

## **Msg #165 of Scripture Beneath The Surface**

*“That No Man Might Buy Or Sell”*

With Randy Smith

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about buying and selling. We all buy and sell, but of course some of us buy more than sell. Of course, there are merchants everywhere who own businesses. But, most of us aren't merchants, we're consumers, so we buy and consume the goods and services that the merchants offer to us. This system of buying and selling is called trade, or, participating in the marketplace.

In the Bible, the business of trade is plainly evident. In all the historical records of the Old Testament, people bought and sold, and it was the merchants of the earth who provided the merchandise which was purchased. But the basic concept of buying and selling in scripture centers around the concept of the buying and selling of grain, wine, and oil. Think about this. Grain, wine, and oil. It is grain which is the basic food that all people need in order to survive, and the wine is, of course, the liquid that people drink, and the oil is the ingredient that brings the grain together into loaves of bread, and it is also oil which adds taste and texture to the bread. Bread is, without question, the very staple of life for people of Earth. In fact, the concept of bread is central to the passage in John, chapter 6 where Jesus refers to himself as the, "bread of life."

Let me read John 6, verses 51 through 58. These verses will give a good basic foundation for today's subject. When I read this, just keep in mind the importance of bread as the basic food for anyone on earth who needs to eat in order to live. Without bread, Earth's population would die. All the people of Earth would starve to death. Bread is an absolute necessity. However, these

verses help us to understand the principle of bread being a staple of life, but not just in the physical sense. Bread is also a staple of life in the spiritual sense. So, listen to John 6:51-58 as I read. It says, “ I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eats of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers ate manna, and are dead: he that eats of this bread shall live for ever.”

Well, did you catch the significance of Jesus Christ as the bread of life? Jesus is the bread that came down from heaven. You see, the bread that Jesus was talking about is the Word of God, and Jesus is that Word of God. Let me also read John, chapter 1, and verse 1, which says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Also, let’s drop down further in John, chapter one, and read verse 14. It says, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelled among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

You see, Jesus is the Word of God. Jesus is God’s Word which was brought to earth in the form of a man, in the form of flesh and blood. The Word of God was made flesh in order that God might more fully reveal himself to us. God is a spirit, but we are flesh and blood creatures. In order for us flesh and blood creatures to comprehend the fullness of God’s word, he brought his Word to earth in the form of flesh and blood. In this way, the people of earth have the opportunity to receive God himself. Jesus became that bread of God’s word which gives life. And when we eat the flesh of Jesus, and drink his blood, this gives us sustenance to live. However, the life we live from eating the bread from heaven is not life in the flesh, but life in the spirit. God is a spirit, and to live in God is to live in the spirit because we eat God’s Word.

Now, here’s what I would like you to concentrate on today. The word of God gives us knowledge about God. And because we have knowledge of God, we therefore have a relationship with God. Of course, the relationship we have with God is not a fleshly relationship. Our love for God is not demonstrated in the same way we demonstrate a love for things in this world. God is a spirit, and therefore, as the Bible tells us, we must worship God in spirit. The things of God are precious to those who have been born again in spirit, and they are precious to us because we like to know God, and we like to experience a relationship with him in the spirit. We love heavenly things. However, the only real problem with the word of God is that we can’t get enough of it. Sure, we can read the Bible a hundred times, but we still won’t understand it fully. The knowledge we glean from the scriptures is only a small part of who and what God is.

You see, there's not a Christian on the face of this earth that is satisfied with the understanding of God's word. We can't get enough of it. We always want God to show himself to us in a greater way. We always want him to reveal himself more fully. We always want his spirit to bless us more and more, but in every way, we come up short. We don't get enough of the understanding of God and we don't get enough of God's demonstration of his power.

And the problem is not that we don't want to read the Bible, but that it is just plain difficult to get as much of the understanding of God as we want. You see, there is a famine in this world for the word of God. No, I'm not talking about a famine for bread, I'm talking about a famine for the word of God. Sure, we have the Bible, and we can read the Bible, but no one on this planet can understand it fully, or even to any great extent. Yes, we have enough to sustain our life in the spirit, but not enough to fully demonstrate the power of God to others, and not enough to have great strength to fight the spiritual warfare.

And yes, we are fighting, and God has given us enough, but not enough to completely satisfy us. At least, I'm not satisfied. Are you? Are you satisfied that you have enough of God? Are you content and don't want any more understanding? Of course not. You want God to reveal more of his word to you, just like other Christians. But sadly, there is a famine for the word of God. In fact, the Bible refers to this famine in scripture. Let me share a couple of those scriptures with you. The first scripture is found in Amos, chapter 8. It says in verses 11-13, "Behold, the days come, says the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: 12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. 13 In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst."

Did you hear that? It said that the day would come when the Lord would send a famine into the land, and that this famine was not for food or drink, but a famine for the word of God. In Revelation 6:6, it talks about this famine when it describes the opening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> seal and the rider on the black horse. The black horse refers to famine, saying that this famine is going to be extreme. However, once again, you will have to understand that it isn't talking about a famine for bread, nor a famine for oil and wine, but a famine for the word of God and for the revealed word of God and for the power of God in the earth.

Now, I suppose there are some people who claim that there is no famine for the word of God at this time, but you can judge for yourself. Do you think there is plenty of understanding of God's word? Do you think you always have the answers to Bible questions? Do you ever ask questions about the things of God that preachers can't answer? Of course you do. If we had all the answers about God's word that we needed, we wouldn't have any problems. Is there any single Christian in the church today that doesn't have any problems? Is there any Christian in the church today that has all the answers they want from God?

You see, there is a famine for the word of God, because we Christians can't get enough of the heavenly things of God. Yes, we do have enough to sustain our faith in Jesus Christ, and we do

have enough to ensure our continued walk with him, but we don't have enough of the word of God to eat to the full. I don't know about you, but I'm hungry for more. I'm not satisfied at all.

However, I want you to think about something. Although there is a famine right now for the word of God, there is no famine in the world for worldly things. If you want the things of this world, you can eat to the full. You can stuff yourself. If you want worldly delights, if you want any kind of desires of the flesh, if you want entertainment in any earthly form, you can get it. It is there for the taking. You see, there is no famine for earthly things, but there is a famine for heavenly things. Christians struggle with understanding scripture, and especially in understanding prophecy. Christians everywhere ask the question, "how can you tell for sure when God is speaking to you?" They also say, "I read the Bible, but I have such a hard time understanding it."

And actually, the difficulty in understanding scripture is described in Isaiah 29:10-12. It says, "For the LORD has poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers has he covered. 11 And the vision of all has become to you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one who is learned, saying, Read this, I pray: and he says, I cannot; for it is sealed: 12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray: and he says, I am not learned." This spirit of deep sleep has invaded the church, and Christians everywhere are experiencing the famine for the word of God.

Of course, we know that the answer to our dilemma is that Jesus Christ will rise up and restore sight to us, and that the scales will fall from our eyes, for it is promised in Habakkuk 2:14, which says, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." You see, the knowledge will come, but the problem we have now is that practically the only knowledge that we have to the full is the knowledge of earthly things. In this world, if you want to know anything, just go to school, or look it up in the library, or go on the internet and the answers are everywhere. No, not the answers to the heavenly things of God, but answers to earthly things.

The real problem is that if you want heavenly things, you have to work very hard to get what you want, and even then you never get enough. But if you want things of the world, there's not much problem in getting them. Everything is for sale. The merchants are selling everything, and the buyers are buying everything. The merchants are getting rich, and the buyers, although they spend their money, still, they have an overabundance of the delicacies of earth.

And this is why Revelation 13:17 tells us that Satan's purpose is to create an environment on earth which only allows the wicked to buy and sell. If you're a Christian, and you care for the spiritual things of God, you cannot get enough of them. But, if you're a follower of Satan, and you only care for the things that this world has to offer, then you can eat to the full. And you know, eating to the full is how the Bible describes the sin of Sodom. Ezekiel 16:49 says, "Behold, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of

idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.”

You see, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because they only wanted to stimulate their flesh. Their fleshly desires were the only thing they thought about. Their pride was great, and they had all that they needed. And, because they had no need of anything, they began to look around for other things to play with. And this is also the problem with the world today. Especially in America. Americans have no end to their automobiles, and no end to their toys, and no end to their name brand clothes. It seems that everywhere you look, people are extremely prideful in their appearance, and are not satisfied unless they are wearing designer clothes. Instead of dressing modestly, there is a great tendency to dress for the purpose of drawing attention to themselves. This is the pride of life that the Bible refers to.

Buying and selling is everywhere, and it is easy to see that the buying and selling is not just in commodities necessary for daily living, but also include every toy and gadget imaginable. And this is exactly what Satan’s intent is, to create a world system where the stimulations of the flesh are abundantly available, and where the heavenly things of God are scarce. And the world market, as a whole, is quickly becoming just exactly that, a place where Satan’s toys are abundant, and God’s word is scarce. It is a place where there is a famine for the word of God, but the fleshly stimulations of the flesh are abundantly available in Satan’s market.

However, it is only those who care little for God and who love the world who traffic so heavily in the worldly things, and this is why these same people are marked with the mark of the beast, because they belong to Satan. The mark of the beast is a designation of ownership. Satan’s purpose, as described in Revelation 13:17, is to eventually create a world system where the heavenly things of God are no longer available, but the only thing still available is the worldly temptations of Satan. What the Devil wants is a Godless society, and a super abundance of earth’s delicacies. And Earth is quickly approaching Satan’s goal. However, Jesus Christ will soon stand up and put a stop to it, because if he didn’t, then pretty soon all of God’s children, all of his elect, would be lost.

However, we do have this promise, that the Lord will rise up, and that the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, will proceed out of his mouth. At that time the tables will be turned, and the wicked will begin to experience a famine for their kind of knowledge that will have no end. But at this current time, we Christians are still struggling.

But what can we do about it? How can we get more knowledge? How can we keep from being caught up in the flow of the world system of buying and selling? The answer is that we must develop a true love for the things of God, and we must also resist the impulse to deal and trade so extensively in Satan’s market. The temptations to reach out to everything of this world is very strong. But we must resist the temptation, and we must set our hearts and minds on the heavenly things of God instead of the delights of this world.

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Sodom's sin was pride, fulness of bread, and they became idle. They became bored. And it doesn't take too much imagination to realize that once you become bored, you start looking around for something to do. But also notice that part of the sin of Sodom was that once they were bored, they didn't put their time to good use by strengthening the hands of the poor and needy. The real problem with idleness is that when people have an abundance of idleness, they usually look around for some kind of entertainment. But entertainment is exactly opposite to what God has intended for us. We Christians don't need to be entertained, what we need is a true desire for the word of God, and we also need to reach out to those around us who are in need. James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep yourself unspotted from the world."

But you know, this isn't the message of the church today. Oh sure, preachers always talk about it, but they don't stress the importance of it. Pure religion is not church on Sunday morning and then the television the rest of the week. Pure religion is to get busy doing what God has called us to do. God didn't put us here to have fun, he put us here to work. He put us here to accomplish something. There's a lot of Christians who are constantly calling on God to move in their church services, but there are not a lot of Christians that are calling on God to show them how to get busy and work. Actually, it isn't God who needs to bless us, it is us Christians who need to get busy and bless God. It is us Christians who need to start seeking the will of God and searching for ways to help others instead of looking for God to bless us while we are so busy entertaining ourselves with the delicacies of this world.

Sadly, many Christians are trading heavily in the market of worldly things, and then they continue to complain that there is very little understanding of heavenly things. You see, Satan wants to eventually create a world market system that is completely void of heavenly things. He wants to completely take over the business of buying and selling on this earth, until all the people who buy and sell are his people, and are marked as belonging to him. At least, that is his intention. So please, think about this. What is your part in this? Are you still setting your eyes on the heavenly things above, or are you setting your affections on earthly things? This is an important point to consider, because the choice you make will determine whether you receive the mark of God, or the mark of the beast.