

Christ-the Searcher of Mens Hearts

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson's sermon emphasizes Christ's role as the searcher of our hearts, calling the church to repentance and intimacy with Him.

Duration: 56:09

Scripture: Revelation 1:9

Topics: "Hidden Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being willing to be searched by the Holy Ghost. He refers to the book of Revelation, where Jesus instructs John to write letters to seven pastors of seven churches in Asia. The preacher warns against the dangers of a superficial and self-reliant form of Christianity, where people seek quick fixes and shallow messages. He also highlights the need for genuine repentance and a return to the old-fashioned gospel that convicts of sin.

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 World Challenge, PO Box 260, Lindale, Texas 75771 or calling 903-963-8626.

You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. I want to talk to you this morning about Christ, the searcher of men's hearts, the searcher of men's hearts.

Would you please go to Revelation, the first chapter, first chapter of Revelation. I'm going to read from verse 9, starting at verse 9 through 16. I'm reading from King James.

Christ, the searcher of men's hearts. I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet saying, I'm Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

And what thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches that are in Asia, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and to Philadelphia and Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that speak with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.

And in the midst of those seven candlesticks, one like unto the son of man, clothed with the garment down to the foot and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were as a flame of fire.

And his feet like unto fire, fine brass as they burned in a furnace. And his voice is the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword and his countenance was the sun shining in his strength.

Verse 17, And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. He laid his right hand upon me saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last. Heavenly Father, I'm asking you now to come with special anointing, an unction from heaven.

God, I want you to search my heart first and search the heart of everyone within the sound of my voice. What a loving Savior to love us so much that you would search us out and find those areas that we're blind to and show them to us that we may be healed, that we may grow in grace, the knowledge of our Savior. God, you're in this house, you're in this place, and we're hungry people.

We've come, oh Lord, to hear your word. We're not afraid of reproof, Lord. We're not afraid of anything that you say.

If you say it to us, Lord, in your grace, in your love, we receive it. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

Now, Christ loves his church. The Bible said he's the head of the church. He's the founder.

He's the foundation stone of the church. The Bible said Jesus said the gates of hell shall never prevail against his church. He said his wisdom and his glory abides in the church.

He sent the Holy Ghost to help establish the church and to make us conformable to the very likeness of Christ, that his body would be clean and pure. I'm saying this again, and I want to emphasize it. Jesus Christ loves his church, and that's why he comes to search it out.

If Jesus Christ so loves his church, why does he come to the church with such awesome visage as described here in the first chapter of Revelation? Why the flaming eyes of fire? Why a two-edged sword coming out of his mouth? He's speaking words that are so piercing. It's like a two-edged sword cutting right through the marrow of the bone. Why a voice so loud, so piercing, that it's almost like thunder? Why is he coming at his church that he so loves with this kind of visage that is so powerful and overwhelming that the disciple who had leaned on his bosom is now falling on his face, trembling and in fear? And Christ himself explained why he came in this visage, and it's found in Revelation 2.23, and he says, and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the heart, the reins, that's the inner man or the soul, and the heart, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

He said, I want everyone in my church to know that I'm the searcher of their hearts. I want my church to know that I will not allow them to continue in any form of blindness, any spiritual apathy or blindness, but I will keep coming and I will search. And this is what this is all about this morning, what I want to bring to your attention.

John falls on his feet and the Lord Jesus Christ says, don't be afraid. But he said, I'm coming to search my church with flaming eyes, with no uncertain sound, no double talk. In other words, I'm coming straight forward and I'm going to speak what I see in my people that I love.

I come now to search hearts. Are you willing to be searched by the Holy Ghost this morning? Are you? The flaming eyes of Jesus, those loving, those are not flaming eyes of hatred or bitterness. These are loving eyes that pierce through all of our facades and pierce through our apathy to get to the very issues that are in our heart.

He saw some things in his church and he instructed John to write these things down. Everything that I tell you, everything that you're going to see and hear from me now, I want you to write seven letters to seven pastors of seven churches in Asia. And I want you to write them and I want you to send these letters to these seven, the Bible calls them angels of the church, but that actually means pastors of the churches.

Jesus called these pastors, by the way, stars. He said, John, the stars you see in my hand are the angels of the pastors of these churches. In other words, he said, I love these men.

I called them. I anointed them. See, God loves his servants.

He loves his pastors. He loves his evangelists. He loves his prophets.

He loves them. And when he comes to correct, he does it out of love to purify the body of Jesus Christ. Can you imagine what it would have been like? For example, let's take the church at Ephesus, the first letter that was received.

And the pastor opens that letter to the church at Ephesus, thus saith the Lord concerning your congregation. Here's a pastor that is really proud, spiritually proud of what God has been doing in the church at Ephesus. The scripture says they didn't faint.

They were hard at work. The scripture makes it very clear that they hated evil. Good measure.

In fact, let's just read it. The first chapter or second chapter, verse one. To the angel of the church or to the pastor of the church of Ephesus write, He saith, saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his hand and walketh in the midst of seven candlesticks.

Now, can you imagine this pastor receiving this letter and opens it? And he's sure now he's told that this is from the heart of Christ. And he's sure this is a letter of commendation because this church is really been charitable, loving, caring. This church has a reputation of patience and labor and couldn't bear them, which were evil.

You've tried those that are apostles and they're not and found them liars. You're born. You've had patience for my namesake.

You've labored. You've not fainted. And he is he's enjoying this commendation from the Lord himself.

And then his eyes fall on this. What a shocking moment. But I have something against you, pastor, and I have something against your congregation.

I have something against you because thou has left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence you are fallen and repent and do the first works or else I will come unto thee quickly and remove the candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. Here's a pastor saying we who are justified by faith, walking in covenant promises, we who have been faithful and we have not fainted, we have loved, we have done all of these great things for the sake and name of God.

And he's saying repent. He's saying that he will remove our testimony if we don't repent that that we have strayed from our first love. And we're told to go back and go.

Remember how it was at the beginning and do it again as we did at the beginning. And I have to read this to the congregation that I so trust. I see so many great things happening.

And I'm going to stand up in the Sabbath and I have to read this to the congregation. Remember, therefore, once thou has fallen and repent and do your first works or else I will come quickly and remove your candlestick out of its place. Folks, if Christ speaks so searchingly to the church at Ephesus, to a wonderful congregation, this has to be serious business.

A church that he so loves, pastors that he so loves, and he speaks with such searching, digging, powerful, two-edged sword message. It's serious in the eyes of the Lord. First to the pastor, repent.

Your love for me is not what it once was, has been a neglect of communion. In other words, this is very serious business because I believe it has everything to do with the abiding, awesome, manifest presence of Jesus. He's saying there's something has been lost in the church and it's that awesome presence of Jesus.

Now, folks, I'm not preaching at this church. The messages that we preach here go out all over the world. I'm preaching to this church.

Yes, I'm preaching to the church body, the corporate body of Jesus Christ, wherever the message may be heard. But you see, the issue here at the Church of Ephesus is that they have lost something that they once had, and it's affecting the presence of the Lord in their midst. It's the loss of affection.

It's the loss of that that diligent, incredible first love that they had for the master. And not only for the master, I don't believe this has to do with just love for Christ. It has to do with love for one another in the body, something that had crept into the church that affected that body, where the people were just taking one another for granted.

They were not meeting the needs of the body of Jesus Christ, and they became self-centered. There were some things here that only God could see, and they were blinded to it. You see, we get so busy doing these good things in the Ephesus manner.

We get so busy in our ministries and in our good works, just our good deeds. I thank God for all the good deeds that are done in this church and around the world. And there are some churches that outdo us a hundred times in the charitable outreaches they have.

But you see, you can get so busy. The last thing Jesus said to all the churches was, he said, I stand at the door of your heart and I knock, and any man open, I'll come in and I'll sup with you and you with me. And that's where he was going with all of this.

He said, what I really want is to just have love time with you. I just want to have prayer time with you. I want to have quality time with you.

I want to speak my heart to you and I want you to speak your heart to me. I want supper time with you. I want to sup with you.

And that's where this is all going to. And he says, I don't have that time now. You're so busy working for me.

You're not spending time with me. And, you know, Jesus comes knocking at the door sometime and there's a note on the door saying, Jesus, I'm sorry I missed you, but I'm on my way to hospital visitation. I'm on my way to prison ministry.

There's somebody who needs me. All of these things are vital. All these things are the part of the heart of Jesus Christ.

But, folks, you can get so busy doing the good works of God that you begin to stray away from that supper time with Christ, that daily quality time with the Lord. And when you lose that quality time, you lose the presence of the Lord. You lose the awesome nearness of Christ.

And he takes this matter of prayer communion very seriously, so much so that he warns that if there are not changes made, if you don't come back to that hunger and that thirst for me, and if you can't see it and hear it when I speak it to you, I'm going to have to take away your testimony. In other words, you will not have the authority. You will not have it.

I take this matter very seriously. And, folks, I want to emphasize that this has to do with love for other people. It's so some of you that are here now, many that attend this church work with social agencies and folks that some of the hardest people I've ever met in my lifetime are people who work with people in welfare department.

And some of you that ever been on welfare or you've gone to some of the agencies here in the city, you'll meet some of the hardest hearts you've ever met. You can meet it in Christianity as well because they get so hardened by what they hear. Some of the most the hardest nurses I've ever met and hardest doctors in Staten Island, where they have all of these deformed children and those who have mental problems.

And those nurses, some of those nurses, not all of them, I'm not indicting all of them, but when I was there, some of the hardest nurses, they have hardened themselves because of the cries of the people. And that can happen in the church of Jesus Christ. You hear so much, you can harden your heart.

The Lord said, you were once so tender with people, you had such a love for people and you listen. Now you don't listen anymore. Folks, don't ever let that happen in this church.

Don't ever let that happen to any of you that work in any agency or those who work in the Sunday school department and you deal with all these children and some of them have no fathers and they're difficult. Go up Sunday afternoon between services where there are single mothers and these kids have no fathers and some of those kids run wild. And you think what a church this must be.

They can't control their kids. And then you can get a hard heart. You can't think of those kids at home without a parent, without a husband, without a father.

Folks, this is what Jesus is talking about in the church of Ephesus. There's a very serious side effect when a church loses that presence of the Lord, where the Lord says, I'm going to have to let you know what it's like. I'm going to let things just go cold for a while.

And I've been in churches like that, where the spirit of God had moved to where the presence of Christ was so real. And a season comes where nothing seems to move. There's a deadness, there's a dryness for a season because God said, I want you to know what it's like without my presence.

And folks, it's a horrible thing. It's an awful thing to go and sit in a church where there's no presence of Christ, nothing to move you, no conviction of the Holy Ghost, nothing to move your kids. It's a horrible thing.

And it can happen. It happened in Ephesus. It can happen in Times Square Church.

It can happen if I and other pastors of this church are not giving him that time and so busy ministering to you. We're not ministering to Christ anymore. It happened to me.

It has happened over the years many a number of times where I never want it to happen again because I know the horribleness of it all, where the Lord says, because I love you and because I want to bring you out of that lethargy, I'm just going to let you know what it's like. And folks, what happens? I have about 800,000 people in my mailing list, as you know, and I use that figure just to tell you how many people we draw from. And as I've told you a number of times, the number one complaint is I can't find a church where the spirit of the Lord is.

I can't find the presence of Jesus. I go from church to church. And that's the problem, because many people who can't find a church, they go sit at home, they turn on the television and they hear a television teacher or preaching.

That's the only place they have any spiritual food. They forget the assembling of themselves together with brethren. And folks, there are some of you that are visiting here, perhaps, and you say, I can't find that church.

But you can't use that as an excuse to stay home and you're not going to grow. In fact, you're going to grow hard and indifferent if you are not going to the house of God, if you're not finding about. Go to the deadest church you can't find and just sit there under your breath and pray for fire to come down.

Pray for the pastor. Do anything. But whatever you have to endure, don't sit at home in front of a television box and think that that's all the church that you need, because many, many who've said, I can't find it.

So they stay home and they are backslidden now. They've lost the touch of God. Now, I can understand if you can't find a church and you make your secret calls at the church and you go in there and seek God, you give him quality time and you're into the word and God has given you revelation and you're sharing it with people.

That's a different story. But it doesn't happen that way. Nine times out of ten, you just sit you do that hour with some Bible teacher evangelist and you say, I've had my church.

No, no, no, no, no. You're going to drift away completely and end up with this indictment. Jesus gave against the church at Ephesus.

Now, there were seven literal churches in Asia. They were actual churches. And some teach that that's that represents seven eras of the church or dispensations.

I'm not going to get into those doctrines. I'm not going to talk about that. What I see when I read Revelation two and three, I see Christ searching the hearts of all people in all ages.

In all eras, all dispensations, a Christ concerned about spiritual blindness that can happen in his body and in his church. Now, Christ had a controversy with five of these seven churches, but I want to focus on just the three have already dealt with Ephesus. I want to talk about Thyatira and Laodicea.

Now, see, the problem with Ephesus here is a loss of intimacy with Christ. They get so busy, they're no longer intimate with Christ. The problem in Thyatira is, listen closely, folks, I'm going to ask you, and I'm not trying to be theatrical, but if you've ever listened to me in the 16 years I've been in this church, I want you to listen now, because a true shepherd doesn't just feed you.

He has to protect you from wolves. He has to protect you from false doctrines. And you've got to hear what the Spirit says, because God has put this in my heart to save many sheep here in this building and those who hear this message on video or audio.

The church of Thyatira, the problem that Christ saw was a flirtation with seductive devilish ministries, seductive devilish ministries. Revelation 2, verse 18, beginning to read, And unto the angel or the pastor of the church in Thyatira write, These things sayeth the Son of God, who hath eyes like unto a flame of fire. Now, how would you like to be the pastor? You open up and that's what you hear.

A flame of fire, the eyes. Hath eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine breast. I know thy works, charity, once again, commendation, service, faith, patience, thy works in the last to be more than the first.

But nevertheless, and notwithstanding, I have a few things against you because you suffer, you tolerate that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants, to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication. She repented not.

Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds and will kill their children with death. And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts, and I'll give unto every one of you according to your deeds. Christ, once again, is commending this church.

I know your deeds. I know you love me. I know you're good people.

You have a heart for me. That's exactly what Lord Jesus is saying. They're not being reprimanded for loss of intimacy, as it was at Ephesus.

Here's a congregation with faith committed. Christ says, I know you love me. I have a few things against you.

And he says, you are tolerating something that I despise. He's saying this to the pastor first of all. He said, you're tolerating the teaching in your church.

You're allowing ministers, you're allowing teachers and evangelists come into your church to seduce my people. You are allowing those in your pulpit. And folks, this is happening all over.

I am so shocked at the lack of discernment in the ministry today. People that are allowed to come in, pastors who found out that so-and-so, this evangelist can draw a crowd, and allow these to come in and

stand in the pulpit and deliver that which God despises, that which is seductive, that which is immoral, the fornication, that which is the food of Satan itself. Does it seem to you inconsistent that a pastor can allow? Here's a man, here's a pastor that Jesus said was a loving, good man.

It seems inconsistent to me that a loving, good pastor would allow anybody in the pulpit. Folks, one of our first obligations to a congregation, to this congregation, is to make sure that nobody ever comes into this pulpit. First of all, these pastors listen to at least two tapes.

They check the man out, they check his morals, they check his preaching. Nobody's allowed into this pulpit. And if somebody would accidentally slip in and we heard one word, we would get up and we would stop him and make him sit down, and we'd escort him out the back door.

Now, that sounds a little rough, a little gruff, but that's what God demands, and that's what this heart of Christ is all about here, this seductiveness that has come into the house of God. Jezebel. I've heard it said, in fact, that the word does have a connotation of covetousness.

But folks, there's a scripture that says, make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof. In other words, there are people that have lust, but the Lord says, don't scheme, don't plan to make it happen. Allow it to happen.

No schemes. It may be in the mind, I'll cleanse your mind. I'll help you to make no plans.

But you see, Jezebel doesn't mean covetousness. It means the fulfillment of that covetousness, a scheme, a plan, an evil scheme to fulfill that lust of covetousness. And this is exactly what Jezebel did when Ahab, her husband, desired his neighbor's vineyard and his beautiful plants and shrubbery and his wonderful garden.

She made a scheme to kill that man and take his vineyard and give it to Ahab. The sin was in the plan. It was in the scheme.

Yes, it was a sin to have that covetousness in the heart, but she schemed it. Jezebel is a schemer, has to do with money, materialism, me-ism, everything that God despises. Jezebel represents everything that schemes and robs from his widows, from the poor, from the body of Jesus Christ, who come as angels of light to deceive, who have a gospel that's 95% pure, but the 5% of poison destroys and seduces the body of Christ.

And most of them end up in New York City, in Madison Square Garden. Now, folks, I don't want any reaction from you, please, for the next five minutes, but I'm on a mission from heaven. Some of you dear people sit in front of a television set, and the fornication mentioned here has nothing to do with sex.

The fornication here and the food that is offered to idols has to do with the message that you eat. It's what you eat, the sound that you hear from these men, prosperity preachers, who will take any dime, last dime, from a widow. You hear this, the fornication caused them to fornicate means that you give yourself, you sit under their teaching, you sit under their message, and you feed on this, and you become a part of this.

It is a bonding, it's a yoking of the flesh, flesh to flesh, spiritual fornication. And some of you come to this church and you hear a pure word from God, and sometimes we don't know why you don't grow. Some of you have heard the message, sitting here for 10 years, and you haven't grown.

And the reason is because you have been sitting, listening to somebody on television feed your soul, all of this stuff, all of this fornicating stuff that comes from the very pits of the wicked one. How many of you have slipped away when these evangelists, you've heard the pastors with tears stand in this pulpit and beg and plead with you that you have discernment. And here's what Jesus is saying to this church, this church with good people, good people, they're not backslidden people, they're wonderful people, they give you anything, they're loving people, they have faith, but they have this little attraction for the big show.

They've got this attraction, there's something inside saying, oh, you've got to hear this man. And I see people come, they want to hand me tapes, and I'm thinking if they're handing me tapes, how many are they passing around the church? Be careful, saints, they're sad with love, be careful anybody brings you a book or a tape or anything from any evangelist, television or otherwise, bring in the pastor and get it checked out. What a dangerous thing.

And you go, you slip off to Madison Square Garden, or you slip off because there's some healing events, there's somebody in town. Now, not all healing events are under this indictment, not at all. But when a man stands and tells the whole United States in one of his meetings, I curse any man or preacher who stands against my ministry, I curse him.

When a man stands before the people on television and says, Jesus Christ has told me that one day he's personally going to attend and be in one of my meetings. That's blasphemy. That is the doctrine of demons.

And yet you sit there and you say, this sounds good, it looks good, it looks like people are being healed and you are being fornicated with. You're into fornication, spiritual fornication, because you don't have the discernment, because you see the big shot. And one recent evangelist that was here, I get a call from a pastor who worked with him and said, Brother Dave, you should have been here this morning.

God came down and we raised two million dollars. I said, I don't want to talk about it. He said, I don't want to talk to him.

And we are under an obligation before a holy God to warn you. And I say it with tears and brokenness. There's a lack of discernment all over the body of Jesus Christ.

And you've been better taught than that. You've been better taught. Folks, they're in and out of town.

We're here and we stay with you through the tears and the brokenness. We stay with you. I've been here 16 years now.

We don't have any plans of running from you. We're shepherds. Folks, hold it, hold it.

He said to the pastor, you tolerate allowing your people to slip off to meetings of false prophets, evangelists who practice divination, making merchandise in my people. Every time you go to them, come on, tell me the truth. How much time did you listen to them raising money? How much you've ever heard about raising money in this church? What did you hear today about raising money? You didn't hear a word.

We trust God for our money. And dear sister, we don't want your rent money. We don't want the food money belongs to your kids.

Jesus said, I've been patient with these false prophets and teachers and evangelists. I gave them warning time to repent and they've refused. Behold, I'll cast her into a bed.

He's talking about when he talks about her, it's a whole system, this whole Jezebel system, going to cast it into a bed of affliction. He said, I'm going to deal with it. And he's doing that right now.

Many have been exposed already. Oh, I remember letters that God had me write to famous evangelists, warning them, pleading, you're robbing widows. God's going to expose it.

And then wait and watch and see it all come down. God said, I'm going to cast you into a bed of affliction. And you say, what harm is it to just go and listen? Well, let me tell you what the Bible says.

I will cast her into a bed of affliction and them that commit adultery with her will go into great tribulation. God said, you're in bed with fornicators. He said, and I'm going to cast both the evangelist, the false teacher, the false prophet, and those who support them, those who are into it, those who are part of this whole system into tribulation, great tribulation.

That's a powerful warning. That's not my warning. That's from Christ who stands before John with flaming eyes.

He said, I examine and I search the hearts. And something Ezekiel said stirred my heart. And I've seen this every time people get involved.

He said, you are going to end up, and he uses the word stronger than I have to use it in public. He said, you're going to lay down in front of every passerby. He said, you will lay down to submit fornication to every passerby.

In other words, you won't be satisfied with one. You're going to run all over the country and around the world. You're going to lay down in front of every passerby.

And I've seen that happen. You get into that. My heart bleeds for them.

And Christ spoke to that same church, to those who were not involved in this Jezebel seduction. There were those who were steady, well-grounded saints with true discernment who could see through the flesh. And here's what the scripture said.

And those who have not this doctrine, verse 24, those who have not this doctrine and have not known the depths of Satan. You know what Christ is saying? These men are taking my people that are seduced into the very depths of Satan. Depths of Satan.

He said, but you that have not been seduced, I want to talk to you. He says, I want you just to hold steady. I have no other obligation.

I have no burden to lay upon you. He says very quickly that which you have already hold fast till I come. He said, you have learned discernment.

You can't be twisted and pulled by every wind and wave of doctrine that comes down the turnpike. You are steady. You are part of a body in Jesus Christ.

And you know what is evil and you know what is righteous. And he said, hold steady now. I don't have any burden to put upon you now, but just hold it till I come.

Don't let anyone deceive you. That's my cry for you today. Don't let anybody deceive you.

Glory to Jesus. We come now finally to the Laodicean condition. Revelation 3. I begin to read verse 14.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, these things saith the man, the faithful, true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. I know thy works, that thou were neither cold or hot, and would thou were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold or hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

Because you say I'm rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched, miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.

Anoint thy eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous and therefore repent.

Behold the door, I stand at the door, and knock many men open. When men hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and will sup with him and he with me. Now, my question is, how can a whole church wind up, in Christ's own words, miserable, wretched, poor, blind, and naked, and not know it? I think a blind man would know he's blind.

I would think a naked man who has no clothes would know he's naked. This is an amazing thing. He says, you don't know what's happened to you.

You're totally blind. And that blindness has caused the lukewarmness. He said, you have changed and you don't know that you're changing.

You don't know. Oh, I love to hear people say, I know I'm changing. I'm not what I was last year because I'm growing in Christ.

That's one thing. The other side of the coin is they'd be blind to the fact that you're not where you were last year. In fact, you are now into the whole area of lukewarmness and you don't know it because you still think you're hot.

And he said, you're naked and you don't know it. And the Greek root word is, strip the resources. He said, I've had to strip your resources because my resources, my strength, my power, my might, my glory is given only to those who have a need, who know it, and call out of their need to me.

He said, it's a need. And you've lost the sense of need. You say, I'm rich and increased with goods.

This is the American church per se. This is the American gospel. This is a capitalistic society.

And capitalism says you grow or you die. In other words, expand. If you don't expand, you'll lose.

That's the American enterprise. That's all right for business, but that's infiltrated the church of Jesus Christ. Now we've got a capitalistic Christianity.

Now it's all about growth, grow or die. It's not about brokenness anymore. It's not about the old rugged cross anymore.

It's about how many people do you have in your congregation? Rich, increased with goods, and that increase means numbers as well. Oh, you're increased in anyone without discernment. What a powerful church.

And the Lord comes as a searcher of men's hearts. And he says, you don't know what's happened to you. You're wretched and miserable.

What he's doing is prophesying the end of what happens. This is where it all ends up. This nakedness without resources where a man thinks he can do it on his own.

He doesn't need to pray anymore. He doesn't need the old-fashioned kind of gospel that convicts you of sin. And now they go to a nice church where they get a few little tidbits, short message, one hour service, Sunday morning, and that's all.

That's it. You can see him lined up for miles, getting into these churches, this capitalistic Christianity, and it's a 15-minute message on how to cope with life's problems, how to be patient, how to love your family. All wonderful truth.

You can get it from any psychologist. Same thing. You add a few Jesus words to it and make it sound palatable to the church.

And God says, I'm sick of that. I'm sick of that. Folks, we are bent on backsliding by human nature.

And we have to have the piercing gospel. We have to have the searching eyes of this flaming fire, of the eyes of Jesus Christ at all times. I pray every time I sit here, every time a pastor or a visiting pastor gets up, I say, oh, God, search me.

There's some things that I may not know if I'm blind. I plead with God every day. I plead with Jesus last night.

If there's anything hidden in my life that I don't know, if there's anything that I'm blind to, you've got to show me. You owe it to me, Lord. Show me.

There may be things in my heart that I don't see. Now, he's not just probing, looking for something. I don't live under that kind of torment.

Not at all. But I say, oh, God, if here's a church, a whole church that you love and they're totally blind, they're charitable, but they have no sense of need. And what the Lord is saying, whom I love, I chasten and reprove.

And what he's saying, I'm going to create some situations in your life now. I'm going to bring some chastening into your life so that I can create a need because I can only give my resources to those who are in need. You don't need to pray anymore.

You don't need to give them quality time. You're going to balance it with good works. No.

He said this is all about something with me. It's all about that knock on the door and my voice saying, I need you. I want time with you.

And when he says in this 18th verse, counsel to buy of me gold that may be rich in white raiment. Folks, don't look at some deep theological thing there. Don't try to explain all that.

That's just the Lord saying, I have all the resources you need. I've got the glory. I've got the anointing.

I have the strength of power. I've got everything you need. But if you're just I'm calling, I'm begging, I'm pleading give.

And I'm going to tell you, this is the coin. Bible says, Isaiah said, you come and buy without money, but there is a price. And I'll tell you what it is.

Nothing more, nothing less than quality time. That's your purchasing power. He says, I'm at the door and I'm knocking.

You see, and I'm going to close with this. No, I'm just going to close for you. Listen, here's what I've seen in the spirit.

With this I close. Standing here right now, I have names that are just clicking in my mind. The people I know over the years who are now settled in, either don't go to church at all anymore because they say I can't find a church.

So they've just given up and they're backslidden, absolutely indifferent, lukewarm. No, they don't smoke, drink, curse, carouse, but they have no more intimacy with Christ. And then I have others that I know that used to come to this church and sit under that preaching and they were so on fire.

They couldn't wait to get back. They would sit in church and the next week get the tape that was preached on Sunday morning and listen to it again going home the next service. On the car, in the car.

And now you see them occasionally Sunday morning they come. God help Times Square Church if it becomes just a Sunday morning church. God help us.

I don't believe it ever will happen. Not with the pastors you have sitting here. Never.

But you see, that's what happens when they settle down and they're changed. I meet them and they're changed and they don't know it. They still think I'm the same old man.

I'm the same woman. I'm on fire for God. I love the Lord.

And they don't spend any time with the Lord. They've changed and they don't know it. Oh, what a terrible place to be.

But oh, thank God for the love Jesus has for his church and the love he has for his pastors that he just keeps coming. Remember, it's not just a knock, but it's a voice. Anyone who hears my voice and hears my knock, if you just open up, I will sup with him.

That is fellowship. Fellowship. And out of that fellowship comes all the ministries to the poor, to the needy, hospitals, jails, all.

It has to come out of that supper time with the Lord. I preach the message here called feeding Christ, where that's his food when you allow him to talk to you, where you just sit in his presence. And folks, I've been tested on that.

I've had times where I've spent so much time alone with the Lord. And I said, Lord, is this really true that you want me to sit here and wait on you and give you quality time? And I just wait. Wouldn't that be easy for the enemy to come in and speak or my flesh to take on the voice of the spirit? The Lord said, no.

He said, if your heart is open to me, just ask me now to put the wall of fire around you. The enemy doesn't know he cannot come in. I'll not let you be deceived.

I will not deceive you or let you be deceived. You will not hear strange voices, but giving him that time. And that's what it's all about.

After over 50 years of preaching, if I was to distill everything I've ever learned in 50 years of preaching and walking with God, it has to be this. My time with Jesus. Quality time.

Quality time every day. Just loving him. And then sitting and waiting until he speaks his mind.

That's when the revelation, that's when he'll come and reveal these things. That's when he'll search you. And he does it with such love because he says, I want you to be, I want you to be that lamp stand.

I want you to be that testimony. Stand with me, please. You may be one that has to acknowledge this morning.

Something you said, Pastor Dave, just like an arrow into my innermost being. You know, the Holy Ghost has been searching you this morning, your heart. You love the Lord, busy for him, but you've been drifting.

You've been drifting. You're really not where you were. It's not where you want to be with him.

There's been a drift. I want anyone who's backslidden in your heart and willing to acknowledge that. Anyone here that's not right with God.

You are not intimate with Christ. You may not be angry at him, but you don't have intimacy with Christ. You don't know what it's like to be intimate with him.

You've never, some of you have never walked down an aisle. You've never come forward like this in any church, any meeting before. But the Lord wants to change your heart.

He wants to leave this building changed so that you're not going to go on just like you were. There has to be a confession for sin, something that may have a hold of your heart. I want you to get out of your seat.

It always amazes me how quickly God responds to a cry and a need. He responds immediately. It's not some long, drawn out thing.

It's instant. He comes. He said, call and I'll answer.

And by your coming forward, it's a cry. Lord, here I am. My heart's reaching out to you.

Oh, God, melt my heart and break me. Look at me, please. You know what he said? The scripture says, to this one while I looked.

And that's a broken heart and a contrite spirit. A brokenness, a yieldedness, a willingness to say, Jesus, I've got to have you. It's not money that I need, though I need that as well.

And it's not a husband or wife or a friend. I need you first and most of all. I need you.

I need you present in my life. I need to know when I walk on the subway and walk into my job that you're with me, your presence is with me. And I'm walking with you.

It has to do with your walk and your talk. And the change that will happen if you mean it from your heart, to confess your heart and believe with your mouth. Most of you that are here know what to do.

You've done it. But this morning, when you do it from the heart, when you do it with a cry that says, Jesus, I don't ever want to be lukewarm. I'd rather be cold than if I can't be hot.

I'd rather be cold, I prefer that state than the lukewarmness. At least when you're cold, you have a quicker chance of facing your need. I'm going to pray for you.

Then I'm going to ask you to have you pray with me first. Just close your eyes so you're not looking at other people. Pray this prayer with me from your heart.

Dear Jesus, I do need you. I know that deep in my heart, there's a cry that no one can help, no one can answer but you, Jesus. And I stand here in your holy presence, asking you to forgive me for trying to work it out myself and leaning on friends and people instead of you.

Now I come to you, Jesus, cleanse my heart. I trust you to forgive me and love me and search me and find any wicked thing and I give it to you. Thank you for loving me and searching me.

I give all that I am, all that I have, and the best I know how, here and now, in Jesus' name. Would you just thank him now? Now let me pray for you. Lord, I pray for those who came forward and those in the congregation, in the annex, the overflow rooms, and here in the main auditorium.

Oh, holy Christ. Christ, the son of the living God. How dependent we are on you.

We're dependent. Lord, I hear your voice saying, I want to be with you. I want time with you.

I want to sup with you. I want to dine with you. I'm knocking.

Lord, that's what the whole message is about, just the knocking and the crying of the heart of Jesus, saying, I have everything you need if you just give me your time. Look at me, please, before you go. Would you make up your mind right now? This is strictly something you can do.

You have the power to do it. You don't need to be super endued from the Holy Ghost to do this. You can do this by your own human will.

You can set your heart right now to give God time, to give Christ time and go. If all you can start is 15 minutes a day, it's not one of those prayers as you walk. Prayer on the subway, that's fine.

You do that too. But I'm talking about shutting yourself away. Find a place alone, if you can, and spend a time just talking to him.

Please don't ask for a season. Don't ask for anything. Because if you get close to him, he said, I'm more willing to give you or to receive.

He said, I know before you ask. I know what you're going through, but I just want fellowship with you right now for a season. I want you to love me.

Then after we've stopped together and you let me talk to you, then ask for the city, ask for the nations, ask for what you will. But I need to just talk to you. Get close to Jesus.

That's the whole thing. I thank God for that. Hallelujah.

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