

America Needs a Prophet

by Bob Phillips

America needs a prophet to guide the church and the world in these perilous times, where anarchy, apostasy, and apathy are on the rise.

Duration: 1:01:08

Scripture: Luke 14:26, Acts 2:46, 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Topics: "Prophet"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of responding to the prophetic voice rather than just going through the motions of a church service. He refers to the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well, highlighting how her encounter with the prophet Jesus brought about a transformation in her life. The speaker warns that seeking the benefits of God's blessings without embracing the prophetic voice can lead to unsanctified joy. He also addresses the current trends in society, citing the list of characteristics mentioned by Paul in 2 Timothy 3, and urges listeners to choose between being influenced by the negative trends or being transformed by God's word.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing, World Challenge, Post Office Box 260, Lindale, Texas, 75771, or by calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted, and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. America needs a prophet. 1 Kings, chapter 22, and I'm going to start reading.

I want you just to read with me a few verses here. We're going to pray first, and then we're going to go through several of the verses, the first 17, 18 verses, and just read it so that you get a picture of the whole story. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you for your presence this morning. Thank you, Lord, for meeting us. You promised you'd meet us here.

You said we're two or more gathered. There you will be in our midst, and we give you thanks. Lord, we come to praise you, and we've come, Lord, to adore you, and we've come to seek your face.

And Lord, as we ask you to minister to our hearts, I ask you to come with a conviction, with an encouragement where it's needed. And Lord, I ask you to come ministering your grace to us. And Lord, bring your word deep into our hearts and prepare us.

And Lord, set us on course to love you more than we've ever loved you before. Lord, we're hungry for you. Open the word that we may examine what you have to say to us this morning, and not only examine it, but Lord, by the power of the Holy Spirit, give us the desire and the hunger and the empowerment to walk in your will.

Lord, we give you praise in Jesus' glorious name. Amen. 1 Kings chapter 22.

And three years passed without war between Aram and Israel, and it came about in the third year that Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, came down to the king of Israel. Now the king of Israel said to his servants, Do you know that Ramoth-Gilead belongs to us? And we are still doing nothing to take it out of the hand of the king of Aram. And he said to Jehoshaphat, Will you go with me to battle at Ramoth-Gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.

Moreover, Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, Please inquire first for the word of the Lord. I don't think the king would have thought of that if Jehoshaphat hadn't reminded him. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about 400 men, and said to them, Shall I go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle or shall I refrain? And they said, Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king.

But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not yet a prophet of the Lord here that we may inquire of him? I think Jehoshaphat had some insight. He saw 400 prophets and he said, I don't see any of them from the Lord. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.

He is Micaiah, son of Imlah. But Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, Bring quickly Micaiah, son of Imlah.

Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in their robes at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria. And all the prophets were prophesying before them. Then Zedekiah, the son of Chennah, made horns of iron for himself and said, Thus says the Lord, with these you shall gore the Arameans until they are consumed.

All this activity is going on right in front of the king. Somebody even made a special exhibit. Some horns.

And he's dancing around, prophesying and saying, These are going to be the horns of victory. And with these you shall defeat the Arameans. And verse 12, all the prophets were prophesying, thus saying, Go up to Ramoth, Gilead and Prosper, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king.

Then the messenger who went to summon Micaiah spoke to him, saying, Behold now the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. I like that. Uniformly favorable.

The prophet usually doesn't speak uniformly favorably. Please let your word be like the word of one of them and speak favorably. But Micaiah said, As the Lord lives, what the Lord says to me, that I will speak.

When he came to the king, the king said to him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth, Gilead to battle or shall we refrain? And he answered, Go up and succeed. And the Lord will give it into the hand of the king. And the king sits back and said, That doesn't sound right.

He never talks to me like that. Then the king said to him, How many times must I injure you to speak to me nothing but the truth and the name of the Lord? So the prophet looks at him and says, All right. I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep which have no shepherd.

And the Lord says, These have no master. And let each of them return to his house in peace. Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Did not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me but evil? And Micaiah said, Therefore, hear the word of the Lord.

I saw the Lord sitting on his throne and all the hosts of heaven standing by him on his right and on his left. And the Lord said, Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth, Gilead? And one said this while another said that. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, I will entice him.

And the Lord said to him, How? And he said, I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And then he said, You are to entice him and also prevail. Go and do so.

It's quite a story. America needs a prophet. Matthew chapter 16, verse 33.

Don't turn there. Don't turn unless I ask you to turn to a passage. But says, Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky but cannot discern the signs of the times? I think the smartest thing that anybody can do today is to set his alarm by God's clock.

The rich farmer in the parable that Jesus gave thought he had goods laid up for many years. But God said, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. You know, there's a lot of difference between what this rich farmer thought and what God thought.

The rich farmer thought he had goods for many years. God said, This night. There's a big difference between many years and this night.

And there are a lot of people that are in that same situation. There's a jigsaw puzzle of the times and it has many pieces to it. As I read the word and begin to study what those pieces are, I don't claim to have all of them, but there are a few things that the word of God makes it very clear will happen before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And my message is not on the second coming, but it's on where we are right now, discerning the times and what we're to be doing right now. What do we do in this crazy world? I mean, you look around you and you see things on every hand. You read the papers, you listen to the radio.

Everywhere I look, it looks like the monkeys have taken over the zoo. But the problem is they've let the beasts out. And we live, I think, in very perilous times.

The Bible says in the last days perilous times shall come. What are we to be doing in these times? What are you doing? There are some things that I see the Bible talk about that really are found in the Scriptures throughout the Scriptures that begin to happen and will begin to take place. They're going to set the stage for the coming of the Lord.

One of those things is what I call anarchy. One of the things that Jesus told us would happen before he returned is that lawlessness will abound. Now, you don't have any trouble seeing that today, do you? Can you see that sign? Lawlessness will abound.

Every man will be doing what is right in his own eyes. Now, the word anarchy means a general disorder from a lack of authority. In other words, when the authority is gone, anarchy comes rushing in.

When authority goes out, anarchy comes in. Right and wrong are no longer absolutes, but they're all relative. Relative to what? Relative to what anybody thinks is right in his own eyes.

And when that happens, anarchy begins to take over. In 1 Kings here, chapter 22, verse 8, it says that the king said to Jehoshaphat, There's one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him because he doesn't say anything good concerning me. It's interesting because later on in the story, when he does tell him what he wants to hear, he says back to the prophet, How many times must I adjure you to speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord? Now, here's the man who had a great conflict.

You see, he wanted to hear the truth, but he didn't want to hear the truth. He wanted to know what God was saying, but any time God had something to say that went against what he thought was right in his own eyes, he balked at it. Now, when that happens, it opens the door to this kind of society in which you and I live, which is quickly becoming a society of anarchy.

The church has lost its prophetic ministry. And when it lost its prophetic ministry, it lost all of its authority. It no longer stands as a voice crying out in the wilderness, pointing the way to the Lord, but yet it's more like these prophets that were all gathered around, 400 prophets prophesying whatever is pleasant to the ears.

And I think that's where we are. Now, when I talk about America needs a prophet, first of all, I do not believe that the word prophet is the way we normally interpret the word or we normally look at people who are prophets. There are a lot of people in America today who claim to be prophets.

Secondly, I also believe that there are prophets. I'm not saying that there aren't any prophets and America needs to find one. I'm saying there are prophets.

This message, I want to tell you two things. America and the church needs a prophet. And secondly, the church needs prophetic ears.

They need to hear what a prophet's got to say. Now, I know he wouldn't claim to be one, but I think Pastor David is a prophet. I've never said that publicly, but I believe that to be true.

Pastor Don, on the other hand, speaks prophetically. I don't think he would claim to be a prophet, but he speaks prophetically. I've heard prophetic messages that he's spoken.

See, I'm not talking about what we call prophets today necessarily. Too many of today's prophets are profiteers. Because they make no distinction between right or wrong.

And that's what these prophets were doing in chapter 22 of 1 Kings. These false prophets put no difference between the holy and the profane. We don't have time to turn there, but Jeremiah called them windbags.

Dumb dogs afraid to bark. But one of the signs will be when the church loses its authority, when it has no more power to stand against the time of the age, you'll know that when anarchy begins to take place

throughout the country. In anarchy, we've got a government, we have a form of government.

You say, how could that be anarchy? But now let me tell you something. There's a rebellion in the land that is so strong. And it hits every area of society.

You know, I heard something, read something in the sports page the other day. You normally don't find headlines relating to the Bible in the sports page, but this one was. It said this year, something unprecedented had happened.

And I forget how many there were. I don't know that it even named how many. But this year, something that had really never happened in the history of sports that they could remember on such a broad scale had taken place.

And that was this. That athletic teams were going to the heads of the schools and to the heads of the athletic departments and they were demanding the dismissal of their coaches. And that it happened in a number of places.

It was like a chain of events that began to take place. Now, I don't know what those coaches were like. And I don't know, I'm not advocating one side or the other.

But what I'm saying to you is that there was a time when that would never happen. It doesn't matter how rough the coach was or how difficult he was or how bad he was. It would never happen.

You'd never even think about it. We'd never even enter the minds of some players to band together and go to the school and refuse to play because they didn't like the coach. But it's here.

And it's not just in athletics. But it's in all areas of our society. People are demanding what they want, when they want it, however they like it.

There's another characteristic that the Bible speaks of as a sign of the times. And that's apostasy. The Bible speaks very clearly that before Jesus comes back, there will be a falling away from the faith.

Now, I don't want you to turn there, but I'm going to read to you from Jeremiah, the sixth chapter. Just listen carefully. Thus says the Lord, stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths.

Now, by the ancient paths, I'm not talking about good old-time religion. I'm talking about the Word of God. The paths that are already proven.

The ways in which God has made himself known. The sacrifices necessary. And the commitment that's called for in the Word of God.

The ancient paths. Well, see, we've rewritten all of that. We've got new paths today.

And he said, I want somebody to rise up and call for the ancient paths. Where the good way is and walk in it. And you shall find rest for your souls.

But they said, we'll not walk in it. And I sent watchmen over you saying, listen to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, we'll not listen.

Therefore, hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth, behold, I'm bringing disaster on this people. The fruit of their plans.

Because they've not listened to my words. As for my law, they've rejected it also. Behold, I'm laying stumbling blocks before this people.

And they will stumble against them. Fathers and sons together, neighbor and friend will perish. Now that's pretty strong language.

See, the Bible declares that there will be an apostasy. That apostasy is not going to come, I don't believe. Like you might expect it, people just declaring they no longer believe in Jesus.

You know, the greatest apostasy that's ever anywhere in the Bible was the kiss of Judas. Judas betrayed the Lord with a kiss. That's the apostasy that I see in the land today.

The Judas kiss. The apostasy that says, I love you, Lord, and kisses the Lord, but only for betrayal. There is a Judas kiss apostasy that's in the church.

New personalities, but different terminologies. The third thing that comes. And I see this all working together.

First of all, anarchy in the world. Apostasy in the church. It all works to produce something.

Apathy. See, it all works together to produce an apathy. Let me tell you how it works.

Do you remember when some of the billboards and some of the advertisements that you heard here today or would have seen today would have shocked you? Because of the sexual content? Have you seen the, I don't know which jeans it is, but on the side of the buses, have you seen the commercials, the side of the buses in New York City? How far do you think it is from total nudity? You know how, you look at that now. You look at that bus going by and you say, my, isn't that terrible? You know why? That's the only reaction you have. I'm not being critical.

Happens to me too. You know why it happens? Because we're being desensitized into apathy. See, you see something enough and it hits your senses enough before long, your apostasy leads to apathy.

And even those who are not living in apostasy, I'm telling you, it's difficult. You hear it all the time. I remember when I first came to New York City.

When I walked down Times Square and saw these pornographic theaters, an anger rose up in me and a shock rose up in me. I was walking past there the other day. In fact, I used to take my little girl, we'd go over to a place to eat or something like that.

And one day we were walking. Whenever I'd come to those stuff, I'd walk to the other side of the street so that we wouldn't have to walk past those things. And one day we were walking and she knew where we were going, but we went across the street and went this way.

And we got to the corner and she said, daddy, I know why we went this way. And I said, why, sweetheart? She said, because of those dirty places over there. Now see, I was walking by the other day and I just walked by one.

I looked at the pictures because you just, you glance that way. I mean, I didn't stop and look at the pictures. I want you to understand.

I walked by it and I glanced in that direction and I walked right on past it. And the Lord spoke to me down deep inside and said, you used to be shocked by that. Now, listen to me, please.

You used to be shocked by that, but you're not so shocked by it anymore. Now, that doesn't mean I agree with it anymore or less. I don't condone it.

I don't do anything. And when I think about it, I get just as angry as I did before. But it's so easy to be desensitized when you see something all the time.

You see, what one of the most subtle ways the enemy has of infiltrating the world is to bring about an apathy. Because first, anarchy in the world. Apostasy in the church.

Until it all leads to an apathy to set the stage for Antichrist. Now, there is a spirit of Antichrist and there is a person Antichrist. I personally believe that the person Antichrist is probably somewhere already on the scene.

I believe we're that close to the times when I discern the times. When someone said, well, what if you're wrong? Well, I don't care if I'm wrong or not. I'd rather be prepared for it than to be caught asleep and slumbering.

But there's an apathy that leads to all of that. The Bible says that it all begins by turning the truth of God into a lie. And the Antichrist will be the final big lie.

And I believe that it's shaping up right before our eyes. But here's the point I want to make. There's a system at work.

And that system is bringing people, whether they realize it or not, to one final place. I call it trendism. Now, trendism is not a word that's in the dictionary, but when I can't find the word I want, I make one up.

So I'm calling this trendism. You see, when the Antichrist system works its final work, and it starts not just with the revelation of the Antichrist, but what happens is Satan does, I think, far more harm as an angel of light than he does as a roaring lion. And before our eyes, he's shaping this gigantic popular system that will be the end thing to belong to.

Now, the Bible speaks of it as a financial economic system as well as a religious system. People get apathetic enough that they just don't care what happens around them. The world gets apathetic.

Now, I know that there's a lot of crime that's fierce and violent and scares people, but you just keep reading the papers long enough. And before long, you just come to expect it. You don't get shocked anymore.

Read it in the papers yesterday about a man who his son, I guess he was retired. I don't know. It's crazy.

He cut the head off of his father and threw it out the window. As bad as that is, that happens enough and you get to the point where you don't notice it so much. You just say, oh, no, the head went out the window.

Now, I'm not. Listen to me. I'm not trying to be funny.

I want you to hear me. I want you. I'm speaking as serious as I can be.

Now, I know that's shocking. Somebody that may offend you, but that's what happens. Are you shocked anymore when you read about a murder in New York City? No.

Why? Yeah, because of all the time that's been taking place. And listen, what happens is we forget that these are not isolated incidents. The violence that you read about in today's papers is not just some aberrant behavior.

It's demonism. There's a power behind it. And it's not an isolated murder.

It's not an isolated rape. It's not an isolated killing. It's all part of a plan.

And the plan is through anarchy in the world, apostasy in the church, to bring about apathy in everybody's life and heart, to be desensitized to whatever you read. And it culminates in the coming of Antichrist. Now, trendism is what we're all being prepared for by the world system.

It's the following of the trend of the times. Getting with it. Doing the end thing.

Setting the stage for Antichrist. Look what happens. I want to read it to you again.

These prophets in 1 Kings 22. Verse 12. And all the prophets were prophesying, thus saying, Go up to Ramoth-Gilead and prosper, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king.

Then the messenger who went to summon Micaiah spoke to him, saying, Behold, now the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. Please let your word be like the word of one of them and speak favorably. Well, do you see what he's saying? He's saying the clergy have endorsed it.

Micaiah, don't be square. Get with it. Tell it like it is.

But tell it like we tell it. If you don't go along with it, you're an oddball. And you're just a calamity howler.

It's all you talk about is what's wrong and what's taking place. We are so caught up in this trendism. Let me tell you another way it works.

You let one church stumble across a key to church growth. And they'll start to grow and expand. And they'll call a conference.

And you've got pastors from all over the world coming to this one place to find out how it works. Are you hearing me? Trendism. These prophets were only prophesying what was uniformly favorable.

There's so much pressure. There's so much pressure to fit into the trends. Now, Paul wrote to Timothy about three trends.

Don't turn there for the sake of time. But let me tell you what they are. You'll be familiar with them.

The first trend was the trend of things. And he wrote about that in 1 Timothy 6. For the love of money is the root of all evil. Flee from these things.

Now, he didn't say making money or money itself, but the love of it. See, money becomes dangerous when you get caught up in the pleasure of procuring it. Or the pride of possessing it.

Or the fear of living without it. I know someone who's retired. I won't mention the name, but someone who's retired.

This person had no knowledge whatsoever of the stock market. Never even fooled with it. Never even paid any attention to it.

Never even spent any time with it. But now, this person receives three, four, five magazines into their home about investing. You say, well, what's wrong with that? This.

This person's on a retirement income. And they're living in absolute fear that the money's going to run out. There's no trust of God whatsoever.

Are you hearing what I'm saying? And so the Bible says that one of the trends that people become is how am I going to make it? Now, I'm not saying the question's not valid. But how you answer it is very important. Because you're either going to become a trendist or a transformist.

The Bible says, do not be conformed to this world or the ways of the world. But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. How do you do that? You present your body, a living sacrifice to God.

Now, be careful you don't get caught in the trend. And the reason I entitled the message, America Needs a Prophet, is because there is more of a need for prophetic voice today. Maybe than ever before.

Because we're getting closer and closer to the end of the times. We're getting closer and closer to that time when everybody's going to be caught up and swept away with the trends. We're getting desensitized.

Then there's the trend of the times that Paul spoke about in that long list of things. Remember that long list of characteristics that would characterize men in the last days? In 2 Timothy 3, let me just read it to you. Lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

A person has to be blind not to see the trend of those things. You can't live in this world and not see the trend of those things. You can say it's not there and you can deny it has that much significance, but you can't say that that's not the trend.

Is that the way things are going? That's the trend. And you see, the more you live in this world with that kind of a trend, the more people you see lose their temper and get mad at somebody else and express it. The more you watch it and see it happens, if you're not careful the trend is going to be, well, you know, that's just the way it is.

The more you allow the world to pinch in on you and create attitudes and feelings that you know are not like God, the more you see it, the more you experience it, the more it happens around you. You have a choice to make. You either become a trendist or a transformist.

If you don't transform, God transforms you. But you do it by presenting yourself a living sacrifice to God. This trend is not money but morals.

You know, America, I don't know, I've heard Pastor David say it and I believed it and everything, but I guess maybe I'm just feeling it more right now than I ever have in my life. America's living in a sewer. There's new morality and new ethics and new sex and we're a nation that's dying with an inward

putrefaction.

The third trend Paul talked to Timothy about was in 2 Timothy 4. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires. You know, I know some godly pastors that are without churches right now and they can't find a church. And I know a couple of them that tried to start a church.

Now, I know these men, godly men, and I've listened to their cry and the heart saying, what's wrong with me, Pastor Bob? What, what, where have I missed God? What am I, what am I doing? I'm not saying this does not, but see, God's preparing them. He'll use the men because man doesn't open doors. God opens doors.

But now, but now listen to me. These men that I know of that have lost their churches, lost their churches because they dared be a prophetic voice. I've listened.

They sent me their tapes and said, please listen to these tapes and tell me what I'm doing wrong. I got convicted. Listen to tapes.

And I realized what happened to church. And I know one of the churches and I know who they've got in there now. And he's one of these prophets that's learned how to speak favorably, uniformly, favorably to the congregation.

I'll tell you something. America needs a prophet and America needs a prophetic voice. There's a good scripture in Exodus 23 too.

It says, thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil. But you see, the trend is to send a letter to the prophet Micaiah to tell him everybody's agreeing with these 400 prophets. Now, why are you, why are you such an oddball? And when you, when you speak, when you tell what the Lord's saying to you, please let your word be like the word of one of them.

How do you tell a prophet to speak like that? Turn with me to John chapter 4. John chapter 4. John, the fourth chapter. John chapter 4, starting with the fifth verse. This is speaking of Jesus, of course, at a well.

John chapter 4, verse 5. So he came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. And Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied from his journey, was sitting thus by the well.

It was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, give me a drink.

Now, as I said, when we think of prophetic, we're all too likely to think in terms of incidents and happenings and dates in the future. We're prone to just listen for the predictive element of prophetic ministry. But it's much broader than that.

The ministry of the prophet is a ministry of spiritual interpretation to bring recovery to the people of God. The role of the prophet is recovery. It always has been.

It's not to predict the future. If he does predict the future, it's so that the people could be warned to be recovered right now. And you see, this role of the prophet is to bring spiritual implications into view of what's happening around us.

So that you begin to read the papers when you read them or hear the news, watch what happens on your job, see what's there. This prophetic voice keeps you on a sharp edge. So that while you're out there in the workplace or where you are in your neighborhood or where you live or whatever you do, you're constantly aware of this voice running through you.

That's warning you, alerting you, waking you up to the times. It causes you to evaluate. Now, listen to me.

Everything from a spiritual viewpoint. You don't evaluate anything apart from its spiritual significance. And the prophetic voice will challenge you to resist trendism.

Because it'll declare God's mind against those things. Look what happens. Jesus had talked to this woman about a lot of things.

They'd been talking about water and they'd been talking about a well and they'd been talking about living water on the inside. Now, there's another trend that scares me. And that trend is in the charismatic or Pentecostal church.

And I'll tell you what it is. It's a trend toward unsanctified joy. We have almost become addicted in the church to unsanctified joy.

I talked to someone that was formerly coming to this church. And we don't, we don't, I mean, if you, if God leads you to another church, then that's, we feel that's God. I mean, that's it.

But this person left and they didn't leave on good terms. And I was talking with them not too long ago. And they had come back to visit the church.

And then I ran into them and we went into a little restaurant and we just sat down and talked for just a little bit. And this person said to me, you know, one of the things wrong with Times Square Church. And by the way, this is not a perfect church.

You can find some things wrong. We said, you know what's wrong with Times Square Church? And I said, well, yeah, I know a few things. And I said, but what do you see? He said, well, and we experienced it here this morning.

He said, you know, in the praise, y'all just don't know how to praise God. I said, is that why you left? I believe that's the main reason. What do you mean we don't know how to praise God? He said, there's too much downtime in Times Square Church.

And I said to him, downtime, I don't understand that. I'm not a song leader. And so I don't understand.

What do you mean downtime? He said, well, you know, when the church gets quiet, you know, it's the church. I'm going to now. We just flow with the spirit.

I said, what do you mean? Well, I said, we get started. And man, when we start, it starts praising God. And I mean, it just I said, you mean like a horse race just rushed right on through it? He said, no, I'm telling you, we have joy.

I said, you mean you're calling those quiet times when people are calling on God? There's no music and or maybe there's music. But we don't seem to be doing much of anything except just that's not downtime. That's uptime.

I said, you know what's uptime? He said, no, all I know is that you just got a voice, somebody over here talking and somebody. I said, that's it. That's uptime.

I said, see, because what's happening is all of this is going up to God and God's up there. And he says, that's Bob's voice. That's Don's voice.

That's Bill's voice. That's George's voice. That's Mike's voice.

That's Sally's voice. That's Sue's voice. That's Mary's voice.

That's Margaret's voice. It's all coming up to God. And it's uptime.

You see, now listen. And he said this to me. He said, well, maybe so.

But when I come there, God's not saying that's my voice. Not now, please. I'm not saying because I'm saying is to illustrate something.

I said, oh, yes, he is. Yes, he is. He said, no, because I'm not saying anything.

Oh, yes, you are. Yes, you are. God hears that critical little voice.

Look at him over there. Look at her. Look at him.

Look at her. Look at that. The Bible says that God hears your words before they're ever framed with your lips.

Now, I thought about this. And I thought, what really is wrong with that? Because I'm not being critical of the church. I think God has a myriad of ways that he leads churches to worship him.

I don't believe any church has to do it like this. That's not my point. But what I don't understand is why someone comes into the presence of God, and because it's not done a certain way, they don't recognize the presence of God.

And part of the reason is that we have become addicted to unsanctified joy. We want to be praising God to the point where we're in a horse race and we're running as fast as we can go and we don't want to take the time to stop and talk to him. There's nothing wrong with a service that just goes with service, just worshiping, praising God and the joy.

Listen, God wants us to enjoy his blessings. But let me tell you what the real problem is. It's not the way the service runs.

It's how you respond to the prophetic voice. You know, Jesus talked to this woman about being filled up with water, having a living water on the inside that never run dry. And it really never accomplished much in her until the prophet came out of Jesus.

Look at it. This is the end of side 1. You may now turn the tape over to side 2. Look at verse 15. The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water so I'll not be thirsty.

And he'll come all the way here to draw. See, all over the land there are people that want this water. And it's real water.

And it produces real joy. And it produces real excitement. But there's a problem.

If you want the water without the prophet, you're going to get unsanctified joy. And so Jesus turns the discussion from water to sin. And says, the woman said, Sir, give me this water.

And he said to her, go call your husband and come here. Can you imagine, she thought, what does that have to do with water? What does that have to do with living the Christian life? Let's get on with things. I mean, let's really get going here.

Let's discover who we are in Christ. I mean, let's talk about this water on the inside. Nothing wrong with that.

But if you leave the prophetic element out of it, it becomes dirty water. Not living water. And Jesus said, go call your husband.

He said, I don't have a husband. And he said, well, I know that. You've had five husbands and the one you're living with now is not your husband.

Now look at verse 19. The woman said to him, what did she say? Sir, I perceive you're a prophet. You see, the prophetic voice that we need today is a voice that tells us about God's alarm clock.

And the word of God as a disturbing hammer, fire, and a sword that breaks up our foul ground. Stirs up the gift of God within us and girds up the loins of our minds. Well, I tell you, we need that voice.

You know, when there's an emergency, it requires an urgency. When someone gets sick around our house, we don't carry on business as usual. I tell you, if my wife gets sick or if the kids get sick or if I get sick, we don't do things.

I mean, it disrupts things in the house. Things don't. Emergency requires an urgency.

We begin to adjust our lifestyles to the emergency. When a disaster strikes a community, businesses close down. Routines that are carried out day by day are abandoned and everything is adjusted to the crisis.

I believe we need to do some adjusting. I believe we need to not fall into trendism and apathy. But we need to cry out for the prophetic ear and the prophetic voice and to be disturbed prophetically.

You see, the prophet, the prophet will not allow you to have the joy without facing your sin. And that prophetic cry comes up and calls us not to be conformed to this age, but to be transformed. And it's constantly calling you to make sacrifice, to present yourself a living sacrifice.

I want you to turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 7. 1 Corinthians chapter 7. I'm not a prophet. God will never make me a prophet. But I am praying for more prophetic voices to be raised up than I've ever prayed for.

I'm talking about real prophetic voices, not these prophets, but prophetic voices. 1 Corinthians chapter 7, verse 29. But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened.

The liturgy says the time is short. So that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none. Those who weep as though they did not weep.

And those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice. And those who buy as though they did not possess. And those who use the world as though they did not make full use of it.

For the form of this world is passing away. Now let me tell you what he's saying here. Those that had wives as though they had none.

Now that's not an excuse to neglect your family. It doesn't mean that you treat her like she doesn't exist. The Bible says in Luke 14, 26.

That the person who does not hate mother, father, brother, sister, so on and so forth. He's comparing the love that you and I have. And what he's saying is that in these times, because the times are short.

That devotion to Jesus must run so high and so deep. And be so intense that all other loyalties must seem in comparison as if they didn't even exist. Folks, listen to me.

Are you ready? Wives, are you ready for your husband to suddenly catch fire? And live as if everything depended on Jesus alone? Husbands, are you ready for your wives to catch fire like you've never known before? I'll tell you something. There's going to be a shake-up in a lot of families. Because I believe there are a lot of people.

I believe there are a lot of people that they're not really prepared. Because, you see, apathy has kind of slipped in. They say it.

Oh, I'd love for my husband to be white hot for the Lord. I'd love for my wife to be on fire for the Lord. You see, until... And I'm not talking about somebody going to the closet, coming in from work, going to the closet, sitting down and ignoring the family.

I'm not talking about that, folks. You see, because when Jesus gets more of your heart, they're going to feel loved by you more than they ever did before. But listen.

I really believe this. I believe there's a lot of wives and husbands that are not ready for their husbands and wives to catch on fire totally for the Lord. I believe some jealousies are coming in.

Because the heart's not being prepared right. Are you hearing what I'm saying? And then, they that weep as though they wept not. Now, He doesn't say there's anything wrong with weeping or sorrow.

Jesus wept. But, folks, listen. You know what He's saying? Though that weep as though they wept not.

That means that, yes, there's a joy in the Christian life. But we're not to walk around sad and dejected and depressed like the rest of the world. Not if Jesus has really got a hold of your heart.

There are lots of things to get depressed about. And there are too many Christians walking around with their chins dragging the ground. He didn't say there's anything wrong with weeping.

He didn't say there's anything wrong with crying. But He said, live like you've got something to live for. See, you know what the difference between us and the world? The world is waiting for something to happen.

We're waiting for somebody to come. And there's a big difference in those two. And it says, though that they rejoiced as though they did not rejoice.

And that's what I've been talking about. The Bible says they ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. And God would have you to enjoy His blessings.

But we're not to be intoxicated with prosperity and blessing. And we're not to be saddened by adversity. But God says, I want a people who are not changed no matter what comes.

I mean, if they have a good week, that's wonderful. They're praising God. If they have a bad week, that's wonderful.

They're praising God the same way. He said, well, how can I apply? And they that use the world. In fact, He goes on and He says, those who buy as though they did not possess.

Now, He didn't say there's anything wrong with buying. You can buy too much. But don't attach too much importance to the enjoyments of life and the things that give you pleasure.

Because the time is short. Are you hearing me? Turn with me to Isaiah 49. I'm going to close with this.

Isaiah 49. Let me tell you why you can rejoice. Because this is also part of the prophet's message.

Isaiah 49. I love this scripture. It has to be one of my favorites.

I meditate on it often. I think about it. When things start getting a little bit too much for me, I start getting a little in the doldrums.

You ever feel that smog just kind of come on you? Be honest. You don't know why? It just kind of comes on you? Well, this is one of the verses that I like to turn to. It's one of my favorites.

Isaiah chapter 49. And you know, the children of Israel cried out and they said, verse 14. But Zion said, the Lord has forsaken me.

And the Lord has forgotten me. But God gives them an answer. He says, can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? And then he adds this.

Even these may forget, but I'll not forget you. See, if you look at the world. In fact, the Bible prophesies it.

Isaiah 28. It says that they're going to be in the last days when people forsake the Lord. It says more and more women are going to be giving up their children.

And that's happening in our country. Happening in the world. And so what God is saying is, can a mother love give up her son? Well, if that love is where it's supposed to be, the answer is no.

But he knows how people are. So he says, but even if they do it, I couldn't do it. Mother love.

I want to tell you something about mother love. Mother love, I believe, is the strongest love. I love my children.

Listen, I love my children dearly. But I don't believe they could do without their mother. Are you hearing me? Mother love, there's something about that attachment to the children that's stronger.

As much as I love them, I believe that attachment to the children is stronger than a father's love. And that's why he uses this word, mother love. I remember, I never forget, I remember reading.

Because I knew this family. And it happened in a town real near where I grew up in high school. And I knew this family.

And there was a car, a truck ran this mother and her two children off the road. And she got thrown out of the car. Before you had to have seatbelts, she got thrown out of the car.

And the two children were strapped inside the car. In child seats or in seatbelts. And she got thrown out of the car.

The car burst into flames. And this woman, she couldn't weigh over 110, 115 pounds. Somehow tore the door off of the back.

Tore it off. And got inside and threw the children out. And some neighbors came down.

And when she got out, she was all aflame. Burns over her body. But she did live.

But now listen, that's the mother's love. She went into the fire for those children. And there was nothing that could restrain it.

Not even a door. You see, God said, that's the way my love is for you. I've got a mother love.

There's nothing that's going to keep me back. You're my children. Now the world may forget you.

And everybody else may forget you. Even natural love. But I won't forget you.

And then He tells you why I'll never forget you. And this is the part I like so much. Verse 16.

Behold, I have engraved you, inscribed you on the palms of my hands. Your walls are continually before me. Now let me tell you what I really like about that.

You are engraved. He says, I have engraved you. You.

Listen, God doesn't love you with the crowd. I mean, you may have somebody come up to you and say, I love you, brother. I love you, sister.

Well, they may love the whole crowd. But I want to tell you, God loves you individually. He knows your name.

But it's not your name inscribed in it. It is you inscribed. Not just your name.

You are inscribed in the palm of His hand. You in there. And the word inscribed is the word engraved.

And it means to cut deep into the flesh. Oh, listen to that. You are cut deep into the flesh of Jesus.

When He redeemed you on the cross. And then He says, your walls are continually before me. Let me tell you the image that's here.

When that was written to the nation of Israel. The walls were all torn down. And they were all burned.

And they were laying flat on the ground. The temple had been destroyed. There was nothing there.

What do you mean the walls are before me? Oh, listen. The picture here is of an architect. And he's got these plans.

And he knows exactly where every brick goes. And he knows. He knows where every detail goes.

And he. Listen. They're continually before him.

You don't take an architect. The builder doesn't take the plans. And say, oh, those are real nice plans.

And stuff them in a drawer somewhere. And then walk off and build a building. You watch.

He carries those plans with him all the time. He walks around the job with those plans under his arm. He's got them right there.

And he sees something that doesn't look right. He pulls it out. And says, wait a minute.

That's not supposed to be there. Remove that. Take that out of there.

And then he sees something missing over here. He says, wait a minute. I planned for that to be got there.

And he says, put that in there. And that's what he does with your life. He's a master architect.

He's a great builder. You're inscribed in the palms of his hands. Oh my.

Listen. I'll take that over trendism any day. Any day.

Raise his name. He's marked you. You know.

You may have some walls down right now. But he knows where every brick goes. He knows how he's going to build it.

He knows what he's going to put in your life. Are you hearing me? He's watching over his word to perform it in your life. I want you to stand with me.

Now listen to me carefully. If you've had enough of religion. You may be a visitor here.

You may be here. You may have been coming for a long time. You've had enough of religion.

And you've had enough of just pretending. Somehow inside you're saying, I don't know that my life has ever really changed. Then I want you to slip out of your seat wherever you are.

And I want you to come right here. The Lord wants to save you. And when he saves you, he's going to engrave you into the palm of his hand.

Are you hearing that? He's going to cut your name, which is you, deeply into his flesh. He did that at the cross. If you can't say, I know for sure that I know God well enough to go to heaven.

Would you come down here right now? Would you? If you can't say you know for sure well enough. If there's any doubt whatsoever in your mind. The time is short.

The time is short. That farmer that said, I've accumulated enough. It's going to last me many years.

And God said tonight, this day, this night. You don't know when that is. And I don't know when that is.

But if you're not absolutely positive of your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. In terms of salvation. I want you to come down here right now.

Just come down here to the altar. This is the conclusion of the tape.

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