

A Craving for the Presence of the Lord

by David Wilkerson

The speaker warns about an economic storm coming to America and emphasizes the importance of having a personal craving for the presence of the Lord in times of crisis.

Duration: 57:16

Scripture: Exodus 33:18, Isaiah 64:6, Mark 12:30

Topics: "Presence of God"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the importance of being a watchman and warning the body of Christ. He acknowledges that while there will be encouraging messages about communion with Christ and growth, his role is to warn about the difficult times ahead. The pastor also highlights the potential danger of having all needs miraculously met over a long period of time, as it can lead to complacency and hinder a blessed communion with Jesus. He concludes by expressing his conviction that God will protect and provide for His people in the midst of these challenging times, citing Jesus' assurance that He knows what His people need before they even ask.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing WORLDCHALLENGE PO BOX 260 LINDALE, TEXAS 75771 or calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. Thank you choir, orchestra, and welcome to all of our visitors. We trust you are sensing the manifest presence of Jesus here this morning.

As you heard, we just got back from Israel. We went there to dedicate, first of all, a church on Mount Carmel where Elijah called fire down out of heaven and I'm happy to announce to you the fire is still coming down out of heaven on Mount Carmel. We had two services, by the way, for those who prayed.

This church knows that I don't like to fly. I'm one of those white knuckle flyers. But we had, it was just like a dream, just like a pillow flight all the way there and back.

So thanks for your prayers. And we had two services on Saturday. This church is comprised of Arabs and Jews worshipping together.

Had to have two services to accommodate the crowds. There were probably 800 in each service. The church seats about 800, with the overflow, about 800.

And they have 12 stones around, representing the 12 stones that Elijah built an altar with. And the Spirit of the Lord was there mightily. And an unusual experience in one of the services, I think it was the first service.

You know, Israel has two rains, the former and latter, the early and the spring rain and the fall rain. They hadn't had rain in five months and still two months yet before the rains come. I was preaching on judgment that's coming to America.

And as soon as I said judgment is coming to America, there was a lightning bolt and a thunder that shook the building. And the rain fell, absolutely fell on Mount Carmel. And the people were just praising the Lord.

And I didn't know what was going on. Until I find later that they hadn't had a drop of rain in all this time. And there was this one clap of thunder.

And it seemed that God was putting an exclamation mark on what His servant was saying from the pulpit. I'll tell you, it left a mark. It left a mark on me.

And it was an incredible experience. And we bring you greetings from David and Karen. David, the pastor, to you who don't know, was an actor here in the city.

And in fact, he was in a play right in this building. The Lord marvelously saved him, married a Jewish wife. And there are pastors of that church sent out from this church.

Our ministry, World Challenge in Texas, my international ministry, people from all over the country that are on our mending list helped us. And this church and other 39 nations helped. Most of the finances came from this church and from World Challenge.

And we're very thrilled. Remember when we came and we started this, God started this church, we said we wanted to honor Israel. And by honoring Israel, God would honor us.

And He has. We were going to have communion every week. We were going to honor Israel.

And because we honored Israel, He gave us the privilege to build that church right on Mount Carmel. Then we had a conference in Jerusalem on Sunday that came from everywhere there. And I just felt that I had to prophesy and I had to preach a very hard message.

Because in Israel, there are two kinds of Jews. There are religious Jews and there are secular Jews. The religious Jews are in a minority.

The majority are secular who don't even believe in God. The cab drivers, God, where was He doing the Holocaust if there was a God? Jesus, He may be okay, but God, where was He? And, you know, on the mosque there, the big mosque, the Muslim mosque, there's a great big lettering up there that says, God had no son. God had no son.

And the Spirit of the Lord came down, by the way, on the second service on Mount Carmel. The Holy Spirit came upon me to ask. There was such a sense of hopelessness in so many people.

I said, how many of you have been contemplating suicide? Fifteen people came forward that were contemplating suicide. And I thank God for His faithfulness. And the Lord also touched many, many hearts in Jerusalem.

I want to go now into the message. As you know, I've been busy finishing another book. The first book that went out across the United States is up to around 300,000 have gone, and it's just now beginning to go to bookstores all over the country.

And it's had quite an impact. It was called America's Last Call on the Brink of a Financial Holocaust. And this new book is entitled God's Plan to Keep His People in the Coming Depression.

This is the tenth message I will have preached on that subject. There's one more next week, God willing, and then the book is finished. And you people have had, I've been testing these messages on you.

I've been giving them to you first, and then next month this goes to print. And we've been having a demand for it. It's going to go into about 40 languages immediately.

And we're going to share with you the tenth of that. And you may not understand how my message title fits the first 15 minutes of this, 10, 15 minutes of the message, but you'll see it as we go along. Entitled, A Craving for the Presence of the Lord.

A Craving for the Presence of the Lord. Father in Jesus' name, you must come upon me now with your anointing and your touch. There's no man that can speak this prophetic word in his own strength and power.

Lord, we are in a time that frightens our flesh. And in the natural, we can't receive these things. There has to be a work of the Holy Spirit in us to receive them.

Now, Father, I come here now just to deliver your mind. That which you've put in my heart at the throne of our everlasting God. Lord, this is a time for us to hear and understand and know what you are about to do.

You will not keep your people in ignorance or in darkness. And we are asking you now, Lord, to encourage our hearts by the word. And you will, in Jesus' name.

Amen. Now, you've heard me refer quite often in the past few months about the coming storm in the United States and America, an economic storm. I started warning that almost six months before the Asian collapse a year and a half ago.

And then it broke over not only Asia but Russia. And few people want to hear it, I noticed, even when I was in Israel. And they'd say, what do you think is coming? And we hear what you're saying.

And after about five minutes, you could see they just wanted to change the subject. I was with an attorney friend the other day. And he said, Reverend Wilkerson, he said, I know a storm is coming.

I know something unusual. You can feel it. You feel it in Wall Street.

You feel it everywhere. Something incredible is about to happen. But he said, I really don't want to hear it.

He said, I just kind of hope it will go away. You see, what I'm preaching to you is very tame to what the secularists are preaching now and the warning that's coming from economic experts here in the United

States and even around the world. I've been warning of a ruinous storm that's coming to the United States and to the whole world.

But listen to what a secular economist said this past month. He said, if there were an economics channel on TV like a weather channel, the frenetic newscasters would be interrupting regular programs right now and give us an hourly update on something that they would be calling the storm of the century and economic cataclysm as big or bigger than the Great Depression of the 30s. But if, God forbid, if it reaches the United States, watch out.

Stock prices could easily fall two-thirds, 6,000 points on the Dow, and it could take a decade or more to recover. He said, this storm that's coming is chilling. That's a secular writer.

Now, when I say something like that, even ministers' conferences, it's considered some kind of theological aberration. It's considered just my opinion, and even Pentecostal ministers don't want to hear it much anymore. This writer, though, goes on to paint a picture of an economic meltdown that could wipe out investors and it could even wipe out mutual funds, some mutual funds entirely, absolutely wipe out mutual funds.

Now, I've been saying and prophesying that the market would go down 5,000 points, and then I pick up this writer's note and he says 6,000. They go beyond what we are saying. Now, beloved, like it or not, whether we want to hear it or not, and you might want to shut it out of mind and say, Pastor, move on.

Now, I tell you, you come this afternoon, you come this evening, you're going to hear encouraging words, you're going to hear about communion with Christ, you're going to hear about growth, you're going to be encouraged and all these things. But my role as a watchman is to warn his body. I have to do what I'm called to do.

And God balances that by bringing other messages. And one time soon, believe it or not soon, he'll let me get into that stream. In October the 24th, 1929, the day the stock market broke and ushered in the Great Depression, a writer called Elliot Bell, who was there on Wall Street when it happened.

I was down the other day walking on Wall Street after I got back from Israel. In fact, I think it was Thursday, I went down to Wall Street just to feel. And I had some business there, and it was incredible the feeling there that there's something in the air.

And he writes these words, and this was October 24th, 1929, the day the market broke. He said it was the most terrifying, unreal day I've ever seen on Wall Street. He said it began with a cool, on a cool overcast day.

It was about 50 degrees. The wind was blowing softly through the canyons of Wall Street, the temperature in the 50s. Bankers and brokers were buttoning up their coats on the way to the exchange.

But about 11 o'clock, a storm broke. I've been telling you about a storm. They use these terms, a storm broke, a deluge.

It came with such a ferocity that left everybody on Wall Street dazed. The bottom just fell out of the market for no reason. Wall Street became a nightmarish spectacle.

Traders who just a few short days before luxuriated in delusions of wealth saw all their hopes smashed and collapsed in a devastating storm so far beyond their wildest fears. It was almost unreal. The storm created a sense of danger like men trying to hold on to a sinking ship.

He said the sense of danger. I felt it the other day when I was there. Folks, we no longer, I'm no longer saying a storm is coming.

I'm telling you it's already overhead, it's here. Now you could say, Pastor, what does all of that have to do with your title? I thought you were here to encourage us. A craving for the presence of the Lord.

Folks, it has to do with everything about our spiritual condition when the storm comes. How we respond. How we as Christians react when we are facing a change in lifestyles that will never again be like they are now.

How does that affect us? All of this news that we hear, all of these things that we may not want to hear but we know intuitively that it's going to happen. How are we going to react? And folks, when I look into the future and I see these black clouds and I hear the thunder pealing already and the lightning and I have a sense in me that everything the prophets have prophesied, oh, every prophet in the Old and New Testament, everything they've said is about to be fulfilled. And as a Christian spirit filled, if you're walking in the spirit, you've got to sense it.

Also, it's a revelation of the Holy Spirit that everything is winding up and we are coming now to midnight. There's a sense that every prophecy is being fulfilled, everything we've preached about for years, everything we've talked about in this book is now coming down upon us, the ends of all things have come upon us. And we are there, folks, we are there.

And then when I see this and I feel it in the spirit, then I know that every foolish, frivolous thing in my life has to go out the window. When I sense by the spirit and he begins to speak so strongly, not just through your pastor here, but through many, many, even secularists, then I know that every ungodly ambition has to end, every covetous desire has to go, every root of bitterness, every selfish dream, every attachment to the things of this world, everything that's corrupted or hindered, a blessed communion with Jesus, it all has to go, things have to change, it can't be life as usual. There has to be something we do, there has to be a change in our walk with God.

When I hear and see the shaking, and God said you're going to shake everything that can be shaken, and when I see fear and panic coming upon nations, and I see this global superpower about to be shamed, and its economy smashed before the whole world. By the way, we already are the laughingstock of the world. And while the world is crumbling all around us, the whole nation is absorbed in some sexual debauchery in the White House.

It's incomprehensible to the world. Pick up the paper in Israel and you see the picture of the president with the nose of Pinocchio. Liar, liar.

And everybody is laughing. America is the laughingstock of the world right now. It's part of the judgment of Almighty God.

When I look about now and I see this shaking, then you have to come to the question, what is going to be the most important thing in your life in this time? What's going to be the most important thing, folks? You're not going to be thinking by psychosis then. You're not going to be thinking about your psychiatrist in the

couch. You're not going to be thinking about whether you like your job or whether you're fulfilled in your job.

No, it's all going to boil down to some very, very simple questions. What are the most important issues now? I found my answer in Israel. When I was in Israel, I asked my host David to take me to a lonely spot way up on top of Mount, they call it Carmel, up on Mount Carmel.

And I said, just drop me off. And I gave him a time hours later, I said, come pick me up. And I was suddenly out overlooking the valley where Elijah outran into Jezreel for 26 miles, outran King Ahab's chariot.

And I'm looking down at that valley, I said, somewhere there was a dusty road there and he ran. It takes 30 minutes to get there by car. Can you imagine what it took for him? And I'm saying somewhere, not far from where I am praying right now, the prophet called Elijah, built an altar and called fire out of heaven, and 400 prophets were slain and their blood is on this land somewhere.

And how they got all those barrels of water in a famine, I don't know. And up on that mountain, how they got them there, I don't know. But those things are very real.

But I was expecting some kind of historical sense to hit me, some great release in prayer that, boy, I'm in Israel, I'm right where the prophet stood, and I am praying where Elijah prayed, and God said he's a man of like passions, and I can pray just like him. And then I looked to the east, and there's the Mediterranean overlooking Haifa, and I said that little cloud came right over what probably was now the port of Haifa. I said, Lord, that cloud was right there.

The rain fell right here, and I waited for it to hit me. And nothing hit me. It may have had something to do with the Coke cans and the McDonald wrappers all over the ground.

I don't know. It could have been the car over there where two kids were making out on Mount Carmel. Nothing hit me after hours.

Now, I had a wonderful time with the Lord, but there was no sense. There was something almost of, wait a minute, I'm feeling a little lonely here. We went to the tomb, and there's the hill of the skull.

I was there after the Six-Day War years ago, and it wasn't commercialized. But now it's T-shirt country. But I walk in the tomb, and I thought, well, maybe in the tomb I'll feel that sense.

I remember when I was there the first time, I came home feeling the same way, and I said, Lord, what's wrong? He said, well, it's more important that I walk where you walk rather than you walk where I walked. I want to walk with you where you walk. And I never forgot that.

But, you know, even the Garden of Gethsemane, I don't know whether it was all the commercialism around there or what, but there was no sense of a release in prayer. Nothing hit me. In fact, I had some wonderful times in prayer.

I didn't go to sightsee, and I was there when Gwen got on a camel and screamed, ah, when that thing went up. But I had some wonderful times in prayer. I mean, pour more heart out to the Lord, but it didn't hit me until I got on the plane and 30,000 feet over the Atlantic.

And in a sense, I'm going to a place, and I was feeling the drawing of that. I wasn't going just to where we live. I was going to a place in the house where we live.

I was going to a room. You see, it's my craving room. It's my Gethsemane.

It's my Mount Carmel. It's a place where I go to vent my longings and my cravings for Him. It's a trysting spot that's known only to me.

You see, Elijah probably went up there many times to pray. Jesus went many times into the garden to pray. It was a special place, and every prophet in the Bible had that special place.

And Jesus, I know, had a special place, and He went up to mountains to pray. And when I got off the plane, the first chance I had after getting rid of jet lag, I went into that room, and I shut the door. And I raised my hands, and I began to weep.

And I said, Jesus, I have missed you so. I've been so hungry to get back in this room. Because, you see, the word crave means to long, to earnestly desire, to go after, to pursue.

The craving room, as I describe it, is some place where I go not to get prayers answered, though I ask Him, and I lay before Him, all those things. And it's a place where I love Him, a place where I'm drawn nigh to Him. It's a place where I embrace Him, and He embraces me.

There's a craving, and that craving gets stronger and stronger every time I go into that room. I've come to the following conclusions, and I want you to listen very closely. I am, first of all, fully convinced that God's going to miraculously protect and provide for His people in the difficult times that are ahead.

That's beyond question. The Bible says Jesus said, I know what you need before you ask. That's enough for me.

He knows what we're going to need. He said, I'm an earthly father. I've got five children and 11 grandchildren.

And if I were a rich man, like my Heavenly Father is, and I had all the resources, and I saw one of my children suffering, I would take care of them. How much more, He said, if you earthly know how to do that, how much more will your Heavenly Father. So it's beyond question that God's going to provide.

He's going to provide food and water and shelter. He's not going to feed you filet mignon, but He is going to give you all the rice and beans you need, anything that is practical. He's going to give supernatural guidance and direction on how to prepare.

If you're in business and you're in love with Jesus and you believe that He said He knows what you need, you seek Him. He'll give you direction in your business. He'll give you direction in your family and in your home.

But listen closely, please. Having a long-term miraculous supply of every need being met can become a damning experience. Let me run it by you again.

Having all your needs miraculously supplied over a long period of time, miraculously, can become a damning experience. Now consider the children of Israel in that desolate wilderness. Forty long years God provided for them.

Do you know their tents never deteriorated? No tears, they moved and moved. Not a single tear, no deterioration. Rain didn't come through.

He covered... Folks, if you want to know He, you go into some of those Judean hills and the valleys at 105. And especially if you're near the Mediterranean and the oppressive heat and the oppressive... What do you call it? Humidity. Do you understand the miracle of that cloud that God sent miraculously to cover them? Or they would have died under that oppressive heat, especially from noon to three o'clock.

Their clothes never wore out. Their turbans never wore out. Their sandals never wore out.

Now surely, I'm not saying that God expanded them when you grew up. I think they traded around, but those... God... they never wore out. I believe God can cause shoes to grow.

You've heard it said... Somebody said all day, God didn't open... They didn't go through the Red Sea. The Red Sea at that time was only three feet deep and they walked through. And he said, well, it's a greater miracle that God could destroy a whole army in three feet of water.

These people ate angels' food. Nobody was employed. Total unemployment.

And you're worried about your job. Total unemployment. And God took care of every single need in their hard times.

God did everything for them that we hope he'll do for us today in our hard times. He did it. He doesn't have to prove it over again.

He did it. He's going to do it. They were preserved and protected miraculously while all the nations around them were in turmoil.

Egypt was in ruins. Egypt was devastated. There was no food.

Remember, God had devastated Egypt. And here they are, devastation all around them, all around the nations being devastated. And here they are, food, water, protection.

And they're surviving very well while everything is in ruins around them. But they got bored. They murmured.

They complained. Even while they enjoyed the miracle blessings of God. Now, folks, this has got to be absorbed now before these things come.

Because here we sit in Times Square Church in all of this wonderful splendor. September the 20th, 1998, the American stock market is trembling. Asia is falling into depression.

Japan is on the brink. The president of Sony again said that they are going into total depression. And now Korea, Russia, Brazil is next, followed by Argentina, Latin America, and then Mexico.

They're all going down. And soon, Brazil is going to devalue its currency. Argentina has to do it.

And finally, Mexico will do it. And, folks, that is where our banks are so vulnerable here in the United States and our entire Wall Street structure. But in the midst of all this frightful news that I've been telling you about, here I come and I give you this good news.

Folks, isn't it good news God's going to take care of His people? Isn't that wonderful news? It's absolutely wonderful. That God is going to take loving care of us in this time and this age, just as He did in that time and that age. But let me give you this warning breeze.

Even though I believe God wants us to do our part and prepare, and I'll tell you now that we're meeting next week with our pastors and elders to pray about what we should share with you and how to prepare, physically prepare for what is coming. But I want to tell you, you can have a ten-year supply of rice and beans. You can have acreage out in the country somewhere, and you've got your own generator, your own well.

In fact, you have got it all down, all the survivalists have told you how to prepare for the coming crisis of the Depression, and you've got everything, like the rich man who sat there and said, I am set for life. You can have it all and be the most bored, confused person in the world, because you missed the point. You had the wrong focus.

You wanted God's provision and not His presence. I'm telling you, if personal security becomes the focus, then we're going to end up like the children of Israel, about after... You Puerto Ricans may not believe this, but you get tired of rice and beans after a certain amount of time. Forgive me, I'm sorry.

You see, if all you're trying to do is survive an economic depression or a chaos, what point is it if you have everything and you sit there through that, bored, murmuring, complaining, looking back to the good life, and you don't have the presence of the Lord in you or with you, and you're growing more and more bitter and sour, even though sitting there while everybody around you is suffering, and you're sitting there in the lap of the good things, those good things will make you bored and restless and empty without the presence of the Lord. Jesus said, is not life more than meat and the body more than raiment? And what He's saying, don't focus on... He said, don't say, what shall we eat and what shall we drink or what shall we wear, but you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be taken care of, they'll be added unto you. The Lord says, no, it's not about security, it's about your relationship with Me.

He's saying, don't focus on that. If you will focus on My presence in your life, if you will deal with sin in your life, if you will seek Me with everything that's in you, I'll take care of you. You take care of your heart, I'll take care of your basket.

There's nobody in this world now to convince me that America is going to miss having a full-blown depression. Nobody in the world, because the Holy Ghost has convinced me. I am totally convinced.

I don't get this just from reading books and economists' musings. More than that, it's something clear from the Word of God and things that we know. And I don't care if the stock market bounces back to 15,000 points and be the biggest fool's market in the world's history.

And the higher it goes, the worse will be the fall. But Moses knew well that without the presence of the Lord with them, not he or the nation could make it through the perilous times that had befallen them. Moses knew that he had to have more than a legal contract with God.

And I want you to follow closely. Remember that the setting here is that Israel had corrupted themselves by worshipping a golden idol, and the whole nation had risen up to eat and drink and play before this idol in nakedness and shame. And God was angered by this blatant idolatry.

And He said, My wrath is waxing hot against them. And He said to Moses, I'm going to consume them. And you know that Moses prevailed with God, and God had mercy on them, and He spared Israel, but on one awful condition.

He said, All right, I'm going to let you go up to the land of milk and honey. You go on, I'm going to take care of your enemies. I'll send hornets before you.

I, in fact, am going to send an angel with you to lead you on. But He said, I'm not going with you. I'm not going.

My presence will no longer be in your midst. I am leaving the camp. Moses cried out to God.

Well, here's what the Scripture said. Go on your way. I will not go with you.

I will send an angel to go before thee, for I will not go up in the midst of thee. Moses takes his tent outside the camp. His own tent, takes it outside the camp, far away, to begin to intercede before God.

And this is his prayer. He said, Oh God, these people have sinned a great sin, and have made gods of gold. Now, I want you to look at this.

He separated this two. There are two evils here. One evil, the result of the first.

He said, they have committed a great sin, and this is another sin. They have built a golden idol. In fact, this building the golden idol was a result of this great sin of Israel.

It's the sin of today, just as it was the sin then. What is this incredible, awful sin that Israel committed that Moses is crying out and said, Oh Lord, we have committed a great sin against you. That great sin of then and today is a lack of respect for the presence of the Lord in our personal lives.

It's a lack of respect, a lack of desire for the presence of the Lord in our lives. Lightly esteeming the presence of the Lord. Not having a craving in the heart to honor and preserve his presence in our life.

It is to want his provision, to want his protection. And to not crave after his presence. The very presence that makes the provisions possible.

I'm telling you sadly, and I see something and it really hit me this past week. Now, I want every one of you here today to call yourself a Christian. I am a Christian.

I'm a believer. Somewhere along the line you heard a pastor, minister, somebody testified to you about the word of God. It said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reach into your heart and get a hold of faith. Lay hold of that promise. And believe that Jesus died for your sins.

Finished the work. You claim it. It's a legal contract.

It's a covenant God has made with you. Believe and thou shall be saved. And you did that and rightly so.

And that's fine. You are legally saved. You are under contract.

You've been brought into the family of God. But if all you have is a legal contract and a legal covenant with God, you've missed the point. It will never lead you to holiness.

It will never lead you to desire. You will never know him in his fullness. Because you are standing on a legal contract.

What Bible says this, I claim it. But where's the affection? Where is the love? Where is that craving in your heart? Where is that love? The Bible said, you are now a son of God. But where is that love? A son should have a father who adopted him.

Where is it? I don't see it in the land. I picked up a sermon, a written sermon. Or someone gave it to me from the internet.

And it's a powerful, brilliant sermon by a man I know. A man, a preacher who smokes and drinks. And every time you see him in a restaurant, he's surrounded with beautiful actresses.

A lawlessness. And what a sermon. He says, reach down into your gut.

Pull up some faith. Lay a hold of the promise of the finished work of Christ. And don't ever let anybody shake you.

But it's illegal. There is no love. There is no devotion.

There is no crying out to God. There is no desire for the holiness of God. Because anyone who's shut in with God and craving His presence, that holy presence in his life will conform you to the image of Christ.

God offered Moses and Israel this legal deal. He said, I promise to send an angel before you. I'll take care of you.

I'll defeat all your enemies. I'll give you a land of milk and honey. Now that's saying, I'll give you salvation.

I'll bless you. I'll take care of you. And it's all legal.

It's a legal deal. It's a covenant. God made it.

And He made it to a stiff-necked people that hadn't changed. That still had no hunger or thirst after Him. He, out of sheer mercy, and that's what it is.

Salvation is absolute mercy. The mercy of God came and found you. And you have a legal contract.

I'm a son of God. The Bible says that that settles it. And so many go on their stiff-necked way, neglecting Him.

They don't pray. They don't seek the face of God. There's no love.

There's no devotion. And all the time God had said to Israel, I'm bringing you out of Egypt. I'll break your bondage.

But I want you to love me with all your heart, your mind, your soul, and strength. This was a love affair. And here's an offer of a legal deal.

God says, I have given you my binding promises. And, you know, that's all some people want. No, I'm not going to hell.

I've been saved. And there are some people who believe that they're saved and they can live like the devil and still go to heaven. But a surprise awaits those poor blinded souls.

You see, the stiff-necked people had no desire to get to know Him or to embrace Him. Now, you and I have two testaments, the old and the new, filled with legal promises that are yea and amen to everyone who believes. Yes, they are.

He will keep His word. He will feed you. He will clothe you.

He will house you. He will make sure that the enemies don't prevail over you. He's not going to keep you rich, but He'll keep you supplied.

Now, you can go on with that legal deal. You can go on with that. He'll keep His word to you.

But see, Israel now has for the first time to deal with this issue of God's presence. They'd never dealt with it before. They had just taken everything for granted.

They took lightly the presence of the Lord. They saw all of His blessings and provisions and got bored under it all and really had no heart for Him. But now they've heard the word.

God says, you've got your legal deal. Now you go on your own way. I'm not going with you.

I'll protect you. I'll supply all your needs. Now, if that's all you want, folks, you can have it.

If all you think, well, there's a depression coming, hard times. I want my legal deal. I want to make sure there's food, everything else.

That's enough for me. I have this settled faith. I've believed.

I'm saved. I'm not going to hell. He's going to take care of me.

Good. And when the people heard the evil tidings, you know, that the Lord's presence was going to leave, they mourned, and no man did put on his ornaments. And up to this moment, the men had been strutting around the wilderness laden down with foolish ornaments.

They got it from Egypt. Ankle bracelets, arm bracelets, armllet bracelets, trinkets of brass hanging down their neck, trading around with the old baggage of Egypt. But now the message has come, my presence will not go with you.

And so now they take off all of their ornaments, and they begin to mourn. Mourn means to weep and cry and lament. They were crying and weeping and lamenting.

Now that's a message many churches don't want to hear. You can go to nine out of ten churches in New York, and if I got up and preached about, come to the Lord and mourn for your sins, and get rid of all the baggage of your past life, half the congregation would think I'm stupid or walk out. They don't want to hear it.

Believe. And then God comes, they'd already put off their ornaments, and here's what he said, now put off your ornaments. They'd already put them off.

And he's coming back, put them off now, that I may know what to do with you. What he's saying, all right, you put them off temporarily, but leave them off. Don't go back to your old ways.

Don't cry and mourn and then go put your ornaments back on. Don't go back to the old sins. Don't go back to your old life, your old way of thinking.

Leave it. God seems to be saying an unusual thing here. It's almost like God sounds undecided.

He said, take off your ornaments until I decide what I'm, I don't know what to do with you yet. He knew exactly what he was going to do, and he's waiting for something, and he found what he's waiting for in that tent out far from the camp, because there is Moses. God found the man who was going to give him what he's looking for, what he's been waiting for all of this time, not some kind of a legal contract, not just somebody relying on the promises of God and begging and seeking for answers to prayer and having protection for their flesh.

God says, I'm after more than that. And he found it in that tent. He found a pastor.

He found an associate pastor, Joshua. He found those men on their face before God. And in this perilous times, they turned away from all of their activities, every demand on their time.

Everything had to go so that they could pour their hearts out before the Lord. And folks, I believe in these perilous times, God is going to raise up a holy remnant, just like the Bible said, everyone which sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle, which was outside the camp. This means they made a special effort.

They got up every day, and they went out where Moses was pleading with God, laying hold of God. I ask you, Christian, you have that time. I'm not talking about a five-minute devotion.

You have a craving room anywhere. You have a twisting spot. You have some place where you get alone with the Lord and say, Lord, I want more than this legal deal.

I want to know you. I want your presence in my life. I want to feel you.

Folks, I go into my craving room and say, Lord, I take it by faith, yes, but I want to feel your presence. I want to feel your love, and I want you to feel mine. It's a feeling thing.

They're mourning over the sins of the nation. You know, you hear it said, where's the outrage about what's happening in Washington? Where's the outrage? When a majority of the people say it's okay as long as the economy is good. Where's the outrage? I'll tell you where the outrage is.

It's right here. These people are mourning for the sins of Israel. Now they're mourning.

It's not where you just get up in the pulpit and you scream out again. I could stand and give you a scathing message. I could rip Washington apart.

I've got something in my gut and my flesh that would probably want to do it. But that's not the answer. The answer is on your face before God, mourning before him and repenting for the whole nation.

Us repenting. The outrage is expressed to the Lord, not to man. And all I've expressed, I've been outraged, yes, I've raised my hands in my craving room and cried out before God and confessed not only my sins but the sins of the nation.

Out of this prayer time came a cry, Lord, if your presence goes not with me, carry us no further. Boy, this is a powerful statement. He's saying, Lord, unless I can have your presence, unless I have face-to-face intimacy with you, unless I can come to you and know that you are right there, I feel and I know and I sense your presence.

Remember the Bible says this man talked face-to-face with God and he said, I will not lose that. I am not going, I don't care what promises, I don't care what legally it is, I don't care if you send a host of angels. No angel for me.

You know, a couple of years ago, there were books about angels and you go to the bookstore, angels. One woman told me, she got in the car and looked back and there was a 12-foot angel in the back. I thought, how can a 12-foot angel get in a 6-foot car? You know, if you want an angel, the Bible said the angel of the Lord camps around about them that fear him.

You've got your angel. Go your way satisfied. Eat all the water, all the food.

Bored, murmuring, complaining. Whereas you can just say, oh Jesus, this is not about my surviving. This is about my getting to know you in hard times.

This is giving me time to crave and yearn after you and get to know you with everything that's in my heart. And he says to God, Lord, if you're not going to go with me, if your presence is not with me, every day I got up and every waking hour, I'm stopping right here. I'm going to die.

I have had it. I'm not going another step. You're not going to get a craving for the Lord in these hard times unless you pray for it.

It's in that secret closet. It's in that place where you reach out and so God created me a hunger and thirst after you. God by his spirit creates that.

It's not you can't do it in your human flesh. Now you can hear the word and be convicted. And then you go to prayer and say, oh God, I want you with everything that's in my heart.

Now, here's what he's saying. Lord, thank you for your generous, gracious promise to take care of us. Thank you for your covenant promises to deal with our enemies.

Thank you for the promise of the angel. Lord, we don't want to go that legal path. We want to go the love way.

We want to be devoted to you. Hallelujah. Then he knew he knew God would be faithful.

He knew God would take care of him as he did in the past. Folks, let me close with an illustration. One of the highlights of our visit to Israel is to visit two wonderful sisters of Mary.

This is a Lutheran organization. They have their headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany. I've known them for 40 years.

They're wonderful people. Sister Basilia Slink is one of the great saints of this dinner. She's 94 years old and still praising Jesus at this time.

And these two sisters have been on the Mount of Olives. They have a compound there. They have about a three-, four-story house there overlooking the old city.

And we went to visit. These two sisters have been there 36 years, 36 years of ministering to Arabs and Jews. Sainly, you could feel the presence of the Lord when you walk in.

And they served us some tea and cookies, and they began to tell us about the war that came. And the Jordanian army came and surrounded and dug trenches all around their compound. And they were screaming and yelling.

They were convinced they're going to take Jerusalem. And one of the officials came and told the sisters, you'd better get out. The war is going to break out shortly.

There's going to be bombing and strafing, and you're going to be right in the middle because the Israeli army is going to come from the left and over here to the right. The Jordanians have dug in their trenches and ready. And they prayed, and the Lord gave them a word, the same word he gave to Gideon.

I'm going to be with you. Don't be afraid. And the Lord told them to store up food before all this happened.

In the basement, they had a full storage of food and water and supplies. The war broke out. Israelis came from one side, strafing, bombs, and the house was hit.

It came right through the roof. The walls collapsed. One wall, one wall remained, one corner of a wall that had a plaque on it.

God will keep his people, words of that. God will protect his people. The plaque stood there as a testimony.

Another shell came through and broke through two floors, but it didn't break into the basement. And those dear saints, they had food. They had water.

No bullet could touch them. No bomb could bomb them out. And they were there for 14 days in that basement.

One almost broke through, but they fell on some, I think it was a pile of carpets or something, they had in the corner, fell right on those carpets and didn't do any harm. But they told us, the thing that blessed my heart, they said, it wasn't that God, we thank God that he protected us and he provided the food. He told us how to prepare.

That was all wonderful. But she said, if all of our years in Israel, those were the most precious hours we've ever spent because Jesus manifested himself in that basement. The presence of Jesus as we've never known.

She said, we look back, those were the most precious 14 days of our life in a basement because Jesus so revealed himself and they had such craving hearts. They just wanted more and more and more. And even today they look back.

Their work is finished. They leave in November. They go back to Darmstadt after 36 years.

They go back with this precious memory. And folks, they still have craving heart for Jesus. But in the hard times, they look back.

They're not thinking food. They're not thinking shelter or even protection for the flesh. It was the revelation of the presence of Jesus Christ.

Folks, in the days ahead, I've told you this. Pastor Carter's told you this. And I believe with all my heart, we are going to see manifestations of the presence of Jesus as no other generation has seen it.

Paul the apostle would be jealous if he could even be near it. Every prophet in the Old Testament had yearned for it and see it. We are going to see it.

You think it's wonderful. Sometimes you come here and the present Lord just comes down and we can't even talk. We sit here for 15 minutes in total silence.

Just drinking. Wait till the manifestations that you see when you come with a craving heart. It's only going to be revealed to the craving heart.

You've got to come with a craving heart to yearn after. I'm going to church not to hear Brother Dave or Pastor Carter or any of the other pastors. I'm not going there to try to get a word that God's going to somehow keep me.

I've got a craving heart. I want to get to know Jesus better. Do you understand any of this? I do.

It's all about Jesus. It's all about seeking Him first, giving Him everything in your life. Check your devotion.

Are you just satisfied to hand out money and be charitable? Is it just enough to be good? No, the Bible says all your goodness is filthy rags. No, no, no, no. He says love me with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your strength.

Love me. Give me your heart. Folks, I heard that and I'm doing that.

And I am so enjoying because, you see, the more you crave because this man, Moses, had such a craving heart. And God says, all right, I'm going to go with you. I'm going to give you my presence.

But then he comes back again. He's so craving after the Lord. He said, now show me your goodness.

And the Lord said, I'll show you my goodness. And then we got the goodness. He said, now show me a revelation of your glory.

This man's not going to stop. I'm going for the glory. I'm going to get to know who you are.

I want a revelation of everything about you, Jesus. I'm not here on this world to live for myself and just to say I finished 70 years and so forth. Paul's whole thing was not I fought a good fight and I'm ready to be delivered.

No, it was that Christ revealed himself, not to me, but in me. And all these times, I have a revelation of Christ. I know where I'm going and I know who He is.

When I get there, I won't be a stranger. I know Him. Will you stand?

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