

When Mercy Kills

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon highlights the critical need for addressing sin and embracing God's presence in our lives.

Duration: 1:01:20

Scripture: John 4:24, Galatians 6:7

Topics: "Repentance", "Obedience To God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God sincerely and dealing with sin in our lives. It highlights the danger of casual treatment of God's presence and the need to align our hearts with God's truth. The story of Uzzah touching the ark and the consequences of his actions serve as a warning against disregarding God's commands and living in sin. The sermon calls for repentance, genuine seeking of God, and a joyful obedience to His ways.

Transcript

There are some messages that I would rather not deliver, and this is one of them. Jesus said in John chapter 10, the hireling sees the wolf coming and flees because he is a hireling and doesn't care for the sheep. And the mark of a hireling in the pulpit is that he or she will never deal with sin in your life.

You see, that's the wolf. The wolf is that encroaching dullness to spiritual things that has a tendency to creep into everyone's life. It's sin that wants to come and get a foothold and rob you of not just eternity but the life of Christ in you.

The hireling won't deal with it. The hireling cares only about building his empire. The hireling only cares about how much money you've got in your wallet and how he can get it out of your wallet.

To suit his own purposes. And one of the marks of hireling ministers, be it on television, radio, or in churches, is that they will never deal with issues of sin. If they even mention it, it's just a swift passing to give legitimacy to their ministry, but they will never deal with it because they don't really care about you.

They care about what you can give, but they don't care about you. Your destiny doesn't separate you from God, your self-image doesn't separate you from God, and all the wonderful things that you could become don't separate you from God. Sin separates from God.

Not just eternity, but it separates you from the life of Christ for here, in the present. The hireling will not deal with it, but in this pulpit in Times Square Church for 15 years there have been faithful shepherds that have opened the Word of God and preached to you the full counsel of God, because we love you. I look at your faces here today, and I want to see those faces in heaven.

I want to see you around the throne of God. I don't want to see you snared by something that you might not even be aware of is deadly that's in your life, or an attitude, a spiritual attitude that gets a hold of you. I want you to be in heaven.

We're numbered here today, perhaps, I'm only guessing at maybe 3,000, but I want to see 3,000 names that were here today in heaven. And I'm believing the Holy Spirit to touch you, to turn you, to encourage you. For those that are walking in righteousness before God, I'm trusting with all my heart that this will just be an encouragement to you.

It will be a strength to you. Truth will always strengthen us, even when we are found walking in it. It will still be a source of strength to us.

Please pray with me that God gives incredible grace today. Lord Jesus, we love your presence. Without your presence, there is no church.

There's no reason to gather. There's nothing to gain. There's no true God to worship.

Lord, thank you for what you are doing here. Thank you that you have been an abiding Savior in this church for over 15 years now. We don't come and play church.

We don't work anything up. We don't have to. You are here.

You speak, you save. Thousands have come to the saving knowledge of Christ in this very sanctuary. Missionaries have gone around the world.

It's been because you've been here and you've been speaking to us. We've had hearts to hear truth. I ask you today, God, to give me wisdom and compassion to preach this, to speak it, God, in the way you want it to be spoken.

I'm asking that it be your heart that be conveyed through the words of this message today. And I do pray, God, that you give us all ears to hear. Give us hearing ears and hearts that love you and that want to worship you in spirit and in truth.

I acknowledge my need of you. Holy Spirit, without you, I have no thoughts, no mind, nothing to say. Everything I say will just fall to the floor if you don't quicken it and make it real.

The mark of the anointing is the advancement of God's kingdom in the hearts of his people. I cry out today to you, Lord, and I say, let your kingdom come. Let your will be done.

Let it be an advance of your kingdom in the hearts of your people today. And I thank you for it in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

2 Samuel chapter 6, if you'll turn there with me, please. 2 Samuel chapter 6, when mercy kills an outstretched hand. When mercy kills an outstretched hand.

2 Samuel chapter 6, beginning at verse 1, and this is when David the king has conquered, he has been appointed by God to be king of both Israel and Judah. God has used his life to bring unity to the nation, and now he's set up a new capital called Jerusalem. Saul's capital was in another place, but David was now going to move the ark of God and into Jerusalem.

He consulted with the leaders. Everyone agreed this was a good thing to do, to bring the heart of God. It's always been the desire of God's heart to be right in the center of his people, to be able to be manifested in the middle of his people and to give his people life and strength.

2 Samuel chapter 6, verse 1, and David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, 30,000. And David arose and went with all the people that were with him from Baal of Judah to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Judah.

And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God. And Ahio went before the ark.

And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of firwood, even on harps and on psalteries, on timbrels, on cornets, and on cymbals. And when they came to Nachan's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it. And the oxen shook it.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah. And God smote him there for his error. And there he died by the ark of God.

And David was displeased because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah. And he called the name of the place Peraz Uzzah, or God's breach really against Uzzah this day. And David was afraid of the Lord that day and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me? So David would not remove the ark of the Lord unto him into the city of David.

But David carried it aside into the house of Obed-Edom, the Gittite. And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-Edom, the Gittite, three months. And the Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

I want to go through just a little bit of history before getting into the real meat of this message. First of all, it's important to understand the ark of God was an Old Testament symbol. It was carried by the people through the wilderness journey and into the promised land.

It was a symbol, as it were, given to Moses to be a type of what God wanted to accomplish in and among and through his people. It was a small rectangular box. It was carried by priests.

There were poles inserted in the sides of it. It was to be borne by the priests who were set apart for that specific purpose. Now, inside of the ark were things which God had instructed to be placed there.

Now, all of these things represented the blessings that his presence would bring to his people. It has as much application to you and I today. Now, the ark is a symbol.

It's obviously that is past. But there's an application that still applies to us today through Jesus Christ. First of all, God told him to put manna inside the ark.

You remember when the children of Israel came out of the wilderness, they were given divine provision for their every need. And this is one of the promises to those who are in Christ. If you are truly in Christ, a true believer, if your heart is right before God, God says, I will be your daily supply.

You need courage, I'll give you courage. You need faith, I'll give you faith. In other words, everything you need, I'm going to give it to you.

As you open this book, as you seek me with an honest heart, I'm going to give you everything. And I'm going to be your constant source of supply. That is one of the blessings of knowing Christ in truth.

No matter what comes, whether it's difficulty, fire, flood, the Lord is in the midst of it all. And the proof text of the truth of this is that Christ becomes our supply in the hard times. You would never know that Christ is your supply unless you go through a hard time.

When you go into those fires and begin to realize that he is the fourth man in your fire, or the second in your case, if it's only you there alone, when you begin to realize that he is in the fire with you, you can stand with authority and say, I've proven him. I've proven him. I've opened the box, as it is, of his promises.

And even in the midst of my deepest, darkest time, he has been my constant source of supply. Inside of the ark was a rod, and it was the rod of Aaron, or at least part of the rod of Aaron. And you remember at one time there was a division between the priests as to who really was anointed of God.

And so God says, everyone take his staff, take his rod. Now, a rod is basically a dead tree, like a wooden cane, for example. It's carved up.

There's no life in it. It has no power to draw life from anything around it. It has in itself no power.

And he said, I'm going to show who I have called. So all of the priests came and threw their rods together, and in the morning only one rod had budded, and it was Aaron's. And it's amazing.

Not only had it budded, but there was also fruit on it overnight. From a dead stick, God brought life. And this is the promise, that if I'm in your midst, if I'm in the center of your heart, if I am the true focus of your worship, there's nothing of death can hold you anymore.

Even if you have no power in yourself, which we don't when we finally come to understand who we are, we have no power within ourselves to produce any form of life. We can imitate life, but we can't produce true life. And he says, out of all the death that's all around you and in you, there's going to be a newness, a constant newness of life come into you.

That's an evidence. And he said, that's something that I'm going to do. It comes from my presence.

When Christ is in you, you are a new creation. When Christ is in you, morning by morning, you do see new mercies. When Christ is in you, old things are constantly passing away, and all things are becoming new.

It's wonderful. It's miraculous. It's the most incredible life you could ever have conceived of living on this side of eternity.

It's amazing to have, the Bible calls the Holy Spirit, the deposit of God of our eternal inheritance. The evidence, as it is, that our trust in God is not empty. It's not in vain.

The Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that rose Christ from the dead, quickens us constantly, changes us from one image to another, from one place to another, brings us out of death and into life. Attitudes change. Old focuses, old desires die.

New ones are given. It's an amazing thing. God plants new desires in the heart.

At 70-something years of age, you find yourself going to South Africa to give your life for children that you've never met, you don't know. Why is that in your heart? It's in there because God put it in there. It's in there because God planted it in there.

It's new life, new life. It's an amazing thing, and that's the provision, the promise of God. And then, of course, the Ten Commandments, the two tablets with the Ten Commandments were in there, which represented a new way of living.

Now, we know that in the Old Testament, they had to strive to do this by self-effort, but in the New Testament, we accomplish this by faith alone. It's His presence in us, and the Old Testament ark was a type of that. God said, it's my presence that's going to give you the power to obey.

You try, as you will, to fulfill the 600-plus laws, you're going to fall short. All have fallen short of the glory of God. There's not one righteous, Isaiah said.

We've all missed the mark. We've all failed in some area, and to fail in one area of the law is to violate the entire law. It's an amazing thing, but God said, no, it's not your effort.

It's my presence. It's my presence. To an honest, God-seeking people, a people who seek Him in truth, my presence will go with you.

My presence will be among you. My presence will change you. My presence will empower you.

My presence will feed you. My presence will give you the power to joyfully obey. It will not be your will fighting against mine.

You will be yielded to me, and my presence will cause you to simply love me and to love your neighbor with all your heart. You will fulfill all of the law. It will be all done by my presence in you.

Remember, he said to Ezekiel, I'm going to find a people, I'm going to breathe on them, and I'm going to give them a new heart, a new mind, a new spirit. I'm going to do in them what they cannot do for themselves. And above it all on the ark was the mercy seat, and thank God for the mercy seat, because we do fail.

We do get into flesh. We do fall short. Things do rise in us that shouldn't be there, and if God marked all these failings, how could we stand? It'd be impossible.

Above it all is the mercy seat. Thank God for the mercy seat. Thank God for the one who sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us.

Thank God for the one who speaks my name before his Father this very moment, and the Father receives me as if I'm as righteous as the Son, because Christ is just there speaking my name. Thank God for the mercy seat. Oh, I praise God for it.

Now, it was implied, and of course it still applies, that all this was available to the sincere person, the person who sought God in a relationship of truth. This was available. Everything in the ark was available to Israel, and everything in Christ is available to us today.

Now, this ark remained among God's people until it was lost to the Philistines. Now, from the time of Moses through the Book of Judges, I don't have time to go through all the history, but the ark, when Israel would get into a battle and the things would start going bad, and they would send for the ark. They would carry the ark in, and when the ark came, all of the enemies would tremble.

Oh, no. They've called for the presence of God. You see, that's the only thing the devil fears.

Doesn't fear your religion. Doesn't fear anything we do. Doesn't fear our good works, because we're not a threat to him.

We can't overpower him in our own strength. One thing he does fear is the presence of God. A believer who, in sincerity and in truth, gets into a situation and says, Jesus, come.

Holy Spirit, come. Be my strength. Be my mind.

Be my life. Oh, God, carry me. The presence of God, the Philistines would tremble.

All the enemies of Israel would begin to literally shake in their boots when God's presence came into the camp. But there arose in Israel a priesthood, and it was a backslidden, self-seeking priesthood. Eli was a man who was not a seeker of God, and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, and all, I'm assuming, their associates, they began to stand at the door and demand of the people the choicest of their offerings for themselves.

They were greedy men, and they didn't care anything for the sheep, for the flock of God. And the Bible says they made the people of God abhor the offering of the Lord. I believe the people began to even abhor the house of God because of these men.

And they got into a battle, and in the midst of that battle, they called upon the ark. The Philistines came, and the ark came into the camp, and the Philistines trembled. And eventually, because of the backslidden condition of the priesthood and what they had infused into the people because of their compromised lifestyle and compromised spirituality, the Philistines did what Israel thought was impossible.

They captured the ark of God. They captured the presence of God, literally, out of the camp of Israel. I can't even fathom how the people must have felt.

That's why Eli, when he heard that the... he could live with the fact his two sons were killed in the battle who were accompanying the ark, but when he heard the ark of God was taken, the Bible says he fell off the wall he was sitting on and broke his neck and died. He couldn't fathom the presence of God because what hope is there for the church? What hope is there for the people of God if his presence is lost? What hope? What makes the people of God any different from the world around us? Is it not his presence? That's what Moses cried out to the Lord. He said, God, if you're not going to go with us, I'm not going to go because what makes the difference? I don't want to follow a message.

I want the presence of God with me. And Eli knew this. We've lost.

Now, it's from his perspective. It's from the Old Testament. You have to understand.

But the capturing of the ark meant that our enemies have captured the presence of God. And that's exactly what our enemies will always try to do. Enemies without, enemies within our own hearts will try to come and steal the presence of God and drive us into fruitless religion.

Now, the ark was taken to Philistine territory. You can't captivate God. You can't capture God.

The Philistines said, well, we've got God. We have the presence of God. We've captured him.

And they took the ark and put it in their temple by their God called Dagon. The next morning they wake up and Dagon is on his face. Now, they probably, they probably thought, well, Dagon probably just slipped.

And they stood him up again. They went back to bed. The next morning they come in and Dagon is on his, not on his face this time.

He has no more face. His head is cut off and both his hands are gone. And so they began to be afraid.

What have we done? We brought something here. We don't know how to deal with it. We're ignorant of how to.

And then they began to send out and ask people, how do you handle this thing? How do you handle the presence of God? They didn't want the presence of God, but they were stuck with it. It's amazing. And of course, the presence of God will always cast down everything that exalts itself.

It's God's nature to tear down all strongholds. And so here all of a sudden the people find themselves dying and they're incredible diseases spreading all over the place in one city to another. The Philistines said, well, let's bless another city.

And they took the ark and these people said, no, no, no, you're not bringing this thing here. We heard what happened to you. And now you want to bring this, uh, what should, should be a blessing to the people of God, but always occurs to God's enemies.

And so they finally said, look, we got to deal with this thing. What are we going to do? They called in their best spiritual minds as they saw it. And they said, well, make some offerings for all of the disease that came on you, golden emeralds and golden mice, and put them on a new cart.

Sounded so good. Put a couple of milk cows in the front, pulling that thing and let it go. And that's what they did.

And they, you imagine the, uh, the Israelite workers working in the field as they saw this cart with two cows that are lowing, it says they're making a, a crying sound as a, as a milking cow always will do for her calf. Uh, but even the instinct of the cow to go back to the calf has been overpowered now by the will of God. And the calves are going in a straight line and they're, they're heading back into the heart of Israel again.

And, and they, they see this and, uh, they, they, they get the, uh, ark and the, the men of that particular first city, the Bible says looked into it out of curiosity and thousands died. Thousands died. It, you see, it was the reverence for God.

It was the familiarity that had caused them to lose his presence in the first place. And God very lovingly now is starting to set things in order. The Ark eventually ends up in a home of a man called, uh, uh, Abinadab and, uh, in the house in Gibeah in a town called Gibeah.

And, uh, the Ark was there for 20 years while the Philistines had military dominance until Saul became King. And then for another 40 years during Saul's reign, the Ark was in the house of Abinadab in Gibeah. Uh, remember when David sent for it in first Chronicles 13, three, he said, let us bring the Ark again of our God to us because we didn't inquire of it in the days of Saul.

Saul was a man who didn't seek God and he had no use for the Ark. So he just left it in the house of Abinadab. He never really went there to get it, never sought God.

He was never a seeker of God at any time. And the final 10 years after Saul's 40-year reign, it was there before David decided to bring it to Jerusalem. So it's, it's 70 years in the house of Abinadab in Gibeah.

Now Gibeah was Saul's capital. So the Ark is in a, in a city that is synonymous with not seeking God. Saul was, Saul was not a seeker of God.

The presence of God is there, but Saul is not seeking for it. And you know, of course, what happened? The end result was the, the tragedy, the fearfulness, the overpoweredness by their enemies, because Saul was not a seeker of God. Now Gibeah was also where the tribe of Benjamin had at one time in biblical history become so backslidden that they, they systematically raped the concubine of a Levite priest that was traveling through.

And because of that, all of Israel came against them and almost wiped out the entire tribe of Benjamin. And Gibeah really is a place of not seeking God and going into deeper morality, deep sin, letting, letting the sin nature begin to take control. And in this place is the Ark of God.

You see, it's, it's a type of a believer. The power of God, if you are a true believer in Christ, you may not have been seeking Him in truth, and you may be captivated in horrid, uh, physical passions, but I tell you, the presence of God is still in you. If you will turn, the Ark was there, but nobody was turning to the Ark.

Nobody in Gibeah was seeking God. All the power was there for them for this new life. Every promise still applied, but there's nobody really seeking God.

Now David confers with Israel and everybody says, this is a great idea, let's go get the Ark. David sets up a new kingdom, a new capital. Through his life, unity's coming again.

The kingdom was divided before. Now it's, it's going to be unified, and Jerusalem is going to become the capital city. Now go with me to 1 Chronicles chapter, just go ahead in your Bible, just a few pages, you'll find 1 Chronicles chapter 13.

And here is the procession as it gets underway. We're going to start it at verse 4. David is moving the Ark of God. This is another account of that particular scenario as it takes place.

Verse 4 says, And all the congregation said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the sight of the people. Yes, let's go get the Ark. Now keep in mind that Proverbs 14, 12 says that there's a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Yeah, that's right, let's go get the presence of God. There's people who've come to church this morning, and in your heart you said, oh, I'm in such trouble, I'm just so down. I'll tell you what, let's go get the presence of God.

Let's go to Times Square Church and let's trust the presence of God to come to us and leave with us out the door. Let's go get his presence. Now, how tragic it is that in 70 years of God's presence in the house of Abinadab that they've become so acquainted with his presence that they treated the things of God just as the Philistines did.

Amazing. They leave the house of Abinadab putting the Ark on a cart and pulling it with a couple of cows. After 70 years of having the Ark of God back in their presence again, and they're treating it just the way it came in with heathens handling it, not understanding anything about it.

And it's hard to find them. How did this happen in Abinadab's household? How did he have the presence of God in his house for 70 years? And the Ark goes out and there's no instruction. Now it's possible that Abinadab, now we know that the parchments were available.

Samuel, a little later on, set up a school and taught the ways of God. And David, of course, later on inquires and finds out how the Ark is supposed to be carried. So the manuscripts are available to them.

They could find the knowledge if they wanted to. Abinadab, I see as a type of a man who God's presence comes into his house. And perhaps he did some research initially and understood how the Ark should be carried and transported.

And he never passes it on to subsequent generations. He's a man who's spiritually lazy, doesn't teach it to his children, his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, because Uzziah and Ahiel were more than likely his great-grandchildren after 70 years. And he doesn't teach it to them.

They're all, in a sense, so familiar with the presence of God. It's like the man who comes to Times Square Church never opens his Bible at home, never teaches his family, doesn't be found on his testimony, doesn't share or lead his children into the things very gently, leading his children into the ways of God, doesn't keep the presence of God fresh and alive, doesn't exhibit through his own life the necessity of walking in truth. Or Abinadab is also the type of a man who is just so used to the presence of God that he begins to casually treat God's presence.

Comes home every day, God's in my house, God is with me. Walks in the house, God is with us. But it's a casual treating of God.

There's a loss of awe. There's a loss of respect. There's a loss of an understanding that this is God.

This is God. This is not just a box. Beloved, this is not just a book.

This is the Word of God. This is not just any old Savior that just happens to come around on a cart into our house. This is God and he chose my house to come and live in.

Amazing. God forbid that I should ever get so familiar with his presence that he becomes just like some other ornament in my house. The ark is an ornament.

It's there. All the promises are there, all the provision, but it's just an ornament. How does it happen after 70 years that the ark is coming out of that house with such ignorance as it came in? How did they get to believe that God doesn't really mean what he says? Oh folks, it's not just Abinadab, it's all over the Christian world.

It has been since the time of Calvary. How does it get to the place where people really just don't believe that God means what he says? That somehow I can ignore him. I can ignore his commands.

I can ignore his Word and I'm just going to be part of the parade that goes into the streets of glory one day. I'm just going to march on in and sing my songs and do my thing and I'm going to somehow casually walk into the presence of God only to find out that it hasn't been the way I thought it should be. Verse 5 says, David gathered them together and verse 6 he said, he went up in all Israel and to Baalath, to Kijath, to Jerim, that belonged to Judah, to bring up the ark of the God, the Lord, that dwelt between the cherubims and they carried the ark, verse 7, on a new cart out of the house of Abinadab and Uzzah and Ahio drove the cart.

And David with all Israel played before God with all their might, with singing harps, psalteries, timbrels, cymbals and trumpets, all their might. Here's a procession of self-effort. I'll tell you when God is not with something, the people are left to have to make something happen.

All their might, come on sing, sing louder, sing more, sing harder, clap more, shout more. Musicians sweat, everybody sweats, everybody works up a sweat because they're carrying God in a sense but not the way that it's intended to be. There's a procession but something is wrong.

Whenever there's all this effort, whenever his presence is not so clearly there, that there's a sustaining, carrying power that has to come with his presence and when leaders are trying to work something up, something is wrong. You can see this procession going along and everybody says, this is a good thing we're doing and the singers are playing and singing and they're sweating with all their might and they come to the threshing floor, verse 9, of Tidon and Uzzah puts forth his hand to hold the ark for the oxen stumbled and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah and he smote him because he put his hand to the ark and he died there before God. Incredible, here they are so casually treating God, working something up and you know always the fruit of working something up.

If you're in a church that has to work things in the flesh, you'll find always a fearfulness in the ministry, always having to put their hand to the ark. Every day is a crisis, every Sunday we don't know if we're going to make it till Monday. It's a constant crisis and you'll find all these plans and schemes to hold the ark up as if we are in charge of holding God.

Even if we have to give God a hand, here let me help you Jesus in case you fall over. I mean it's as spiritually blind as the thing that Uzzah did and it's as if God was able to tolerate it, probably the poor word for it, but until there was a final point when he said, guys the parade is over, it's over, I'm not going with you, this is not the way I'm going to be carried into the very heart of my people. And when we let our hand even in zealous ignorance, when we set our hand to alter or change the true meaning of God's presence, something always in and around us dies.

I'll give you some examples. In the ark were manna, you remember what manna symbolized, but when we stretch out our hand to provide our own needs in such a manner as to minimize or deny the power of God to be our provider, a sense of awe in our children and ourselves that God is our complete caregiver dies. Whenever we stretch our hand out to do something in our own power, something always dies.

I remember years for years now our children have had the opportunity to witness the power of God keeping us. We didn't set our hand and scheme and plan how we're going to survive, what are we going to do. Even when we lost everything years ago, we just simply said we're going to trust God and you watch

and see what happens.

And they saw the provision of God, they'd seen the miraculous, there is no doubt in their minds that God can provide for them. When we stretch out our hand to bring freedom to bound lives through intervention of the flesh and human wisdom, when we think that we can counsel people out of situation, I'm not opposed to counseling, please don't misunderstand me, but if counseling doesn't come to the true issue of sin in the heart, if it doesn't deal with what's really causing the obstruction to freedom, then the trust in God, our healer and our deliverer and our restorer dies. Every time humanity stretches its hand out to help God, I thank God that in my heart I have a knowledge I don't have to help God set you free.

I don't have to help God heal your wounded heart. I preach the word of God, God says he will do it. The anointing will come, something will touch your heart, faith will arise and you will say I don't have to live here anymore.

You will stand up and the shackles of hell will fall off of you. It's as simple as that. I think of the 10 commandments in the ark and when we hold with one hand we hold the law of God, in our homes for example, and with the other hand we disregard it.

Think of this just for a moment. In one hand we're holding the book, we're teaching, we're doing devotions, we're praying. In the other hand we're finger pointing, full of anger, smiting with the fist of wickedness.

We teach both ourselves and our children that God's word can be disregarded and we can still live. And I tell you what happens is a true religion and true relationship with Jesus Christ dies in our hearts and in the hearts of our children. You cannot hold the things of God in unrighteousness.

You can't. It's a spiritual law, you just cannot transgress it. Stand on the street, throw a brick up in the air and stand right where you are and I don't care how you try to change the law of gravity, it is still in effect and that brick is going to come down and land right square on top of your head.

You cannot get away from it. You cannot escape it. Similarly, we can't deal lightly with the things of God.

We can't hold the truth in one hand and hold a lie in the other and expect that the life of Christ is going to be in a spokes. It just doesn't happen. Now go with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 6, please, if you will.

1 Corinthians chapter 6. Paul the apostle had founded a church and it was a church in a very wicked and immoral city, a very prosperous commercial city, but there was a huge root of immorality in this society. Self-seeking, there was lusting for gold and all types of pursuits. Now this was the church that Paul found out there was a man in it who was having an incestual relationship with his stepmother and he said, and nobody seemed to have a problem with this.

Everybody's coming in and saying, God's with us. We're worshiping God. Isn't it wonderful to be saved? Praise the Lord.

And there's no grieving. There is no sense of God's hurt at all in the midst of this worship. And Paul had to deal with this issue at the Corinthian church, but now he goes on in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 9. He says, Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, O beloved, don't let your own heart deceive you.

Be not deceived, he said, neither fornicators. That means people who are involved in sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Do not inherit the kingdom of God.

Settle it. You can't get around it. You won't get around it.

You can join the parade and sing your songs from now till Christ comes, but you will not get through the gate of That's people who have other gods, other loves, issues, places that you spend more time, more thought apart from the Word. Idolatry is easy to define. Whatever has your heart more than the Bible is idolatry.

Whatever you place your trust in apart from God. Nor adulterers. That's people who have partners outside of marriage.

People who stood at an altar and swore to God to be faithful and now are exercising unfaithfulness. They will not inherit the kingdom of God. Nor effeminate.

That means male prostitutes. Nor abusers of themselves with mankind. That's active homosexuality or lesbianism.

Oh, you'll find a church that will cater to your sin, tell you that God loves everybody, with some hireling standing in the pulpit, but I tell you from God's Word, you will not inherit the kingdom of God. Nor thieves. Now, that includes people who cheat on their taxes and steal from God and deal dishonestly in financial matters.

Business people that are here today who lie about the price to sell something. That's thievery. Nor covetous.

That's people who have something in the heart that they value more than God. And His presence. Trust in it.

Nor drunkards. Nor revilers. People who just join the crowd of scorners.

Who are always scorning everything and everybody, and especially in God's house. Nor extortioners. That's people that use their position.

If they have an advantage, they use it to gain more advantage by extorting those, by let's say lending money with unfair interest rates. Shall inherit the kingdom of God. Paul says, don't be deceived.

Don't be deceived into thinking you can likely handle this relationship with Christ that has come into your heart and home and still inherit the kingdom of God. Don't be deceived. Don't be fooled by your own heart.

Don't be deceived by hirelings that don't deal with your sin. Don't be deceived into thinking you can somehow get around this. Folks, this is about eternity.

This is about heaven. This is the most important and should be the most important area of your life and heart. Even if you don't agree, there should be something in you that says, my God, is this true? And if it's true, I want to know.

And such, Paul says, were some of you. But now you're washed. You're sanctified.

You're justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God. Paul and the evidence of God's presence is you don't any longer live like this. Oh, it doesn't mean you don't have a lapse or it doesn't mean that that sometimes you'll be overpowered by temptation or whatever comes into your life.

But you don't live like this. That's the issue. You don't live like it.

You can't because the life of God is in you now. You can't do what you used to do. Not out of.

It's not out of some dogged determination. It's because the life of God is in you. You can't.

John the Beloved says, if any man has the seed of God in him, he can't continue to live in sin. He can't do it. Remember when I first was saved? I've shared this before.

I sang in a choir, a policeman's choir. And I remember there were songs that we sang that theologically, as I began to read the Bible, I had problems in singing them. They were well accepted by all of society, and the more I tried to fight against this, and others were saying to me, come on, now these are just simple songs.

One of them was just an old kind of a, I don't know, it's maybe an old vaudeville type song, and it was, the Lord God made man to help his neighbor no matter where on sand or sea or foam, but with a little bit of luck when he comes around you won't be home. Those are the lyrics to this song, and I'm thinking, I'm reading the Bible, it said, if any man sees his friend of need and shuts his vows of compassion, and here I am believing one thing and singing another, and the conviction got deeper because the life of God was now in me. And it got to the point where I went to a rehearsal one time, and I was one of their lead singers, and I went to this, and I opened my mouth to sing, and nothing would come out.

Nothing, just air. No words would come. The Holy Ghost finally said, we're bringing this thing down to a decision here.

And it's like God's hand just choked my windpipe, and nothing would come out of my mouth. I would try to sing, and I couldn't sing. The conviction on me was so deep.

You cannot keep doing what you used to do when the life of God is in you. It was not so much that I was under the law of a commandment, but I was under the power of a new life. There was something in me saying, this is not my heart anymore.

This is not right. I don't want to be not at home when my neighbor has a need. I want to be there.

I want to be the hand of God to my generation. And there's something in me began to change. Now, it's a small example, but that's an evidence.

And Paul says, don't be deceived into thinking that you can have the life of Christ and somehow treat him casually when he begins to speak to your heart. First Corinthians 15.33 says again, don't be deceived. Bad company ruins good morals.

Come, he said, I'm reading it from the Revised Standard Version. Come to a sober and right mind and sin no more, for some people have no knowledge of God. And he says, I say this to your shame.

Here's the people who are failing to disassociate from company that is ungodly. They're not making the break. Now, if you're one of those today who are not making the break, something is going to happen to

you.

Now, it's not just bad company physically, but bad company through the media. If you don't make the break, either they're going to become like you or you're going to become like them. And Paul says, don't be deceived.

Bad company corrupts good morals. It's as simple as that. Don't be deceived into thinking you can handle this.

You can have this and the presence of God. Paul says it doesn't work that way. Galatians 6, Paul says, don't be deceived again.

God does not mock. Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. He that sows to his flesh is going to reap a harvest of corruption, but he that sows to the Spirit is going to reap a harvest of everlasting life.

Paul's saying, beloved, your concept and walk with God must not come from the lower regions of your fallen intellect. God will not be changed by any new definition of him. That's what the human heart always tries to do, get around its sin by redefining God.

Well, does God really? That's exactly what the devil did. Came to Adam and Eve and said, well, does God really say that? Does he really mean that? And that's the twist, the strange twist in human hearts. You find people in all kinds of horrid behavior, and they always have a spiritual reason for it.

Well, you know, it's as if my mind has reformed God in this area. God understands my weakness. God understands I need to do this.

God understands I need the money to support my family. God understands. I have a little problem.

I had somebody recently tell me, I've got a little, I've been attending the church. Oh, I love the praises. I love the worship.

I love, but I have a little problem. You know, the little problem happened to be prostitution. I have a little problem, a little problem.

How do you get to the point where you consider this a little problem? I'm a prostitute. I attend Times Square Church. This is a little problem.

How do you get so dull spiritually? How does it happen to somebody's mind? You can sit here, praise God, and then go out and sell your body to pay your rent. Oh, don't, don't be deceived, Paul said. First of all, because the human heart is wicked.

You come in and say, well, I got to pay the rent. God understands. It's a little problem.

I'm not sure which problem this person considered bigger, the rent payment or the prostitution. Acts 5, don't turn there, please. There was a couple who came in the New Testament and they had the testimony of Christ.

Christ's testimony was all for the kingdom of God. They had the testimony of the church, which we have through history. The only people who ever amount to anything in the kingdom of God are those that say, Christ, I give you my all.

You're all to me. I'm giving all I have to you. You work your life in through me.

And here's a people now approaching. Everyone is yielding their all. And this couple called Ananias and Sapphira approach God as it is.

And they say, well, here's a portion. Here's half of my heart. I wonder, God killed them just like he smoked Uzziah.

And I wonder, had their thinking been any different? Had they seen their end? Had they understood? If you saw your end, if the Holy Spirit, by mercy today, was to open your end and you saw it, would it change your thinking? If you saw yourself pleading before the throne of God, let me in. I attended Times Square church. You ate and drank in our midst.

I took communion. I went to church. I sang the songs.

I was part of the parade. What do you mean I can't go in? And then all of a sudden, the words from this day come back, be not deceived. Fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, liars, thieves will not inherit the kingdom of God.

And then Paul says, but you, this is what you were, but now you're changed. You see, Uzziah's end was not just judgment. It was a mercy cry from God.

Most commentators say, at least Hendrickson does, and I agree with it, that this didn't mean God sent Uzziah to hell. Probably took him straightway to heaven. This was a zealous but ignorant young man, improperly taught in the things of God.

Took him straight up. But it was a cry from God. It was a mercy cry to his church.

If you want my presence, it doesn't come this way. It doesn't come through self-effort. It doesn't come with casual light dealing of the things of God.

It comes from sincere, honest people who worship in spirit and in truth. You want me at the life and this to be, to be the center of your life with all the promises of my presence. God says, you have got to walk the way I told you.

If you do, all the promises are yours. The provision, life from the dead, and obedience, but now with joy. It's not a, it's not a dogged obedience anymore.

It's an obedience that comes out of the life of Christ within us. David said again in first Chronicles 15, he said, the Lord, 13, the Lord our God made a breach upon us because we didn't seek him after the due order. You see, David became angry with God and said, this is wrong.

This is wrong, God. This is just an ignorant young man who touched the ark and you killed him. And the whole parade stopped.

And this is what humanity will always try to do. Say, my heart was right, God. You know my heart.

Oh yes, he does. You better believe he knows their heart. My heart was right.

And David is angry. And he says, take the ark. I'm not bringing it to my house.

I'm not taking it to Jerusalem. If this is the way God treats his people, I want nothing to do with it. And he sends the ark off to the house of Obed-Edom and it's there for three months.

And word comes to David. David, God is blessing everything in that man's house. Blessing his marriage, blessing his children, blessing his finances, blessing his coming out, his going in.

This man has got blessing of God all over him. And God is, here's a man I believe that's not casually treating the presence of God. He would be dumbfounded.

God is coming to my house. There's always one like that in the crowd somewhere. He says, God's come into my house.

Oh God. And begins to open the book and find out how this thing is supposed to be carried. And find out what it is about God that he wants from his people.

And it begins to translate that to his children. And the blessing of God so comes into this man's house that it grabs the notice of the king. And David says, I can't figure this.

Here you kill us in our parade on the road and you bless this man. God, obviously it must be in your heart to bless your people. Then why didn't you bless us? Then the Bible tells us clearly that David went back into the manuscripts and looked and says, oh I see it now.

We are not living right. I see it now. We're casually treating God.

We are treating God just the way the heathen treat God. We are divorcing in the house of God at the same rate that the heathen are. We're unfaithful to our wives and husbands just like the heathen are.

We're watching pornography just like the heathen do. We're sitting in front of scorners just like the heathen do. We're talking and backbiting just like the heathen do.

Oh God forgive us. And David said God made a breach because we didn't seek him the right way. We didn't seek him after the due order.

And David spoke to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be singers with instruments of music and lifting up their voice with joy. Now this is the second procession. He goes and gets the ark out of the house of Obed-Edom to bring it down to Jerusalem.

Now I want you to notice the difference. The singers now are not singing with all their might. They're not singing with joy.

There is a difference if you look it up. The singers, the sweat is gone and there's a joy now. You see this preaching might seem hard to you today, but the end result is joy.

The end result is a life that's free. The end result is God moving in me, changing me. The end result is coming in next week there's no sweat.

You just lift your hands. Oh God what a week this has been. I've been in the fire but you've been there.

God how good it's been. Joy, joy. To have a mind that is straight on him, to have thoughts that are established in God, to have quietness and confidence has become our strength.

Lifting up their voice with joy. Joy is in the house of God when God's people are walking in righteousness, when we're treating him as God and when God is manifesting his life in us and breaking chains and opening prison doors and healing wounded hearts, giving sight to the spiritually blind. There is joy in the hearts of his children.

The Bible says in 1 Chronicles 15 26 that God helped the Levites that bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord. No longer is it man helping God, it's now God helping man. God helped the Levites when the road got rough, when it got to be weary, when they stepped in a rut or slipped.

The scripture says clearly that it was God now doing the help. You see God that's why he smote Uzziah. I said I can't this if this is your concept of me it will destroy you.

I can't let it happen. I've got to put it, I've got to stop it. I have to strike it dead because those who know me know that I help those that have in their heart to walk with me.

I help them. I become the one who's the glory in the lifter of their head. And 2 Samuel 6 14 says David danced before God with all his might.

There was he danced. Oh when you have found truth he's no longer trying to make something happen. Something has happened and David dances before God before this ark with all his might.

Oh God I have found your heart. Oh God I understand you now. Oh God I see your power.

I understand your presence. I know what you want to do in the midst of your people. Oh God I worship you.

I glorify you. I magnify you Jesus. Oh God thank you for your presence.

Thank you for your presence. Hallelujah. And he danced with all his might.

What a difference when the power of truth has been found. What a difference when we no longer have to work something up spiritually but we can come into the house of God and dance in the joy and the strength of that which has been already done for us on Calvary. What a difference when we can come in and say I was blind but now I see.

I was in prison but now I'm free. I was mad mentally dark but God's light is coming in and changing my mind. Morning by morning new mercies I see and we dance before the presence of God.

What a difference. Oh what a difference. What a difference.

Joy unspeakable full of glory. Joy when the sin sick soul is free and the chains of hell are gone and human thinking is banished and finally said God I'm walking your way and I understand now where your life comes from. Education annex in the balcony the main sanctuary.

Lose everything in your life but don't lose the presence of God. The Holy Spirit is speaking to you and there's something in your life that isn't right. You said God I have been dealing casually with you in this area.

Oh Lord I see what it can do to me now. It's robbing me of life and I've tried to I've tried to reason it. I've tried to remold your thinking to fit my way of living and I find myself always having to hold up my concept of

God because it keeps falling over.

God forgive me for this ignorance but today I come and Lord I'd rather be I'd rather be wounded by the truth than deceived by a lie. David said the hand of the righteous will smite me and it'll be an excellent oil. I want you in heaven beloved.

I want you to make it but if in your heart today you could say God I'm hearing something and Holy Spirit you have shown me my heart today. I am a Binadab. I am casual.

I'm not passing on with any revelation truths to my family. I am the adulterer. I am the immoral person.

I am the thief, the liar, the covetous man, woman. I am the reviler. I am the one who sits here thinking that sin that's going to keep me out of heaven is a little problem.

God forgive me. God forgive me. The moment you come to Christ with that kind of a heart you can be sure you're forgiven before you even move from your seat.

As a matter of fact God is so merciful he's forgiving you right now. Even as you form the intent to move towards him he's forgiving you. It's the heart.

It's just the heart that he looks for. I'm going to ask you if the Holy Spirit is drawing you and you want to come to this altar and say Jesus I want to get my life right with you. Lord we love your presence here.

You have been so good to us in this church. God we ask you today to forgive us for casual dealing with truth. The deception of disregarding you and thinking somehow that's okay.

But God in your mercy, in your mercy you put to death our false theology. You put to death our wrong thinking. Only that you may give us life because you love us Lord.

We thank you God for the depth of your love. It's incredible your love. You bear with our foolishness.

You call us back again to you because you want to give us the power to live and dance in your presence again. I know that you know the hearts of your people in the education annex and at this altar. I know you know their hearts and you see and know those that are sincere.

God you give a promise now to empower everything in that ark is ours in Christ. You say you'll be life. You'll be life from the dead.

You'll be provision Lord and it'll become a joy to obey you and you'll be merciful. God thank you today. Thank you for mercy.

Thank you for the promise of God for our future. Now pray with me Lord Jesus, forgive me for being so casual about your presence in my life. I'm sorry for my sin and I repent.

I make a decision to live your way and I trust you for the power that you will give to me. That you will live your life through me as I trust in you by faith alone. I will not put my hand to try to make things happen but you will help me because I have chosen today to walk in truth in this area of my life.

I believe that you will provide everything that I need. I believe that you will bring life, new life, abundant life in this area of death in me. I believe it will become a joy to obey you because I will no longer have to do it in my own strength.

I will no longer be deceived by the emptiness of my own heart. Lord Jesus, I love you. I thank you for loving me and being so merciful to me.

I'm overwhelmed by the depth of your love. This has been a good day for me because the power of the devil is being broken off of my life and I believe that like David, I will dance. I will rejoice in your presence because you are my God.

Hallelujah, hallelujah.

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