

# Beware When You Are Full

by Carter Conlon

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*The speaker calls the church to a seven-day fast and encourages the congregation to join in, recognizing the spiritual condition of the people and the need for revival.*

**Duration:** 56:36

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 8:11, Psalm 74:12-19, Isaiah 58:6-7, Joel 2:23

**Topics:** "Beware"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power and mercy of God in difficult situations. He references the book of Esther, where the people of God fasted and prayed in desperation before God, leading to their deliverance from a wicked decree. The preacher also highlights the importance of fasting as a means to seek God's intervention and to help those in need. He commends the church for their numerous ministries that serve the hungry, poor, oppressed, and marginalized. The sermon concludes with a call to have a revelation of God's power and faithfulness, citing the example of Jonah and the city of Nineveh, where repentance and fasting led to God's mercy and deliverance.

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## Transcript

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None of these messages are copyrighted and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. This morning that you are interceding for us, as we have gathered to corporately worship you as your church body, here in this place and at this time, your heart, your mind, your thoughts are towards us. And so, Lord Jesus, I would ask for the manifestation of your heart, the manifestation of your mind, a manifestation of your word, to be our portion this day in your house.

Lord, I thank you, God, for allowing me to one more time stand and proclaim your word, the less than the least, O God. You saved me and empowered me, and I stand not in my own righteousness nor strength. I stand in your strength and I stand clothed only in your righteousness.

And I thank you, Lord, for the privilege of disappearing that you may appear, of not being heard that you may be heard. We desire to hear from you today. Holy Spirit, we invite you to manifest the presence of Christ, the risen Christ, in our midst, and indeed to proclaim truth that will set us free and give us great and

glorious liberty in Christ.

I thank you, Father, for strength, for anointing, for your abiding presence. Thank you, Lord, that you're going to touch lives today. You're going to provoke us to walk further into you, Lord.

And we thank you for this in Jesus' name. Amen. If you'll turn in your Bibles, please, to the book of Joel, chapter 1. The message is entitled, Beware When You Are Full.

Beware when you are full. Pastor David and I have felt to call this church to a seven-day fast, beginning on Monday, going right through till next Sunday. Coincidentally, it's Easter Sunday.

We didn't call it. It's not a religious thing. We didn't call it because of that.

Just something that the Lord put upon our hearts. Now, to some of you, fasting is new, and you may not even understand what fasting is all about. And I'm not going to go into a defense at all today of why we should fast.

Suffice to say that Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew, when you fast. He said when you give, he was giving instructions, and he said when you give, you're to give in a certain way, when you pray, you're to pray in a certain way, and when you fast. The New Testament records clearly in the book of Acts that the early church fasted and prayed on a continuous basis every time there were decisions to be made before laying hands on people and sending them out, and simply for personal purification and a deeper drawing towards the heart and the ways of God.

Fasting was not a strange practice to the early church, although I think safe to say to this church generation, it is a truth that has to a great degree been lost, and many people don't understand the reasons why we should fast in the spiritual as well as the physical benefits that do come from fasting. Now, we're going to be fasting for seven days, and there are some of you who may choose to join with us in fasting for seven days. Now, for those who are beginners, I really don't recommend that you fast for that long.

It may not do you a whole lot of good, you'll not be able to get your mind off of food after about the first day and a half, and you'll think you're going to die for the next five and a half after that. Anyways, mankind really does eat too much. An Egyptian doctor wrote in the past, he said, man lives off of one quarter of what he eats, and we doctors live off the other three quarters of what he eats.

There are many, many sins in every generation, and overindulgence is one that will lead to many, many things. There's an excellent book out called God's Chosen Fast. The author's name is Arthur Wallace.

It's a little yellow book. You can get further information about this down at the book table in the lower rotunda, and perhaps Brother Paul Steinman has some available that you can purchase if you want to really learn the ins and outs of fasting. This is probably one of the most balanced books ever written on the subject.

It will give you insight into fasting from both a spiritual and a physical perspective. We want to avoid in every case, and in all cases, any forms of religious extremism. People can take these truths and take it right to the extreme end and bring discredit to what should be a really valuable discipline, a valuable exercise in the sight of God.

In no way and under no circumstance will you die if you fast for seven days. Your physical body is a wonderful machine. It's designed by God that when there's a sudden stop or an intake of food into the system, that your body will automatically begin to dissolve, begin to ingest, begin to burn up, and use up all stored poisons, fats, and toxins within the body.

For roughly anywhere from 21 to 40 days, all your body is doing when you fast, and I'm talking about the total fast. The total fast, in a sense, is just simply drinking water or juice and no solid food. Your body, at that point, anywhere from 21 to 40 days, is simply eating up toxins, eating up fats.

Initially, your breath will smell horrible, your eyes will turn yellow, and then eventually your eyes will clear up, your breath will clear up, there'll be a renewed strength come into your body because a natural cleansing process is taking place. You'll lose weight, but it will be good weight that you will lose. It will not be muscle tissue.

Hunger usually disappears anywhere from nine days, seven to nine days and onward, and doesn't return again until actual starvation begins to take place. Scripture talks about Jesus going into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. It says at the end of 40 days, he hungered.

That's when the devil came. That's the time when your body is now beginning to consume muscle tissue, when hunger returns. That's the danger point.

That's where any and all fasts should cease, and a person should then gradually begin to add nourishment, supplemental nourishment to their body. Under no circumstance should you ever go more than three days without water. You could literally impair your health considerably going any longer than that, and in fact you could die if you took that too far.

We do not recommend at any part of this particular week that you abstain from liquids at all. If you abstain from solid food, that's fine. You're not going to die.

You'll feel like you're going to die, but you're not going to die. If you have a medical condition, if you're a pregnant mother, if you have a heart problem, if you have any kind of physical ailments, you may want to seek medical advice before undertaking any type of a fast. Now, fasting is not only good spiritually, but it's also good for the body physically, and doctors are not going to look at you as if you've just stepped off another planet if you talk to them about fasting.

As a matter of fact, many medical doctors recommend it to their patients as a periodic cleansing of the flesh, a cleansing of the digestive system, and things like that. And so, if you have any doubts at all, please seek medical counsel on this. Now, there are many different kinds of fasts.

You'll read about them in this book. I'm not going to get into it all. But there are fasts where you can abstain from one meal a day.

There's the Daniel fast, where he abstained from all meats and just simply ate vegetables for a season. There's the Esther fast, which was an absolute total fast for three days. There are all different types of fasting.

You can fast one meal a day, perhaps come home at the end of the day, especially if you're a hard-working person, and come home at the end of the day, and perhaps skip supper for every day of that week, all week. And spend that time, though, not on the golf course, but spend that time alone, shut in with

God. Let it be of a spiritual benefit to your life.

There are those who may want to fast the full seven days. And if you want to, be sure that your body is able to handle that. And be sure that you have knowledge about what you're doing.

We don't want anybody taking this truth into an extreme. And that's the way the devil very often tries to discredit truth, by taking truths in the Word of God and pushing them into the extreme so that people will reject it. Fasting is a wonderful, wonderful exercise that very often in my own life has brought me back into right perspective and renewed in my heart a hunger for God.

And so we would encourage you, beginning on Monday, to join with us in some respect. Maybe there's just a particular food that you can give up. Maybe you would like to choose a day or two.

Maybe fast on Tuesday, and then fast again Thursday, and then fast again Saturday. Something like that. Simply depending on what you feel that you're able to handle and what God reveals to you in prayer.

There is no compulsion for anybody in this church to join with us whatsoever. It's totally a free will thing. You're not less spiritual if you don't partake, and you're not more spiritual if you do.

True spirituality is an attitude of what's in your heart, irrespective of what we do. You can fast and scrunch up all your face and walk around looking like you're starving and shivering all week, and Jesus said it's absolutely good for nothing. That's what the Pharisees did.

Those who do fast, don't make a big deal about it. Don't talk about it to other people. Just let it be between you and God.

Hallelujah. Joel 1, verse 14. I want to talk about a specific instance when God used a prophet to call.

This man was a prophet. He used him to call a fast in his generation. Joel 1, verse 14.

Sanctify a fast. Call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord.

Now, there were certain conditions in Joel's day that caused the Holy Spirit to prompt him to call God's people to fast. Firstly, the land was in a despicable condition. In verse 6, it says, For a nation has come up upon my land, strong and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.

He hath laid my vine waste and barked my fig tree. He hath made it clean bare and cast it away. The branches thereof are made white.

There was a plague of locusts that had come into the land. These locusts had gone through the land and simply stripped everything and eaten everything that was good, everything that provided nourishment. It was a devouring, or we can call it an eating away plague, had hit the country.

Now, there are spiritual applications to this as well because Paul says in 2 Timothy chapter 3, he says, This though also that in the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truth-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, that means unable to contain anything that's good, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers

of God. It is safe to say that the enemy has come in like a mighty flood into our society, into this land, and like a devouring, eating away plague, is consistently eating away everything that is good.

In the last two decades, there's been virtually almost a total reversal. Everything that was good is now called evil and things that were evil are now called good. Self-interest groups have risen up and taken over so many agendas throughout the land.

And we now live in very, very perilous times. Anybody who's not aware of that, you mustn't be able to see when you walk out of these doors and you mustn't be able to hear. Because we are certainly living in perilous times, as perilous as the days that the Lord had spoken to the prophet Joel about in the nation of Israel.

In chapter 1, verse 12, he talks about the vine has dried up, the fig tree languishes, the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field are withered because joy is withered away from the sons of men. Joy is gone. We're living in a society when youth or young people, there's no more joy.

I walk the streets oftentimes throughout Manhattan and looking into the faces, very often I'll try to make eye contact with the teenagers if you see them on the street, maybe to get a smile out of them or be able to get them to say at least hello or how are you or possibly even have a conversation. But I don't see any joy in this young generation that has risen up. It seems like joy is gone.

Even the young ones, the little ones, you'd expect, I'm not that old, I'm only 42, but I do remember when I was younger that children played in the streets. These children seem so hard, they're only 5, 10, maybe a little older than 5, but 10, 12, 13 years old and there's such a hardness. They walk two and three abreast down the street with a scowl on their face and just like the Prophet Joel was saying, the joy is gone in this generation.

We had a prayer request on Friday night of a Christian family whose 10-year-old boy jumped out of the window on the fourth floor to commit suicide. We're living in a generation when children are now starting to commit horrendous crimes and lose all hope for the future. I'm told that in youth prisons now there are children as young as 10 years old, 8 years old now, in prison, having committed crimes that were virtually unthinkable in past generations.

A pastoral friend of mine told me recently about a family that had a young daughter, 14 years of age. She was in the top of her class in school. Seemingly a bubbly girl, seemingly happy, involved in social activities in her community.

And then one day, only recently, the parents came home. She was supposed to be home. They didn't hear her voice in the house.

They went downstairs and there she was hanging from the rafters in the basement. She had hung herself, 14 years of age. She left a note.

In the note she said she apologized for any harm that she might cause to other people. But she said, I don't see any hope for the future. I don't see any hope.

What an incredible day that we live in when our children don't see hope. Ten-year-olds jump out of windows and 14-year-olds hang themselves. Shouldn't have to be any more than these two to cause an

alarm to rise up within our hearts.

God help all of the people in our present-day society that have been used to the devil to take the Word of God out of the public school system. Those who have done so have taken hope away. One of the last hopes that our children had, they've taken hope away from them.

And subsequently, the death of every one of these young ones is going to be one day late at their doorstep. Also, God's heritage was in danger of being overpowered by heathen leadership. In Joel chapter 2 and verse 17.

Joel says, Let the priests and ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar. Let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach that the heathen should rule over them. Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? We have all kinds of instances now throughout certainly much of the western world where heathen leadership has risen up over the house of God.

By that I mean simply men and women who don't know the heart of God. They're leading God's people out away from truth and into all kinds of spiritual excesses. They should be bringing freedom, but they're bringing the people into deeper and darker bondage.

And Joel said, Let the priests and ministers of the Lord, let there be a weeping in the house of God. Let there be a crying out, O God, don't give your heritage over to reproach. Don't let the heathen rule over your house.

That the people in the nation should look upon God's house and say, Where is their God? I think there are all kinds of graphic examples, but I was gripped by one that I read in the paper either this week or last week. There was a church that professes in the United States, to know the doctrines of Christ at least, professes as a matter of fact, this church prides itself this denomination on knowing the truth and holding to the truth and not forsaking the truth. And there was a story in the paper about a couple who had a baby who died.

And they buried the baby in that church cemetery. And then the elders of that church found out that that baby was from a mixed race marriage. And they went and contacted the parents and said, We want you to exhume your baby.

We want you to remove the body of your baby out of our graveyard. For our graveyard is reserved just for people of our own particular race. My heart, when I read that, I said, God, what do the people around that city and that town think of such a church? Heathen men in leadership.

These are heathen men. It was the elders. Now, I thank God I understand that some of the people rose up against them in that church.

And I thank God they did. There are certain times that rebellion is justified. They rose up and said, No, you're not going to do this thing.

But how did men with such hearts get into leadership in the house of God? Where they gather, what kind of worship do they have in that house? What do they sing? I love you, Lord, on Sunday morning. But in their heart, they're saying, I hate my brother. Doesn't the scripture says, If any man says he loves God and hates his brother, he's a liar and the truth is not in him.

Heathen men. And so the devil takes this and puts it on the paper for the whole world to read. That this is what has become of the church or at least a segment of the church.

Instead of us just folding the paper and say, Isn't that awful? I really believe with all my heart it should send us to fasting once again before God. And say, Lord, think of all the people in that area that are going to be turned away from heaven and turned into hell because of that testimony of that church. Think of all the wounds that are not going to be healed.

Think of all the lives that are not going to be changed. And one day these men will all stand before God. They're going to stand before the throne of Christ on his left hand and on his right hand are going to be gathered with him all nations, all kindreds, all tribes and all tongues.

Every man, every woman from every background, every skin color is going to be there. All standing equal in the sight of God. And then what will these men do on that day? What excuse will they give for what they've done? And how they've brought such horrible reproach to the name of Christ.

Let the ministers stand between the porch and the altar. Let them lay and weep between the porch and the altar and say, Oh God, God, give not your heritage to reproach. I believe that Jesus is interceding right now.

There are people down there in churches like that in the western world and all over the world that are good people that are God-seeking, God-fearing people, but somehow corrupt and blind leadership has gotten over them. And I believe we need to cry like we've never cried before. Oh God, in the power of the Holy Spirit, send revival once again to this country.

God send revival to this, to your house. Cause these men, remove them, blow them out of your house, oh God, and raise up righteous, godly leadership over the people. Look at Psalm 74 please if you'll turn there with me.

Psalm 74 the psalmist cries out for the house of the Lord. Psalm 74 beginning at verse 2 he says, remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased of old. The rod of thine inheritance which thou hast redeemed.

This mount Zion wherein thou hast dwelt. Lift up thy feet unto perpetual desolations even all that the enemy has done wickedly in the sanctuary. Verse 4 he says, thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations.

They set up their ensigns for signs. Thine enemies roar. Thine enemies roar in the midst of the congregations.

I wonder what kind of lies these people had on the sign in the front of their church. I wonder what kind of lies they put in their literature. Did they say a church for hurting people? A loving friendly community church? And they're not isolated.

That attitude of heart may not be as graphic as this particular church, but it is in churches all over America. A man was famous according as he has lifted up axes upon the thick trees. In other words there was a season in the house of God where people looked for men of character and women of character and it was important that they were skilled and cunning craftsmen in the word of God.

But now, verse 6 says, they break down the hard work thereof at once with axes and hammers. They cast down the truth of Christ. They have cast fire into thy sanctuary that they defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.

They said in their hearts let us destroy them together. They have burned up all the synagogues of God in our land. We see not our signs.

There is no more any prophet neither is any among us that knows how long. Oh God how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name forever? Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? Pluck it out of thy bosom. This is the cry of the psalmist.

And I believe it's got to be the cry of every true child of God in this generation. For God is my king of old working salvation in the midst of the earth. You did divide the sea by your strength.

You break the heads of the dragon in the waters. You break the head of Leviathan in pieces and gave him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness. Thou didst cleave the fountain of the flood.

Thou dryest up the mighty rivers. The day is thine. The night also is thine.

Thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set up all the borders of the earth. Thou hast made summer and winter.

Remember this that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name. Oh listen to verse 19. Deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked.

Forget not the congregation of thy poor forever. Have respect unto the covenant. You see the Lord made a covenant with us.

Have respect for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. Oh let not the oppressed return ashamed and let the poor and the needy praise thy name. Arise O God plead thine own cause.

Remember how the foolish man reproaches thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies the tumult of those that rise up against thee increases continually. That was the cry of the psalmist.

Joel in chapter 1 verse 11 he says be ashamed O husbandman O how O ye vinedressers for the weed and for the barley because the harvest of the field is perished. The harvest of the field is perished. We live at a time in America of white harvest.

The harvest is ready. Despair is deeply sown in the hearts of many many people because the things of the world have not satisfied and yet over the house of the Lord there is such foolishness in so many places. Now I'm not saying in all because there are definitely righteous men and righteous women the righteous congregations that are seeking the face of God and desiring a deeper revelation of truth that want to know the heart of Christ but really they have become the exception now rather than the rule and I see in the spirit multitudes multitudes of people who are in the valley of decision wanting to know which way to go like these young people and passing by these houses and not able to go in because they look at the spiritual condition of the people and of the leadership and they just shake their head and said where is their God? What they do is no different than what the people in the street do.

How they live is no different than the way people that I associate with live and I see multitudes passing by. What should be places of refuge? What should be houses of freedom? What should be washing stations

where they come in and hear the truth of Christ that is able to unlock the prison doors and heal the wounds in their heart and set them free and cause them to stand upon a rock and to be able to be used for his honor and for his glory. I sincerely hope that this incident reveals to these people their hearts and turns them to repentance.

If not, one day they're going to stand before God and find out that they have missed, with all of their religion, they have missed out on eternal life. You see, Joel called the people to fast because he had a revelation of the power of God. In Joel chapter 2, if you're going to fast, you and I need to have a revelation of the power of God.

We need to understand what God can do. We need to know his heart. We need to look in this book and find out his history and see his faithfulness and to know that he does respond.

New York City is a tough city, is it not? The powers of darkness are literally rolling over the city, but is it any worse than a city in the past that was called Nineveh? And God raised up a man called Jonah and sent him into that city of supposedly three million or so people, and he sent him into that city with a simple message, repent for the judgment of God is coming, and the whole city turned with repentance and fasting and sackcloth and ashes, and God spared that particular generation in that city because of their attitude of heart. In Joel chapter 2, verse 15, he says, Blow the trumpet in Zion. Sanctify a fast.

Call a solemn assembly. Gather the people. Sanctify the congregation.

Assemble the elders. Gather the children and those that suck the breasts, even the little ones, the infants. Let the bridegroom go forth out of his chamber and the bride out of her closet.

Let the priest and ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach that the heathen should rule over them. Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land and pity his people. You see, Joel saw the condition.

He knew what needed to be done. But Joel also saw the response because he knew the heart of God. God delights in taking impossible situations and turning them around when his people, with clean hands and a pure hearts, begin to call out unto him.

Then the Lord will be jealous for his land and pity his people. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I'll send you corn and wine and oil, and you shall be satisfied therewith, and I shall no more make you a reproach among the heathen. But I will remove far off from you the northern army and will drive him into a barren land and desolate with his face towards the east sea and his hinder parts toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savor shall come up, because he has done great things.

Fear not, O land. Be glad and rejoice, for the Lord will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree bears their fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month. This is the end of side one. You may now turn the tape over to side two.

You shall be full of weed, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years the locust has eaten, the canker worm and the caterpillar and the palmer worm, my great army which I send among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God that has dealt wondrously with you, and my people shall never be ashamed.

And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and none else. And my people shall never be ashamed. The situation may be beyond our control, but it's never beyond the power and the mercy of God.

I remind you that in the book of Esther, when a decree by a wicked king was signed that all the people of God should be destroyed, Esther called all of the people of God to fast for three days and three nights. And then she went in unto the king, and after the people had fasted in desperation before God, you see, it was out of their control. It's not really in our control to change anything anymore.

We've got to call it to God like we've never called out to Him before. And God moved His hand and touched the king's heart, and a second decree was sent out where the people were allowed to stand up and fight for themselves. And God won a mighty, mighty victory through that time of fasting and prayer.

Even wicked King Darius, even egotistical King Darius, fasted all night when his friend Daniel was thrown in the lion's den for a foolish decree he had signed. He prayed and says he fasted all night. I don't even think he knew the Lord, but he fasted anyway.

And God delivered Daniel with a mighty deliverance by shutting the mouths of the lions. And the king made a great decree, and a great victory was won. I'm not saying it was because of the king's fasting.

It was because of Daniel's stand with God. But nevertheless, even the king knew enough to abstain from food when he prayed because it was a desperate situation that required desperate measures before the Lord. Now, the last reason why we feel the Lord calling us to fast as a church body, it's for those who are moving forward and who understand the true motive of fasting before God.

The prophet Isaiah warned in Isaiah chapter 58 about fasting for false motives. He says you fast for debate and you fast for strife. In other words, you fast to prove yourself spiritually superior to others.

He was using this as an illustration of a fast that had absolutely no value in the sight of God. He said, others, you fast, and in the day of your fast, you exact all of your own pleasures. In other words, you're fasting, but on one hand, you're appearing to deny yourself, but on the other hand, you are living the rest of your day, and you're alive for yourself.

And you're seeking out pleasures while you fast, and he said that's of no avail either. But he talks then, he goes on, and he talks about the fast that he has chosen. He said, the fast that I've chosen, in other words, the reason I have called you to fast is to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke.

It's to deal bread to the hungry, to give shelter to the poor, and clothing to the naked. I firmly believe with all of my heart, as a matter of fact, I know that this church is a church that has laid hold of these truths in Isaiah 58. And you are a church that is moving forward.

There are over 30 ministries in this church. We meet with the leaders every month, and spend a time of prayer together. There are over 30 ministries that go out meeting the needs of the hungry, the needs of

the poor, the needs of the lame, the needs of the deaf, the needs of the blind, the needs of the oppressed, the needs of people in the streets, the needs of people in the parks.

There's food given to the hungry, clothing given to the naked. And it's a good thing. And we must never stop.

We must always be sure that our motives are pure in the things that we're doing. I believe in the book of Revelation that Ephesus was also such a church. Look at Revelation chapter 2 please with me quickly.

There was a church in Revelation that was doing these things. And Jesus spoke to this church in Revelation chapter 2 and verse 1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write, These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. I know your works and your labor and your patience.

Now patience we find the book of Romans comes out of trial. So this church had known trial. And many of the people had known trial.

And they had come out and the fruit of patience was interwoven in their character. I know you cannot bear them which are evil. You've tried them which say they are apostles and are not and has found them liars.

And so this is a church of the word. These people were in the word in Ephesus. There's no other way that you can try those that say they're apostles and find them to be liars unless you know the word.

And you've got to really know the word. And so this church knew the word and they were a laboring, bearing, patient church. And verse 3 says you have borne and you've patience and for my name's sake.

They were doing what they were doing in the right name. They weren't doing it for their own name. They weren't doing it to try to build up some great name about their own church.

They were doing it for Jesus' name. It says for my name's sake you've labored and you've not fainted. They were moving on.

They were pressing on. They were a church that believed that scripture that says in due season we shall reap if we faint not. In verse 4 he says nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love.

Jesus was saying you're doing all of these things. I want you now to remember he says in verse 5 where you've fallen from and turn back that's what repent means here and do the first works. Or else he says I will come quickly and remove your candlestick out of its place except thou repent.

In other words you won't you'll lose a revelation of who I am if you don't turn back and continue to do the things that you're doing but do them because you love me more than very life and breath itself. Do them because you love me more than your past, more than your present and more than your future that's to come. Remember those who are here who know Christ and you've been saved.

I challenge you today to remember what it was like when you first came to him and how you loved him. You got into ministries in this church because you loved him. And because his burden was birthed in your heart.

And you heard the word and because of the love relationship in your heart you wanted to go out and you wanted to do the things that God called you to do. And so it became as natural as breathing to feed the hungry. As natural as breathing to clothe the naked and do these other things that his word tells us we should do.

You did it because you loved him. You did it because his love his nature, his character was birthed within your life. But if we're not careful there's a sudden shift that can take place.

And it's a trap of the enemy and it's not a trap for the pew sitter. It's not a trap for the backslider. It's not a trap for the lukewarm in heart.

It's a trap for the zealous for God. It's that we begin to do works and in the process of doing those works we forget what it was all about right in the beginning. And the works become all consuming.

We come home after a day of doing things for God and no longer have any time for him and his word. No longer long for that secret intimate time with him in the prayer closet. Something begins to happen in the heart.

The whole focus shift now is on the works and not on the first love. And Jesus was not condemning. He was commending this church.

But he loved this church so much that he was calling her back. And he was challenging her to remember. Remember.

Remember what it used to be like. And you don't have to go from there. Get back to there.

Keep doing what you're doing. But do it with a first love motive. Do it because you love me.

Put me back in the place of being first in your life. And all of these things will be added unto you. All of these things will be as natural as swimming in water.

It will be as natural as breathing air. If you're involved in a ministry and all of a sudden the ministry has become burdensome to you and it's become labor, then you'd better take a look at what happened to that love relationship that first birthed that desire in your heart. We fast to keep our first love intact with Christ.

In Deuteronomy chapter 8, if you'll go there please. Deuteronomy chapter 8 in the Old Testament. I'm almost done.

Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 11. Moses now is warning the people of God. They've wandered through the wilderness for many years and they're about to go into the place of promise and now he's warning them.

And human nature has not changed. We might be in another era, but the very essence of who we are is the same as these people. We have to beware of that human nature.

And here's the thing that God warned them about in Deuteronomy 8, 11. He says verse 10. When thou hast eaten an artful, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he has given thee.

Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God in not keeping his commandments and his judgments and his statutes which I commend thee this day. Lest when thou hast eaten an artful and has built goodly

houses and dwelt therein when thy herds and thy flocks multiply and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied and all that thou hast is multiplied that thine heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt and from the house of bondage. David said Lord teach me to number my days that I may know how frail I am.

God said through Moses to these children beware lest when you are full you forget God and you forget where he brought you from. I was saved at 24 years of age. I was saved from a lot.

I can honestly tell you today that I don't want you to misunderstand what I'm about to say but I think that normalcy was out of my reach. I suffered horrible horrible anxiety attacks that are virtually crippling. I had an uncontrollable temper which would have stopped me from being a good husband or a good father.

I really didn't think I could ever be a good father. I was selfish and the list just goes on and on and on. I had a lot of desires but they were outside of my grasp and that's the way it is for most of us when we come to God.

You have things that you want to do and you want to be but they're out of your grasp and then you come to the Lord and you so need God you find God like I did when I was 24. I remember when I was first shared with me that if any man be in Christ he's a new creature. The old things pass away.

In my heart it was like God there's a chance that I could attain to everything that I've ever wanted in my heart and in my life. That I could be those things that I would like to be but are out of my grasp. Some of you here today, maybe you've watched in the past shows like Little House on the Prairie or something like that and you've seen what a family could be.

And you'd like to have a family like that but it's out of your grasp without God. And then you come to the Lord and all of a sudden the principles of God begin to take effect because your heart is hungry for the Lord. Chains begin to break, things begin to change, your heart changes.

He puts love where there was no love before. Maybe you were so driven by the fear of loss that you were financially always struggling and all of a sudden you begin to tithe. You begin to obey God.

And you see the windows of heaven open, a blessing is poured out there's not room enough to contain. You see it's in the heart of God to give to His children. It's in the heart of God to change His children.

It's in the heart of God to bless His children. It's in the heart of God to fight for His children. It's in the heart of God to so fill us with Himself that we stand in Him perfect and entire wanting nothing but more of Him.

And then the things that were out of our reach all of a sudden are within our reach. He gives us the patience to come home and not yell at our children. He gives us the love that is found in Ephesians 5 to come home in His strength and be the husband that we should be and to our wives and the wives we should be to our husbands.

He takes evil and casts it away and replaces it with Himself. And all of a sudden we're full and there comes a day in the life of every... there's a time a season in every Christian's life when you and I are driven by our need for God. But there comes a day when we're full.

There comes a day when you come into the house of God and even if He never gives you another thing you can stand and raise your hands and say I'm full! I'm full! You've paid me in full! God you've given me

everything that I've ever wanted. You've not withheld a thing from me. You love me so much.

All I had was a heart for you. I had nothing else. I had no skill and no integrity, no talent, nothing.

Just a heart. And God you responded and you filled me to overflowing with yourself. That's what Moses was talking about.

Beware lest when you're full you forget God. And you say my own hands, my own skills, my own might, my own power has gotten me this place that I'm in. It never was and never will be.

It was God. It will always be God. Many, many people fail to make the transition.

Because there is a transition that takes place. We come into God and our relationship with Him is based on our great need. And then we come and continuously come.

That's why folks that respond to this altar, if you go to respond, 10,000 times respond. You just come. Maybe you don't even know sometimes why you're coming, but if the Holy Spirit is prompting you, come.

And God simply fills and God cuts away old branches and God opens prison doors. God changes your ways of thinking and fights against your enemies. They come against you a hundred ways, they flee 10,000 ways.

There are things going on in the spiritual realm that you don't even see and you can't understand. God is there fighting all the time for His children. And then one day, one day, you come into the house of God and you stand and the realization hits you, I'm full.

I'm full. Yes, you want more and we should always want more, but there's something inside that says, I'm full. I'm not driven by my need anymore.

And many people at this point sit down and die. The whole life just becomes going to church. They lift up a cup that's overflowing and they're saying, fill my cup, fill my cup, fill my cup.

There's no more room. It's full. And they fail to make the transition.

They fail to understand that there is a need in the heart of God. Did you know that He has needs too just like you and I have? That's why He created us. That's why He loves us.

That's why He saved us. That's why He makes intercession for us right now at the right hand of the Father. Did you know that God has a need to be loved? He has a need that we love Him.

Did you know that there's other needs that only we can fill? Do you know that there are many many out there that He died for? Do you know that He wept when that 14 year old girl hung herself? Do you know He cried? He cried because He wanted her to know Him. There are needs that God has. And only you and I can meet those needs.

There comes a point when we've got to stir ourselves up to seek God. And like the lepers after they discovered this great treasure even though they may not have felt good about themselves, they said, Oh God it's not good that we keep to ourselves what we have found. We've got to go because God you have a need.

My needs are met but now I'm beginning to understand that you have a need. And through my life I invite you to come and meet that need. Firstly in your heart that I might love you with all my heart, my soul, my mind and my strength.

That I might have a continual love for your word. You remember the children of Israel, He told them when He sent Manna down, He said, Don't gather up more than you need for the day. And when they gathered more some of them disobeyed and they gathered more it rotted and stank.

And many many people lose out on that understanding that we have a daily continual need for God. They try to live on yesterday's experiences and old revelations and past victories and you can't do that. It's give us this day, He said, our daily bread.

This day. A continual walking relationship with God. And lastly we need to ask God for a continual outpouring of His heart in us for the lost.

Jesus thank you for meeting my needs but now may I have the privilege of meeting your need. May I have the privilege Lord of you pouring your light through me unto death if necessary that others can come to know this wonderful relationship that I have with you. God I come to present myself as a living sacrifice before you.

I trust you for everything that I will ever need. You send me anywhere you want me to go. As long as it's you I know that I will have the tools and the equipment to do what you sent me to do.

It wasn't me in the beginning and it won't be me in the end. It will always and only be you. They that sow in tears, the psalmist said, shall reap in joy.

If you weep Jesus, I want to weep. If you have sorrow in your heart for the children in the city, then I want sorrow in my heart. I don't want a different spirit than the spirit that you are of.

I don't want different thoughts than the thoughts that you're thinking. Jesus I want you in me to find a friend. I want you in me to find a lover.

I want you in me to find a bride. Somebody that you can draw right to your heart and you can share the very essence of the thoughts that are in your heart with me. And Lord, if you're weeping, I want to weep.

If you're dancing, I want to dance. If you're suffering, let me suffer along with you. Let me bear in my body the marks that you want me to bear.

Imprint your character upon me, oh God. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

I have prayed and I will continue to pray for this church and for my life and for Pastor David's life and for all who are in leadership in this church that we would always, at Times Square Church, be a first love church. Always. We'd never lose our first love for Jesus Christ.

Never substitute it by works. Never let religiousness take us over. Never become cold and complacent to the things of God.

Never get to the point where we say I'm full and I'm satisfied and sit down and begin to die. Never. Doing what Christ asked us to do and never letting works substitute for our love for him.

Joel says in Joel 2 16, let the bridegroom go forth out of his chamber and the bride out of her closet. Let the bridegroom go forth. The Lord was saying I want a face-to-face meeting with my church.

I want to reason and reckon with every last one of you. I want to touch your heart in a new and fresh way. That's what we're fasting about this coming week.

That God would keep us alive in him. Would you stand please? Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

There are some here today that the Holy Spirit's already spoken to your heart and so you know that you're to respond not to the preacher. You're to respond to him. There are some that you can honestly say Lord I'm in danger.

Your Holy Spirit has spoken to me today. My love is growing cold. I need to come back.

Brothers and sisters, I have to fast. I have to as a preacher of the gospel. I have to as a Christian.

Whether I was preaching or not wouldn't make any difference. I have to. And every once in a while I find that coldness starting to come into my life.

I find that I'm reading the Bible and all of a sudden it's just words. It's not ministering life to me anymore. Then I know that something is not wrong with him.

He's constant. Never changing. It's something is wrong with me.

And there are certain things I know to do. And one of them is to stir myself up again to seek God. And if that means denying of the flesh then that's what it means.

At any and all cost that I would be stirred up to seek Him. He can set me free. He has.

He can do wonderful things in my life. But if I lose my love for Him, I've lost it all. There are some here today your love is growing cold and you need to come back.

I'm going to encourage you in the balcony. You can go to either aisle. Exit and come down the aisles here to this altar today.

You're responding to Him. To the need in His heart. The main sanctuary you can come to as well.

You need to come back. And there's another group of people, the Lord that you would say to the Lord, God give me your heart. Give me the strength to deny myself.

Give me the courage to fast and to cry out for those who no longer have a voice to cry for themselves. Jesus, rid me of indifference. Rid me of always self-seeking.

Give me your heart. Lord, use my life. Use my life.

Whatever it means. Whatever you have to do. God, use my life.

That's why you're coming to this altar today. Let's move in close and across the front to give everybody an opportunity. If you're not saved today, if you don't know Christ as your Savior, you can come.

And if you're willing to turn from your sin and believe that He died in your place, you can be saved. Your sin can be washed away and you can be a new person in Christ Jesus. Hallelujah.

We want to be a church that shares your heart. When you look down upon us, and you say that this is a first love church, Lord, for my own life, God, whatever you have to do, I would just invite you to do it. I don't ever want to lose my love for you, Lord.

What good would it be, oh God? Oh, Jesus. There's no life apart from you, Lord. There's no hope, there's no future, there's no direction.

No fruit can be born apart from you. Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, draw us this week as we fast, even those who can only fast for half a day. Lord, you're no respecter of persons, and it's not the length of anything, it's the heart.

I ask you to look upon our hearts this week, oh God. You're the resurrection, you're the life. God, raise up a church that knows your heart.

Give us compassion for those that have fallen by the wayside. God, grant to us the ability to intercede for those churches that have wicked leadership raised up over them. Lord, we don't desire fire to fall on them, we desire repentance.

God, that you touch them, Lord. Turn them, oh God. Turn them, Lord.

Turn them, Jesus. Lord, we offer up our lives to you, to meet the need in your heart. Forgive us, Lord.

You said in your word that days on end you have forgotten me. For there's a need in your heart. God, forgive me for the days that I have forgotten that need.

The days I've gotten consumed with my own daily affairs, and I've forgotten you, Lord. Forgive me, Father. God, I thank you, Lord, that I can come before your throne.

That you're a loving heavenly Father. You cleanse and purify and strengthen your children. Oh Lord, oh God, oh God, let there be a fire from heaven come upon this church that will never be extinguished by the cares and concerns of the day.

That will never be extinguished by any trials or tribulations that come our way. Lord, that we will walk through, loving you with all our heart, our soul, our mind, and our strength, and loving our neighbor as ourselves. Let there be a shout of freedom in this house, a cry of rejoicing among your people, oh God.

Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. We bless your holy name.

You're our strength. You're our life. You're our breath.

You're our eyesight. You're our hearing, oh God. You're the direction we walk in, Lord.

You're the giver of life. You're the author, the finisher of our salvation. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

Hallelujah to your holy name. Hallelujah. Hallelujah, Jesus.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Father. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Those that have come this morning, take courage. God's going to give you strength. Nothing we do is in our own strength, and so knowing this is your freedom.

It's Him. It's all in Him. It's His strength that He gives to us.

Lord, I ask that you bless the people today. Bless your body. Those who are going home today, let there be an impartation of strength and a new resolve to lay hold of the hem of your garment and like Jacob to say I'll not let you go until you bless me.

Lord, thank you. Thank you that we come into your house and you meet every need, every time. We love you, Lord.

We honor you. In Jesus' name, amen and amen. Hallelujah.

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