

Escaping the Theology of Babylon

by Carter Conlon

The sermon warns of the Theology of Babylon, a fallen world system that seeks to find eternity without God, and calls for a destroying wind to come against it, raising up a legitimate bride who knows and loves God.

Scripture: Psalm 41:1, Isaiah 61:1-2, Matthew 3:10-11, Matthew 6:33, Luke 4:18-19

Topics: "Babylon"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the importance of considering the poor and disadvantaged in society. He highlights Psalm 41, which states that those who consider the poor will be blessed and delivered by the Lord. The pastor criticizes false preachers who only care about money and condemn the suffering. He urges Christians to show kindness to the poor and seek God's guidance in doing so, as Jesus himself preached the gospel to the poor and healed the brokenhearted. The sermon concludes with a reminder that the work of God is defined by preaching the gospel, healing, deliverance, and setting people free from their burdens.

Transcript

Jeremiah chapter 51. Please, if you go there with me, I'm going to speak on the topic of Escaping the Theology of Babylon. That doesn't sound like much of a Christmas message, but it is, actually, when you get to the end of it.

Escaping the Theology of Babylon. Now, actually, you'd probably be wise, if you have markers in your Bible, to go to Jeremiah 51, then Daniel chapter 5. Let me give you some scriptures, because we're going to move very quickly. Job chapter 26, and the rest of them are not too difficult to find for you.

Now, Father, we stand before you with no other desire than to be an oracle of God. Lord, this is a dark and a desperate time. Jesus, you spoke of the days that we're living in.

You spoke of them in two measures, an increasing darkness, but at the same time, an increasing glory upon a body of people that you chose to call your bride, your beloved. I'm asking you for an anointing today to clearly convey these words that you've given to me. Lord, you have to override my weakness, and you have to come and anoint my mind and physical body, and take me far beyond my natural limitations.

I ask you, Jesus, to be absolutely glorified in this house. I ask that your kingdom advance, and the kingdom of darkness suffer great violence. I ask, Lord, that you overthrow everything that offends you.

God, that is being perpetrated as your gospel, and being spoken as your name. And, Father, I thank you today. I thank you, Lord, that you're going to give a people the courage to stand in those last hours of time.

I give you the praise and all the glory in Jesus' mighty name. Now, throughout the Scriptures, Old Testament and New Testament, you find a lot of reference to a specific city. Of course, it's a physical place called Babylon, which is thought to have been a physical place somewhere in the vicinity of modern-day Iraq today.

Now, throughout Scriptural history, Babylon is symbolic. It's not just a physical place, but it's also a spiritual condition. It's the condition of fallen men and fallen societies who claim to know and to speak for God.

It's best typified by Paul in 2 Timothy 3. Paul typifies this Babylonian society as self-indulgent, a lawless time, lovers of pleasure, people who gravitate to and profess a form of godliness that clearly has no demonstration of the life of Christ in it. Now, the Scripture has warned about this. We're clearly warned right from the time of the earliest beginnings, right through to the end of the book of Revelation, that the devil is going to come.

He's going to come with a mighty flood. He's going to try to duplicate as it is the gospel of Jesus Christ and to so mar the way to eternal life and to so mar the way to salvation and the abundance that God has for a people who believe in Jesus Christ that there'll be a confusion, that Jesus himself said, were it possible, even the very elect could be deceived. There'd be such a deception, especially in the last days of time.

Babylon is a fallen world system. It's a fallen system of men trying to find eternity without God, trying to find a semblance of meaning for life without turning to the word of God, without bending their knee to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Babylon has its own religion.

It has its own theology. The Babylonian theology is self-indulgent. It is in God's sight lawless.

It has a people who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. It has a form of godliness about it, but there is no actuality of the life of Jesus Christ within it. Those who profess it are an abomination, really, to the very image that God wants to portray as his son through a bride of surrendered believers on the earth.

Revelation chapter 18 tells us about this Babylon because you'll find it mentioned at the end of time as we know it. And in Revelation chapter 18 and verse 2, the scripture says, He cried mightily with a strong voice saying, Babylon the great is fallen, and has become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. In other words, these are issues and things perhaps that even attempt to look as if they are holy, but they are not.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. And the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. The scripture tells us that Babylon and its theology offers the nations a polluted wine.

Now, you remember Jesus in the miracle feast of Cana, he saved the best wine for the end. Now, there's a typology. Wine gladdens the heart.

I'm talking about the typology of wine in the New Testament. It gladdens the heart. There's a savor, a fragrance.

And the church of Jesus Christ is supposed to be a savor that goes through the earth gladdening the hearts of those who are in captivity, those who are bruised and wounded and blind, those who are without hope and help. We are to walk through the earth as Christ walked through the earth. We are to be helping those that are helpless.

We are to be fathers as it is to the fatherless. We are to be reaching out beyond ourselves, understanding that there's an agenda far and above and beyond the agenda that comes from the hearts of fallen man. But Babylon offers a polluted wine, a polluted version as it is on the spiritual side of Jesus Christ and his truth.

Babylon offers false comfort to world leaders, offers it, buddies up to this world system and it becomes a religion that both uses political power and is used by political power, offers false hope and false comfort to those that embrace it. Babylon goes through the earth and the scripture says in Revelation 18, 3, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And Babylon has a theology that feeds the lust of those who travel through the earth seeking personal gain.

They're really not seeking to live for God. They really don't want a mandate other than the satisfaction of their own heart. They really don't want a destiny other than their own viewpoint of themselves and how they can better have access to wealth, status, fame and power in this world and society.

And Babylon comes with its theology and reinforces this in the fallen nature of man. And it feeds this lust of the merchants that are traveling through the earth. In the church of Jesus Christ today is jam-packed with merchants.

They're not interested in the cross. Don't talk to them about the blood. They don't want to hear about it.

Don't sing about sacrifice. Don't talk about the mission field. I'm just here to find out how I can use this Christ to increase my own personal worth and gain.

They are merchants. And Babylon has a theology that allows them to satiate, as it is, their lusts all in the name of God and in supposedly what should be or is called God's house. In verse 4, John says, I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out from her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins and that you receive not of her plagues.

Come out from this false Christ. Come out from this false Christianity that does not even minimally represent Jesus Christ, especially in this last hour of time. Now, Jeremiah says in Jeremiah chapter 51, where we started, In verse 1, he says, Behold, thus saith the Lord, I will raise up against Babylon and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me a destroying wind.

Now, God says, I'm going to come against this system. I'm going to come against this false covetous Christ, as it is, that is created from the hearts of those who really don't want the kingdom of God, as it is clearly portrayed through the life and the word of Almighty God. And he says, I'm going to raise up against it.

And those that dwell in the midst of it, a destroying wind. That's interesting. This destroying wind, you look at it, if you if you read it just at face value.

What is he going to send a hurricane? What is he going to do to come against this spiritual Babylon? No, the word wind in the Old Testament is Ruach. And it's the breath of God. He says, I'm going to raise up a

word and I'm going to bring you to ruin.

That's what he's saying. I'm not going to leave my church captivated by Babylonians theology any longer. I'm going to raise up a destroying wind as it is.

I'm going to set my voice in motion. That's really what God is saying. And I'm going to come against this system that robs the poor, that robs people who come into the house of God of the true knowledge of who Jesus Christ is.

I'm going to raise up a destroying wind. And if you'll go ahead to Daniel chapter five, please, with me. I'll show you an example of what this destroying wind is.

Now, this is in Daniel chapter five. We're in the place that was physically Babylon and Babylon overplayed its hand. The devil always does overplay his hand.

You remember when Babylon went in and captured Jerusalem, they took all the holy things out of the house of God and began to party with these holy things. And folks, it so speaks to me about a church age that has almost gone in large measure, at least unchallenged in the last 20 or even 30 years, where men and women have gone in and taken the holy things of God and have made a party of something that was not intended to be so. And Belshazzar says in chapter five of Daniel, the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords and drank wine before the thousand.

And Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines might drink therein. They brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem. The king and his princes and his wives and his concubines drank in them.

They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver and brass and iron and wood and stone. And folks, I tell you, there's a lot of theology that is exactly like that in the house of God today. And all you have to do is turn on not all but much of Christian television and you will see this very thing taking place.

You will see men and women who are taking the holy things of God and they are praising the gods of gold and silver and brass and iron and wood and stone. And if you have been watching any of this, you're seeing it increasing in measure. In the same hour, verse five, there is a cut off point.

There is a time where God Almighty himself says enough. For my name's sake and for my church's sake, you've gone far enough with this. In the same hour, it says, came forth the fingers of a man's hand and he rode over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace.

Now, you remember in the book of Revelation, it is Jesus Christ who comes and walks in the midst of the candlesticks. Now, those are these organizations that claim to represent him. Now, in the book of Revelation, these were seven as it is.

Well, they were supposed to be legitimate churches. The church of Laodicea was doubtful that it still had some spiritual legitimacy to it. But in the midst of the candlestick came forth the fingers of a man's hand.

And I see it in this sense that God one more time sends his word. God one more time unveils the scriptures. One more time he pulls back the curtain and says, I know there's a lot of people out there that

have been professing to know me, but this is who I am.

And he makes it known and he comes down and he begins to walk in the midst of the candlesticks so that those at least who are there to observe these things are now without excuse. The seven churches of Revelation were without excuse. There were some good things happening in those churches, but there were some things that were so serious that they were going to take the very testimony of Christ away from these people.

And this is one of those situations that we're speaking about today. Again, in Jeremiah chapter 51 in verse 2, he says, Now in verse 1, I'm going to raise up a destroying wind. And in verse 2, he says, I will send to Babylon fanners that shall fan her and shall empty her land.

For in the day of trouble, they shall be against her roundabout. Now, this is interesting. Fanners, first of all, a destroying wind, which is the breath of God, come to challenge this system, this worldly system that has its own religion.

And secondly, he says, I will send fanners against you. And the word in the Hebrew is zor. I guess that's the easiest way to pronounce it.

And it's a word used to describe someone other than what you are. It's used in Proverbs as the other woman. That's very interesting when we look at this.

Because if you take it in that context, he says, I'm going to raise up in your midst the other woman. Because, you see, you claim to be my bride. You claim to have been betrothed to me.

You say, as you hold these vessels in your hand and party with them, that you and I are of one heart and of one spirit. But the Lord says, I have a controversy with this type of Babylonian theology. You've never made a vow to me.

You don't know my heart. You don't know who I am. You don't care for my children.

You don't do what I do. You're not walking where I walk. You have not rightfully taken my name onto your lips.

And so he says, I'm going to set before you the other woman. You see, there is another woman in the church. There is a legitimate bride of Jesus Christ.

There are a people who are betrothed to him. They do know him. They have come to an altar.

They do love him. His spirit is upon them. They do love him with all of their heart.

Hallelujah. It's like a man who is at a wedding reception, and his bride is there with him. And the whole thing is a fraud.

And all of a sudden, another bride comes in, dressed in a veil, and a dress more radiant than the one who is sitting there. And she says, I know you. You're a fraud.

You've never made a vow to this man. You've never come to an altar. You don't love him.

His objectives are not your objectives. You care nothing for his house. You will not walk where he walks.

You will not care for his children. You will not pursue the things he is pursuing. You are a fraud.

And there will be another bride. There will be a voice that will rise up and challenge this end-time theology that is taking the testimony of Christ out of much of his house. John talks about Jesus as one of these, actually, in Matthew chapter 3. Let me just read it to you for time's sake.

Speaking about Jesus, he says, And now, in chapter 3, verse 10 of Matthew, the axe is laid to the root of the trees, and therefore every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. But he that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Verse 12 says, Whose fan is in his hand. Hallelujah.

And he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Whose fan is in his hand. In other words, there were a people who professed to belong to God.

But God says, No, you don't belong to me. I'm sending before you my Son. And my Son is going to stand before you with his fan in his hand.

Hallelujah. He is the embodiment of my heart. He will stand before you, and his very presence will challenge the passionless powerlessness of your own profession that you know me.

Again, in Daniel chapter 5, I see fanners as those who stand. They clearly know by God's Word the times they're living in. And they know what God is saying.

Remember in the book of Malachi. Malachi prophesied in the last days. And if you believe we're living in those last days.

There's going to be a gathering of people who fear the Lord and think upon His name. And God says, I will look to them, and I will remember them. And they will return to me, and they will discern who serves God and who does not serve Him.

God says, I will bring them back to me, and I myself will remove the veil. I'll open their minds, I'll open their hearts, and they will see who I am, and who serves me, and who doesn't. I see Daniel as one of these fanners who stands in a time of God's judgment.

In Daniel chapter 5 and verse 22, he says, And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thine knewest all this. In other words, Belshazzar, you knew that God was the one who set kings on their thrones. You had a history in your own family of God's dealing with those who had falsely claimed to know Him and dealt lightly with His kingdom.

You've seen how those have been humbled before you. In verse 23, he says, But thou hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven, and they brought the vessels of His house before thee. And thou and thy lords and thy wives and thy concubines have drunk wine in them.

And thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold and brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know. And the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified. Then was the part of the hand sent from Him, and this writing was written.

In verse 26, he says, This is the interpretation of the thing. God has numbered your kingdom and has finished it. Daniel knew.

And Daniel knew from the word of God. He was a student of God's word. He was a student of Jeremiah.

He was a student of these times of captivity, when a foreign power had come in and captivated, as it is the people of God, taken them out of the holy place, taken them out of Jerusalem into a foreign land, had taken the holy things of God and were sitting at tables of supposed power and authority and were partying with the things of God. But Daniel was in the word of God and the Spirit of God was upon him. And Daniel knew.

God was speaking through Daniel that a time had come. A time of God's justice. A time when God Himself had risen up.

A time when God said, I'm not leaving my glory in the enemy's hand any longer. I'm not letting ungodly men party with the holy things of God any longer. I'm not letting my people be a reproach any longer.

I will have a testimony in the earth. I will have a people who will go back to Jerusalem. I will have a people who will rebuild the temple.

I will come to them and they will glorify me in their midst. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! He said, your kingdom, you've been weighed in the balances and are found wanting. And your kingdom is being turned over to someone else.

And Belshazzar was so blind at this point. I'm stunned at the spiritual blindness of some who profess to know Christ and even have influence in society. I'm stunned at their blindness.

And I'm stunned at the blindness of so many who sit under the misguided ministries. And even after Daniel told this king, he said, your kingdom is over. God has opened His word.

He's finally come to a place of judging it. Even then, Belshazzar commends them and they come and put a chain of gold on Daniel. Can you imagine Daniel, how incredulous it must have been? Standing there, this blind leader, putting a chain of gold on his neck and making a proclamation and making him third ruler in the kingdom.

So blind. Daniel has just pronounced his own judgment. And he's promoting him to third ruler in a kingdom that's not going to last the rest of the night.

Before the night was out, Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans was slain. The blindness, there's no blindness like religious blindness, folks. There's no deeper, darker blindness than those that have taken the things of God and they've not handled it honestly.

Jesus Himself said, if the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness. If you have taken the holy things and you've not used it for the purposes of God. If you have vowed vows, but they're not vows, they're sincerity to the purpose of Almighty God through Jesus Christ.

And you've taken His word and pulled out little bits and pieces and made yourself drunk on your own lusts all in the name of God. How dark and how deep is that blindness. So many are not going to know that they're going to hell even though they're preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ until one day they stand before Him and He looks at them and says, I don't know you.

I don't know your prophesying. I don't know your buildings you built. I don't know your works and even the devils you cast out.

I don't know any of this. You're a worker of lawlessness and a worker of iniquity. Jeremiah chapter 51 and verse 6. He says, flee out of the midst of Babylon and deliver every man his soul and be not cut off in her iniquity for it is the time of the Lord's vengeance and He will render to her a recompense.

Babylon has been a golden cup in the Lord's hand and made the earth drunken. The nations have drunken of her wine. Therefore, the nations are mad.

How much of what professes to be the gospel of Jesus Christ is out in the world today and has no effect on its society but to dull and deaden the people. Babylon is suddenly fallen, verse 8, and destroyed. Howl for her.

Take balm for her pain. If so, she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed.

Forsake her and let us go everyone to his own country for her judgment reaches up to heaven and is lifted up even to the skies. Verse 10 says, the Lord has brought forth our righteousness. Come, let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God.

In other words, folks, this was the invitation. Let's get up and go home. Let's get up and go back to God.

Let's get up and go back to Calvary. Let's get up and go back to apostolic teaching and foundational truth of the church of Jesus Christ. Let's get up and go back to lives of self-sacrifice for the kingdom of God.

Let's get up and go back to the work of God and do what God has called us to do and be the people that God has called us to be. Let's get up and let's go home. Let's get out of all of this because the judgment of God is coming upon it.

Verse 11, he says, make bright arrows. Actually, the word is pure. Make pure arrows.

Gather the shields. The Lord has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes and his devices against Babylon to destroy it because it is the vengeance of the Lord. It is the vengeance of his temple.

Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon and make the watch strong. Set up the watchmen. Prepare the ambushes.

For the Lord has both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon. O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come and the measure of thy covetousness. The Lord of hosts has sworn by himself, saying, Surely I will fill thee with men as with caterpillars, and they shall lift up a shout against thee.

Now, this is interesting because the Lord says, I'm going to lift up a shout against the whole theology of Babylon. All of this self-seeking that has found a place in the house of God. Now, when I'm speaking today, I'm speaking about the theology of Babylon.

I'm not speaking about we expect nations without God. We expect people without God to go into a spiral of decadence. The scriptures speak this, but I'm speaking about this heart of this fallen world system and the measure in which it has found expression in the house of God.

And it is being perpetrated even in great measure in our generation as if it is the gospel of Jesus Christ. But the Lord says, I'm going to raise up a shout against it. Amazing.

Can you imagine this? Babylon has been a world power. There's been a dominance. No one has been able to conquer it.

They're secure at their table and they're drinking of the holy things. They completely polluted the knowledge of God among their own people. And all of a sudden, a shout comes into their midst.

Now, we know physically there was an invading army that came against them. But what could the context of this shout be in our generation and in the church of Jesus Christ and in the times in which you and I are living? Now, of course, the shout would be in some measure the fanners, the fanners that are standing. There will be men and women that will stand in this hour.

They're going they're coming out of places of hiding. Even now, the Lord has prepared an army. Folks, he's never without a testimony.

There might be one hundred thousand souls with their misguided war plans standing on a hillside. But there are David's dozens and hundreds of David's that are being prepared. There are Deborah's that are being prepared by the hand of God.

There are those that are going to stand. And I believe in God with all my heart. We're going to have a revival in this Western society of pure preaching and pure theology.

In this last hour of time, there are going to be those who rise up and they know God. They've been hidden. They might not even come from great halls of learning.

But they've been in the prayer closet and they've touched heaven. They've been at the feet of Jesus and they've been in this book and they know what God is saying. And God is speaking to them.

And they're not even given any regard in our time that we're living in. But all of a sudden they're going to rise. The Joseph Company is coming and they're going to hold the keys to the storehouse in a time of incredible famine.

That's one of the shouts. But there's another shout. Now listen to me carefully.

This is something that the Holy Spirit is speaking to my heart. And God will have to bear witness with your heart. And you'll have to see it in the word for yourself.

But there is another shout. And I hear it. I heard it in Africa.

I heard it in other places we've been in the last several years. I hear it on the streets of New York City. It's a shout of the poor.

It's the cry of the poor. It's the cry of the fatherless. It's the cry of the widow.

It's the cry of the man or woman who is completely marginalized by much of what is preached and taught as Jesus Christ today. Pushed to the sides as it is. Outside of the love feast that is going on in Belshazzar's court.

With all of these holy things and all of the drunkenness and debauchery that's going on. The Lord says himself in Psalm 12 verse 5. For the oppression of the poor. For the sighing of the needy.

Now will I arise, says the Lord. And I will set him in safety from him that pops at him. Folks, I personally believe that there's going to be a spiritual awakening among the poor in our time.

I believe it with all my heart. I believe it. I believe the kids that are out in the street that are not evangelized because a lot of what is being preached today is looking for money.

They're targeting middle, upper class because they're building monuments to their own egos. They care nothing about the poor. They care nothing about the work of Almighty God.

But I believe with all my heart because I know the heart of God. He's the father to the fatherless. He's the husband to the widow.

He's the one who promises to come with a vengeance when the poor cry to him. I hear the cry of the poor. I heard it in Africa.

I hear it in New York City. I hear the cry of the poor in our generation. And God says, I will answer this cry.

I will come to this people and I will pull away the veil of the man, the woman that have been marginalized by a gospel of partying and foolishness and covetousness and gold and success and health and wealth. I'll pull aside the curtain and I will show them who I am. Job was a suffering man.

He lost health. He lost family. He lost property.

He was sitting down in an ash heap. And came to him three supposed friends with satanically inspired theology. And they told this suffering poor man.

They said, if God was with you, you would be prosperous and wealthy. If God was with you, you would be healthy. If God was with you, you would have no trouble.

You would be happy all the time. The theology right out of hell itself. Come to condemn a suffering man.

And Job, finally, just before the appearance of God. I believe the Holy Spirit comes on him after 25 chapters of listening to this drivel theology. Finally, it's as if there's an awakening in Job's heart.

And let me just read you his words. Job answered and said, how have you helped him that is without power? You can see him looking at this theology that stands before him. This theology of health, wealth, success, prosperity, destiny, status, power.

And Job says, tell me, how have you helped me? I've had no power. If I was you, I would have helped you. How have you saved the arm of him that has no strength? I'm standing, I'm sitting here.

I'm despondent. My life is almost destroyed. But what has your theology done for me? How have you helped me? How have you pulled me out of the pit that I'm in? How have you encouraged me? How have you strengthened me? Verse 3 says, how hast thou counseled him that has no wisdom? How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is? Job is saying, tell me now.

You say you're speaking for God, but where is God in anything that you've spoken in these 25 chapters? Verse 4, he says, to whom hast thou uttered words? And whose spirit came from you? Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. So help me God, there's going to be a discernment come to the poor.

The widows that have been ripped off by silver-tongued devils on television. A discernment is going to come into their heart. And say, what spirit speaks from you? That all you seem to do is go after my money.

You don't care anything about my children. You don't care about family. You make just nothing but empty promises.

Send a thousand dollars to you and my drug-infested sons and daughters will come to God. As if God has to be bought. Verse 5, he says, dead things are formed from under the waters and its inhabitants.

You've come out of, suppose that you say you have revelation. You say you have this divine connection to heaven. And you've come out from this supposed water that represents theology that comes from the heart of God.

And all you brought is dead things. Things that can't give life. Things that give no birth.

The poor are going to realize that Babylonian theology has seen them, has created other than in the image of God. Has not seen the poor as precious in the sight of God. Has not seen anything that doesn't further their own objective is worth pursuing.

The poor are going to understand that the theology of Babylon does not represent the heart of God. And today stands at the right hand of the poor. The scripture says that God stands at the right hand of the poor to save him from those that condemn his soul.

The poor are going to realize that the theology of Babylon has condemned them to excuse the lack of godliness in their own conscience. Oh, folks, I'm telling you, a spiritual awakening is also coming among God's people about what Calvary is all about. Calvary is not about self-indulgence.

How disgraceful to even think of using the cross of Jesus Christ for personal gain. Disgraceful. There's no other word for it.

Abominable. And it will be judged. Some now and some later.

But, folks, it's going to be judged. Calvary is about giving ourselves to that which is the work of God. And Jesus Christ undeniably and without argument defines the work of God.

And let me read it to you just one time again. The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, the recovering of the sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, or to tell them that now is the time you can come to God for these things.

You can get out of your prison. You can get out of your situation, not necessarily being completely as it is delivered from it, but you'll not be overwhelmed in it. The Lord has promised to be the strength of those who turn to him.

Now, you'd ask me today, how do I escape the theology of Babylon? It's really easy. Go to Psalm 41. Now, I know this is not a very clap your hand kind of a message, but, folks, I'm hearing something.

Psalm 41. Quite frankly, I don't care if half the church walks out. I'm going to preach the truth.

Pastor Dave's going to preach the truth. Pastor Neal's going to preach the truth. Psalm 41, verse 1, says, Blessed is he that considers the poor.

The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive. He shall be blessed upon the earth, and thou will not deliver him to the will of his enemies.

Now, the will of your enemy is to deceive you. And God says you stop and consider the poor. Just stop and consider.

Stop and consider the poor, the disadvantaged, the disaffected of society. You ask today, why? Here we are in a sanctuary that is marvelous. There's no doubt about it.

Why has God blessed Times Square Church to the measure he has? I want to tell you why. Because in 1958, one man stopped and considered the poor. Stopped and said, God, there are young men in a courtroom, and they have nobody to speak for them.

They have no defender. And they're being overrun. And yes, maybe they are guilty, but God still loves them, and God's still willing to forgive them.

He stopped and considered the poor, and then began to move in a life of moving towards the poor. You look at Brother Dave's life, and you're going to see every ministry that emanates from his life, and the ministry God's given to him, goes to the poor, the addicted, the homeless, the lonely, the despondent, the poor all throughout the world. Thanks be to God.

Blessed is he that considers the poor. Blessed. Here you have a whole church age running around looking to be blessed, and they won't do the one thing that God says, if you'll do this, I'll bless you.

Stop and consider the poor. I'll deliver you in time of trouble. I'll preserve you, keep you alive.

You'll be blessed on the earth. You'll not be delivered to the will of your enemies. They'll rise up against you on every side, but they'll not overwhelm you.

They'll never defeat you. I'll put you in the virtual palm of my hand. And verse 3 says, the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, and thou will make all his bed in his sickness.

That means, actually if you look at the original text, it means God will be a nurse to you in your time of difficulty. And he will ease your pain, even when you go through difficult seasons in your life. Hallelujah.

The man who stops and considers will be blessed. And you have all this theology running around looking to be blessed, but not looking to do it God's way. And secondly, just do what God has enabled you to do.

Proverbs 19, 17 says, he that has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and that which he has given will he pay him again. Stop and just do what God has enabled you to do. I think of Peter and John going into the temple in the book of Acts.

They didn't have any money, but they had hands. They had a mouth to speak a word. They had a shoulder for a lame man to lean on when his legs came back again.

And we can all do that. We can escape this misguided theology by just moving again into the work of God. I'll make you a promise.

If you will step out and begin to help the poor, if you'll do that, you'll not be deceived by any snake oil salesman on television, water drillers. Have you seen the water drillers? I was in a gym and I couldn't believe it. There's a guy who says, he's led of the spirit to drill a well 210 feet down and struck holy water.

And all you got to do is send in like \$100 and you get a little vial of this holy water. Drink it. This is supposed to be in the name of Jesus.

It's the old Western wagon rolling up with Uncle Sam snake oil, healing Alex here, healing all kinds of illness. It's the same thing. There's nothing.

It's just all in the name of Christ. Now, the same scam. And yet the poor, the widows, people at home, shut ins fall for this.

But, folks, I want to tell you something. If you and I will just start reaching out and giving to the poor, however God leads us, it can be a hand. It can be a word.

It can be a shoulder to lean on. It doesn't always have to be money. Now, wonderful if it can be, but sometimes it can't be.

Peter and John, in spite of what prosperity preachers preach today, had no money. And you will lay hold of the heart of God. I see Peter and John coming into the temple and they've got this lame man between them who's leaping and dancing and praising God.

They haven't got a dime in their pockets. But they've just reached out and they've helped. And modern religion of its time is so threatened by this, so hates the simplicity of Jesus pouring his life through people, to people who are oppressed and left marginalized at the temple door.

How many years did that man sit there and was not allowed in? You lay hold of the heart of God. Something will get a hold of your heart, I promise you. You enter into the work of God.

The scripture will come alive. You'll begin to see this book, not just picking it apart for individual promises for the day, but you begin to see it in its context. You begin to see the depth of the word of God.

You begin to understand something of God's heart, not just for you, but for the society around us. And Jesus will lead you into the life that only he can give you. Hallelujah.

He will. He'll lead you into his life. I don't know how else to say it.

I never am closer to Christ than if I am helping somebody who just needs to be helped. Or speaking a kind word to somebody who needs encouragement. Or offering a shoulder to somebody who just maybe needs to cry over a certain situation.

Not a lot of theology, sometimes necessary. But more theology in it than an hour and a half worth of preaching. And God begins to open his heart.

You go into the book and you begin to see it. You become aware of people. I was in the hospital the other day for a particular reason and sitting there for a few hours.

And I remember just looking at all the people around and how sad they look. And how despondent some who are obviously very suffering physically are. And how my heart was broken for them.

Wanting to reach out. Wanting to give them a word of assurance. Wanting to be able to help in some measure.

To do something for somebody. There's no greater feeling in the heart than when our lives are not lived looking for our own gain. We're not walking down the street seeking wealth and status and power and our piece of the pie.

And all the rest of it. But to say I'd rather be counted a fool for the sake of Christ. I'd rather walk knowing that God is walking with me.

Doing what Christ did. And what Christ does in every generation. Let the Babylonian theologians party with the holy things.

Let them carry on in their foolish drunkenness. Their endless prophesying about nothing. But I'm going to go where God is and do what God is doing.

And see my hands become the hands of God. And my voice the voice of God. And my eyes the eyes of Christ.

And my feet carrying me where the Holy Ghost is walking. And the Lord will open something of your heart. This Christmas and beyond this Christmas.

I think the best gift that you and I could receive from God. Is a heart that would be kind to the poor. For the rest of our lives.

God help me to be kind to the poor. The rest of my life. This is the calling of God.

This is the church of Jesus Christ. He has a bride but he has other children the scripture says. They're not in yet.

They don't know who he is. They don't know that he's the one that gave them life in the beginning. And he waits and holds even the judgment of the world.

Because he's not willing that any should perish. And he sends his bride. And we're to go to those who are poor in spirit and physically poor.

And those who know that they are poor without God. In spite of the size of their bank account or their home or whatever. And we take to them.

Christ. We live for the will of God. We ask I've been asking the Lord.

Recently God give me a kind heart. I want a kind heart. I want.

To be kind. I want this to be all of my life. I don't want to be indifferent.

To the suffering of people I don't want to be able to walk by a person who's crying out inside. For truth and not even be aware of it. I want a heart that you can engage.

And I believe. I'm 52 now. And I think I'm going to be fortunate to get another 20 years out of this body.

I really do. But for the time that's left. I want to be kind.

One thing that marks Brother Dave about any man of God. That I've known of his era and time. Is he's a very kind man.

Extremely kind if you know him. It's not a public kindness. It's behind the scenes kindness.

You always find out through the grapevine. Somebody's been blessed. Somebody's been helped.

Somebody's been sent to Bible school. Somebody and you find out. Who's been behind it.

He's just been a kind man. And God has blessed him. I want this kindness in my life.

I want to be kind to the poor. Especially of this city. And the Lord will show me how to do that.

He'll show me as a Christian. Not as a pastor. As a Christian.

And then he'll show us as a church. How to be kind. It's the cry of my heart.

And it's the way to escape the theology of Babylon. It's the way to. If you get stuck in front of one of these television programs.

Then you begin to realize how fraudulent these men and women really are. The whole gospel is about themselves. You begin to realize that they're bringing nothing but dead things from under the water.

And they're condemning the suffering man. James said to the Christian church. You've despised the poor.

And of course this is always in the hearts of people everywhere. And he challenged the people. He said cleanse your hands and purify your hearts.

And I want this church to be a church with a heart for the poor. Until Christ comes. We're going to make that a focus of some of our prayer meetings in the new year.

We have a heart for the poor in this church. Until Christ comes. And we never lose that heart.

Because that is the heart of God. I want to give an altar call. Education Annex.

Main Sanctuary. And the annex is. There's not a whole lot of people there.

So we'll wait for you if you want to make your way here. But for everybody today that would like to join with me at this altar. And just say Lord.

I would like the gift of God's kindness. To the poor. To become a lasting part of my life.

God I'm asking you this Christmas to give me this. Pray with me please. Lord Jesus.

I've heard your voice. And I thank you. For judging in me.

Everything. That offends you. That offends your work.

That offends your life. That you want to live. Through me.

God forgive me. For my self-seeking heart. Give me your heart.
Lord you are kind. And you're good. And your Bible says.
That your mercy. Endures forever. Scripture tells me.
You are kind. To the unthankful. You are kind.
To the unholy. You are kind. That all men.
May know. That you love them. Jesus.
From this day forward. I ask you. That the gift.
Of your kindness. May be upon me. That I might be kind to the stranger.
To the fatherless. To the widow. To the hungry.
To the naked. To those that have nowhere to live. That I might be kind.
To the confused. To the arrogant. To those who are misguided.
To all men. To all women. To all children.
That the kindness of the Lord. Would be in my hands. And on my lips.
You say in your word. That the mark of a virtuous woman. Is that the law of kindness.
Is on her lips. Let the law of kindness. God's kindness.
Be in my heart. My hands. And on my lips.
From this day forward. Make me aware. Of the suffering.
Of others. And help me. To feel your heart.
For them. Lord only you can do this. Because you are God.
And you live within me. So I release my life. Into your hands.
And I ask you. To make me. Into this kind.
Of a person. I ask it. And I believe for it.
Because you tell me. That if a son asks for bread. You'll not give him a stone.
I'm asking you for bread. God you promise. To give me those things.
That will glorify your name. Now I rejoice. And I thank you from the depths of my heart.
I thank you God. Thank you Father. Thank you Jesus.

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