metal in the Bible days, so it was sought after by kings and collected in great quantities by rich people.

4b) Gold is often linked to God in the Bible. Jesus is depicted in the book of revelation as dressed in a golden sash around his chest and (Rev. 1, 13). The 24 elders had golden crowns and held golden bowls of incense. The heavenly city is made of pure gold, as transparent as glass. Even the streets are made of gold. **God’s words are likened to Gold.** “And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.” (Psalm 12, 6. See also Psalm 19, 9-10). **Godly** **wisdom is also seen as worth more than Gold.** “Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold.” (Prov. 3, 121-14)

4c) **Our faith is likened to Gold.** “trials ... come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—**of greater worth than gold**, which perishes even though refined by fire, may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.” (1 Pet 1, 6-7)

4d) When God gave Moses the pattern for the tabernacle, he commanded that **everything possible was overlaid with gold**. The ark, the tables, the lampstands, the framework that held up the tabernacle and the carrying poles were covered in gold. The pots, utensils and many other articles were made of solid gold. The priests’ garments even had gold woven into them (Exod. 25-31).

4e) Then when Solomon built the temple, the whole of the inside of the temple was covered in Gold. (1 Kings 6 – 7).

4f) God is pure and holy. He’s the King of Kings and He, so it is fitting that His dwelling place was covered in gold.

4g) The Gold is meant to illustrate to us the glory of God, the splendour of His majesty. It is an earthly representation of the Shekinah presence, the golden glory that emanates from God’s inmost being.

1. **What does nature tell us about Gold?**

5a) **Gold was created in the heavens, not on the earth.** Scientists believe that gold was originally formed either through the explosion of supernova stars as they burned out or by stars colliding. Gold is formed in the intense heat that comes from the explosion of stars.

5b) Most of the gold on the earth is in molten form within the planet’s molten core. The gold near the surface has either been forced up from the molten core through cracks in the earth’s crust or has been brought from outer space by asteroids in the great bombardments that happened in the earth’s early history!

5c) Gold is the most malleable of all metals. It can be drawn into a wire of single atom width. It is also one of the densest elements on earth.

5d) A single gram of gold can be beaten into a sheet of 1 square metre. Gold can be beaten so thin that it becomes transparent.

5e) Every person has gold inside their body. An average person weighing 70kg would have 0.2milligrams of gold, enough to make a cube 0.22mm each side.

5f) When gold is found in nature, it is full of impurities, like quartz or ironstone on the outside, whilst the metal itself is impure, containing zinc, silver, copper or iron.

5g) Pure gold is virtually indestructible. It will not corrode, rust or tarnish, and fire cannot destroy it.

5h) As of 2020, if you add up all the gold that has ever been mined is 201,296 tonnes. That is equal to a cube with each side measuring roughly 21.7 metres.

1. **The Tabernacle**

6a) During the time of Moses, God wanted to make a place where His presence would rest and where people could come and meet with Him – the tabernacle.

6b) God gave Moses detailed plans of every aspect of the tabernacle’s shape, size and design. There are many spiritual lessons we can draw from this. Today we will just look at the tabernacle’s main structures, made out of acacia wood covered in gold.

6c) The Acacia (Raddiana) thorn tree is the only tree that grows in the Sinai desert. Acacia is the hardest of all hard woods. It is extremely difficult to work with once it is dry. It is hard to cut, very twisty and full of knots. The wood is very resistant to decay because the tree deposits many poisonous substances into the wood which are preservatives and render the wood unpalatable to insects.

6d) Out of all the materials that God could have chosen to build his house, he chose acacia wood covered in gold. The hardest wood covered by the softest metal. The twisty, poisonous knotty branches of the prickly desert thorn tree were rendered invisible, even beautiful, by being covered in this shiny, soft, valuable heavy metal from had come from the heavens.

6e) That’s a great picture of the Christian life. We are like the hard hearted, poisonous, awkward, prickly, knotty, twisted acacia wood that God comes to and offers to make us into something beautiful and valuable by covering us in himself. “We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” (2 Cor. 4, 7)

1. **We can have Gold**

7a) Just like gold comes from outer space, God wants our life to be characterised by qualities that aren’t normal, human qualities but which are the attributes of heaven,

7b) Qualities like loving your enemies; Forgiving those who hate you; being full of joy in difficult circumstances; Living at peace in impossible situations.

7c) Gold also represents the manifest presence of God, that Shekinah glory.

1. **If we want Gold, we have to buy it**

8a) We would like God to lavish gold upon us as a gift whilst we relax in comfort on the sofa! But God says, if you want it, you have to **buy it** from me.

8b) That doesn’t mean that you can earn His spiritual blessings. To buy in its simplest form means that you give something that you have which the other person wants in order to get what they have that you want.

8c) In exchange for time spent reading God’s word, we get the gold of His wisdom.

8d) In order to buy something firstly you have to recognise its true value. Secondly you have to want it badly enough to pay the price. We give our time to that which we believe is the most valuable to us.

8e) God asks us to make a costly investment. The more of your life that you give the more of God’s life that you get.

1. **We can get gold by making an exchange**

9a) Another way we can buy gold is by exchanging some of our old, wrong thoughts and habits for God’s precious new ones.

9b) Jesus wants to “bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.” Is. 61, 3

9c) Ashes are what’s left after a fire. Ashes of grief, unforgiveness or hurt or disappointment or debt or hatred. God wants us to give Him these ashes so He can turn them into something beautiful.

1. **Gold must be refined in the fire**
2. When God gives you gold, we should expect God to send fire to refine the gold in order to make it more pure.

10b) The traditional way to refine gold is to heat it until it melts in the fire. Gold has one of the highest melting points of any metal at 1,064C. It is one of the heaviest of all metals, so as it is heated, the impurities separate out and rise to the surface where they become visibly different from the gold so that they can be scraped away.

10c) We Pray – “God give me your heavenly love” – imagining a lovely, warm, glowing feeling that radiates out of us and fills all those around us with a comfortable after-glow. God says; You want love like mine? Here’s a rude, selfish person who’s going to hurt you that I will put in your life, who you can’t escape from. You’re asking for love, and I’m going to turn up the fire so that all your and all your hatred and desire for revenge is going to come up to the surface and become very visible.

In your natural human nature, you won’t be able to love them. When we see that we can’t love, we are meant to repent and skim away these ugly impurities in our life, and cry out to God for Him to gives us His gold from heaven.

10d) You pray; “God, I want faith for healing the sick”. Then, you unexpectedly develop arthritis or diabetes. You say; “God I thought you wanted me to heal the sick but now I’m sick. Why is this happening to me”?

10e) Whenever God called the great heroes of the Bible, almost straight after their calling he pushed them in the opposite direction. God purified them in the fire.

10f) Abraham, I’m calling you to be the father of many nations. Now I’m going to make it impossible to have children.

10g) Moses, I’m calling you to lead my people out of Egypt, so I’m going to remove you from your position as a prince of Egypt and send you to live as a no-body shepherd in the desert

10h) David – I’m anointing you to be king of Israel, so now I’m driving you out into the wilderness with an army of thousands of fully armed soldiers hunting you to try and kill you.

10i) Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China said; “Any work of God is first of all difficult. Then impossible. Then done.”

1. **God’s fire consumes His enemies**

11a) “Fire goes before him and consumes all his enemies.” (Psalm 97, 3).

When we invite God to come into our life, His fire goes before him in order to consume all his enemies that are in our hearts and minds.

11b) “Abraham, I’m calling you to be the father of all those who believe. But your life is full of unbelief. My fire will go before me to expose the unbelief in your life. If you are willing, I will send my fire again and again until all that unbelief has been exposed and repented of, so that you can become like me, pure Gold.”

1. **What we do in the fire determines if we become bitter or better.**

12a) Difficulties can make us turn away from God and become bitter, grumbling and full of unbelief, just like the people of Israel in the desert. Or full of “Gold”, full of God, living in miraculous victories, like Joshua and Caleb.

12b) The same fire can either harden clay or melt wax.

1. **Fire is God’s way of setting you free.**

13a) Remember Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Daniel 3). They were thrown into the fire bound hand and foot. The only thing that the fire did to them was to burn away the ropes that were holding them.

13b) God wants to set you free from the fear and depression and unforgiveness and sickness that is restricting and holding you. Fire is often God’s way of doing that.

1. **Fire is your best chance of meeting Jesus.**

14a) In the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego that when they were thrown into the fire, a 4th man appeared with them, walking through the flames

14b) “Do not fear …when you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour” (Isaiah 43, 2-3).

1. **Fire is God’s natural element.**

15a) Those of the prophets who saw God, saw his form as blazing with fire. A burning bush (Exod 3); sitting on a throne of fire with a river of fire flowing out from before him (Dan. 7, 9); “high abo

ve on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire” (Ezk. 1, 26); “his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace” (Rev. 1, 14). “Our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. 12, 29).

15b) Fire is God's natural element. God is fire, and He lives in the fire. Out from His heart flows a river of fire which is passion for the nations. He is an all consuming fire. But Fire is not the natural element of human beings.

15c) God came and lived among us in the flesh, but He calls us to live with him in the fire. “He makes His ministers a flame of fire” (Heb. 1, 7; Psalm 104, 4). You are destined to be an Eternal Flame and to shine brightly as a star (Dan. 12, 3).

He’s calling us to become like Him. He invites us to share in His heavenly life and glory even whilst we are on this earth.

15d) When you become like God, it doesn’t matter who stands before you, what difficult situation you are facing, what evil people stand before you, what lack of resources is before you. You will live in it with peace, you will respond to those around you with love and you will come through it with victory. That’s the life of God.