

# Divinely Lead

by David Ravenhill

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*The birthing process is a series of stages God takes a person or ministry through to bring about growth, maturity, and spiritual development, often involving surrender, obedience, and recognition of our impoverished condition.*

**Duration:** 1:26:09

**Scripture:** Genesis 29:31, Daniel 3:25, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Hebrews 11:34

**Topics:** "Godly Leadership", "Spiritual Transformation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the cycle of bondage and captivity that the nation of Israel experienced due to their disobedience to God. The speaker highlights specific instances where Israel was under the rule of foreign nations, such as the Philistines, Jabin the king of Canaan, and the Midianites. Despite their dire circumstances, the speaker emphasizes that God can use weakness and dependency to bring about strength and transformation in individuals. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God chooses the weak and will ultimately bring them to a place of dependency on Him.

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## Transcript

If you were not with us this morning, we transitioned from the first three services, where we dealt with some basic foundation truths, the Lordship of Christ, forgiveness, cleansing of the house of God, getting right with God, and this morning we talked about maintaining that victory. The Bible says He wants men and men that are steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Not people that are up and down, vacillating, but steadfastness.

And so we need to maintain the walk and the life that God has given us. We are now moving on to another phase, and before we do that, let's look to the Lord in prayer again. Father, once again, we magnify You.

Lord, we exalt You. You're the head of this church, the head of the church. Lord, it wasn't redeemed by the blood of men, doesn't belong to a denomination, doesn't belong to a movement, it belongs to You.

We are Your people, the sheep of Your pasture. Lord, we acknowledge Your headship over us. We're Your body.

You're the head of that body. And Father, we ask tonight that You would come and do what You said You would do, build Your church, further Your work in us, Lord, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

I'm convinced that we are living in the last days, exciting days and terrifying days. There is tremendous contrast that we see in the last days revealed in the Word of God. The Bible says, in the last days, I'll pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.

That's going to be exciting. The last day, the Bible says, in the last days, perilous times will come. That's not very exciting.

The Bible says, the wheat and the tares will mature together. So while we're going to see the church blossom, I believe, and come into the fullness of all that God intended, so also we're going to see the kingdom of darkness blossom. The wheat and the tares will mature together.

And so again, we have days of tremendous contrast. Days in which we're going to see, I believe, the outpouring of the Spirit of God in an unprecedented way. Because God said, in the last days, I'll, again, not only build my church, but in the days of those kings, I will establish my kingdom.

That kingdom will last forever. It will crush and devour every other kingdom. But along with that, in the last days, we're going to see the love of many wax cold.

We're going to see signs and wonders and miracles created by false Christs and false prophets. Beware, lest any man deceive you. Worldwide deception is going to accompany the outpouring of the Spirit of God.

And so we have to discern. And so these are days of tension, days of contrast. The Bible says again, Matthew 24, there's going to be rumors of wars, wars, rumors of wars, signs, wonders, miracles, earthquakes, pestilence, all of those things that we're beginning to see and experience in a greater measure.

But it says these are just the beginning of birth pangs. And birth pangs do not diminish as the time approaches. Every woman wished, would wish they would.

But they accelerate. And rather than get further and further apart, they get more and more frequent. And so we're going to see more and more famines, more and more earthquakes, more and more pestilence, more and more wars and rumors of wars.

But again it's the beginning of birth pangs, not death throes. So God is going to birth something, a glorious church, a kingdom that cannot be shaken, a company of men and women. Again as we heard tonight, those sons of God that God is going to manifest in these last days.

Not some exclusive, you know, company that can incorporate. Many years ago they incorporated the sons of God in America. Don't know how you do that, but they were the sons of God.

You know, what somebody said is, bride price. We're the only ones. But God is going to do something, I believe.

He's going to display to the world a glorious church. And in order for God to do that, He is going to raise up men and women that He will use in various capacities. Men with a passion for God.

Men with a passion for the presence of God. Men with a passion for purity. Men that are not swayed by public opinion.

Men again that live their life in the light of eternity. They're not on the stage because of some sort of an ego trip. They're conscious again that they are servants of the Most High God and that one day they'll give an account.

The Bible says, be not many teachers, thus incurring the greater judgment. And it's a fearful thing to be in leadership, because leaders will be more severely judged than anybody else. So be not many teachers, be not many leaders, thus incurring a greater judgment.

To whom much is given, much is required. But God will raise up men and women, I believe, in these last days, that will fulfill His purpose. There are three things, three characteristics that I see about the Bride of Christ.

One is purity. I've done many, many weddings and I've never seen a dirty bride. And God is not coming back for a dirty bride either.

So she has to be a pure virgin. So one thing is purity. The next thing is passion.

I don't think He's coming back for a bride that's not madly in love with Him. To those that look for Him, He will return a second time. But also, men and women that want to be involved in the purpose of God.

Passion, purity, purpose. God said to Adam, I will make you a help meat. And so Jesus Christ is coming back for a help meat.

In Song of Solomon, one of the things that the bride wanted to know about was, take me to where you pasture your flock. All of a sudden she became interested in what He was interested in. I guess if I'm going to marry you, I better like, you know, sheep and goats and whatever else you look after.

So let's go down there and, you know, get involved. We need to be involved in the purpose of God. It's not all about passion, lovemaking.

That's part of it. It's also about purpose, destiny. Again, as we read and sang tonight, at least, the nations and this nation.

God's heart for the nations. And so with every move, new move of God, there is a, many times at least, a new leadership that is raised up. Many times the pioneers of the past are the persecutors of the present, unfortunately.

Because they think that God's got to do it the same way. And when He doesn't do it the same way that God moved 30 years ago, 40 years ago, then they resist and say, no you don't understand, I've been there. And then God has to raise up another group of people.

Tonight I want to speak to you about the birthing process, the birthing of a ministry. If you turn with me to the book of Judges, Judges chapter 13. And as you're turning to that, let me give you a little bit of a background to this portion of Scripture.

If you've read the book of Judges recently, you know that there has been a series of stages in the life of Israel, where they have gone into captivity, they've gone into bondage. In chapter 4 of Judges, we find that for 20 years, the nation of Israel has been in bondage to Jabin the king of Canaan. Imagine 15, 16, 18, 20 year old kids that have never known freedom.

They've been in bondage. In Judges chapter 6, you have the nation of Israel in bondage to the Midianites, during the time that God raised up Caleb, um Gideon. Again seven years in which the Midianites came and totally devastated the land.

Hardly a blade of grass existed. The economy, everything else was destroyed, because of sin of the nation of Israel. In chapter 13, it gets worse.

Verse 1, Now the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. And so the Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistines for 40 years. You would have thought they would have learned the lesson.

Seven years is bad enough. Twenty years is bad enough. Forty years now in bondage.

Forty years in servitude. Forty years in captivity, under the hands of the nations that God said you were to dominate. Remember this is a nation God says, I want you to be the head and not the tail.

I want you to be above and not beneath. I want you to lend, but never to borrow. I want you to be a light to the nations.

I want you to be that city that we heard about tonight. That was the role of Israel. That's their function in the Old Testament, to be a light, to be salt, to be a nation, a testimony.

And here we have them in servitude and bondage. Instead of them dictating what should be going on, they are being dictated to. They're being governed and ruled over.

And it's a time of devastation, a time of darkness. And yet in the midst of it, God is at work. How many of you know God is never caught not knowing what to do? He's always working out His plan and His purpose.

He knows exactly He rules over the affairs of men. And while He has permitted this, He is about to change it. And many times we look at the darkness of this nation and other nations and we wonder, you know, is God really in control? I can assure you He is.

Have I not spoken? Will I not bring it to pass? And sometimes in the midst of the darkness and the devastation, God is working away silently. This is the case here. God is about to bring forth a Deliverer.

He is about to raise up an anointed man of God. A man that is going to turn the tables on the Philistines. A man that is going to once again put Israel on the map.

And I believe God is wanting to do that once again. Again through a corporate body as we heard tonight. It doesn't mean that individuals won't be used, but I believe as somebody said, this will be a faceless generation.

There will be so many individuals being used that there won't be one person that sort of takes the limelight. But there is a process that I want to look at, this birthing process. And as we look at this, I trust that God will give us some insight and understanding as to the ways in which God works.

Because God's ways are not our ways. There are eight areas that we're going to cover. Some are much shorter than the other, but the first one is divine desperation.

The second one, divine intervention. The third, divine conception. Number four, divine gestation.

Number five, divine restrictions. Number six, divine possession. Number seven, divine maturation.

And number eight, divine participation. I will repeat those as we go through. I thought you'd have got them by now.

Divine desperation. Verse two, And there was a certain man of Zorah, chapter 13 of Judges, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. And his wife was barren, and had borne no children.

What a strange place to begin. God does some funny things, doesn't he? I would have thought he would have gone down to some sort of school of the prophets. I thought he would have gone into some Bible school.

Thought he would have gone to some priestly family or something. And instead, God reaches into the life of a couple, a woman who is barren. There's nothing more devastating for a woman than to find out she's barren.

There's in the Proverbs, it says, there are two things that will never be satisfied. Sheol and the barren womb. And a barren woman cannot be sort of paid off with riches or possessions or clothes or jewelry or anything else if she's barren.

Nothing is going to appease that. Nothing is going to satisfy that, because everything that she was created for has been stripped from her. And women will go to desperate lengths, in order to bring forth life.

Why? Because they were created to bring something that has eternal value into this world. The whole being was destined of God, again, to bring forth life. And when that doesn't happen again, there is a deep frustration and anger many times, bitterness.

And again, extreme lengths will be taken. Tens of thousands of dollars, or tens of thousands of pounds in some cases, going from one specialist to another. And when all of that fails, then flying to the end of the world almost, to adopt a child from some third world nation.

But to do anything to have a child, when you can't have a child, the frustration. And this is where God begins. A woman who has been stripped of her natural capability.

A woman that God has brought to the end of her own resources. She's tried, and tried, and tried, and nothing happens. Barrenness, as you know, is a major curse, a major reproach.

In the Bible, wasn't it Hannah that says, he's taken away my reproach. We have the blessings and the cursings there in Deuteronomy 28. Part of the blessing was that you would be fruitful, not only in your crops and everything else, but the fruit of the womb.

Part of the curse was that you would not have children. But you see, there is a reason that God uses this woman, because she typifies the church. In fact, all the way through the Word of God, the only people that are barren are women, apart from Abraham, in the sense of being an old man.

But you see, the church is barren, can't do anything of herself, can't produce anything of her own ability. She doesn't have any resources of her own. There's nothing wrong with the bridegroom.

I am come that you might have life. He is the life giver. He is the source of life.

And so the woman, the barren woman, typifies the church throughout the Word of God. And God will bring us to this place of barrenness, where He will strip us again of our capability, our self-sufficiency. And you may, you know, come on the stage and have a great ministry, but somewhere along the line, God will strip you of your own resources and your own capability, and He will bring you to that place of total and absolute dependency upon Himself.

And it's one of the major principles in God's Word. Jesus said, apart from the Father, He says, I can do absolutely nothing. Then He says, apart from Me, you can do nothing.

I do only do the things that I see the Father do. The Son can do nothing of Himself. Dependency.

One of the very first principles, the very first law that Jesus ever taught His disciples, I think I touched on it, I believe, when I was here last time, was there in Matthew. The Beatitudes, the very first law of God's kingdom, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. And that word in the Greek is the word beggar.

Blessed are the beggars, for theirs is the kingdom of God. What is a beggar? A beggar is somebody who lives off somebody else's resources, somebody else's generosity, somebody else's wealth. He's looked at his own impoverished condition.

I remember being in India a number of years ago, and seeing a cripple at the side of the road. We pulled up in a jeep, and I was looking around, just enamored with what was going on. I heard a voice, and I looked down, and finally here was this little boy, 10, 12 years of age, all crippled.

Legs all twisted underneath him, hands all crippled, begging. You see, that young boy could not sustain himself. He didn't have the resources, he didn't have the capability of looking after himself.

There was no means of sustaining his life. He couldn't work, and so he begged. You see, he derived his life from somebody else's resources.

And Jesus said, the very first law of my kingdom, blessed are the beggars. Recognize that apart from him, we can do absolutely nothing. Look at your impoverished condition.

I don't care how brilliant you may be, what sort of degrees you may have. God will strip us, and bring us to that place where we cry out to God, and say, God, show my cup. Lord, you've got the resources I need.

I'm going to live my life by deriving from you all that I need. And Jesus said, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is, not will be, the kingdom of God. He makes his kingdom resources available to beggars.

And so, this is where God begins in the birthing process. Barrenness. Taking away again our natural abilities and capabilities, our own strengths, and all those things.

He will strip us, in order to get us to this place where we look to him, and to look to him alone. And I could testify and give you details of my own life, how true that is, and many, many other lives, as I've read the story of great men and women of God. It's amazing isn't it, some of the greatest servants of God, in the Word of God, came out of barren situations.

John the Baptist, Elizabeth was barren. David can trace his pedigree, if you like, his history back, just a generation or so, to Ruth, who was barren. She'd been married, remember, her husband had died, they had no children.

She married Boaz, God opened her womb, brought forth again, Obed, and then Jesse, and then David. Again, here is this wonderful king, that we sing so much about, came out of barrenness. Joseph, heard about Joseph tonight.

Where did he come from? A barren woman. Rachel, give me children, or else I die. And so many times, God reaches again into these barren situations.

Isaac, the child of promise. Sarah, unable to conceive, until God opened her womb. Samuel, one of the great prophets of the Old Testament.

Hannah, barren, until God opened her womb. I mean, these are choice vessels, but they all came out of barrenness. That's the place where it all begins, recognizing again our impoverished condition.

God, I can't do it. I can't take this nation. I can't take this city.

I can't do this. I can't do that. Lord, unless the Lord builds the house, we labor in vain.

Lord, we're incapable of doing it. So you have to do it. Not by might, not by power, by your Spirit, Lord.

Not by my strength, not by my wisdom, not by my cunning, not by my skill. Lord, I tried all that, and it doesn't work. And so we've got to learn, don't we? One of my favorite portions of Scripture again.

I touched on this last time I was here, when we had the day's teaching together. Hebrews 11 verse 32. Let me just read it quickly, and just comment on it.

I won't go into detail like I did last time. What more shall I say, for time would fail me, if I were to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to flight. How many of you would like to fit into that category? What an incredible group of men.

Unbelievable, isn't it? I mean these are the great heroes. These are the men that we sort of put up on a pedestal, and we say, well God, I mean, you know, you don't breed them like that anymore. These are the sort of the, you know, the elect of the elect.

These are just a breed all of their own. I can't even begin to be even in the same company. I mean after all, when's the last time you did some of these things? Conquered a kingdom.

That's what we talked about. Taking the land, performed some great act of righteousness, obtained some great promise, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. What a list.

But you see there's one phrase, if you were following along, I left out. Now let me put it in, and it will change everything. Verse 34, they quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, listen, from weakness were made strong.

Oh I love that portion of Scripture. You see there was always one common denominator with every great servant of God. From weakness, from barrenness, they were made strong.

God chooses the weak, and if you're strong, He's going to weaken you. He's going to do the Jacob on you. He's going to make you walk with the limp.

He's going to take that area of strength, and He's going to bring it to a place of dependency. Guaranteed. No way around it.

You may postpone it, you may put it off, but somewhere along the line, God's going to catch up with you, strip you of everything. Until again, you can be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Not in your own strength.

Again, not because of your own cunning, your own ability, and so on. My father used to have a saying, you can have 30 degrees and still be frozen. The next one, the second one, is divine intervention.

Verse 3 again, then the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman. Until God showed up, she was going to remain in the condition that she was, barren, hopeless, helpless, weak. But then something changed in that house.

God came. The angel of the Lord appeared. God intervened.

There was a visitation of God. And again, the church will remain barren until there is a visitation of God. That's what we're crying out for.

I know that's what you're crying out for. There's an expectancy. When the heavens, Lord, you come down, the mountains melt at your presence.

Not my presence, not my ability, not my wisdom, not my personality. The mountains melt when you come. We need a visitation of God.

And again, you can go through the lives of so many individuals, and you realize that until God showed up, nothing happened. Moses, the Bible says in the book of Acts, supposing his brethren understood that God had raised him up to be a deliverer. Moses assumed everybody saw in him the leadership qualities.

He goes out there, sought to bring deliverance to the nation of Israel, by killing off a couple of Egyptian soldiers and burying them in the sand. It takes a long time to get rid of the Egyptian army that way. God had a better idea.

The Bible says Moses was mighty in word and deed. He was eloquent. He was raised the son of Pharaoh's daughter, the finest education that anybody could have in all of Egypt.

And we know now, as we've excavated and seen some of these fabulous tombs and the wealth and so on, all that he had around him, the finest of everything. I mean, here he was. He was a striking man, part of the family.

Suppose his brethren understood. God takes him on the backside of the desert for 40 years. 40 years of stripping.

40 years where God basically, sort of at least, it would appear neglected him, and yet God had his hand on him all along. And finally at the end of 40 years, divine intervention. Suddenly God shows up.

He's never late. Oh, I would have thought he'd been late. I mean, when you're 40, you've got a little bit of, you know, get up and go.

At least I used to have my get up and go as got up and gone. And you would thought, you know, God surely, I mean here I am. I'm no longer just a teenager.

I'm 40. I'm, you know, this is the time surely when you're going to use me now. Supposing again his brethren understood.

40 years on the backside of the desert. The Bible says he was content. The word there is to be slack.

It's like that of a bow. When you're slack in the bow, I mean he's lost in one sense his vision. He's failed.

One day he turns aside and God comes. Says, Moses, I've got a job for you to do. Moses says, not me Lord.

I stutter. I can't speak. The Bible literally says he was mighty in word and deed.

By the time God gets through with him, he's been around those sheep long enough that he sounds like them. Lord, I'm going to make a fool of myself. You had your chance 40 years ago.

I'm 80 now. And says, from weakness you're going to be made strong. Because you're going to go in my name, not in your name, not in your personality, not in your strength, not in your ability.

I'm going to put authority in that rod. I'm going to put authority in you and I'm going to send you. Divine visitation.

Gideon. Talked about him a moment ago. There he is in the wine press.

Again, maybe the last little bushel of wheat. Trying to get something to eat. The land has been devastated.

He's hiding, hoping nobody sees him. Again, food was precious. The Midianites have swooped down and again devastated the land.

All of a sudden, the angel Lord comes. Gideon, got a calling on your life. Lord, you've got the wrong person.

Lord, don't you know about the tribe that I belong to? It's the smallest tribe of all 12. And Lord, don't you know about my father's house is the smallest house of all the tribe? And Lord, don't you know that I'm the least in my father's house? So Lord, why go to the smallest tribe and the smallest house and the least member of that house? God says, go in this your strength. What was his strength? His weakness.

The greatest strength you and I have, if we use it properly, is our weakness. It will drive us to God. There's been many, many, many, many times when I've got on my face before God and shed tears and said, God, I cannot believe I'm doing what I'm doing.

Lord, I don't have the ability. I look back at my life, failed many courses in school, was nervous and shy, introspective, never did anything publicly, never wanted to go into the ministry. The last thing I wanted to do.

You see, my greatest asset has become my weakness, because over the years it's forced me to get along with God. It's forced me to lift up my little cup and say, Lord, unless you fill my cup, I have nothing. And when you're self-sufficient, who needs God? Because I'll do it, Lord.

I've been trained to do it, and I know how to do it, and I've got the personality to do it. Jacob, all alone one night, going back to face his brother, who has threatened his life, and a divine visitation, divine intervention. He was changed and transformed as God wrestled with him and subdued him, changed his nature and his character.

No longer will he be called Jacob, a deceiver, a conniver, but a prince, again from barrenness to strength. And you can go on all the way through the Word of God. Joshua, the same thing.

There he is. He's taken over command after Moses dies, and he's out facing his first major obstacle. Jericho, out in the field there, no doubt looking at the size of that place and thinking, God, how on earth? And all of a sudden, what? Divine intervention.

The angel of the Lord appears, and he had a meeting place with God. Isaiah went into the house of God one day, had a meeting place with God. I saw the Lord high and lifted up.

I heard him speak, who shall we send? I said, Lord, I'll go. First of all, it was cleansing. The seraphim took the coal, placed it on his lips.

Abraham, the Bible says, the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham. The 120 in the upper room, again, suddenly it was the outpouring of the Spirit of God and those fishermen. Oh, not Sanhedrin, not, you know, Pharisees with all the scriptures they'd memorize, dangling, you know, like a fly fisherman with his corks, you know.

You would have thought God would have reached into the life of one of those, but Paul says, listen, not many mighty men. God takes the foolish things, the weak things, the base things. You see, God's biggest problem is, how do I get the glory? God's biggest problem.

And while he will share everything with us, he says, my glory I will not share with any man. He'll share his love, his patience, his kindness, all those other things with us. But my glory, I don't give to any man.

And how does God get the glory? By taking something that is despised, and worthless, and insignificant, and weak. And people look and say, that's got to be God. I went to school with that guy.

He was the most unlikely to succeed in our whole class. And now look at him. Something's happened to him.

The third one is divine conception. Verse 3, the angel Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, behold, you are barren, and are born no children, but you shall conceive. See, God knows where you are.

I don't know where you are. God does. Here is a nation of a million plus people, and God knows exactly what's going on in each home, each heart, each situation, each circumstance.

Many times we feel, you know, the pastor doesn't see me, and this person doesn't recognize me, and so on. Here I am, just sitting there. But God knows where you are, and he knows what's going on.

I know you're barren, he says. I've been watching you. You're not just a number to me.

Your name is inscribed on the palm of my hand. When we think we're all alone and nobody cares, he cares. He calls his own sheep by name, but not by number.

And he says, I know all about you. I know what you're going through. I know the tears you've shed in the secret place, longing to hold a child, longing to bring forth life, longing to be fruitful.

I know all about that. And you shall conceive. You see, God can open the womb whenever he wants.

And sometimes we have to wait, because there are dealings that God has to do in our life. Because the Bible says, an inheritance gained hurriedly in the beginning will not be blessed in the end. And we have a classic case of that with the prodigal.

He seemingly wasn't mature enough to handle what he was given. You see, the anointing is like money. You give a million dollars to a six-year-old and you can get a million dollars worth of bubble gum.

He's not going to invest it. He's not going to buy houses and lands or invest it in some way and make it grow. He's going to blow it, so you don't give him that.

Yeah, blow it literally. Some of you are more awake than I am. And so God waits a time, doesn't he? See, if he'd have given it to Moses at the age of 40, supposing his brethren understood, Moses was full of it.

He thought he was the cat's whiskers. He thought, you know, surely everybody sees in me the potential of being a great leader. After all, you know, I'm an Israelite, but I've been trained up here in the ways of Egypt, and I speak the language, and I know the culture, and I know, you know, I've got connections.

I'm a son of Pharaoh's daughter. I know all the, you know, I'm the one. See, God knows when.

You shall conceive. Conception is a very personal thing, very private thing. In the years that I pastored, I've gone to the hospital numerous times, especially in New Zealand, and I'm sure it's this way here in this country, where you have sort of socialized medicine.

In America, you know, if you want to do visitation in the hospital, you need to follow the ambulance, you know. There's no sooner there's a baby arrived, than you're back home. If you can make it in half a day, good, you know, but never more than a day, very seldom overnight.

Pastors' nightmare, if you want to get there, and at least show some sort of compassion. But in New Zealand, at least, it used to be at least a week, they would keep you in hospital. If you were tired, or they didn't think you were quite ready, ten days, all at government expense.

And I've gone to the hospital numerous times, more times than I can ever imagine. Climbed up the stairs there, of Christ Church Women's Hospital, given the name, and been shown where the ward is, and gone in, and admired that beautiful little baby, a boy, a little boy, a girl, stood around the bed with the parents, maybe other siblings. Many times, taking that child, and just offering it back to God, there and then, in the room, and saying, God, thank you for a safe delivery.

That all the faculties are there, and the hands, and the toes, and I've done that many, many, many, many times. Then maybe a month later, I've stood on the platform like this, with some of the other brethren, and we've formally held that child, and presented it back to God, and had the parents there, and grandparents, and so on. But you know, I've never been there when conception took place.

Oh, I'm not trying to be crude. You see, it's a personal thing, isn't it? Oh, I've admired the babies, I've admired what they've given birth to, but I've never been there during conception. You see, there are certain prerequisites for conception, and I think what we see in the natural, we see in the spiritual, I think there is a parallel, many times the Bible says, first the natural, then the spiritual, and the first thing is a total commitment.

Total commitment. And I know we're not supposed to talk about marriage, because we have a Bible school here, but those things, so. But no doubt the day will come, when one of these young men will propose to, maybe one of these young girls, I don't know, but one, some young girl.

Can you imagine if he gets down on his knee there, in some fancy restaurant, and he says, darling, I want to ask you a question. Would you marry me? She said, I'd love to. And he says, well, I'm going to make the weekends available, so I can be with you.

But you know, Monday is the night I spend with Mary, and Tuesday's night I spend with Alice, and Wednesday's night I spend with Susan. I don't think so. Total commitment or nothing.

Again, like Ruth. Ruth clung to Naomi, and says, listen, don't try and turn me back. I'm going with you, because where you go, I go.

Where you're going to live, I'm going to live. Again, your people are going to be my people. Your God is going to be my God.

Where you die, I'm going to die. Total, radical commitment. You see, God doesn't go around sort of getting people in trouble, was the old expression, whatever the new one is.

Doesn't go around fathering a bunch of sort of bastard ministries. He looks again, as we heard this morning, for men and women that will commit their will, put their hand to the plow, and say, God, from this day on, I'm going to follow you. From this day on, all that I have, and all that I am, belongs to you.

I commit myself to the cause of God. I commit myself to you, Lord. I'm going to marry in to you, and to your purposes.

And there's a cost, isn't there, forsaking all others. The second thing is time alone. Conception doesn't take place in public.

It's a private thing. Again, it's when you're alone, you and your beloved. You see, most of us never get alone with God.

Most of us never saw a draw aside from all the activities, from the hustle and the bustle, to really spend time with Him. Again, that secret place. As my father got older, when he got into his late 70s and 80s, he told me, he said, David, he said, I've been getting mail lately from seminary students, and young men saying, Brother Ravenhill, could I come and see you? I know you're getting up in age, and I'd love it if you could pray for me, and impart your mantle to me.

He said, I'd love to have your mantle, Brother Ravenhill. Would it be all right for me to stop by? I'm going to be passing through your part of the, you know, nation, or whatever, and you know, just would love you to just lay hands on me. My father, with sort of a twinkle in his eye, he said, you know, David, everybody wants my mantle, nobody wants my sackcloth and ashes.

But you see, that's the secret place that the mantle comes from. Getting along, pouring out before God, weeping, or whatever it takes, groaning, travailing, in the secret place. Go into the closet, shut the door.

Shut the door, as opposed to the Pharisees who prayed to be seen of men. And Jesus said, you've got your reward. See, it deals with motivation, doesn't it? Oh Lord, if I can do it publicly, you know, I'd love a public ministry.

Begins in the private, it begins alone. Time alone with the one that you love. The third thing is a time of exposure.

There has to be nakedness. You can't go around, you know, trying to be something you're not. You've got to expose yourself.

Transparency, honesty, that's where it begins. God, I don't really have, even though I go to this church, I don't really have that burden for the nation. I don't really have, Lord, an understanding of revival.

It doesn't really sort of interest me. I know everybody talks about it, but Lord, I'm being honest. I'm going to shed my religious, you know, garb, so to speak.

Lord, I put up my hands. I look fine. Everybody, I'm going to be honest.

I'm going to be transparent. We've got to get transparent. We've got to be honest before God, don't we? We've got to strip away all the show and all the pretense.

And just as in the natural, God sees us just the way we are. Oh, we don't cover ourselves. These days, we have certain cuts and certain clothes that cover a multitude of sins.

But we do it spiritually, don't we? But your beloved knows what you like, and the heavenly beloved knows what you like, too. All things are naked and bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. And the sooner we face the reality of who we are, Lord, I don't have a burden.

I don't do this, and the sooner we're going to concede. And then the final thing, of course, is that time of intimacy, where you enter into the presence of God, and it's heart-to-heart and face-to-face, and there's a joining, where you go beyond the veil, just as in the natural, there is a veil that has to be penetrated in order to have proper union in a marriage. So in the spiritual realm, there is a veil that we've got to go beyond, from the outer court right into the very presence of God.

We've got to have a meeting place with God. We've got to find ourselves again in that place along with Him. It's there where He births vision.

It's there where the seed of God is imparted to us, the sperm of God. That's what the Bible calls it, the Word of God. Where God births again something, maybe for a nation, maybe for a city, maybe some particular calling for an orphanage, or whatever it may be, I don't know.

But there, as we're all alone with God, waiting on God, and we come face to face, God begins to speak, and He begins to make known to us. Elijah didn't just strut on the stage and announce to Ahab, listen, it's not going to rain for a while. He says, no, the Lord God before whom I stand.

Behind the scenes, he was alone with God, and we've got to get alone with God. That's where conception takes place. Number four is divine gestation.

After conception takes place, there is the gestation period. It can be long. The earth would be overflowing, if you could conceive and give birth at the end of the week.

But it's that nine months that you never think is going to end, and the spiritual is like that, only it's longer, most of the time. Then there's the initial excitement, maybe that you've conceived, you know, and you let everybody know the tests are positive, and you know, call up the relatives, and blah, blah, blah. Maybe you call your husband at work.

You've just got back from the doctor, and you're all thrilled, and then all of a sudden, the months begin, and people look, you know, how far along are you? Oh, you look a lot more. Every woman loves that. But you know, something has been birthed within you, and something begins to stir within you, and you're not, you know, you're experiencing things that you've never experienced before, and changes are taking place, and your interests begin to change, don't they? You know, all of a sudden in the natural, women are talking now about maternity clothes, and they've never talked about that, and they're looking at borders to put up in the baby's room, and you know, they get interested in knitting little, you know, suits, and all of a sudden, I mean, all sorts of different things, and then they get crazy urges, and you know, I mean, all those funny things that happen, they happen in the spiritual.

All of a sudden, you get interested in certain things, certain types of ministries, and certain types of programs, so on and so forth, and something is beginning to work inside you, and changes are beginning to take place, and you're beginning to change, and then you begin to carry a burden, a heavy burden. And while I've never been there, my wife has been there. Oh, and the backache and everything else, you know, I mean, the burden, but spiritually there's a burden that comes, a burden for the nation, a burden for the youth, a burden for evangelism, a burden for this, burden for that, gestation, and God is beginning to put something together inside you.

You see, conception took place for Joseph. We heard about him tonight. Conception took place one night, in the middle of the night.

He had some dreams, and oh, they were exciting. After all, he was Daddy's special favorite, and the rest of the family knew it, didn't especially appreciate it. He got the favors, you know, the fancy coat, and well, oh, he had a dream, you know, vengeance is mine, I will repay, said the Lord, you know.

Joseph, they're all going to fall down. You're going to be the top dog. I mean, you know, I'm going to elevate you.

I'm going to raise you up, Joseph. And oh, you know, he bounded down to breakfast that morning, convinced that after he blabbed out his dream, that everybody get off their stools or whatever, and fall at his feet. And you know, Joseph, you see, that was just conception.

Thirteen years of gestation. That's a long one. Thirteen years of preparation, inions, rejection, accusations, and finally the baby was born.

But God had done a work in him. Moses, 40 years of gestation. How many would like that one? Supposing his brethren understood.

You see, I believe God did put a burden in him, as a young man, but he thought it was God's timing. God was doing something, 40 years later, the baby's born, so to speak. Jesus, we heard about this morning, 30 years, never did anything.

Oh, was it last night? Yesterday morning. No miracle, no raising of the dead, no great message, and yet the Father said, this is my beloved Son. It was a timing, in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son.

And in the fullness of time, God still sends forth His Son, and His daughters. And He knows the time. I don't understand why we've got 400 years of silence, between all the Old Testament prophets, and you know, until the child is born, and so on.

It doesn't make sense. If I'd have been God, I'd have, you know, Lord, they need a Messiah now. But God knows.

And so again, you know, you've got all these years and years of preparation, Joshua, 40 years of preparation, 40 years of being a servant, 40 years of serving the man of God. God was watching him. When Moses left the house of God, the presence of God, the Bible says, Joshua lingered.

God says, that's the sort of man I like, somebody that likes to linger in my presence. That's the sort of man I like, a man that's a servant. And all the qualities that you see in Joseph's life.

And God was sort of, yep, he's doing great. Not going to be too long now, another 20 years, you know. And I'm going to take your, I'm going to take Moses and David, all those years after God had called him, where he's under Saul, gestation.

And so I believe the greater the call of God, the greater the time of gestation. Number five, divine restrictions. Verse four, now therefore, you're going to conceive, now therefore, be careful not to drink wine, a strong drink, or eat any unclean thing.

Be careful. You're carrying something. You're going to be holding a priceless vessel, a ministry, a calling, a gifting.

Be careful. See one of the things about pregnancy is, that you can abort that child. I'm not talking about going to a doctor and aborting it.

I'm talking about just because of neglect or abuse. I remember way back, because she's about my age, Princess Anne, when back in those days she was an avid equestrian, you know, rider, loved horses, possibly still does. And I remember when she got pregnant, and the doctor says, no more riding.

Why? Because what you're carrying is far more priceless than any horse. You've got to be careful. You could fall off that horse and lose royalty.

So be careful. And we have to be very careful, don't we? You see, God will put on us restrictions. I used to carry around in my Bible a little tract that says, others may, you cannot.

It was a famous tract many years ago. Lord, why do others do what they do? That doesn't matter. What is that to be? Follow thou me.

Paul says, all things are expedient, but they're not, all things are, uh, what was the word? But they're not expedient. All things are lawful, but they're not expedient. Paul says, listen, there's lots of things I can do, legally do, but they're not expedient.

Be careful. And God comes time after time. First of all, in verse 4, verse 7, Behold you shall conceive and give birth to a son.

You shall not drink wine, a strong drink, or eat any unclean thing. Verse 13, The angel Lord said to Manoah, let the woman pay attention to all that I've said. She shall not eat anything that comes from the vine, or drink wine, or strong drink, or any unclean thing.

Let her observe all that I've commanded. Three times God says, listen, you're under restraint now. I'm putting restrictions on you.

You can't do what others do. If you're going to bring forth a vessel, I'm going to confine, I'm going to restrict, I'm going to put disciplines on your life. We don't like discipline, do we? Oh, we want to be free, and I don't want to pray.

I don't want to see God. I don't, you know. And God will say, listen, if you're going to be the man of God, I want you to be.

If you're going to be the woman of God, I want you to be. It's going to be restraints. I remember when God clearly spoke to me, 25, 30 years ago, I suppose, not to go to another movie.

I'd never imposed it on my family, on my kids. Obviously they try and be selective as to what they go to, but restrictions. You can't, others can.

You can't drink wine, others can. You can't have strong drink, others can. You can't eat anything that comes from the vine, others can.

But not you. Why was that? Because she was going to give birth to a Nazirite. God makes it very clear.

Listen, what you're carrying in your womb, verse 5, is going to be a Nazirite to God. Again, the same thing in verse 7. He's going to be a Nazirite. You see, she was going to give birth to a Nazirite, but she had to become a Nazirite.

We heard again that this morning. You can't separate ministry as a sort of a calling from your own character and who you are. It has to be one and the same.

You can't preach holiness unless you live holy. You can't talk about integrity unless you're a man of integrity. You can't talk about evangelism unless you have a passion for souls.

She is going to give birth to a ministry, but she has to become what she's giving birth to. She has to model what she's giving birth to. She's going to give birth to a Nazirite.

Here's this little boy, three or four or five years of age. He's beginning to talk a little bit, and here she is, you know, scoffing down the grapes and drinking the wine, and mommy can I have some of that? No. Please mommy, no.

Why? Because you're a Nazirite. Well why can you have it? I can't. So she had to model what she was going to raise up, and our lives have to reflect what God has called us to do.

Time to go around the nation talking about intercession, unless you spend time alone with God, or prayer, or whatever it is. See, you've got to be the very thing that you're going to give birth to, and in order for that to happen, many times there are restrictions that God will impose upon you. Number six, divine possession.

What God births, God owns. He says again in verse five, behold you shall conceive, give birth to a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb.

We go on in verse seven, behold you shall conceive and give birth to a son. You shall not drink wine, or strong drink, or any unclean thing, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death. The Nazirite law was an interesting law.

It was not restricted to any tribe, as was the priesthood. You had to be a Levite, then you had to be of the house of Aaron, then you had to be a son of Aaron, then you had to be physically fit in order to be a priest. But anybody could be a Nazirite, male or female, any tribe, and you could choose the length of time you wanted to be a Nazirite.

You could be a Nazirite for a week, a month, two months, a year, two years, four years, five years, ten years, whatever. And at the end of your completion, then you went to the priest, and you know it was over, you'd fulfilled your vow. But you see when God calls a Nazirite, it's from the womb to the day of death.

You're mine, I have ownership of you. Well Lord, I think I'll try the ministry. You know, if it doesn't work out, I can always go back to business.

You know, I'll be a missionary for, you know, a couple of years, and you know, I'll try pastoring, and well Lord, you know, I can always fall back on. So you know, I'll give you the next year or so, and if it pans out good, fine. If it doesn't, you know, fingers, no, you see, total commitment.

From the day God births that thing within you, it's His. To the day it dies. Belongs to God.

He created it. He gave it. It's His.

And you can't play around with it. You can't, again, put your own sort of conditions on it. God is the one that does that.

And so we're accountable to God for what God gives us. Number seven, divine maturation. Finally the child is born.

Sorry, before the child is born, let me just back up a moment, but divine maturation. Manoah comes before God, and he prays, and he said, Lord, let the man of God return. The man that spoke to us.

The man that spoke to my wife. This divine visitation. Lord, I need this man of God back.

He didn't realize it was an angel at that particular stage, but he said, God, I need to hear from your servant again. So in verse 8, and Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, O Lord, please let the man of God whom thou has sent us come again, that he may teach us what to do for the boy who is to be born. He goes on, verse 12, and Manoah said, When your words come to pass, he's talking now to the angel, Lord.

When your words come to pass, what shall be the boy's mode of life and his vocation? What an interesting scripture. Let me read you a couple of translations. Moffat's translation, how are we to train the boy? Knox's translation, how is the boy to be nurtured? The Berkeley translation, show us his life and his activities.

The Septuagint, how is he to be educated? You see, most of us get so excited at the birth of the baby. Finally, you know, I've been asked to speak. I've been asked to sing.

I've been asked to play. I've been asked to go on a missions trip. You know, finally, you know, they've, you know, the baby's born.

You know, I've waited so long to be a part of this group, you know, and we get so excited about the baby. We run around, you know, talking about the baby, and showing the baby off, and you know. How many of us say, Lord, what does this thing look like when it reaches maturity? Lord, how do I raise? How do I educate? How do I further this priceless gift that you've given to me? Lord, where does it go from here? Lord, when it's educated, when it's trained, when we nurture this child, Lord, teach us.

Oh, most of us are too excited just to do anything like that. Finally, you know, I've been recognized. I've got my calling, my ministry.

It's taken years, but now Manoa could have gone to the neighbors, said to the lady next door that's got a dozen kids running around, listen, would you mind coming over some afternoon, and let my wife and I just talk to you, and you know, give us some pointers on, you know, how to look after this baby. You know, it's going to be due pretty soon. You know, this is our first one, and we're not quite sure what to do, and you know.

You see, one of the tragedies that I've seen, and I've experienced a few sort of minor, if you like, moves of God over the years, and seen different movements come and go, but very seldom do they get together and say, Lord, where is this thing really going, and what does it look like, what is your purpose? We heard about it tonight a little bit, the church being the church. Oh, we're not just flopping around like fish, and enjoying, you know, the presence of God, and getting goosebumps, and this feels good, and I can't wait till the next conference. No, what does it look like when it matures? What's the purpose for all this? Why is God touching us? Why is God visiting us? You know, what do we do with it? Lord, you're obviously, there's a baby beginning to form here.

In our congregation, we've been barren for years, and something's happening now, the move of God. People are getting touched, and so on, but nobody ever takes time to get together with the leaders, and the elders, and say, listen, let's pray. God's moving, but listen, we've got to be careful.

How do we carry this thing to maturity? Where does it go from here? I was part of a very brief, sovereign visitation of God, many years ago, down in the South Pacific islands of Tonga, with Youth for the Mission. We were on a little island, way out in the middle of nowhere. Most of Tonga's little islands, anyway, but I mean, this island, you could walk around in less than an hour.

That's how small it was, and there was an all-girls school, and a typical YWAM faux pas. They sent the boys team, but we got there after many, many hours. It was supposed to be a six-hour journey, by an open sort of trading vessel.

Took us 32 hours, ran into a storm. It was just unbelievable, and got there, and then we had torrential rain for three or four days, and we were holed up in this house, just had mats on the floor, no furniture or anything. We had our lilos we slept on, and it was a girls Methodist school compound, and all we could do is pray and seek God.

Couldn't do the typical YWAM thing in those days, go out and knock on doors. And God gave us a word that God was going to bring the people to us, and one afternoon the clouds parted, and the sun came out, and before you knew it, all these girls surrounded all these guys. And that afternoon there were groups of

six and eight, twelve girls sitting on the grass with two guys, and we were sharing the word.

But that night, one of the men asked the director of the school, the principal's name was Ulfa, means love in Tongan, did we have a meeting with the girls? It was a boarding school. And at the end of his meeting, he shared his testimony, and then he said for some reason, he felt to raise his hand and said, receive the Holy Ghost. And he said, a wind just came right through, just like a rushing mighty wind, and people fell off their chairs, started weeping, kids started prophesying.

They didn't even know what prophecy was. And we were having a meeting with some of the teachers, and after about two hours, a couple of these guys came in. You could see a beam on the face, something had happened, and the headmistress said, you know, I need to go and make sure the kids are, you know, getting ready for the evening.

And she disappeared. She came back running about 20 minutes later, and she said, what on earth has happened? She said, I went into one of the dormitories, and she said, there the girls have got their hands up, and they're just weeping. And a little girl met me at the door, and she said, Ulfa, Ulfa, if you don't cry out, the rocks will cry out.

Methodist girls. And for about three days after that, they would stand up, and it would take them 10 minutes sometimes to compose themselves. And the tears flowed, and they would ask the teachers for forgiveness, because they'd cheated, because they'd been smoking, because they'd been stealing bananas off the plantation, and so on.

And Ulfa said to us, the headmistress, she said, I've been in the school something like three years. This is the first time after a week or so, first time I've seen ripe bananas on that, those plantations. But you know, we were young.

We didn't know what to do with it. God gave us a wonderful baby. A week later, we got on another boat and went to another island.

See, we've got to learn, Lord, now that I've got this, what does it look like? How do I educate? How do I train? How do I nurture? Lord, where do we go from here? What's the whole purpose of this wonderful outpouring of the Spirit of God? Lord, what is the end result? Is it for my sake, just so I feel good? We've got to be wise master builders, don't we? I had a friend who was one of my elders in the last church that I had, before I launched out in ministry. And we had a school, and he was one of the teachers in the high school, and then we cancelled the school, and we couldn't take him on financially, nor did we feel he was the right one. And so he was offered a position at another church, where there was a real move of the Spirit.

Three pastors from three denominations had gone to Toronto, come back, touched in a very powerful way. They were drunk, and people poured in from all over the northwest in America. But you know, it never matured.

I finally told my congregation, I don't want you going, because they kept it in that infancy. And this man that was one of my elders, became the worship leader. In fact, he was a worship leader for me for a while.

And he adopted a baby, and it's about a year later, and he sent me a card, or his wife did, and he had a letter inside it. And he said, you know, things are going so well here, blah, blah, blah. You know, we've adopted a baby, a little picture, and so on.

He said, you know, one of my favorite songs, and he wrote out the words. Let me read them to you. Jump into the river, and drink till you sink.

It's better where it's wetter, and the fish wear sweaters. See, that's getting heady on the new wine. There's no sense to it.

You're casting off all restraint, freedom for freedom's sake. You know, we're going to do away with all the trimmings of hymns, and all, you know. We're just going to be free now.

Jump into the river, and drink like a fish. It's better where it's wetter, and the fish wear sweaters. Wasn't too long after that, I got a flyer in the mail.

I still have it in my file. These were the topics. How to blow your nose, while having the jerks.

How to drive while drunk. More fun than you can imagine, with these spiritual drunks for Jesus. I mean, these are literally the topics they had.

Or they had a baby. It's still a baby, as far as I know. It may have died.

There was no wisdom. There was no maturity. There's no coming before God, and say, God you've given us a visitation.

Where does it go from here? How do we mature it? What's your purpose behind this? There's one thing to have fruit. The Bible says, there's got to be much fruit, and then it goes from much fruit, to much, to fruit that remains. I've appointed you that you bear fruit, then much fruit, then fruit that remains.

I want fruit that remains, don't you? I want to be part of something in these last days, that isn't just a little fizzle here, and you know, but something that matures, and something that swells, and something that really does become the church, as we heard about tonight. That advances the cause of God's kingdom, with the sacrifice involved, and other things. And it's not just, you know, splashing around in the waters, and enjoying the fun and games, if you like, of the things of the Spirit.

We've got to learn to mature. Lord, what does it look like? Worship. Thank God for the level of maturity.

But I'm in churches, and they never get out of the outer court. Volume, happy clappy, you know, everybody gets stirred. The shofars blow, and people drool, you know, like Pavlov's dog, you know.

It's amazing, isn't it? As though somehow that trumpet blast has got some sort of special anointing, because it comes from a, doesn't even come from a ram's horn. Unfortunately, somebody's made a fortune conning the body of Christ. The Bible says the shofar was a ram's horn, not some South African, whatever it was.

Nothing to do with South Africa. Yeah, and anyway, the trumpet that blew the warfare signal, was a silver trumpet in the Old Testament. Make silver trumpets to sound the alarm of war.

But it's amazing, isn't it, how we react emotionally, and everything else, and we just have these happy clappy songs, you know. And there's a place for that. But we don't really mature in to the presence of God, where the instruments begin to prophesy.

What does it mean to prophesy on an instrument? It means to discern the mood of the Spirit. And all of a sudden, we can go into a militant mood, because there is a man who is openly listening to the Spirit of God, and he changes the mood, again, by prophesying on the instrument. You know, something that's got some militancy, and all of a sudden, we're... See, there's two types of worship.

My friend, Des Evans, who's a great Welsh preacher in Dallas. We are honored to have him. He says, there's feminine worship and masculine worship.

And we've got to discern, not that one's right, and the other's wrong. There are moods. There are times of love-making, of contemplation, worship, and just adoration.

But there's times when we make declarations, like this last song. And we declare His majesty, and His power, and the power of the blood. And the powers of darkness, again, shake and tremble.

That two-edged sword in our hand, whereby we bind nobles and fetters with chains. We had an Awake America crusade in Denver, Colorado, one of the most successful of all the Awake Americas. And in the middle of it, in the middle of worship, we were led to go into a time of, sort of, militant warfare.

And we focus, just like a laser, on the demonic strongholds over Denver. Denver is known as a New Age center, apart from Colorado Springs now, that has become the spiritual Mecca. But Denver itself, and much of Colorado, because of the rugged mountains, and you know, people go there, and there's drugs and everything else.

And we began to declare the name of Jesus. And we did something that Ed Miller taught many years ago, just a sort of a warfare clap, where we had about 6,000 people, just one beat. And we just said, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

And it was electrifying, as you had you know, 6,000, 8,000, whatever it was, people doing that. But we didn't just do it. We focused, and we addressed it, just like a, you know, a concentration of light.

And at the end of that period, there were some men that came up, ministers, and one of them said, I had a vision. And he said, I saw the state of Colorado covered with this rebar, you know, the steel reinforcing that you put in concrete, in roads, and so on. And he said, all of a sudden, when we began to do that, he said, that rebar broke.

And it just was like a net that was breaking. And somebody else had a similar vision. And we went back three times, maybe four times, I've been back, where they've continued on with their own Awake Americas, and brought different people in, because something was happening in that city.

See, we've got to mature. We've got to understand and discern. And we can do things, if we're, you know, if we're not very smart, that grieve, again, the Holy Spirit.

I remember one day, we had a lady in New Zealand, and at the end of the meeting, there was a tremendous sense of God's presence, you know, that, the heaviness of God's presence, the kabod, the weight, the glory of God had just sort of settled. And it was a time when we could have all just sort of fallen off on our faces. And she made the mistake of saying, could somebody come up and just lead us? And one of our young men got up, and all of a sudden, we were dancing.

And the whole atmosphere just instantly changed. The power of music. You see, I think in one sense, and this may not be the right interpretation, but I think it's an application, when God was trying to deal with Saul, and finally he sent an evil spirit, and I think it could be God's last chance for Saul, to show him what it's like.

That evil spirit bugged him and agitated him, almost like a spirit of conviction. And he realized, you know, the presence of God had withdrawn, and maybe that was God's final appeal to Saul. Listen, this is what it's going to be like, unless you repent.

This is what it's like without my presence. This is what it's like when you disobey. You open yourself, and I'm letting you experience the full fury of the enemy.

And what happened? He said, listen, we need somebody that can play an instrument. And David came. Young man, he had to obey.

He was under the king's authority. And he started playing, and all of a sudden, that spirit departed. And that may not be the interpretation, but I think there's an application there, that we can change the mood of what God is wanting to do, you see.

So we've got to reach maturity. The last thing, divine participation, very briefly. Verse 24, And the woman gave birth to a son, and named him Samson.

And the child grew, and the Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him. Notice, the child grew, and it was only after the child grew, matured, that God began to take this life and use it. And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him.

It was not Samson controlling the Spirit. It was the Spirit controlling Samson. You see, it's not us trying to control God for our own ends or our own purposes.

It's us becoming totally and completely available to God. So God can lead us, and God can guide us, and God can take us wherever He wants. And we don't take the glory for ourselves, to embellish our ministry, and to further our cause.

But rather, God has control. God working with them, the Bible says. That's what I want.

God working with them. What a difference that makes. What a difference when the Spirit of God comes, and where we have instruments, vessels, men and women, that know what it is to be controlled by the Spirit of God.

Where they are totally His, again, Nazarites. And He says, that's mine. I can do with that vessel whatever I want.

And we begin to participate again with the Living God. We know what it is to be led by the Spirit. You see, there is a process.

I think God allowed us to enter a realm tonight, to show us what He wants to do. And I don't think it's coincidental that now He's saying, listen, this is how you get there. If you're going to be one that's going to go through into that realm, and you're going to have longevity in the kingdom.

Paul Cain said to me many years ago, he said, David, few people survive the anointing. Few people survive the anointing. I want to survive the anointing.

I hope you do. And so God has to form us, mold us, fashion us, deal with motivations, strip us, in order to birth in us, what He wants. Let's close in prayer.

Father, we're conscious tonight that we've already stood on holy ground. That Lord, you've given us the privilege of coming in to your presence and standing before you. Lord, you've opened our eyes to what you want to do with us as a church, as a people.

And now Lord, we ask that you would raise up out of this congregation, bodies of believers, in which you can birth again your purposes. Lord, ones that will be able to endure again the gestation period. Ones that will know what it is to get alone with you, wait upon you.

When others are involved in other things, they'll go into that closet and shut the door. Father, raise up in this nation some Samson's that will turn the tide again, demonstrate to the world the very power of God, the might of God, that will pull down strongholds. Yet Lord, we think of the tragic ending of this man.

Lord, keep us. Keep us pure. Keep us holy.

Keep us dependent. Keep us, Lord, from the Delilers of this world. Lord, we don't want to lose our hair.

We don't want to lose our strength. So Lord, come and have your way. In Jesus name.

Amen.

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