

Elijah and Restoration of Acts

by Andrew Strom

The church needs to return to its original form, as described in the Book of Acts, and to practice body ministry and communion in order to truly follow Jesus.

Duration: 41:05

Topics: "Elijah"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preaching the Gospel and living in New Testament Christianity. He describes how many people are unfamiliar with the true essence of the Gospel and the transformative power it holds. The preacher encourages believers to adopt a new wine skin, which refers to a mindset and lifestyle that aligns with the moving of the Holy Spirit. He urges listeners to actively participate in practices such as baptism, communion, and ministering to one another. The sermon concludes with a call to action, urging believers to share the Gospel with others and lead them to repentance and baptism.

Transcript

Pray God that your glory would be here tonight, that we would receive insight from you, because without you I have none. Literally, without you I have nothing to say. So I pray Father that you would speak, that your word be found in my mouth, that your glory would come down, that your inspiration and insight would make itself felt amongst us, because you are the one God.

You are the glorious one. We praise and honor you tonight, Father, in Jesus' wonderful name. Amen.

Everything we have comes from Him. You know, if you're in a nation where it is a massive struggle every day, you believe that. When you're in a fat cat country like we all come from, including myself, we forget that so easily.

Everything comes from God. There's a lot of complex reasons why they're having revival over in those poor countries and we are not. Well, the thing I want to principally speak about tonight is this, that the end result of the revolution we're talking about is to return us to the book of Acts type church.

In other words, to return us to the New Testament to be a church like they were. And if it does not result in that, then we've failed. No revolution will go far enough if it doesn't return us to the original church.

Isn't it a novel idea? Think about this for a minute. Isn't it an incredibly novel idea that Christianity as it was set up to be in the beginning is what we should aim for? And yet, do you know we're completely different? You know that, don't you? You know that everything we do, I once just looking at, you know, the first probably six or seven chapters of the book of Acts, and I made a little list of ways in which we're similar and ways in which we're different. We're completely different.

We have almost no similarities at all. Now there's a lot of talk about the Elijahs of God, the Elijahs. We hear all this kind of talk all the time, especially in the movement that I've just left, which is the prophetic movement.

And I publicly declared that I'm leaving that movement. I did it in November last year. I wrote a big email, an article about it, and it caused a big shockwave and a big stir because I said, I'm leaving the prophetic movement because all you do is talk about Elijah, but I see no sign of him in your ranks at all.

Nothing approaching him, nothing remotely like a prophet of God would speak to the lukewarm church. Why would I be part of a prophetic movement that is so utterly unprophetic? Utterly unprophetic. As far removed from Jeremiah as you can get.

Big swank fat cats in jet planes going from conference to conference selling books. Staying in five-star hotels, which are often demanded in their guarantee that they send to you before they say they will come. Anybody who's organized a conference with the big dudes knows that that's what they do.

Many of them. Elijah's, give me a break. Elijah comes in his camel here, eating locusts and honey.

Why does he come this way? He says, I do not come from your background, sir. I challenge everything you stand for. I did not come out of your systems.

I was not trained in your schools. I cannot be bought. I stand for one thing and that is truth.

I shall bring you back to God or die trying. They took off his head in six months. Who did it? The religious authorities of his day.

Utterly threatened by a man who spoke truth and could not be bought and would not play the game. And how easy it is today in America to play that game. You get on the conference to a man and get yourself a little TV show and you start small and you build your way up.

You know, and James is talking about a generation coming through that ain't going to do it. Is going to say no to the game, say no to the big swank prophets who will only invite you back if you speak sweet things. And just say, I'm sorry we rebuke you in Jesus name.

Oh prophet who prophesies for money. There is an epidemic of the era of Balaam. I believe you guys say it differently.

How do you say Balaam? Balaam. There is an epidemic of that thinking. What did he do? He prophesied for money.

He would even prophesy against God's people for money. There is an epidemic of the love of money in the ministry in this country. When the Elijah's come, their job is this to restore all things.

Remember Jesus said of John the Baptist, he first comes and restores all things. He's talking about the Elijah's of God. This is their job.

You want to claim today that you have some kind of part, even if it's a small part in an Elijah type ministry, you want to talk about the Elijah's of God. Let me see you taking risks and standing on the edge to restore the church to how she's meant to be. If you ain't going to do that dirty job, which is not a pleasant one, get away from me you false prophet.

I will not listen to you and I will not buy your books. The Elijah's of God. Can you imagine them trying to invite John the Baptist in to partake of one of these conferences? John will put you up in a five-star hotel.

John, what is your minimum guarantee that you demand for us to get you here? We would love to, you know, on and on it goes. I mean, it's just, and the American church is suffering because of this, because do you know what? They've taken prophets who were given a gift by God and ruined them, destroyed them. You know, I mean, I've just received an offering from you guys.

I hope it's not going to destroy me. But seriously, what do we do with the guy that arises with truth in his mouth? Pretty soon the church has corrupted him by throwing money at him. You know what I'm saying? How do we avoid it? That principality must have been destroyed in our lives to cope with the level of money that is around the American church.

You must have no love of money in you, otherwise it will take you to the cleaners. It'll have you for breakfast. You guys say that? It'll have you for breakfast.

So here we are, we're in an age where we're utterly different from the original church. The Christianity that Jesus invented is nothing like us. We know that in the very beginning, let's just turn, shall we, just for reference, let's just turn to Acts chapter 2. We might as well talk about a little bit about what the church was like.

I've studied Acts extensively on this subject. I've written literally a book on this subject. If anybody ever wants to go to my website and read some challenging stuff, which, you know, it's just really how I came to be here, go to www.revivalschool.com. Can you remember that? Revivalschool.com. That's just a little advert there.

That was our ad break. Okay, Acts chapter 2, down in verse 43. Listen to this description of the early church.

Try and match it with us. ...and fear came upon every soul. Many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

All who believed were together and had all things in common. They sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all as any had need, day by day attending the temple together. By the way, you know what it means when it says attending the temple together? They used to gather in this place called Solomon's Porch.

Huge open-air courtyard, the size of five football fields, called the Court of the Gentiles. Solomon's Porch is running around the edge of it, a little overhang running around the edge of it. So they had this open-air church happening every day.

When it says they went to the temple, they didn't go inside some big marble building. They went inside the courtyard area, and this is where Jesus taught whenever he was in Jerusalem. If Jesus was in Jerusalem, he'd go and preach in Solomon's Porch.

That's where you went to gather a crowd of people out, basically out in the open air, but it was still a place that still had spiritual significance, if you like. It was like a big courtyard, but even Gentiles were allowed to go there. It was Courtyard of the Gentiles.

If you ever get one of those commentaries or something that has a map of the temple, you'll see it in there. Huge area. That's where they went, okay? So it's almost like they're having an open-air, kind of, very similar to an open-air miracle meeting, repentance meeting, out in front of all Jerusalem.

Getting a handle on that? Different from us, isn't it? They sold their possessions and goods. I'm down in verse 45, 46. Day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God, having favor with all the people, and the Lord added to their number day by day, those who are being saved.

Now, we talked about this morning, even their way of getting saved is different from ours. Their way of getting saved is different. The fact that they have communion in their homes together, breaking bread from house to house, it says.

We know that in those meetings, they ministered to one another. If you have the gift of healing, and you're in one of their house meetings, you would be expected to pray for the sick. You don't have to go to Bible college.

None of these guys had been to Bible college. They were fishermen and tax collectors. You know what it would be like? It would be like me now, arriving and saying, we're going to found the church of God and the earth.

Now, let me look around for some garbage disposal men that I can find to run everything. You know, let's look around for the, you know, the guys that run along behind the garbage trucks. Let's look around for some totally average, everyday people, untrained, uneducated.

It says in the book of Acts that the Pharisees scorned the disciples, scorned the apostles because they were uneducated and ignorant men. Jesus said, I've delivered this unto babes. Remember that? So what do we do? Of course, we start Bible colleges where you have to go and virtually get a master's degree before becoming a pastor.

And thus, we ruin the church. We make sure that the gifted people amongst us, every one of us has giftings, they don't minister at all. They just sit there like you guys are sitting there now, listening.

Is this the church? What is the body ministering to one another? That's what used to happen in these houses. They'd come together, they'd have communion. I've run meetings like this and I've taught people how to do this.

So the person who has a gift of healing, it could be anybody, could be the least educated person in the room, doesn't matter. You say to that person, please, can you pray for the sick in the room tonight? You say the person with the gift of discerning spirits, you say, please, there's someone we believe may have a demonic stronghold in their life. Can you get up and pray for that person? We all know that we've been

given gifts by God and the way we've set our churches up in the West today denies it.

And even in our house meetings, often we run them in a way where we don't minister to one another at all. We've still got the same old thing going on, one guy doing it all or two guys doing it all. Listen, people, that ain't body ministry.

No one's going to become the next Oral Roberts to pluck a word out of the air. No one's going to become the next healing powerhouse guy if we don't let the healers heal people in the Jesus. Where are our tomorrow's prophesies come from if they aren't getting body ministry prophesying in those kinds of meetings? They're not.

What's happening is it's like if I have an arm and I just let it sit there and do nothing for 10 years, it will wither away. I'll go to use that arm in 10 years time, I'll find I can no longer even lift my arm up because the muscles will disappear because they're totally unused. We're doing that to the body of Christ today.

We do not get our people ministering and most of them are extremely capable, but untrained and unconfident. So I want to challenge you in your prayer meetings from now on, start considering this. Why don't we have communion together? A, let's start doing that.

Praise God, we're starting to live a little bit like the book of Acts. Number B, let's open our prayer meeting up so that ministry can occur in our prayer meetings. We had a wonderful, those who are at our conference, I think there's probably four or five in this room who are at our conference, most will say that the most blessed moment that we had, the John the Baptist conference was on Sunday morning at the prayer meeting, we had an open mic and people started praying and then people started just spontaneously singing and then people were getting up and delivering words and it was like an atmosphere that was prayerful but turned into body ministry.

Wasn't that beautiful? Wasn't that a morning that you just wouldn't miss? Were you guys there for that? You know, you just wouldn't miss it for the earth. Wouldn't miss it for the earth. And I just sat down.

I did my opening prayer and said the mic is open. We've got to have leaders that simply know when to shut up and stop talking and let body ministry take place. It's difficult to do it in large gatherings but it's perfect to do it in smaller gatherings and this is what happened in scripture.

It wasn't in their huge, huge meetings outdoors. This was basically in their houses. Perfect place to start ministering and getting experience.

We have pearls in our midst who we never hear from. We do. We're wasting our jewels.

We're wasting the gold and silver that God has given to us. And so many people are tomorrow's leaders if only they were released in the small groups and grew into giants in God. So I believe fully, if you think about it, there's nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

I mean, you could add to that if you go into Romans as well but let's, you know, we're just figuring, looking at everybody. Everybody in here, if you've got the Holy Spirit, you have a gift. You have a calling on your life.

You know, another thing that we need to do, pastor, just an idea. This is one I love. Get, and this is something I'm emphasizing to us all, not just the pastor but this is something I love doing on a practical

level.

Get people, when it's time to baptize someone, get some of you in brand new spirit filled but on fire Christians to baptize that person. Why do I say that? Because when I was in Fiji, I was 23 years old. I just went over, we went on a month's mission trip and the Holy Spirit broke out in this meeting and I was just accompanying this guy.

He was the evangelist. He was doing all the ministry. I was just kind of tagging along, you know.

23 years old and enjoying it all but not really doing too much. Pretty unanointed what I did do, you know. That's what it was like in those days, praise God.

And anyway, the Holy Spirit broke out. This guy was delivering, you know, delivering demons out of some girl or something. Pretty horrific and he said to me, listen, there's seven people here that want to be baptized and there's just no way I can get away.

Can you take them down to the beach and baptize them? This is in the middle of the night, the middle of the night. In Fiji, there ain't no street lights and we had to walk down to the beach but you know what? I felt all the way down enduring it and all the way back. You know what I felt? I felt like, I felt like I was in the middle of the book of Acts.

Felt like I was in the middle of the book of Acts. I've never forgotten that. I was totally changed by that.

You see, we've got to get our young dudes baptizing. I'm not talking about the elders, I'm not talking about the guys who are appointed to do everything, you know. We've got to get our people just experienced at book of Acts kind of stuff.

We've got to say to our young people, okay, you've led this person now in a prayer of true repentance, it's time to baptize them. We're used to sending guys off and training them up, giving them a piece of paper and saying, you're qualified brother to do everything in the church. You're qualified, we're going to hire you and we're going to sit around and make you do it all.

Oh goodness, why are you feeling so burnt out? Oh goodness, I wonder why your marriage is crashing apart because we're keeping you, you know what I'm saying? We do this disastrous, silly, non-body stuff and we wonder why, you know, that the the burnout rate amongst pastors is literally one of the worst amongst all professions anywhere. That's because we expect them to do everything. So what are we headed towards with the New Testament church? What are we headed back to with the New Testament church? We're headed back to a church that preaches the whole gospel that we were talking about this morning, that allows the whole body to minister, that is out there instead of in here, in essence, you know what I'm saying? Our ministry is out there, the people we haven't ever met yet, James is talking about this, like in Solomon's porch.

So there's got to be a presence. Now, the way we'll know that we have come back into New Testament Christianity is this, it's very, very simple. People will look at us, the corporate thing that we are, and they'll say, my goodness, that group is like Jesus.

They're working miracles, they're speaking repentance and truth, they're putting down religion and raising up Christ. They are all powerfully involved in the Holy Spirit, ministering to one another and to the world. People will look at us and they'll say they're giving to the poor, they're pouring money into the poor of the

earth.

Do you know David Kirkwood, who's a friend of mine, he ministers in third world countries all the time and serves orphanages. He has about 10 or 13 in third world countries that he serves. And he made this point very clearly when he was at our conference, he said this, America has no poor people.

He said, I have seen the poor of the earth, and I tell you, even our most poverty stricken homeless people are rich by comparison. Rich by comparison, he said, he has been just in the streets of an everyday visit to somewhere like Nigeria, not even one of the worst countries, Nigeria. Let alone going to Pakistan, some of those places.

There's third world and there's fourth world, literally, in the earth today. You can go to places where it's just an incredible nightmare from beginning to end. And you can't believe that people can live this way.

And how can they survive? How can they get up and walk another day in this? We don't know. We have no idea. I want to tell you, when the move of God comes, when the revolution comes, the church of America's eyes will be taken off itself.

And we won't be wanting to buy ourselves anymore a sound system that's better than last year's, man. We'll just be going, oh my goodness, if only there was a way, what can we sell to get more money to our brothers and sisters in those poor countries? Our focus is going to completely change. If you want to be part of the new move of God today, get your head around the things I'm talking about, because the new move of God is all about this.

In other words, if you want to start living in New Testament Christianity, if you want to jump the gun and get into the revolution and be a front runner, get these things sorted out that I'm talking about tonight. Start participating in them. Start baptizing people.

Start having communion in your small groups and ministering to one another. You know, it ain't rocket science. The fishermen were running it and they did a pretty good job.

It just ain't rocket science. I don't have to go and get a degree to know this stuff or do it. We all have gifts and man, if we were using them, boy, what a change.

If we were pouring money into the poor of the earth, my goodness. Do you know, I could tonight, I could prove to you from scripture that Jesus predominantly came to minister to the poor, that virtually every rich man, and we're in a rich zone right now. You know, all Americans live in the top 10% of the world as far as wealth.

All Americans. Very, very few that are so poverty stricken in this country that they live in third world conditions. Because third world conditions is, there's nothing electrical.

There's no hot and cold running water. You have to go down and dredge it out of some swamp, muddy water that you use. There's nowhere to wash.

There's nowhere to go to the toilet. There's nothing, man. And so much of the world lives that way and we just have no idea.

And many of those people are brothers and sisters of ours. Africa is full of Christians, spiritual Christians, many of them in poverty. They are the ones that our ministry needs to go to.

Praise God for all the outreaches that we do in our own country to poor people here. But I want to tell you, there is a harvest field in Africa and in Asia. Multitudes of Christians in those countries are completely without, totally without.

My friend sponsors orphans for \$15 a month. He says the difference between an orphan that has \$15 a month and one that doesn't is astronomical. Just the difference that that makes.

Because they're all just eating rice. They're all just existing on this bare minimum, you know. We just have no idea.

And God is speaking to the church in our day and our focus as a church, the church in America's focus is going to change. And we're not going to give our money to big preachers anymore and TBN is going to lose funds and God willing it'll just kind of dry up one day and fall over. And anyway, I won't go there.

And TBN cannot preach the gospel in all the earth, do you know that? Do you know we can send missionaries that belong to Gospel for Asia out for \$3 a day into the worst situation, the conditions where they could likely get killed any minute and they'll willingly go and they will preach the gospel better than a TV show ever will. We ain't helping the world by making more TV shows, seriously people. We ain't teaching them anything good.

My friend David Kirkwood, when he goes to Africa, he spends all his time undoing what they've heard from America. All his time. He holds conferences of pastors up to a thousand at a time.

He says he has to preach against Western Christian garbage coming in. He spends his whole time doing that. That's how bad it is.

That's the reality on the ground right there. He does this every month. Hmm, where were we? This is when we'll see signs and wonders return to the church.

We ask why, why are we not living in a church that has an abundance of signs and wonders? Why are all the things that are happening in other countries not happening here? Well, we're not persecuted. We don't give to the poor. We give to ourselves.

We preach a lukewarm gospel. God's not going to back it with signs and wonders, people. He just ain't.

We're completely divided. And in every way, we're not like the book of Acts church. And so God is going to bring a revolution.

He's going to shake this church. He's going to shake this nation until the church falls on its knees again and begs God, God intervene. God, we have to have things where Jesus is glorified, where the people of the earth look at us and they go, oh my goodness.

It's like looking at Christ himself. Look at these people. And the thing about it is we can be that way again.

We can. If we have the Holy Spirit in us, there is nothing stopping us. The only thing stopping us is us.

So your homework, this is your homework, people. Okay. I used to be a teacher, so I'm going to give you some homework.

Put your hand up if you've never yet baptized anybody. Put your hand up if you have never baptized anybody. That's a lot of people.

Put your hand back up if you would like to baptize somebody. Right. Your homework is this.

You preach the gospel to somebody that you know, they might already go to church. We need to remember that much of our harvest field in America already goes to church. They sit in pews every week and they think they're okay with God.

So you go talking to your neighbors and you just say to them, listen, do you have the fullness of Jesus in you? Have you been transformed? What I was talking about this morning. Are you transformed in the inner person? Do you walk with him? If they don't really know what you're talking about, you show them, look, this is how it starts. You lead them to repent before God.

That just means they confess their sins to God and they say, God, God bring change. God make me change. God don't let me go back to this.

If their heart is really in it, praise God. That's repentance. Step number one.

And you baptize them. My wife was baptized in a bathtub. She came out of the water speaking in tongues.

Praise God. Book of Acts, Christianity. Do you know who needs to pray for them to get baptized in the Holy spirit and speak in tongues? You do pastor.

Is it okay for me to authorize them to baptize people? Okay. I authorize you to baptize people. There you go.

Praise God and pray for them to get filled with the Holy spirit. And when you're in your small groups, it doesn't matter if it's a prayer meeting. Doesn't matter if it's a home group.

Doesn't matter if it's a cell group. I don't care what it is. If you're in a leadership meeting, next time you try it, have communion together, start praying and say, God, we're just opening this meeting up now for the Holy spirit to move.

Please God move in our midst. Father, if there's, if so, and you just say, listen, anybody feel free to speak out. If you have a word for someone, if you just have an impression, you need to pray for someone in the group or, you know, or you have a little word or a prophecy for someone, whatever it is.

And you can stick someone in the hot seat and you stick a seat in the middle of the room and you say, we're just going to have turns praying for this person. This person wants some prayer. And if you feel anointed that God's given you a word for them, pray it over them.

And next thing you know, stuff starts happening and people that aren't baptized in the Holy spirit get baptized in the Holy spirit and people, people start wanting more of God and they see God moving. And next thing you know, you've got a book of our acts breakout happening. Not rocket science is it people come on.

That is your homework. I'm the teacher go and do your homework. I mean, I mean, I used to say that and I used to get very angry if they did not actually, I used to, I used to teach 11 and 12 year olds.

It was, uh, it was an interesting experience. Well, do you know, if you do that, you see what God is restoring. I want to bring this really back down back to a bit more theoretical level.

Before I close, we are in need of a new wine skin because the new wine cannot survive in old skins. Jesus said that he said they'll leak everywhere. The, the wine will run out.

Everything will fall apart. Many revivals have tried to be crammed into the old wine skins. In other words, the old structures, the old ways of doing things.

I'm telling you, the Holy spirit does not like being cramped up that way. He wants to move and he can only move if you will open things up for him to move. This is why in the Azusa street in the early days, you know, they went overboard that way.

Azusa street consisted of this. You'd go in there. You'd say, who's leading this meeting? Because the leaders literally had their heads in a fruit box praying the whole time.

You never even knew who was leading it. That's what Azusa street was like. They had the flakiest people getting up.

I don't agree with it. It actually ended up virtually destroying that revival because they are too lenient, but they were so keen to see the Holy spirit move. You know, you go read, uh, read the book, Azusa street by Frank Bartleman.

You see, this is what they did all day. The leaders just prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed. And, um, and they let anybody get up and speak.

Not a good idea, but praise God. He moved because he had such room to move. All we've got to do is allow that to happen.

And those occasions when the devil wants to get in, we shut them down real fast. And that's what all elders do. Praise God.

Well, I think I've given you guys enough homework to think about for now, but that in essence is bringing about a new wine skin. In other words, I can go away from here. See this morning, what I preached to you, I don't know what you want to call it.

I just call it the gospel. Unfortunately, we don't preach the gospel anymore. So we just don't know what it's like.

I've preached in situations where I will describe new Testament Christianity to a group of people. And the look of surprise and shock on their face is something to behold. I might as well be describing a trip to Mars, describing new Testament Christianity, how we walk before God with a state of heart purity before him walking in it, man, it was as though I had just spoken Latin or something.

And so that's the gospel and we just preach it now. And the new wine skin stuff that I'm talking about will help us sustain the moving of the Holy Spirit. If you want a new wine skin that lives in the spirit, you've got to start doing the things I've been talking about tonight.

Praise God. That's pretty much it for me. Let's pray people.

Father God, I just pray that in all of these practical things, Father, you'll be working in our minds right now. I know you've been working in our hearts, but Father, please work in our minds at this moment that we will think of ways that we can easily do this. We'll think of a meeting.

Everybody do this right now. Think of a little meeting that you go to. It doesn't even have to be a church meeting.

It can be just a prayer group from a different church. I don't care what it is. Think of a meeting that you go to.

Father, remind us of some meeting that we go to where we can just turn up with communion and just pray together and see you move in ways that we don't normally allow you to move, that we can invite you to move God, that by your Holy Spirit, our meetings would become full of life and full of your activity and full of body ministry. God, I pray also for the gospel we preach. God, that you'd lead us to speak repentance to people, to lead people into repentance, to show them what it is very simply, Father, and why they need it, and to baptize them and to pray for them to be filled with the Spirit.

God, I pray for those in this room who have an inkling or a strong feeling that they have a healing gift. God, please let it become a ministry. You know, call them again, Father, please remind them that they have a gift sitting on the shelf, unused.

God, give them confidence to start praying for people. Please remind us all, Father, of the gifts that we have. God, I pray that we'd become the church again, I really do.

God, I pray that we'd get back to the New Testament, the original Christianity as it was invented. Father, please bring that back because we need it and the world needs it. And Father God, you need it.

You need us to be your hands and your feet. And we're so ineffective right now, and I just pray that you'll make us and give us a heart for the poor, that our giving, that our eyes would turn off ourselves in our own country, where so many of us are just, we're comfortable, God. And God, turn our eyes to the poor of the earth.

Show us how we can minister to them in practical ways. God, just remind us. I just pray that you'll just, in the coming days, remind everybody of this meeting tonight, and especially of the practical things that they can do, all of us can do.

Just the practical things. God, help us be that church, that New Testament church. In Jesus' wonderful name.

Amen.

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