

Church of Vidor Saturday

by David Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of God cleansing His house and the need for individuals to deepen their personal relationship with Him, focusing on the heart and not just outward appearance.

Duration: 1:04:01

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 29:3-5, Psalm 51:10, Isaiah 61:1, Matthew 5:8, John 17:3, Romans 12:1, James 4:8, 1 Peter 4:17, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 18:2

Topics: "Christian Life", "Cleansing the Church", "Revival and Restoration"

Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the urgent need for the church to undergo a cleansing process, drawing parallels between the spiritual state of the church today and the historical cleansing of the temple by King Hezekiah. He warns that judgment begins in the house of God and that true revival often follows times of adversity rather than prosperity. Ravenhill calls for a deep, personal relationship with God, urging believers to open the doors of their hearts and allow the Holy Spirit to cleanse them of sin and uncleanness. He highlights the importance of maintaining a vibrant relationship with God, rather than relying on past experiences of faith. Ultimately, he encourages the congregation to respond to God's call for repentance and restoration, leading to genuine worship and celebration.

Transcript

Tonight I want to talk about the cleansing of the temple. The cleansing of the temple. I think one of the things that God is doing today is cleansing his house.

The Bible says if judgment is going to come it must first come to the house of God. And I believe as a nation we stand on the brink of judgment. I have no idea when that's going to come.

I know it's coming. God has to judge sin. He will judge sin.

It's only the grace of God that has kept us so far. But I believe with all my heart that that judgment is coming. Dave Wilkerson just released a book a couple of weeks ago in which he is talking again about an economic collapse and I don't think he sets a time other than saying it's pretty soon.

And I believe that God is going to prepare the church for that day when devastation is going to grip our nation. And I believe that devastation will bring a revival that is going to be unprecedented. How many of you know that people are not likely to repent during times of prosperity? In fact God gave a warning to the nation of Israel concerning the prosperity that he had for them.

And it was this. He says I've given you the land. It's a land of blessing, a land of plenty.

There's houses, there's lands, there's vineyards, there's olive groves, there's all all of those things that I want you to enjoy. But then he says P.S. Watch yourself once you settle into all of those blessings because there is going to be a tendency to forget all about God. And it's during seasons of prosperity that the nation forgets God.

It's during seasons of adversity when there's nothing else to hold on to, nothing else to cling to, when the stock market has crashed and everything else has come tumbling down around us that then people begin to reach out again. When the nation of Israel was in the desperation that they were in there in Egypt, when there was no other answer other than a sovereign intervention of God, then their cry arose. And it says God came in response to their cry.

There's no cry right now. The only cry is that the market has gone another 20 points or 100 points or whatever it is and everybody's rejoicing. But Revelation 18 says one day Babylon's going to fall.

And it says the nations of the earth are going to weep. They're going to be lamenting, moaning because of all that they trusted in has been taken from them. And then it says rejoice over her my people.

Meaning that we have a different value system or should I say we should have a different value system. Anyway that's not my message tonight. But God is cleansing the house.

I believe that. There was a word given many, many years ago that back in about the mid-80s that God was going to sovereignly visit this nation in the 90s. In 1994, beginning in 1994 it was going to begin with wine.

Then it was going to go to fire and then to wind. And the wine of course was the experience that many had as Toronto experienced the wine of God. The refreshing, the intoxicating, the exhilarating touch of God in the lives of many, many people.

The church was barren. The church was dry. The church was sort of weary and well-doing.

And suddenly God was pouring out the wine if you like. And people were getting drunk in the things of God and reveling in the presence of God. But then the prophetic word went on to say that it would go from wine to fire.

The fire talking about cleansing. The fire talking about holiness. I believe we're experiencing some of that now as the message has shifted somewhat to a message of repentance, of holiness, of godliness.

And then I believe the next phase is going to be the wind. And the prophetic word was the wind is going to usher in the supernatural activity of God. The healing, deliverance, all the things that we've longed for.

And I believe that we're seeing that now unfold in our nation. That doesn't mean that one thing eclipses the other. We're also seeing the refreshing presence of God, but now it has a message of repentance and holiness and getting right with God.

God's putting His house in order. And He's preparing the church because one day the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And so this message again deals with the cleansing of the house of God.

You see the Christian life really is a relationship. A dynamic, vital, living relationship with God. The Bible says this is eternal life, John says, that you may know, may know Thee the only God and Jesus Christ

whom Thou hast sent.

And eternal life is not a place. Eternal life is not a decision you made five years ago or ten years ago or twenty years ago at a Billy Graham crusade or some other crusade. Eternal life is a person.

John goes on to say he that has a son has life. He that does not have the son does not have life. Paul writing to the Corinthians says that God has brought us into the fellowship of His Son.

There is a relationship. There is an intimacy. The Christian life is likened in the natural to marriage.

There is a relationship, the bride and the groom. And God wants to restore that relationship. Many of us are clinging to an experience that we had many, many years ago.

And we look back and we say well I remember the night. I remember the day when I embraced Christ as my Lord and Savior. And yet somehow over the years a relationship has been strained.

In fact maybe there is no relationship. And you're trusting in something that took place many, many months ago, many, many years ago. If I were to ask you how your marriage is, you don't run to the file cabinet and pull out your certificate of marriage and say here I'm married.

That doesn't answer the question. I said how is your marriage? Not are you married, but how is your marriage? What sort of state is in it? How are you getting along, husband and wife? What sort of communication do you have? What sort of love relationship do you have? Are you the best of friends? Is your relationship deepening? Is it greater today than it was when you first met? Or is that relationship strained? And yet many times when we ask people again about their spiritual condition, they let us know well I was saved five years ago, ten years ago. That isn't the question.

What is your relationship like today? You see the Christian life is a relationship. And relationships have to be maintained in order to become more meaningful. In order for those relationships to deepen, there has to be time spent with that person.

My wife and I raised three daughters and when they were small, youngest especially, we lived right next door to the senior pastor that I worked with for 15 years. And his youngest daughter and our youngest daughter were the best of friends. And every day they were together.

We had a trampoline in our backyard and they spent literally hours on that trampoline. And then every evening the same question was asked, Daddy can I go over to Catherine's house? Or on the weekend, Daddy can I stay at Catherine's house tonight? Or can Catherine come over here? You see they were constantly together. There was a friendship.

They wanted to be together. They couldn't wait to be together. And the Christian life is a friendship.

It is a relationship with the living God. We should long to be in the house of God, with the people of God, but more than that in the presence of God. And so God wants to come to his house.

He wants to visit his house. The Bible says whose house we are. Acts says that God no longer dwells in temples made with hands.

He's not interested in buildings. He's interested in your life. He's interested in my life.

And just as a house in the natural can get unclean or dirty, a house in the spiritual sense can get dirty and unclean. Just as a relationship in the natural can become strained and you can lose that relationship. So the same thing is true in the spiritual sense.

I can think of relationships I had when I was in high school with guys that I hung around with that I have no idea today where they are. I don't know if they're dead or alive. I don't know if they're married.

I don't know if they're, you know, a businessman or sleeping under some bridge. I don't know if they're into drugs or what they're doing. That relationship is long gone.

It was a relationship that was there for a period of time but I never maintained that relationship. And unfortunately the Christian life is like that for many people. All they want to know is that I've got life.

I've got Christ in me. I made a decision again 15 years ago and that's all that matters. If I die I'll go to heaven.

I'm not interested in pursuing and deepening that relationship. What a tragedy. Again eternal life is a person.

It's the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we need to again know what it is to deepen that relationship. We need to know what it is to have our house cleansed and kept clean.

And there's a place that you and I play in that. I realize that there is a place obviously that the Holy Spirit plays, that God does in a sovereign way. The Bible says that after the Passover there was a feast of unleavened bread.

And while they were under the covering of the Passover lamb, the blood had been shed, they were in a place of protection. Then God said I want you to go through the house and I want you to find any leaven that may be there. Leaven a type of sin and I want you to deal with that.

I want you to rid yourself. Every house had to be clean. And so there was a place that man had to play in the process of keeping himself clean.

Paul said to Timothy if a man cleansed himself from these things he will be a vessel unto honor meet for the master's use. Notice if a man cleansed himself from these things. There's a place that God plays in our life.

There's a place that we play. We cooperate with the will and the purpose of God. If you have your Bible turn with me tonight to 2 Chronicles chapter 29.

And I want to look into this portion of scripture. As you're turning to this let me just give you a little bit of a background. We're going to be looking into the life of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah's father was a king by the name of Ahaz. Ahaz was a godless man. He was an idolater.

He was a man that erected the images to Baal. He burned his sons in the fire. He burned incense on the high places.

He made sacrifices to the various gods of the surrounding nations. He destroyed the utensils in the house of God. He boarded up the temple.

He shut down basically the whole worship of Jehovah in the land of Israel. Again his life was anything but godly. And yet his son ascends the throne.

His father dies. Hezekiah dies. Hezekiah comes along and you would have thought that Hezekiah would have followed in the footsteps of the example of his father but Hezekiah is a man of a different spirit.

Hezekiah is a man that recognizes that the nation of Israel has turned its back on God. And Hezekiah has a priority and that priority is we have to restore the house of God. We have to get in contact with God again.

We've got to restore a relationship with God as a nation. We've drifted. As a nation we've lost sight of the calling of God upon our lives.

We've got to get back to God. Hezekiah's model if you like is David. It says in verse 2 he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father David had done.

Thank God for godly examples. Thank God for Davids today. Men again that stand for the will and the purpose of God.

And Hezekiah did not look at his own father. What a tragedy that people cannot look to their own fathers today. Because they no longer have fathers that are godly men even in the house of God.

Fathers that are preoccupied with sport, preoccupied with television and other things. Children don't see their fathers praying anymore. They don't see their fathers reading the word of God anymore.

Don't see their fathers listening to tapes or studying the word of God. Instead all they see is a father that claims to be born again, claims to go to church and yet really there's no godly example. David was a godly example to Hezekiah.

And he says he did that which was right again in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father David had done. Obviously not his immediate father but his spiritual father. But Hezekiah has a priority and that priority is we've got to get back to God.

And he does something in verse 3. It says in the first year of his reign, in the first month he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and he repaired them. Now if you ask me that's getting serious about getting right with God. The very first year of his reign, the very first month of his reign and if you go to verse 17 it says they began the consecration on the first day of the first month.

And it would seem to me that the very first day of his reign that Hezekiah is that determined. There is a priority in his life. We need a priority in the house of God.

That is to get back to God. Revival will not come until there is that establishing of a priority in our life. God I need you more than anything else.

And on the very first day of the very first month of the very first year he begins to cleanse the house of God. And it says in verse 3 that he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and he repaired them. He opened the doors of the house of the Lord and he repaired them.

Let me just say something about the house of the Lord. In this entire portion of scripture that deals with the cleansing of the house there is not one single mention of any cleansing that takes place on the outside of

the house of God. In other words the house of God outwardly appeared to be all right.

You could pass the outside of that house as you walked along the road and see that magnificent building that was so elaborate so ornate again God gave to David the plans. It was Solomon that lavished again all the wealth that he had and brought men from around the world literally and imported timbers and everything else to build a magnificent building. And that magnificence was still there.

You could walk by it again and marvel at the beauty and the ornateness of that building. Outwardly it looked all right. And Hezekiah never does anything to the outward appearance.

It is what is inside that Hezekiah is concerned about. Let me say that, let me say this, as we look at the cleansing of the house that you can appear very spiritual outwardly. You see you can fool people outwardly.

You can sit in church all dressed up in your Sunday best. You can carry your Bible. You can as Steve King, Steve Hill rather would say, you can sort of tilt your head at a consecrated angle during your worship.

And you can look the part. You can look very, very spiritual. You can have all the right words.

People can pass you and they can greet you and can say, hi brother, how are you doing? Praise God and so on. But God is not concerned again with the outward appearance. He is concerned with what is going on inside.

Again, the Pharisees outwardly looked like whitewashed sepulchres. They were clean. They were spotless.

They were immaculate. They were religious. They stood three times a day praying.

But God looked at the heart. He says the only reason you're praying is to be seen of men. You have your reward.

But outwardly there was a religiosity. Outwardly they were very, very impressive. They had their scriptures dangling down, you know, like a fly fisherman.

All the phylacteries that they'd rolled up. All the scriptures they'd memorized. They were the ultimate navigators of their day, if you like.

And they had them all dangling there as they walked along. And the more you had, of course, the more you'd memorize. And everything about outwardly looked religious.

But Jesus reprimanded them. Possibly His hardest message in the Word of God came to the Pharisees. He says, inside you're full of dead men's bones and rottenness.

Philip's translation says, inside you're like an open sewer. But outwardly they were immaculate. Outwardly they were very impressive.

But Hezekiah begins by opening the doors that were boarded up. You see Ahaz, his father, with all his idolatry and everything else, he had gone to the house of God and he had closed up the temple. He had boarded up the doors.

And so the first thing in order to get inside, the doors have to be opened. How many of you know people live behind closed doors? People live behind closed doors. It's amazing what goes on inside.

Again, I've passed it long enough to know that people live with all sorts of skeletons in their closet. Unrepented sin. Things that they're involved in that nobody else knows about.

Outwardly, again, they're very spiritual. Outwardly there's nothing wrong. Outwardly they have all the jargon down.

They, again, look very spiritual. But inwardly there is uncleanness inside. And so it says here that Hezekiah opened the doors of the house of the Lord in verse 3 and he repaired them.

Notice he doesn't remove the doors because doors are essential. Doors need to be repaired. You see, doors serve one of two things.

They permit certain things to come in and certain things to go out. But they also permit certain things not to come in. Imagine that you've got a visitor that you haven't seen for a number of years.

A good friend that maybe has been overseas and they're returning and they give you a time when they will be arriving at your house. They call you and say we're just about 50 miles away. We should be there within the hour.

And you're anticipating them and there's a knock on the door and you run to that door. You open the door and you welcome them. Again, doors are wonderful.

They can let in things that you want to come in. But let's say a few days later that you're just a 11 or 12 year old boy or girl and your mother has to dash off somewhere and she said, now whatever you do don't open the door. And she no longer or she no sooner goes and you're sitting there and all of a sudden there's a knock on the door and your heart starts to beat.

And you sort of get around to maybe one of the windows where you can look outside and here's a man that looks like Charles Manson and you know he's got a great big dog and maybe he's got you see a knife in his belt or something and you begin to you know panic and you thank God that the door is closed. You don't want that door to open. You want that door to remain closed.

You do not want what is outside coming in. There are times when you want what is outside coming in but there are times when you don't. And what Hezekiah does, he repairs the doors.

Now how many of you know that we have doors on this temple? You see the psalmist says set a watch over the door of my mouth. Set a watch, set a guard over the the door, the entrance. Again the was it Job that says I have made a covenant with my eyes that I will not gaze upon a virgin.

Again he recognized I have a door that can let in certain things or I can close my eyes to that temptation, to that lust. And he says Lord I have made a covenant with my eyes. I'm going to make sure that my eyes do not gaze.

I'm not going to open my eyes. I'm not going to permit what is before me to enter into my spirit. And so we have doors.

David says I will set no worthless thing before my eyes. How many of you know the eye is a door? It allows certain things to come in if your body or if your eye be single, your body is full of light. But you see we can open that door and we can gaze at things that we should not gaze upon.

And the Bible has a principle beholding you're changed. That's why we have a generation of young people now that take guns to school and shoot one another and so on. Why? Because they have behold or they've been looking at and beholding television and the countless thousands of murders that they see over a period of years and beholding they're changed.

It's entered in all the filth, all the rottenness, all the anger, all the perversion, all the crookedness. We live the Bible says in a crooked and perverse generation. And the rise of taking in all of that and it's changed them.

They become violent. They become angry. They become resentful and they think nothing.

They're just picking up a gun and getting even. Again because the door is not being closed. The door is not being repaired.

And we need to make sure that we have the doors not only open but the doors need to be repaired. So that at the right time they open and the right time they close. The ear is also a door.

In the consecration of the priest you recall the blood was applied to the big toe and to the thumb and into the ear. Why? Because he was to listen to the voice of God. He was consecrated.

The blood was applied. He was to march if you like to the beat of a different drum. And as Christians we are supposed to have a consecrated ear but so often our ear is open isn't it to all the defiling influences of the world.

Especially young people and the music that they listen to. And all the perversion of the world goes in through that door and it defiles the house of God. The Bible says let him that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.

And yet we allow iniquity to come in. You have the story there in the book of Nehemiah of Tobiah. Tobiah opposed everything that Nehemiah was doing.

He ridiculed. He made fun of Nehemiah. He criticized him.

Sent messages to the king and so on and so forth. And then towards the end of the book of Nehemiah, Nehemiah has to return back to his job for a while and then by the time he returns guess what? Tobiah is in the house of God. Somebody has prepared a place right in the very temple for Tobiah himself.

The enemy has invaded the house of God. And you say that's almost unbelievable. This man that just stood there defying everything that Hezekiah was doing.

Mocking him, laughing at him, sending letters around, getting him in trouble and so on. Now he's infiltrated the house of God itself. But you see that the enemy has come in to this house as well.

He's come into the house of God. Oh another building. He's not interested in buildings.

He's interested in your life. See the Antichrist has one plan and that is to seat himself in the house of God and call himself God. And I don't know if that's going to happen in a literal sense or not, but I believe it's happened in a spiritual sense a long time ago.

He's come into the house of God and he set himself up as being God. And he's brought with him all the defilement of the world into the house of God. Tobiah, if you like, is alive and well today.

And so Hezekiah opens the doors. Now the reason he opened the door was because it says in verse 5 he had to carry out the uncleanness from the holy place. You see there had to be access into the house in order to carry out what was inside the house that had to come out.

Again we live behind closed doors, so many people. And the reason we don't want to open those doors, number one is pride. I mean what will others think if I begin to expose what is really going on in my life? If I begin to become honest and transparent about the difficulties and the problems that I'm facing, after all I'm a deacon, or after all I may even be a minister, or I teach Sunday school, or whatever it is.

And I don't want to expose what's going on. I'd rather keep the doors closed. And so pride, fear, of course is another one.

What will happen? What will my wife think? What will my husband say? What will the people in the church say? And we become more conscious of the fear of man than we do the fear of God. Or maybe it's unbelief that keeps us from opening the door and we say nothing's going to happen. I battled this problem now for years.

I prayed. I've been to the altar. I'm not going to expose myself.

I'm not going to make, let other people know what's going on in my life. I don't believe it's going to make any difference. And so we're gripped, we're held by unbelief.

And so again we keep the doors tightly closed. And of course the devil all along, he whispers in our ear, don't ever open the door. Whatever you do, don't open those doors.

Because he knows something. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. And he knows that once the doors open and the light comes in, that there is freedom and there's liberty and there's cleansing that can take place.

And so he keeps us behind closed doors. I could give you dozens of stories. Think of one young girl that we had on a team in New Guinea back in the 70s, early 70s.

Came from Australasia. I won't mention the country. She joined our team.

She was a girl that was involved in prayer, intercession. And she'd been with us maybe for about six months. And we noticed a change coming.

And we felt that she was going through some difficulties. She sort of lost the joy of the Lord that she had. And my associate and myself, we brought her in to the office.

We sat her down and we began to talk to her. We said, call her by name. I'll call her Mary.

That wasn't her name. But we said, Mary, we're just concerned. We've noticed that you're not yourself.

There's something troubling you and so on. And she again had the doors closed. No, I'm fine.

And we talked a little bit and my associate had a word of knowledge that God gave him. And he said, Mary, he said, God's just spoken to me about you. And she sort of looked and he said, God just told me that you've been involved in an incestuous relationship with your father.

And all of a sudden the doors opened and the tears just came and she sobbed and sobbed and sobbed and sobbed and sobbed. She just went into sort of convulsions because all of a sudden all of this pent up emotion of years and years and years that she'd held behind these closed doors, afraid that if she ever opened those doors, what would people think? And all of a sudden, God opened the doors for her. And the story was that her father was a respectable deacon, if not an elder in a Pentecostal church in one of these countries.

And she was terrified that if I say anything about what's going on, I'm going to get my father in trouble. If I get my father in trouble, he's going to be mad at me and so on. If I say something to my mother, it may mean that my father's going to leave and all the emotions as to how do I handle this? And for a ten years or more.

And all the abuse and it was just something that she carried, this incredibly heavy load, but she kept it behind closed doors. And the enemy of course said, don't ever open those doors Mary. Don't ever open those doors.

That young girl today is totally free. She's married, has a number of children. Last time I saw her, which was a good 12 years ago, serving in the house of God.

You see the doors opened. And the uncleanness that was inside, and it wasn't uncleanness of her making, but all of that uncleanness was able to be taken out. And she was free for the first time in her life.

And there was a liberty and there was a joy that came. I had a young man, actually not that young, but a man came to me just a few months before I gave up my church back in about November of last year. The same thing, sat down in my office, confessed to me that he'd been involved sexually with his daughter.

Started just when she was a few years old, adopted daughter. Here she was a high school girl now and it was still going on. That man was in the prayer meetings.

That man never missed a service. He and his wife drove further than anybody else to get to church, something like 60 miles one way. They were always there.

He would come forward. He would counsel other people. He would testify.

But you see there were doors that were closed. I had no idea what was behind those doors. Outwardly the temple looked fine.

The hands would be raised at the appropriate time. The testimonies would be given at the appropriate time. Think of a young girl, again not that young I guess, but was my secretary for a while down in New Zealand.

And after I left that particular church I just went to fill in for a little while while the senior pastor was making a trip around the world. And my wife and I went to this particular city and looked after the church and she was a secretary. And after he got back after six months we returned to the church where we're at where

they just loaned us.

And one day this girl called me. She said, I need to see you and your wife. She came around.

She said, I want to tell you something. She had tears in her eyes. She said, you know that young man that I've been dating? We'd been concerned about this man.

He'd been divorced and we were just concerned about some of the things about his character and we'd warned her. We said, listen we do not feel that this is right. We weren't putting a heavy on her.

We weren't trying to, you know, force her not to relate to this man. But there was a check at least in our own spirit. One of the other pastors had warned her, but she had persisted in this relationship.

And she was that night sitting there. We had the fire going. She came in and she began to cry and she said, listen I've got to tell you something.

I'm pregnant. She said, I know that you warned me. I know that you told me not to get involved with this man.

And she said, it was just one of those things. She said, we only had a sexual encounter once and it was basically almost a rape sort of a situation. But she said, I concede and I got pregnant.

She said, I'm here. She said, I feel so terrible. She had a call of God upon her life to the mission field.

A few months later we had her stand publicly in church, confess what she had done. She was repentant, deeply repentant. We gathered around her.

I remember just people crying. She was just a wonderful girl that gave in just momentarily to the pressures of that situation. You know that young lady.

She's not that young now. I guess she's in mid-40s, I guess. But she's in China.

She's been there for about 15 years doing an incredible job. She's got converts all over. I've talked to some of them in this country as they've come out, gone to university and so on.

She's given herself to God. She writes the most amazing letters, just serving God. You see the doors opened, the uncleanness was carried out and God restored her to a place of fruitfulness, a place of blessing.

My daughter who is in China right now, our oldest girl, looks to this woman as a model, as an example. She is such a woman of God. Thank God for the grace of God that's able to restore, that's able to cleanse and the forgiveness of God.

You see the enemy says, listen whatever you do, don't open the door. Don't open the door. I think of a married man in my church just again last year.

Came to me, man that had a very good position with the government, good paying job, beautiful home, four or five children. Came to church every single Sunday, came into my office and confessed again that he was hooked on pornography. His wife discovered a bill of \$500 on the telephone, 900 numbers.

Somehow he'd been able to keep from it. That thing went from one thing to another, got involved with prostitution and so on. What a tragedy.

It's just amazing isn't it what goes on in the house of God. People live with closed doors. Oh, I could go on and tell you story after story after story that I've heard.

Tragic stories. Some of them that have got the grace of God that has brought them out of that, that young man to this day is living a lifestyle of just serving the flesh. His wife has had to file for divorce.

She was a pastor's daughter. Raised in the house of God, he was training to be an associate pastor. You see the enemy came in and he refused again to really deal with the uncleanness.

Even though in that case he opened the doors a little bit, he refused to allow people to help him. So Hezekiah, he first of all opens the doors. He repairs them and he carries out the uncleanness.

Now how did all this begin? Notice in verse 6, our fathers have been unfaithful. Our fathers have been unfaithful. You see the Bible likens the relationship that we have with God to a marriage.

There is an unfaithfulness. There is a turning from God. The Bible says, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. That's unfaithfulness. You adulterers and adulteresses know you're not.

The friendship with the world is enmity against God. That's unfaithfulness. So it says, our fathers have been unfaithful and have done evil in the sight of the Lord and have forsaken Him and turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the Lord and they turned their backs.

Notice again, there came a time when they turned their face from Him. Again, no desire for God anymore. No desire for the house of God.

They allowed sin to come in. Again, they shut the doors. There was a deliberate choice to walk out on God.

Oh, outwardly everything looked fine. The temple looked fine. But inwardly, there was no heart.

There was no affection. There was no desire for the things of God. You see, it's possible to sit in the house of God, at least the church, the building, and yet at the same time turn your back on God Himself.

Going because why? It's the thing that you're supposed to do. After all, your wife has asked you to do it or you know that you've got to keep up a certain credibility, certain reputation. And yet you know in your spirit that long ago you turned your back on God.

Long ago you forsook Him. Long ago there's been an unfaithfulness. You're married to something else.

You've got other desires. You've got other goals, other attractions in your life. No longer are your affections set on things that are above.

And in your heart, you no longer desire the things of God. Oh, outwardly you look fine. And there's many reasons that can happen.

It could happen because of some offense. It can happen because of some disappointment, some lack of recognition, maybe some sin, some moral failure. All of those things.

It's amazing, isn't it? People shut down for various reasons. So-and-so was asked to sing. I've never been asked to sing.

So-and-so was asked to play the piano. They never asked me to play the piano. And an offense has come in and the doors have been closed.

And while you go to church, again, there's no real desire to worship God. Again, you've turned your back on God. And so it says, our fathers have been unfaithful.

They've done evil in the sight of the Lord and have forsaken Him. And they've turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the Lord. Again, there's no pursuing God anymore.

Their face is not set to do the will of God. It says the Lord Jesus Christ, He set His face like a flint to do what God intended Him to do. To go to Jerusalem to fulfill His destiny.

Again, I'm asking you tonight, is your face set towards the Lord? Can you honestly say, I'm pursuing God with all my soul, with all my strength, with all my mind? And then verse 7 says, and they have also shut the doors of the porch. And they've put out the lamps. You see, as you make your way into the house of God now, further and further, there's another set of doors that takes you into the holy place.

And those doors are being closed as well. And when you go into the holy place, it says, they've put out the lamps. They've put out the lamps.

The lamp, of course, was the lamp stand, the seven branch golden lamp stand. And every single light had been put out. What does that signify? The Holy Spirit is no longer at work.

They've grieved the Holy Spirit. They've quenched the Holy Spirit. The word quench means to put out.

And somehow the activity of the Holy Spirit is no longer a vital part of their life. They're not listening to the voice of God. They're not listening to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

The lamp has gone out. There's no longer illumination. There's no longer direction.

There's no longer light. They're in a place of darkness. A place where they're lacking vision.

Where there's no insight. There's no revelation anymore. There's no excitement about the things of God.

Everything is dull and boring and dry. And they can't wait to get out. Because life to them is out there on the golf course or fishing or some other thing.

That's life to them. Jesus said, I'm come that you might have life. But that life doesn't satisfy anymore.

Why? Because the lamp has been put out. Again, the activity of the Holy Spirit has been grieved. And you know, if the lamp has been put out, that means, again, there's no illumination on the Word of God.

Because when Moses was told to make the golden lampstand, he said, Moses, when you make it, you're to put it in a particular place. And the way in which you position that lampstand, God said, is that it will give light to that which is in front of it. And what was opposite the lampstand was the table of showbread.

The Word of God. You see, the Holy Spirit's job is to illuminate the Word of God, to guide us, to lead us into all truth. And when the lamp is out, the Word of God becomes dry.

The Word of God becomes lifeless. There's no appetite for the Word of God now that the lamp is out. And it just becomes another book, a dry, miserable book that no longer holds your attention.

Is that true tonight? Again, the lamp has gone out. There's no appetite for the Word of God. No desire to sit down and study the Word of God.

Oh, other things are far more exciting. Football season's coming, you know, baseball season, this, you know, we can spend hours watching those things. But the house of God, the doors have closed long ago.

We've set our face towards something else. You see, we have our idols just like they had their idols. Oh, we don't have Baal in that sense.

But we've got the equivalent, don't we? That we bow to, that we spend time before. Again, the lamps have been put out, he says. And then he says, and they've not burned incense.

The incense, typified prayer, place of praise and adoration, communion and fellowship. And there was no longer the incense being offered up in the house of God. Let me ask you, is your temple, is the incense altar functioning? Do you know what it is to spend time in the presence of God? Do you know what it is to spend time in prayer? You see, the Bible always associates incense and the incense offering with prayer.

Zacharias, remember, went in to offer incense at the hour of prayer. You see, there's no longer any incense going up. This temple has long since closed down.

Again, outwardly, it looks perfect. Outwardly, you would never know what is going on internally. But you see, the Holy Spirit does, and God does.

The Bible says, all things are naked before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. See, God sees what is going on. Remember in Ezekiel there, where Ezekiel is taken in the spirit, seemingly taken in the spirit there into the temple of God, and he's told to dig a hole and tunnel in, and he gets inside, and what's going on? All sorts of immorality, all sorts of idolatry on the walls of the temple.

What's going on in the inside? God saw what was going on. Outwardly, the temple looked fine. Ezekiel, come here, I've got to show you something.

See that spirit of jealousy? See what they're doing inside? See all the carved images? See all those things? They're bowing down to these things? All going on in this inside. See, it's what's going on on the inside that God's concerned about, and there's no incense that's being offered. And he says, neither have they offered the burnt offering, verse 7, in the holy place to the God of Israel.

The burnt offering was the voluntary offering. The burnt offering, again, was that what Paul refers to in Romans 12, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your body a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God. The burnt offering, again, was the voluntary offering, but it was the one offering that was totally consumed for God.

See, some offerings, there was a certain portion kept back. That's the way the priests were able to live. But the burnt offering was totally God's, and there was no longer the burnt offering being offered.

Again, is the burnt offering being offered in your temple? When's the last time you said, Lord, here I am. All that I am, all that I have, I give to you. Whatever you want me to do, Lord, I'm yours.

I present my body a living sacrifice. The old hymn writer put it this way, love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. And yet, we withhold, don't we? Again, no burnt offering.

Then notice in verse 8, the consequences of all of the sin. Therefore, the wrath of the Lord was against Judah and Jerusalem. He made them an object of terror, of horror, of hissing, as you see with your own eyes.

Now, there's nothing worse than having God against you. You say, well, how can God be against a Christian? He can. God resists the proud.

He gives grace to the humble. These were his people, redeemed by his blood, brought out of bondage, brought out of captivity. And yet, now the wrath of God is against Judah.

Judah, the place of praise, against Jerusalem. In verse 9, it says, for behold, our fathers have fallen by the sword. You see, death resulted.

Oh, in this case, it was physical death. In our case, it's spiritual death. You see, when we board up the house of God, when we close off the house of God, when we allow all that uncleanness to accumulate in this temple, when we put out the lamps, when we no longer burn incense, when no longer is the burnt offering being offered, then spiritual death sets in.

So it says, our fathers have fallen by the sword. Our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity because of this. Isn't that true? Again, in the spiritual realm, our sons, our daughters, our wives go into captivity.

Again, as the head of the house, men especially, we open the door. We allow certain things to come in. Because of the principle of headship, it affects the home.

Our sons are affected. Our daughters are affected. Our wife is affected.

They go into captivity. Things come in. But Hezekiah says in verse 10, he says, I've made a covenant with the Lord, the God of Israel, that His burning anger may turn from us.

Hezekiah is very, very serious now, as we've already seen the very first day of the very first month of the very first year. He's going to rectify all that has gone on. He's going to right all the wrongs.

He's going to cleanse all these areas where uncleanness has come in. And he makes a covenant with the Lord. And he says in verse 11, my sons do not be negligent now, for the Lord has chosen you to stand before Him, to minister to Him and to be His ministers and to burn incense.

Verse 15, they assembled their brothers. They consecrated themselves. They went in to cleanse the house of the Lord according to the command of the King by the word of the Lord.

You see, you cleanse the house according to the word of the Lord. You don't cleanse the house according to your standard. You don't cleanse the house according to somebody else's standard.

You don't cleanse the house according to the standard of your denomination or the standard of the world. You cleanse the house according to the word of the Lord. What does God say about the sin that I'm involved in? All the world may say there's nothing wrong with it.

It's acceptable. It's an acceptable practice. It's a lifestyle that you've chosen.

It's okay. We don't frown upon it. What does God's word say? You see, we've got to cleanse it according to the word of the Lord.

Verse 16, and so the priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord to cleanse it. And every unclean thing which they found in the temple Lord, they brought out to the court of the house of the Lord. Notice the priests went into the inner part.

The inner part. David talks about the secret sins in the light of your presence Lord. The secret sins.

The sins that nobody else knows about. The things that we practice either in our mind or when nobody else is around. The things that we do.

The programs that we watch. The books that we read. The magazines that we look at.

The internet that we search when nobody else is around. One of the biggest problems now facing the church is the pornography on the internet. Because you can position that monitor in such a way that all you've got to hear is somebody walking down the hall or the slightest crack of the door and you can change it.

See, you had to be a little more cunning in the old days. You had to be able to hide the magazines, the pornographic magazines, so nobody could find them. Now it's just a click of a mouse and people are getting hooked.

We had a young man that went to a bible college, Pentecostal bible college. His wife, sorry, his mother went out to see him and to take in a conference in this particular school, well-known school. Can't understand why she didn't see him that much.

Finally the truth came out that he was hooked on pornography right in bible school on the internet. Spending hours watching stuff that he should not be watching. There he was preparing himself supposedly for the ministry and Hezekiah goes in right into the inner recesses and he carries all the uncleanness out and it says in verse 17, they began the consecration on the first day of the month and on the eighth day of the month he entered the porch.

Eight days to get from the outside to the first set of doors and then they consecrated the house of the Lord in eight days and finished on the 16th day of the first month. That's a thorough job, isn't it? 16 days over two weeks it took them to cleanse all that was going on. It was a thorough cleansing.

It was a serious cleansing that took place. It wasn't superficial. It dealt with every single thing right into the very innermost being of the temple and everything that was unclean was taken out into the Kidron Valley there and burned and then they brought the news back in verse 18.

We have cleansed the whole house of the Lord. The whole house. Nothing that was untouched.

Every single area again was cleansed. The altar of burnt offering with all its utensils. The table of showbread and all its utensils.

Moreover all the utensils which King Ahaz had discarded during his reign in his unfaithfulness. We have prepared and consecrated and behold there before the altar of the Lord. You see everything was restored to its rightful place.

So determined was Hezekiah to get the temple of God functioning again. To make contact with the living God. To restore a broken relationship and it takes him weeks and weeks and weeks but he is determined we are going to restore this.

Every unclean thing and then notice what happened. Verse 25. Then he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with harps, with lyres, according to the command of David and of Gad, David's seer and of Nathan the prophet.

For the command was from the Lord through his prophets and the Levites stood with the musical instruments of David and the priests and the trumpets. It says that when the burnt offering began the song of the Lord also began. The trumpets accompanied with the instruments of David king of Israel and the whole assembly worshiped.

The singers sang, the trumpets sounded. All of this continued until the burnt offering was finished. Verse 29.

And they bowed down and they worshipped. Again verse 30. They bowed down and they worshipped.

They sang the praises of the Lord with the words of David. You see now there's rejoicing, genuine rejoicing. You see there is a principle in the word of God.

There are three words that are used repeatedly in the word of God. Righteousness, peace and joy. And they're always in that order because there is no peace unless righteousness comes first.

And there is no joy until righteousness is established. There has to be righteousness. The Bible says the work of righteousness is what? Is peace.

Righteousness then comes peace. Some of you do not have peace with God tonight. Even as I'm speaking you know there's something churning within you.

You know there's closed doors. There's things that have to be dealt with. And there's no peace.

Why? Because the Bible says there's no peace for the wicked. You see you cannot have peace and wickedness together. There is no peace for the wicked.

And so there has to be first of all righteousness and then comes peace. And once there's peace there's joy. And all of a sudden the joy of the Lord was released.

This tremendous celebration as they began to worship and praise the Lord. And it says in verse 35 and there were also many burnt offerings. With the fat of the peace offering and the libations from the burnt offering thus the service of the house of the Lord was established again.

You see the house is once again established. The house is now operating the way God intended it to operate. The cleansing has taken place.

The rejoicing has come. The celebration has come. The dancing.

The music. The festivity. All of that came after the cleansing.

And it says in Hezekiah verse 36 and all the people rejoiced over what God had done. Or what he had prepared for the people because the thing came about suddenly. And then Hezekiah goes even further.

He sends a message now around the nation. And he says come and celebrate with us. Come and enjoy the presence of God.

And so the message goes out. Verse 5 in chapter 30. They established a decree to circulate a proclamation throughout all Israel from Bathsheba to Dan that they should come and celebrate the Passover to the Lord the God of Israel.

For they had not celebrated in great numbers as it was prescribed. Again there'd be no celebration. You see there is no celebration when there's sin.

Remember Achan? Achan was the one that stole what was under the ban when they marched against Ai or rather Jericho and they kept back and then they marched against Ai and they were defeated. And Joshua has got a problem now. How do I find out who committed the sin? And there were certain lots that were cast and finally it came down to this particular tribe.

And seemingly if you read it the way I read it he basically went down the line and said give praise to the Lord. Praise the Lord brother. Give praise to the Lord.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Came to Achan. Achan couldn't praise the Lord. Why? There was sin in his life.

And he basically said you're the man. You see you can't praise God when there's sin in your life. At least not acceptable praise.

But there's a celebration now that is going on. There's a proclamation that goes around the nation. Come and celebrate with us.

And notice what happens in verse 10 chapter 30. And the couriers passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh as far as Zebulun. But they laughed them to scorn and they mocked them.

Nevertheless some of the men of Asa, Manasseh, Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. And the hand of God was also on Judah and gave them one heart to do what the king and the princess commanded by the word of the Lord. You see there were two responses.

Some mocked some laughed and others were willing to humble themselves. There's two responses tonight. One is to just laugh and mock internally.

Keep those doors closed. Listen to the voice of the enemy. The other is to humble yourself.

Say God it's time that I got free. I can no longer bear this burden. I'm weighed down.

This thing has got a grip on my life whatever it may be tonight. Whatever your besetting sin is. The uncleanness needs to be carried out.

I believe this is an opportunity tonight to get right with God. To have the house of God restored once again. To know what it really is to celebrate.

To really be able to dance with joy because of what God has done. To be able to say he's put a new song in my heart. He lifted me also the psalmist said out of that horrible pit and out of the miry clay.

Some of you are in miry clay tonight. You're in a horrible pit. He wants to lift you out of it.

He wants to redeem you. He redeemeth my life from the pit. He wants to set your feet on a solid rock and put a new song in your mouth.

And if you'll let him do that tonight. These altars are open. We're going to close.

I'm going to ask you just to stand quietly. Again you have a choice to allow the spirit of God to move or to put out the lamp. You have a choice to present your body as a burnt offering a living sacrifice or to withhold it.

You have a choice tonight just to stay in the condition that you're in. And while you may fool everybody else you don't fool God. Or you can come and be transparent to be honest.

I'm not suggesting that you tell all your problems to everybody. I am saying this that there's a place I believe of confession. If we confess our faults one towards another pray for another.

There's a healing. There's a cleansing. There are men and women that are trained counselors.

And there's something about opening those doors. There's something about allowing the light to come in that will set you free. God wants to set you free tonight.

Father we ask right now that you would Lord brood over this meeting. Father bring that cleansing work. Bring that healing work.

Bring that work of restoration. Father you came to bind up the brokenhearted. You came to release captives Lord.

There's captives here tonight. Men and women that are bound. Men and women that are behind prison bars.

Father we ask that Lord tonight by the power of your Holy Spirit you would unlock and release the chains that have them bound. Father we could sing as a hymn writer says, my chains fell off. My heart was free.

I rose went forth and followed thee. Father do that tonight. Lord bring a liberty.

Bring a release. Bring a celebration tonight Lord. Father let this house resound with worship of thanksgiving.

Praise Lord for all that you've done. Father put within us Lord the heart of Hezekiah. Lord that determination to get back to God.

Father no longer to listen to the voice of the enemy. Father to lay that aside and respond Lord as the Spirit of God is wooing. Lord we say while on others outcalling do not pass me by.

Father touch lives tonight Lord we pray. Father bring revival Lord to this church. To these churches that are represented here and Father then in turn to the community.

Father put that new song in our mouth that Lord many shall hear it. Lord many shall hear it. In Jesus name.

Amen.

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