

A Craving for the Presence - Part 1

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson emphasizes the importance of seeking a deeper relationship with God and being in His presence, especially in times of crisis and uncertainty.

Duration: 30:14

Scripture: Psalm 42:1, Isaiah 55:6, Matthew 6:25-26, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 11:6, James 4:8

Topics: "Gods Presence", "Spiritual Hunger"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of craving the presence of the Lord amidst challenging times, highlighting the need to prioritize seeking God's presence over solely relying on His provision. It draws parallels to the story of the children of Israel in the wilderness, warning against becoming complacent or bored even when experiencing God's miraculous provision. The speaker shares personal experiences from a trip to Israel, reflecting on the significance of having a dedicated 'craving room' for intimate communion with God.

Transcript

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, dedication. 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 morally 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 men in this 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.

They 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 during 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 Break 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, an 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.

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.

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 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, every prophet in the Old and New Testament, everything they've said is about to be fulfilled.

And as a Christian spirit field, 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 laughing stock 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 laughing stock 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, 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, you know, 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, and 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 into 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. 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. 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 eleven 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 and 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.

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 wanted no heat, you go into some of those Judean hills and the valleys at a hundred and five.

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 when 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.

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, please. 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 10-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. Now, 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...

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