

# A Call to Anguish

by David Wilkerson

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*David Wilkerson's sermon calls for a return to deep anguish in prayer and ministry as a response to the spiritual decline in the church and society.*

**Duration:** 56:01

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 1:4, Nehemiah 8:9, Daniel 9:5

**Topics:** "Spiritual Revival", "Brokenness And Restoration"

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## Description

This sermon is a powerful call to anguish, urging listeners to move beyond concern to a deep sense of inner pain and distress for the state of the church and society. It emphasizes the need for true passion for Christ to be born out of a baptism of anguish, leading to instant knowledge of God's voice and the authority to hold Him to His covenant promises. The speaker challenges the congregation to seek God's heart, be willing to be broken, and experience the lasting joy that comes from obedience and restoration.

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## Transcript

A call to anguish. Would you open your Bibles to the first chapter of Nehemiah, please? Nehemiah, the first chapter. And would you please just leave that open on your lap? We'll get to it in the course of my message tonight.

I would have a hard time preaching this if I had, I believe, my own flesh telling me that I preach too much of a heavy message. There have been times I've been to the Lord in past months saying, Lord, can't you give me a happy? But I can't. Now, God may be speaking to me.

This may not be for you. But it's a call to anguish. Lord, if you don't help me, I can't get through this.

I can't. Lord, I'm too old for games. Foolishness.

And I'm tired of rhetoric, meaningless rhetoric that never changes things. Lord, just help me. Folks, I'm tired of hearing about revival.

I'm tired of hearing about awakenings. The last day outpourings of the Holy Spirit. I've heard that rhetoric for 50 years.

Just rhetoric. No meaning whatsoever. I'm tired of hearing about people in the church who say they want their unsaved loved one saved.

I'm tired of hearing people say I'm concerned about my troubled marriage when it's just talk. Rhetoric. I don't want to hear any more talk about how immoral America has become.

How Godless our society, how corrupt our business. I'm tired of hearing about Islam taking control and Christians losing power. How dead the church has become because that too is rhetoric.

Meaningless. Away with all of our how-to conferences because they accomplish nothing. It's how to cope, how to build a bigger church, how to reach the lost, how to improve your people's skills, and how to impact the world in this computer time.

And I look at the whole religious scene today and all I see are the inventions and ministries of man and flesh. It's mostly powerless. It has no impact on the world.

And I see more of the world coming into the church and impacting the church rather than the church impacting the world. I see the music taking over the house of God. I see entertainment taking over the house of God.

An obsession with entertainment in God's house, a hatred of correction, and a hatred of reproof. Nobody wants to hear it anymore. Tell me now, how many churches have you visited recently? How many churches do you know where when you walk in the Holy Ghost is so strong that every one of your sins are brought up before your face? The loving grace of God.

When is the last time you've been to church where you've seen young people under such conviction because the people of God have been on their face? And there's such a concern and there's such an agony that young people are falling on their faces and calling on God because a spirit of conviction is called down from heaven upon them. How many churches have you been lately where you hear a word comes forth that so burns in your soul? You know it comes from heaven. You know it comes from the heart of God.

I hope you hear it here. Whatever happened to anguish in the house of God? Whatever happened to anguish in the ministry? It's a word you don't hear in this pampered age. You don't hear it.

Anguish means extreme pain and distress. The emotion so stirred that it becomes painful. Acute, deeply felt inner pain because of conditions about you in you or around you.

Anguish, deep pain, deep sorrow, agony of God's heart. We've held on to our religious rhetoric and our revival talk, but we've become so passive. Our so-called awakenings, our stirrings, last but a short time and when the short-lived revivings and awakenings come from the hand of God, they are so short-lived and in those times we promise God we'll never return to our passivity, that it's not long.

It's just weeks or months and we're back and this time we slip further back into passivity than when we started. I speak from experience and we say this time, God, you've touched me for life. I'll never be the same.

And it's like fireworks. A loud bang and a lot of noise and then it dies. All true passion is born out of anguish.

All true passion for Christ comes out of a baptism of anguish. You search the scripture and you'll find that when God determined to recover a ruined situation, he would seek out a praying man and he'd take him

down into the waters of anguish. He would share his own anguish for what God saw happening to his church and to his people and he would find a praying man and he would take that man and literally baptize him in anguish.

You find it in the book of Nehemiah. Jerusalem is in ruins. This is the center of God's interest on earth at the time.

This holy city and it's wasted and it's full of iniquity, mixed marriages with the heathen. They were enslaving their own people, making slaves out of the poor. The house of God was polluted with filth.

The high priest was in league with Tobiah, a heathen reprobate. And how is God going to deal with this? How is God going to restore the ruin? How does he do it? What does he do? You see, we face a similar situation except ours is many times worse. The time when men, according to prophecy of Jesus, acts worse and worse than that is happening.

A church that's defiled with pedophilia, child molestation, incest, adultery. A nation in a moral landslide that's inundated with pornographic filth that the whole world blushes at. And now out of Cannes Film Festival, according to the New York Times, there's a new movie about to hit the shores of the United States with 13, 14 year old kids having unspeakable kinds of sex with adults.

And they said at the Cannes Film Festival, it's the boast of Cannes Festival that we have not only pushed the envelope, we've gone over the edge. And America is now ripe for it. The ruin and moral chaos is corrupting the house of God also.

How else do you explain the multiplied numbers of Christians go home and watch HBO, a program I've never seen, I don't have television, but I read about it in the newspaper today in the New York Times called The Sopranos. This is a mafia bunch that kill and murder and maim, gratuitous sex, cheating, lying, mafia. And we have millions of Christians now in the United States getting together and talking about the next show and they're addicted to it.

Addicted. Some of you hearing me now, that's your favorite show. No laughing.

This is life and death. Did you come here tonight? Did you raise your hands and sing and shout and have a good time? And you know you've been watching this filth. And I believe in the love of God.

I've preached mercy, grace, and covenant of love. And I believe in preaching the goodness and long-suffering of Christ. But multitudes today are being saturated with your okay messages.

We've got people now that are turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. We've become like the children of Israel who said the right words. But here's what God said.

I've heard the words of this people. They have well said all that they've spoken, all that there was such a heart in them, that they would fear me and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever. He said, oh, you have the right words.

You sing the right songs, but your heart is not right. Nehemiah, verses one through three, the words of Nehemiah, the son of Hakaliah, that came to pass the month of Chislew in the 20th year I was in Shushan the palace, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came. He and certain men of Judah.

And I asked them concerning the Jews that escaped, which were left of the captivity and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and gates thereof are burned with fire.

It came to pass when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept and mourned certain days and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Here was the word. Here was a delegation from the ruined city of Jerusalem coming to Nehemiah.

It said, Jerusalem is broken down. The walls are down. There's ruin, nothing but ruin.

Now, these, I'm sure, were godly men. These were good men, but they had no concept of how God was going to deal with the situation, how he was going to bring about a recovery. They had no concept of what God was going to do.

All they could see was ruin and brokenness and despair and hopelessness. Verse 4, when I heard the words, I sat down and wept and mourned certain days and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. You see, God found a praying man, and he takes him down into the waters of baptism of anguish.

This man goes down into anguish. And in verse 6, I pray before thee now, day and night, confessing the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee, both I and my father have sinned. Now, folks, look at me.

Nehemiah was not a preacher. He was a career man. He was the king's cupbearer.

He was in comfort. He was in royalty. He had made, so to speak.

This was a praying man. And God found a man who would not just have a flash of emotion, not just some great sudden burst of concern and then let it die. He said, no, I broke down, and I wept, and I mourned, and I fasted, and then I began to pray night and day.

When I heard, I wept. Why didn't his brother, Nehemiah, why didn't these other men, who apparently were godly men because later Nehemiah was given the rule of the city, why didn't they have an answer? Why didn't God use them in restoration? Why didn't they have a word? Because there was no sign of anguish, no weeping, not a word of prayer. It's all ruined.

It's all they could see. Does it matter to you today? Does it matter to you at all that God's spiritual Jerusalem, the church, is now married to the world? That there's such a coldness sweeping the land? So many people I know that were my friends, and I see them go one by one, husbands and wives, into such passivity, going to churches where they can find smooth messages, no longer wanting to hear anything of wrath or of correction. Some of my closest friends, I see them falling by the wayside, and they cry as if nothing to you.

Closer than that, does it matter about the Jerusalem that's in our own hearts, the sign of ruin that's slowly draining spiritual power and passion, blind to lukewarmness, blind to the mixture that's creeping in? You see when spiritual blindness comes, very few recognize it. It's the last recognized thing that happens to a child of God. If I, as a pastor, knew you personally, and I was watching your life, and as one of the pastors of this church, I come to you and say, I love you, but I have to tell you the truth.

You're changing. You're not what you were. Something in the world has got in your heart.

I don't know if it's television. I don't know what it is that has your heart, but I see changes in you. I don't see the brokenness.

I don't see the compassion you had once for your family. I don't see concern for your unsaved loved ones. You're changing.

Little by little, something's happening to you. Would it bring you to your knees when the ruin that you are not even aware of is suddenly brought before your eyes? And to tell you the truth, I thank God for the anointing and the singing tonight. I thank God for the praises that came from so many sanctified hearts living in covenant with the Lord, but the truth of the matter is, in all honesty, there are numbers among us that are changing, and they don't know it.

You've lost your fight. You see, when you read the book of Joshua, it's almost a book of failure because they lost their heart. They lost the fight.

That's all the devil wants to do, is get the fight out of you and kill it. So you won't labor in prayer anymore. You won't weep before God anymore.

You can sit and watch television in your family go to hell. Let me ask you, is what I just said convicted you at all? Did you just let that go in one ear out the other? When a pastor tells you right now, hey, and I don't know who you are, but the Holy Ghost is speaking through me, you're changing. Little by little, you're losing the love of God, the love of Christ.

Little by little, these things are making inroads. Folks, why do you think your pastors cry out against television? Do you think we get any pleasure out of the flesh? There's no pleasure in somebody coming and saying, I heard your message and I threw away my television. That doesn't give me any pleasure.

It doesn't give any pastor pleasure. We have given it to him because we watch for your soul. These things, I don't know where it is on the job, things we listen to, these things that creep in, and suddenly this Jerusalem, the walls go down, and ruins sets in.

Does it really matter to you that your unsaved loved ones are dying and we're getting closer and closer to the end? Does it really concern you they could die and go to hell, even though you're a lover of Christ? Where's the anguish? Where are the tears? Where's the mourning? Where's the fasting? How many of you fast? Many of you pray broken before the Lord? I'm talking about the body of Jesus Christ in general. Where's the getting up in the middle of the night? You see, he said, night and day, I began to pray. Where's the confessing of your sins and of your children confessing your children's sins before the Lord, or your mate's sin before God, because this is exactly what Nehemiah does.

He confesses his sins and the sins of all the people. And then he says, we have sinned. I have sinned.

And then he said, we have sinned. See, when Nehemiah heard of the ruin and destruction, he never asked why. Why can a holy just God allow his city to go to ruin? Why were so many dispersed? Why were so many killed and murdered? He didn't ask the question that we're asking America today.

Why did God allow the towers to fall and over 2,000 people died in the affair, in the crash? How could a loving God Folks, I share what Pastor Carter said today. The holy anger that arises in my heart when I

hear preachers on television or on radio or hear that they've said on television, oh, God had nothing to do with it. God had nothing to do with it.

Don't put it on God. Why don't you go to Daniel 9, and I want to once and for all tell you that this was God allowing America to be wakened. God didn't do it.

He didn't stop the plans of the enemy because he had a greater purpose, because it was love for America that was about to slip into everlasting hell. I'm going to lower my voice so you won't think I'm angry. Daniel 9, verse 5, beginning to read, we have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly.

Can you say that about America? And we have rebelled even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments. Neither have we hearkened to the servants of the prophets which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and all the people of the land. In other words, the government has been worn by righteous men.

Oh, Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces as at this day. Men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all Israel that are near, that are far off, through all the countries whether thou hast driven them because of their trespass, or they have trespassed against thee. Oh, Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

Why? Because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belongeth mercies, forgiveness, though we've rebelled against him. Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God to walk in his laws, which is set before us by his servants, the prophets.

They, all Israel, have transgressed the law even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice. Therefore, the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses, the law of Moses, the servant of God, because we have sinned against him, and he hath confirmed his words which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil. For under the whole heaven hath not been done, has been done upon Jerusalem.

Verse 14, Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us. For the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth, for we what obey not his voice. Now let me get back to my message.

There's a great difference between anguish and concern. My husband's dealing with me about this. Concern is something that you, that begets to interest you.

You take an interest in a project, or a cause, or a concern, or a need, something that gets a hold of your attention, and usually it comes through some emotional stimulus. You know, you can hear, like we heard last Sunday from South Africa, and all of the hundreds of thousands dying with AIDS, and the children, and you can hear what we heard from Sister Hulda Bontane this afternoon, of the thousands upon thousands of children dying in Calcutta and India. You can get all stirred up about it, and you can get emotional, and you get very concerned, but folks, there's a difference between concern and anguish, because you see, you can tie yourself to a cause, you can get excited about it, there's some project, you can talk it up, you go public with it, you can advertise it, you can support it, organize it, put a lot of effort into it.

I'm going to tell you something I've learned over all my years, 50 years of preaching, if it is not born in anguish, if it has not been born by the Holy Spirit, where when you saw and heard of the ruin, that drove you to your knees, took you down into a baptism of anguish, where you began to pray and seek God. Folks, this church was born in anguish, six months of anguish, tears, a little country town in Pennsylvania, where a pastor of a small church cried out, oh God, I'm dry and I'm empty, and there's more to it than this, and if this is all the Holy Ghost is, I don't want it, in such a desperation. Weeks and weeks of calling on the name of the Lord, confessing my own deadness and dryness, and finally coming for street rallies here in the city, and walk in the streets, and then wind up on 42nd Street, and see them selling a kind of herald would kill you, say, I've got the good stuff, it'll kill you.

And I remember breaking down, and it didn't matter, the crowds going by, I sat on a fire hydrant tape on the side of a building and wept, and I was in anguish. I was in anguish, four blocks from here, on Broadway, weeping and crying and wailing. I wasn't looking for a ministry, I wasn't looking to build a church, I was feeling God's pain for a lost city.

The same agony I felt years before, when he started Teen Challenge, and I've never had anything that's been any worth to God, in my 50 years, that wasn't born in agony. Never, never. It's all been flesh otherwise.

It's flesh. And folks, I've been around the world again and listening to the cry of pastors, dead and empty, some treating their wives like animals. And here, I haven't prayed in months, I haven't prayed in six months, and I know that sermons won't do it.

I know that a new revelation won't do it, covenant won't do it. I know now, oh my God, do I know it? Until I'm in agony, until I have been anguished over it, I'm preaching sermons. Oh God, I'm preaching sermons.

Then I said, no, it's too late, I don't have that much time. And all our projects, all our ministries, everything we do, where are the Sunday school teachers that weep over kids they know are not hearing and they're going to hell? Oh, everywhere I go, somebody's got a project, somebody's got a plan or a dream, and that's all it is, it's an idea. They didn't come to me from a broken heart, they didn't come to me after hours of fasting and praying and mourning.

Not a broken heart, it's an idea. I'm sick of it. You see, a true prayer life begins at the place of anguish, a place where lifetime decisions are made.

You see, if you set your heart to pray, God's going to come and start sharing his heart with you. He's going to open up his heart, and I'll tell you, there's pain in his heart. But he sees, and so few to hear, he's going to show you the condition of his church, he's going to show you the condition of your own heart, and he's going to ask you a question.

What is it to you? What is it? And that anguished servant has to make a decision. Everyone hearing me now, you're going to have to make this decision. I have to make it.

You either get up from your anguished place, you walk out of the baptism waters of anguish, and you say, I can't handle this. I can barely make it as it is. I don't want it.

God, I have enough. I just want to be an ordinary Christian. I don't want to carry this kind of a burden.

I don't want to have to weep over my family anymore. I'm going to go take it by faith. See, you have to make a decision.

You're going to come, and he says, now, if you're going to bear my burden, if you're going to be an instrument of restoration, if you are expecting somebody else to be an instrument to win your family or to do this work, you're mistaken. I've burned your heart. I've given you my heart, and I've opened up my anguish to you, and I'm letting you feel it and share it, so that it will bring you to your knees, because it is there that I'll speak to you the word of direction, and that's what happened in Nehemiah.

He came eventually out of the waters of anguish with a clear word that nobody could reject. He brought the city and nation to its knees. You find that in Nehemiah, the eighth chapter.

You see, you either walk away and go back to your passivity and say, I'm just going to be an ordinary Christian, and there's no such thing, or your heart begins to cry out, oh God, your name is being blasphemed. The Holy Spirit's being mocked. The enemy is out trying to destroy the testimony of the Lord's faithfulness, and something has to be done.

You can't go unchallenged. Let's go back to these words. When I heard that Jerusalem was broken down, you see, if he believed this theory that the need represents the call, you know what he'd done? He said, gentlemen, if you'll just wait, I'll pack my bags.

Just give me a day or two. This is the challenge that's my meat. I love it.

Let's roll. Let's do it. No anguish, no fasting, no prayer, no brokenness.

Let's just do it. Nothing would have been done. The walls would have never been rebuilt.

Anything you try to do without this baptism of anguish is going to falter and fall. It's not going to work. Here's what a sister wrote to me this past week.

She said, Brother Dave, I'm so hungry for the Lord. I'm so tired of how-to meetings. It's all spiritual fluff.

I was told of a woman's conference that was going to be a great spiritual experience. So I went with a group of sisters. There were 15,000 women.

I was horrified the first night when they opened the conference with a comedy sketch. It went from bad to worse. We were hoodwinked by the leaders.

There was not a single prayer, not one mention of prayer. It was a farce. And I'm as empty as I've ever been.

The prophet Amos cried out to such woe to them that are easing Zion, eating, chanting their music. But they're not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. And in the original Hebrew root word, they are not agonizing in prayer over the ruin in Joseph or Israel.

They're not agonizing. They're not in anguish about the conditions. Comedy, yes.

Happy singing, yes. Eating, fellowship, good time, yes. Weeping, anguish, praying, fasting, no, no, no.

Do not have it. Folks, let me tell you something. Out of this baptism of anguish comes a marvelous thing that happens to those willing to submit to it.

A marvelous thing. It's the instant, prompt knowing of God's voice. Instant.

Now, see, if you don't have a history of prayer, if you don't have this willingness to share God's heart, you get it by asking him for it. He said, I'll give. I'm more willing to give you I've received.

This is something you ask. Oh, God, I want to step out now, and I want to know your heart. And when you begin to seek his face, you allow him to melt and break you.

You come into this communion with the Lord out of that experience. You see, God hasn't called us to live in anguish. This is the birth.

This is the womb of something God is stirring, God wanting to accomplish in bringing out of ruin, restoration in your family, whatever it may be. He'll bring you down into this baptism. Now, just like the baptism of waters, you come up, you come out, but you'll come out with this instant knowing of God's voice.

Because you see, Nehemiah, he'd been fasting, he'd been praying, he'd been mourning and left a mark on his countenance, and the king noticed that he was a bearer. And one day, he brings the wine to the king, and the king says, Why are you so down? Why your countenance? Nehemiah didn't have time to go and booze in his heart to the Lord. He didn't have time now to go and say, Give me three days to fast and pray.

No, he had to have an instant word. Why your sad countenance? Nehemiah said, I was very sore afraid. So I prayed to the God of heaven, and I said to the king.

In other words, instant prayer, instant direction, knowing God's voice. There are times you're not going to know what to do. You have no time to run to the closet.

You have to hear his voice. This is the way. Walk in it instant.

That is a glorious result of the baptism of anguish. The servant who willingly takes on the mantle of God's pain is the only servant who has the authority and the right to hold God to his covenant promises. We've preached covenant here, but only those who've known his heart and in those times have allowed God to bring healing, has allowed God to go down deep in the soul and say, Oh God, I can't do this on my own, but I'm not going to let my kids go to hell.

I'm not going to let my husband, my wife. Oh God, I'm not going to live in this death. I'm not going to live in this lukewarmness and this coldness anymore.

God, change me. And when you get desperate before God, you set your heart to seek him. Then you can hold God to his covenant promises.

Look at first chapter verses 8 and 9. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandest thy servant Moses saying, if you transgress, I will scatter you brought among the nations. Now he holds God to his covenant now, but if you turn unto me and keep my commandments and do them, though there were most of you cast out from the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence and bring them into this place that I've chosen to set my name there. He calls on the covenant made to Moses.

He said, here's what you promised God. And folks, when you allow God to lead you into this place beyond concern, beyond just fleeting emotion, you say, God, I'm going to set my heart. Then you have every right to hold God to every one of his covenant promises.

You see, and I'm going to close in just a minute. We have a nation, a church today full of diagnostic experts. Boy, just about anybody can tell you what's wrong with the church now.

And now they're coming out with statistics and polls. They can tell you how many heathens there are in China. They give you polls and charts, but not the slightest idea.

They have all these how-to books. Now you won't hear one word about anguish, tears, and brokenness. You won't hear that.

In my closing thoughts, I'm going to ask you, why did Nehemiah, of all God-fearing men that were left in Israel, why did God share his anguished heart with Nehemiah? Because he was a man of prayer. He was already in prayer. Now, I want to tell you something.

I believe in destiny. I believe that God chooses men. But God can choose a man, and he can abort it just like that.

Nehemiah could have said, look, I have more influence right here. I have the ear of the king. I need to stay right here.

And God, I'm sure, has. I'll agree with you that God will raise up somebody. No, he said, oh God, this is my burden.

Open your heart to me. I know now it's going to take more than preaching, more than a new revelation. There's going to be no renewal, no revival, no awakening until we're willing to let him once again break us.

I don't know why. I don't know if it's something that's coming. I don't know.

The other pastors have shared with you what they feel about some very, very troubling, difficult times just ahead. And it comes not only from the pulpit, it comes from politicians coming from all over the world. But I have to tell you that God's calling me personally to a baptism of anguish.

I don't know what it's all about right now, but I told God I will not. I'm supposed to go and pass conferences in May in Scotland and Wales and Ireland and then to Minsk and all over the world. I'm only going out two or three times a year, but I said, God, I'm not going anymore.

I won't take another meeting until I know your anguish for pastors. I can't go just because there's a need. I can't go just because I've wanted and accepted.

When I preach sometimes like this, everything gets so quiet and I get the feeling that, Lord, I want to make people happy. Folks, it's getting late and it's getting serious. Please don't tell me, don't tell me you're concerned.

Don't tell me that you want your unsaved loved ones saved when you're spending hours in front of internet or television. Come on. I don't know how to end this.

Lord, help me. I have a sense that though this may not be for the whole congregation, that he's speaking to some very deeply, speaking to your heart like he's speaking to mine. Maybe you don't need prayer along this line, but I beg of you, I plead with you, I need prayer.

Lord, I just have to pray. I don't know what else to do. I just, I've preached, Lord, what you put in my heart and I don't know how to end it.

You end it. You do what you want to do, Lord. You speak to us.

Lord, there's somebody to get this older and confess, I am not what I was. I'm not where I'm supposed to be. God, I don't have your heart or your burden.

I wanted it easy. I just want to be happy. But Lord, true joy comes.

True joy comes out of anguish. That's where the joy is when we see the results of our laying hold of your heart and then you give us direction and then we see the results that are lasting. We see a whole city come to repentance and then Nehemiah stands up and he says, now is the time to rejoice.

Let the joy of the Lord be your strength. But that joy came out of seeing the victory that came out of the anguish. Oh God, I'm not chastising this church.

I'm not trying to bring woe on anybody, but oh God, if you do it for anybody, do it for me. I want my heart broken again. Lord, I want you to take me into your heart and I want to feel the hurts and the needs of this people too.

So that when I stand in this pulpit, I preach your mind and your heart. Will you stand? Nehemiah, the eighth chapter, you can still come while I'm talking. They read in the book the law of God distinctly, gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading.

And the people says, they all said, amen. They lifted up their hands, they bowed their heads, they worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Now folks, this is the result.

Of this baptism of anguish. Now God's dealing with all the families of Israel. He's dealing with the princes, the leaders, and Ezra and Nehemiah have now gathered the people.

Ezra opened the book and the sight of the people. When he opened it, all the people stood up. They read the book of God distinctly, gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading.

And Nehemiah and Ezra, the priest, the scribe, and Levites that taught the people said unto all the people, this day is holy unto the Lord your God. Mourn not, weep not, for all the people wept when they heard the words of the Lord. He said to them, go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, send the poor.

So for this day is holy unto the Lord. Need to be sorry for the joy of the Lord is your strength. You see that's the result of taking on the heart of God.

The ultimate joy is seeing God fulfill his word and his covenant promises in your life. There's nothing of the flesh will give you joy. I don't care how much money, I don't care what kind of new house there is, absolutely nothing physical can give you joy.

It's only what is accomplished by the Holy Spirit when you obey him and take on his heart. It gives you the knowing of his voice, that instant knowledge, God saying this is the way, walk in it. And then the wonderful joy of seeing God answer your prayer, build the walls around your family, build the walls around your own heart, make you strong and impregnable against the enemy.

God that's what we desire. Would you lift your hands? Would you just tell him what's in your heart right now? Right out loud, just tell him what's in your heart. Tell him, there's a reason you came up here, tell him why.

Just tell him why, Lord, here's why I'm here. I want to hear everybody, just speak it out. Tell him why you're here.

Tell him why you're here. Tell him what you have to do. Tell him right now, Lord, forgive me.

Wherever you're at, all over this building, listen to me closely. All we can expect God to do is begin a work in you tonight, a very special work. Or even you go home tonight and say, Lord, I'm not going to lay my head on this pillow.

Folks, there's a discipline to this. There's a discipline. You have the will to do it.

And when God sees you set your heart, he'll give you all the power and authority to follow through. But there has to be something in your heart right now, so God, I'm going to give you no rest from now on until I see my family saved. I have to do that for my family.

I'm praying this desperately. And I want to tell you something. When a man comes up to me, as he did recently, he said, I'm just bound with pornography.

I said, you had better baptize yourself in prayer, immerse yourself in the word of God. And you better get deadly desperate before the Lord. And that's what he wants from us.

He wants that heart that's set. If you do that, he will give you, he will balance that with a peace and joy like you've never known before. And the joy that you have then will not dissipate when you get out.

It'll be an eternal joy, his peace. If he gives you his burden, he's going to give you his peace to accompany it. And never let your heart be broken without all the oil you need for total healing.

Never before in my lifetime if I want to be broken before him. Because when I stand now before four and 5,000 pastors at a time, I know if I ever know. And folks, it's the same thing you face when you go to job tomorrow.

You face all the powers of hell. You've got to know that you know, that you know, you've got to have his voice. I can't say anymore.

I'm not going to preach another sermon, but I want us to sing that. And I want you to just feel the Holy Spirit. And I want you to set your mind.

Now, if God tells you to get rid of your television set, do it quickly. Do it quickly. If the internet's got you, get rid of your computer.

Do whatever God tells you. He'll give you direction. Nobody's going to have to tell you.

It won't be some legalistic thing that we established for you to be something born in your heart out of God's own desire for you. Would you just now set your heart and say, Jesus, I'm willing to follow you all the way. I want to know you and I want to know your heart.

Come Holy Spirit. You do it Holy Spirit.

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