

A Call for Prophetic Evangelistic Preaching

by Alan Redpath

The sermon emphasizes the need for prophetic evangelistic preaching and the importance of getting right with God in order to experience revival and blessing.

Duration: 34:38

Scripture: Exodus 6:6, Isaiah 1:18, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16

Topics: "Prophetic Word"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses a controversy between God and his people. He highlights how God had shown immense love and care for his people, providing for their needs and protecting them. However, despite experiencing God's goodness, many turned away from his law, breaking his heart. The preacher emphasizes that there are people listening who are living in a similar way, having once experienced God's love but now having sour hearts towards him. The sermon also mentions the importance of heeding God's warnings and calls for repentance.

Transcript

Will you turn with me please in your Bibles to the prophecy of Isaiah, the first chapter and verse 18. Isaiah chapter 1 and verse 18. Come now, and these of course are the words of God himself to his people, come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord.

Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool, if ye be willing and obedient. We are commencing tonight a series of studies in the prophecy of Isaiah.

They will probably engage our thoughts and our concern for several months. My intention is not to go into detail of this prophecy, but to take out from it its living message and to show you how relevant that message is for the very time in which you and I live. It's right up to date.

We are apt to think of a prophet as someone who predicted the future, and to say that if he ceased to do that, he would no longer be a prophet. But the meaning of the word prophet in the Bible is a much broader one than that. The prophet encouraged, rebuked, revealed, chastened, exhorted, preeded, and predicted.

But if he has ceased to predict the future, he would still be a prophet. He was the messenger of God, the mouthpiece of God to his generation. And I believe with all my heart that the greatest need in our pulpits

today is prophetic preaching like that.

This country has been, you'll pardon me saying it, but has been absolutely, what's the word, almost put to sleep in John 3.16. It has been inoculated to the point that it can take it and listen to it and purr under it. And the United States of America is in desperate need of prophetic evangelistic preaching. To such a task, I would seek to give myself conscious, desperately conscious of my limitation and inability for it, but asking this congregation constantly to pray that they may sound out from this pulpit, Sunday by Sunday, a word that shall be as thus saith the Lord to our time.

I want you to remember that when the prophet did predict the future and proclaimed coming judgment, you will always find that his word of judgment was conditional. That is to say, he made it perfectly clear that under certain conditions, and provided the people were prepared to fulfill the conditions, judgment need not take place. The judgment of God could be changed into the mercy of God, if he be willing and obedient, says the prophet Isaiah.

I am so glad that in attempting to bring to you a prophetic message from this pulpit, which will often have in it the note of judgment, to say to you that judgment is never God's last word. But I want tonight to get perfectly clear that we understand the background under which this man Isaiah preached. You can never understand a man's message until you see the burden on his heart.

Nobody has any business to preach the gospel professionally, as so many people do today, without any burden. Nobody's got any right to preach Christ unless burning in their soul is a fire. There's a consciousness that the word of God is as a hammer that can break the rock of hearts to pieces, and can bring people to their senses, back to sanity, back to repentance, and back to God.

There's far too much today mere theory and too little real experience that's taught to this generation. And if there be some measure increasingly of burden upon my heart for this city and for this church and for this country, it's only because I see that within the pages of a book like Isaiah, the preacher had always to be a man who directed his message directly to the conditions in which he lived. What were those conditions? You will pardon me just two minutes of Old Testament history.

Maybe you remember that following the reign of Solomon, Jeroboam revolted and led in rebellion ten out of twelve tribes into the northern country of Shechem and Samaria. He formed a constitution and set up a kingdom and gave to the people a new form of worship and a new center of worship, a new priesthood and a new sacrifice. And the whole set-up was immoral and corrupt from the very beginning, and before very long those ten tribes were taken captive by the power of Assyria and were spread throughout the earth, never so far to have returned to their country.

There were two remaining tribes, Judah and Benjamin, and under the leadership of Rehoboam they remained with Jerusalem at the center, and from time to time in Old Testament history they experienced periods of revival and of blessing. At one point this southern kingdom was nearly brought to wreck and ruin because the son of Jehoshaphat, one of the kings of the south, married a daughter of Ahab, one of the kings of the north. And that unholy alliance meant that this daughter of this pagan king came into the south and set up all her pagan idolatry and nearly ruined this southern kingdom of Judah through whom God was going to bring the Messiah and the Deliverer.

The unholy alliance was broken, but this decadent religious people, the Jew, were now utterly unrepentant and utterly hardened and utterly given over to false worship. And while maintaining an outward form of the

worship of Jehovah, deep down in their hearts they were far from him, and before very long they were captured by the Babylonian empire and taken into bondage and captivity, from which many of them returned only after a period of some seventy years. The prophet Isaiah came on the scene, as he tells us in the opening verse of this particular chapter.

He came on the scene some seventy years before this people went into captivity. He preached his message in the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He began preaching about 700 years before Christ, and he concluded about 630 before Christ.

He had a preaching ministry of some seventy years. And there's one thing that will impress you throughout all of this message of Isaiah as we pursue our way through it. It is full of love, it is full of judgment.

Almost every tone of the divine orchestra, if I may put it that way, almost every tone, every note is sounded. God pleads through his servant, God condemns, God pronounces judgment, God preaches and gives warning, God woos, God loves, God pleads, God weeps, and God longs for the return of this people to himself. But Isaiah preached in a day of decadence, in a day of rebellion, in a day of shallow worship, in a day of lack of reality in religion, a day when people were determined to take their own course, a day when people had little regard for God's day and the Sabbath, and a day when ultimately the people of God found themselves in bondage and in captivity.

My beloved people, it is in such a day that I stand and confront you Sunday by Sunday. I don't know how many people in this country have wakened up to the fact that these are days of decadence and days of judgment, and days when the church of Jesus Christ is in decline, and days when the people of God care little for the Lord's day. I am absolutely amazed at the way in which many fundamental believing Christians come to worship on a Sunday morning, go out to a restaurant for noon, and they're finished for worship for the And we live in a day when I believe the voice of God is sounding from heaven in warning, in pleading, in wooing, in love, in judgment, and he's saying to his people, come now and let us reason together, Cephalon.

And this theme, which throbs with all a loving heart of God, has in it many messages of hope and of comfort and of encouragement and of assurance, but it also has a deep note of warning and of judgment. I want to ask you just for a few moments this evening that remain to consider with me the opening notes of the prophecy of Isaiah. Here there's a controversy with God.

Here God is making a complaint against his people. We shall see that it is a threefold complaint. He has three grounds to bring against them, three causes of accusation that he speaks to his people about.

And I am confident that God would speak to you tonight and to me, and he would have exactly the same thing to say concerning many of us. For this prophecy begins and, and, if I may say it, it's almost pathetic to notice that God has ceased apparently to speak directly to his people, but do you notice that in the opening verses of this chapter God calls upon the heavens and the earth to bear witness concerning them? Hear, O heavens, he says, give ear, or else. As much as to say, has any created thing ever seen anything so tragic as the condition of my people in this day and in this generation? And God, instead of speaking directly to his people, turns from them and addresses his creation, the mountains, the sea, the skies, the stars, his created universe, the earth all around him, and he says, my creation, listen, listen, can you believe it possible that my people have done this thing? And as he addresses the heavens, and as I would in his name address you, he accuses this generation of three things.

One, distorted or wrong relationships with himself. Two, wrong relationships with each other. Three, false worship.

And I believe tonight with all my heart God has got something to say to Moody Church about this. I am not concerned tonight whether you profess to be born again or not. I'm not concerned whether you decide for Christ or not.

I'm concerned to see this congregation get right with God. I'm concerned that this people should really be broken, most of all the man who preaches to you. I'm concerned that this church should be worthy of its name and of the glory that once attached to it.

I'm tired of being in a place which has such a reputation, but which has lost the glory, lost the power, and lost the glow. But time and time again we're so smug about it and we think Moody Church is so wonderful. I'm concerned, beloved, to tell you tonight that there are men and women in this place who are in wrong relationship with God.

Therefore they're wrong in their relationship with each other, and their worship in the name of the Lord is false and superficial. Of course this kind of preaching isn't popular. Of course it isn't easy.

Of course you don't like it. Neither do I like it. I want you to know that there's nothing, nothing tempts me, and nothing attacks me more freely.

And you'll pardon me if this sounds cynical or proud. God knows my heart. I don't mean it to be like that.

I see some preachers who are so popular, who fill their sermons with funny stories, who tell illustrations and use them that ought never to come from a Christian pulpit at all. I hear them amuse people in a conference. I hear the laugh of the crowd, and I hear them say how wonderful he is, and I put my head in my hands and I say, oh God, if that wonderful, I'd rather be in heaven out of it all forever.

I listen to men try and thrill people with the attractive magnetism of a personality, and with a streamlined approach, and with a syncopated ideas and music, and all the rest of it. And I say, Lord, Lord, if this is the thing that this country will find true, because I'm quite sure that it's not the thing that America needs, I'd rather that God would take me into the very presence of the Lord Jesus tonight, my friends, than to give in to this popular, easygoing preaching stuff that this country has been doped with by many a pulpit. Of course it's not going to be popular.

Of course you're not going to like the next eight months. I can't help it. I'm concerned here that you and I should wake up to the fact that in this church, and in this congregation, there are people who are living in wrong terms with Jesus Christ.

And if ever we want to see revival, and if ever we want to see Chicago blessed, you and I have got to get right with God. What were these distorted relationships with himself? Look at them. Verse two, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me, says God.

And I can imagine the thoughts of our mighty God going back hundreds of years to a time when his people were laboring under the yoke of Egypt. I can imagine God thinking of a day when he said to that people in bondage, I will bring you out. I will rid you of the bondage of Pharaoh.

I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and a mighty hand. I will take you to me for a people, and I will be your God. And I will dwell among you, and I will lead you with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

And how often was that mighty arm stretched out to save his people. How often had he cherished and nourished them, and cared for them and loved them, given them bread from heaven and water out of a rock, fed them and sustained them and kept them from being hungry and from being thirsty. Forty years they lacked nothing, and he brought them into the land and he subdued all their enemies.

And yet, and yet, after all the experience of God's goodness, they turned their backs upon God's law, and they broke his heart. A controversy, a controversy with God. And I am persuaded tonight that there are men and women listening to me who are just living like that.

Ah, you can go back in your life and remember when God spoke to you and said, I'll bring you out from the bondage of sin. And he cared for you and he's protected you and he's guided you and he's led you and blessed you. He's loved you and cherished you and nourished you.

But tonight as you listen to me, your heart toward God, some of you, is sour. There's been disagreement with him and controversy with him and sin in your life. And you've grieved his spirit and you've turned your back upon your law, God's law.

And God has often said to you, my child, thou shalt not. And you've said, but Lord, I am going to. God has spoken to you time and time again and said, you shall.

And I have said to him, I shall. And in relationship with an almighty God upon the throne, there are people who profess to be so wonderful and they're believers and they're Christians, but in their heart they're wrong. There's no brokenness, there's no repentance, there's pride, there's self-righteousness, there's religion, there's fundamentalism, but oh God, there's no brokenness in spirit.

Wrong with God. And just because, just because in this church there are people like this, I don't believe that Moody Church has ever seen a mighty movement of revival. And I don't believe it ever will until some men humble themselves under the power of God the Holy Ghost.

Loved, if this church doesn't see a real mighty movement of the Spirit of God soon, soon we just can't go on as we are. I don't know how many of you believe that. How many of you say, oh, that's just sensational talk.

Just silly nonsense. It's nothing of the kind. This church desperately needs to see a movement of God that has no explanation except God has met with people who've humbled themselves.

I'm not afraid to say from this pulpit, because the pulpit of Moody Church to me is no coward's castle, I'm not afraid to say that the issue lies with the leadership of this place. Three years next Sunday I preach my first sermon from this pulpit. They have been three wonderful years.

I wouldn't have missed those years for anything in the world. I'm not speaking of the blessing that they have brought to you, I am speaking of the blessing they've brought to my own soul. I'm not speaking of what God has done in your life, I'm speaking of what God has done for me.

God has to put some tough people in a tough place to break them, and he had to do that for your pastor. He has to make some men who think themselves to achieve something, and to have built up some kind of reputation, he has to make them see that they're just absolute nobodies, and God has had to teach me that. I wouldn't have missed these three years for anything in the world.

I want to say to you that all the blessing that has come to this precious fellowship has come in the circumference and not at the heart of it, and that's the thing that burdens my soul daily till sometimes I can't even sleep at night. Now people come in here and some of them get converted. Now people come into this place from the outside and they get blessed and they get out to the mission field.

Thank God for it all, but in large measure the very heart of this place remains unmoved, unbroken, untouched by God the Holy Ghost. And I say there's a desperate need for men in leadership and women of this church to get right with God. There are people who will sit upon the sidelines and criticize and talk but won't do anything for God.

Distorted relationships with the Lord. And of course it may be that even here in this place tonight there are people who are unsaved, unconverted, no knowledge of the living Christ, and you consider yourself intellectual. God said concerning his people, the ox knoweth his owner, the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know.

My people doth not consider. And God would send some of us who perhaps think it's a token of superior education not to be a true believer in Christ, he would send some of us to a grade school and he'd put us in one grade lower, one grade lower than an ox or an ass, and he would say that they have got more intelligence than the man who thinks he can go through life without God. The ox knoweth his owner, the ass his master's crib, they know who they belong to, they know who owns them, they know who possesses them, but my people for whom I have done so much doth not consider.

Distorted relationships with God. Beloved, whenever there's wrong relationships with God that means there's bound to be wrong relationships with other people. Look at this verse.

Distorted relationships with each other. Verse 4. A people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupted. No man can be right with his fellow creature if he's wrong with God.

The fountain of all sin in the Christian church as well as outside the Christian church is distorted relationships with the Lord Jesus. And where things are wrong there, things are wrong down here. How often stories come to me, perhaps I shouldn't listen to them, of one Christian who says this about another Christian and one worker says this about another worker.

And does that spirit of condemnation and criticism and judgment pass? And does wrong relationships and no fellowship, tell me my listener, tell me, you get out of the sideline and get into the conviction of the Holy Ghost tonight, tell me, how long is it since you spoke to somebody in this church with whom you have a disagreement? How long? How long is it since you made an apology for some nasty thought you've had about somebody else? I have actually heard of some people who will stand out at the ambulatory in Sunday school hour and refuse to come into Sunday school because it isn't organized the way they like it. It's time such people got out of this building altogether. That's the kind of and of course such people with a halo that doesn't quite fit them and with a pious expression that is so wonderful will say, oh pastor we long for revival.

You hypocrite. Distorted relationship with God have meant that this church is racked to the very heart with people who are wrong with each other. You expect a man to stand up in the pulpit on Sunday and see crowds of people getting converted? You get right with your fellow Christian and see what'll happen.

I said God concerning this people, they have gone away backward. Backward. They've forsaken the law, therefore they do corrupting.

They've provoked the Holy One of Israel. One word in conclusion. Wrong with God.

Wrong with each other. And our worship for this false. Verse 11.

To what purpose says the Lord? To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts. In other words, God says I've had enough of this, I'm sick of it. I loathe your sacrifices, I loathe your worship.

I remind you that God appointed it all. That God said they should worship him like that. But now he hates the very smell of all their offerings.

You will notice their zeal for the show of the faith. They didn't worship false gods. They didn't restrict their sacrifices to a minimum.

There was a multitude of them. They didn't bring the worst, they brought the fed beasts, the fat ones, the best. They came at the proper time of year.

They had their convention. They prayed and they prayed and they spread their hands toward heaven, says the scripture. Do you know what they were doing? Listen to me.

They were trying to buy off the Almighty. They brought their gifts, they brought their sacrifices, they brought their offerings, they brought their worship, but they wouldn't get right with God or right with each other. And therefore, God looks down in heaven upon them and says, your worship's an abomination.

Your prayer, I won't hear it. Your hands are full of blood. Your service, it's worthless.

Your offerings, oh, they stink in my nostril. You can't buy God's favor with a thousand dollar check if you won't speak to your Christian brother and get right with God. Wrong with God, wrong with each other, wrong in their worship.

And, says the Lord, that from the crown of their head to the sole of their foot, they were full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sore. Oh, beloved Christian, my friend, whether you profess to be a Christian or not, listen to me. Has this message burnt, burnt its way into your soul? Are you listening to the preacher tonight, and you know you're not right with God, and you know you're not right with your fellow Christian, and you know that in relation to this church you're a hindrance and not a help? Are you trying to bribe the Almighty with your worship? Are you trying to bribe God with your checks and with your money and with your sacrifice and with your teaching and with your service? Ah, let me, let the boomerang hit the preacher.

Do I bribe God with that? Do I? Do I tempt God's favor and yet refuse in anything in my life to get right with him? Is that the situation that confronts us in Moody Church? What are we going to do about it? Come now, come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wild.

And of course, that's the whole heart of the gospel. And as I have spent hours this week in Isaiah chapter one, I have seen my own life and my own heart, oh, so much of it, as I see those people. But I am so glad that God spoke that word of comfort, that his last word was not judgment, but, but, oh, come, let us reason together.

And he said it to a people whose sins were as crimson, as crimson. Beloved, I, I ask you with all my heart tonight, don't you see your sin like that, don't I? Wrong with God. After years of all this tender care, my heart has not been right with him, has it? Wrong with God.

Wrong with my fellow worshiper, and there are people in this church today with whom some of you are right out of fellowship and you're content to go on like that. Wrong in your worship. For with all the amplitude of it and the plenitude of it and all the multitude of your sacrifices, brother, sister, you'll bring to God your last penny, but you won't forsake your sin.

You'd empty your bank balance of everything you've got in it, but you'll hold on to the thing that you know blocks the power of God in this church. May God have mercy upon you. But our Lord says, come and reason together.

Will you do that? Will I? Let's pray. Come now, though your sins be scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

For the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. And even for people like us, there's a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness. Lord, answer prayer.

Oh, please, answer prayer in this church tonight. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

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