

God Is Trying to Get at That Thing in You

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson emphasizes God's relentless pursuit of our hearts and the call to respond to His transformative work amidst the ruins of our lives and churches.

Duration: 1:01:32

Scripture: Deuteronomy 11:18, Daniel 9:10, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 6:14, Ephesians 5:11, James 4:4, 1 John 2:15-17

Topics: "Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher, inspired by the Spirit of God, reveals the reason for the ruin of the city. He explains that sin was the cause, specifically the mixing of the holy seed with the world and its system. The preacher then shares his personal journey of searching his heart and realizing that God is going after something in him. He emphasizes the importance of repentance and turning away from sin, particularly the sin of being tied to the world. The preacher believes that God is giving America a little time and space to repent, but expresses concern over the nation's failure to address issues like abortion.

Transcript

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None of these messages are copyrighted and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to your friends. ...in the congregation. So I really start searching my heart.

And it was all week long. I finally didn't know what to entitle this message, but what God first told me, I'm going after something in you. So that's what we're going to preach about.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, You are going after something. You want us.

You love us so much. You're digging down deep. Oh Holy Spirit, I stand here now as your servant, one of the shepherds of this flock, and I pray that you give us power and authority over every evil spirit, every wild spirit, everything that's unlike you.

I take the dominion, the authority of the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory. Lord, I pray the message tonight will have the unction, the anointing, that it will pierce and convict and it will heal and encourage. Lord Jesus, we thank you that we don't have to be afraid when we sit under the Word because our hearts

are open.

Truly open to you. Hallelujah. Now Lord, dig down deep.

Go to the very depths of our soul tonight. Lord, we are honestly hungry for your truth. Lord, we tremble at your Word.

We really tremble at your Word. Holy Spirit, come on man, anoint me. Give me strength.

The power of Jesus Christ, the anointing of the Holy Ghost. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Many great lessons can be learned by studying the history of Israel. You know that. And they're examples to us, the Bible said, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

There are examples. Now, for 23 years, Jeremiah stood before Israel and said, God's going to judge you and you're going into captivity to Babylon for 70 years. 70 years.

And I want you to listen to their response to this prophet. I want you to go to 2 Chronicles 36 and we're going to start reading at the 14th verse. Now remember, for 23 years, this message has been preached.

A lot of people say, well, Brother Wookson, you wrote a book, The Vision. There are a number of things they haven't fulfilled yet. Here's a man who prophesied for 23 years and nobody would listen.

23 years, this message went out and here's their response. Moreover, all the chief of the priests... Verse 14. Moreover... This is 2 Chronicles 36 chapter.

Moreover, all the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen and polluted the house of the Lord which He had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers rising up early betimes and sending because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God.

That's especially Jeremiah. In fact, they had four prophets. They had Haggai, they had Zechariah, and they had Ezra and Nehemiah.

They mocked the messengers of God and despised His words and misused His prophets until the wrath of the Lord rose against His people till there was none... till there was no remedy. Therefore He brought upon them the king of the Chaldees who slew their young men with a sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion upon young men or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age. He gave them all into His hand.

And all the vessels of the house of God great and small and the treasures of the house of the Lord all them He brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God. They break down the wall of Jerusalem and burn all the palaces thereof with fire and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

And them that had escaped from the sword carried He away to Babylon where they were servants to Him and His sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia. Let me stop right there. This is their answer.

They turned down the prophets and they did go into exile for 70 years. For 70 years they're in exile. And when the 70 years are fulfilled and I'm going to go through it very fast to set the stage.

After 70 years the prophet Daniel stood up and he began to prophesy among the people. And in 2 Chronicles 36 22 and 23 you find out that at the end of 70 years God's always on time. I'll tell you folks God has a time clock.

He never misses a moment. He never misses a moment. Every judgment, everything God does is on His calendar and on His clock and He never misses a beat.

At the end of 70 years, verse 22. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia this is the end of the 70 years that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia. He made a proclamation throughout all of His kingdom and put it also in writing and said Cyrus king of Persia all the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me and He hath charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem which is in Judah.

Who is there among you of all the people? The Lord His God be with you and let Him go up. Now this invitation was to everybody. He invited all the Jews that had been assimilated in Babylon for 70 years to go on up to the land.

But the majority of the Jews adapted to the way of the Babylonians they went to their idolatry and they sought after the easy life in Babylon and they rejected the word come out of her my people that you may not be partakers of her sins that you receive not of her plagues. Cyrus declared who is there among you? Let Him go up. God had stirred His heart just on time.

Now every generation has had the spirit of God stirring up a remnant. God has always had a remnant from cover to cover in this book and we I believe are in the last remnant. But God that remnant is not some special people who are super saints.

When I talk about a remnant I talk about a people wholly devoted to Jesus Christ who are walking in His righteousness who have been detached from this world wholly given to the heart of Christ and the Lord has always had a remnant. He stirs up this remnant and I'll tell you I believe this stirring is happening right now it's happening in China it's happening in Eastern Europe and all the communist countries. In fact today the leadership of Russia including Gorbachev has almost come to the conclusion that glasnost and perestroika has failed and it's torn apart the Russian Empire.

It's a confession. And how could that happen? God is stirring up hearts. God is moving things apart.

He's torn down the iron curtain the bamboo in China comes down next because God is stirring up. The Holy Spirit is making a proclamation those among you this day who have been stirred in your heart go out of Babylon get out of that go into the fullness of Jesus Christ you'll be revived and you'll be restored. And this was the message.

There's a revival coming there's a restoration a true restoration of a holy remnant but you have to get out of Babylon. Now this restoration that we're going to flip the page to Ezra and we're going to study the book of Ezra tonight and I'm not I'm going to try to just hit the high points but all what precious lessons there are in this book of Ezra. I believe Ezra, Nehemiah are the books of restoration and revival.

All right, let me start with some of the lessons that I see and want to share with you. Now, you know that 42,360 people only represented the remnant. Out of all of those 70 years and they had large families I don't know how many there were left in Babylon but the scripture says that only a holy seed of remnant left Babylon.

They had something in their hearts yet. Now this is a new generation many of the old generation have died off. This is a new generation they've heard their fathers talk about it.

There's still a few princes left. There are a few who saw the glory of a former time a former temple in Jerusalem. And 42,360 people head for Jerusalem.

They head back to Judah and Jerusalem. What a picture! Now listen, here's the first lesson. They were delivered out of Babylon into a scene of ruin.

That must have been quite a sight. 42,360 people approaching Judah. They come to the border of Judah and these people have been delivered.

They're out of Babylon. They have a heart for God. And in fact, these people had to pray that God protect them from the robbers and the thieves that were hiding behind all the roads and all the bushes.

And they were not attacked. They believed God for protection. And they entered the land and Judah is in ruin.

There's famine. The wells are covered and dry. The walls are down everywhere.

The houses are abandoned. And the only ones there are the Samaritans a mixed group from various lands that the kings of the empire had taken out Israel and put in others who later became the Samaritans. Called the Samaritans.

And there was nothing left when they came into Judah. It was ruin everywhere. There were no houses to be occupied.

The vineyards were dead. The limbs were dry. The fields were unplowed.

There were no seeds. The trees were ruined. There was nothing but ruin everywhere they looked.

But the hard spot, wait till we get to Jerusalem. And what a sight it must have been when that remnant approached, came over the hill and looked at a city of ruin. There's nothing there.

The walls are down. The walls are laying crumbled. The temple, that once glorious temple is leveled to the ground.

The palaces, everything Solomon built is gone. The walls are gone. The wells are dry.

Total ruin. Can you imagine the people and all the children looking around and they're walking in the piles of sifting sand and ruin. Everywhere they look there's ruin.

And can you just hear some of them say, we have been delivered from Babylon for this? We're brought into a scene of ruin. Now I tell you folks, there's a great truth that's going to bear witness to many of you in this place tonight. What happened when God called you out of a Babylonian system? You were in a Babylonian church system maybe.

You were in a system where there was corruption. The Lord stirred your heart. And God told you that there's a remnant He's raising up in the land.

And God began to attach you to the true body of Jesus Christ. And the first place the Holy Ghost will take you when you leave Babylon is to a scene of ruin. He'll open your eyes.

He'll give you discernment. And you'll see in the church, you'll see in the religious system ruin like you never saw before. You never saw it before because your eyes weren't open.

You were still in Babylon. It's when you leave Babylon that God opens your eyes. And then you begin to see all of the ruin that you never saw before.

You see the hype. You see the entertainment. You see the stinking professionalism in the house of God.

You see sleepy, lazy Christians you never saw before. You look inside your own heart and you see filth you never saw before. You see ruin.

When God first began to stir my heart a number of years ago, I was a part of that system. And I'm not knocking any church. It's a whole worldly system that's crept into every church.

All around the world. And when I first got so excited about Jesus, He began to have me look inside. He took me to my Jerusalem.

And He took me to that temple that had fallen. This is the temple. And I saw the ruin in this temple.

You see the people saying, there was a time there was a temple here. And there was such glory they couldn't even stand to minister. It's all gone.

It's dead. It's dry. It's empty.

You can go to many churches and say that the glory of the Lord used to be in this denomination. The glory of the Lord used to be with His people. He's departed.

Now there's nothing but ruin. The walls are down. The demon powers are in.

You see the ruin. When I first came into a closer walk with Jesus. And I said, I'm not going to preach sermons anymore.

I want to know the heart of Jesus. And I began to seek the Lord. I took a year off and began to pray and seek God.

And folks, I thought, well, now that I've been delivered and God really delivered me from many of my freshly ways. I'm still working and He's going to dig tonight while I'm preaching. But I tell you what, I thought, man, everybody be excited.

I was seeing things and you go and talk to some people out there, they don't know what you're talking about. And there were many people in Jerusalem I know that day said, this is hopeless. This is hopeless.

There's no hope. There's no hope. And many of those people, in fact, the majority of them evidently took off and did their own little thing.

They went out and built their own little houses and they said, I don't want to be a part of any body anymore. I don't want to be a part of this thing. There's too much ruin.

There's too much death. There's destruction everywhere. Some of these remnant souls started to go it alone.

They went off. And they started building their own houses and putting up their own roofs. And God sent Haggai, the prophet, and he had a stinging rebuke.

They had been sent there to build something. The remnant was to rise up and build. Now they're off.

Everyone's out building their own house. No one's touching Jerusalem. The foundation is still there.

They've given up too much ruin. The prophet Haggai comes along, Haggai 1, 4, and says, is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your roofed houses, and this my house lie waste? You see, God doesn't deliver us out of a Babylonian system for us to go and do it alone and give up on the true church. He doesn't allow you to go out with your little family, your few little friends, and start your own little thing over here and forget the whole body of Jesus Christ, the body that's in China and Africa and India, all united at the head through Jesus.

Jesus the head. You've got to see the church. There is a true church.

It's not an organized church. It's the invisible body of Jesus on this earth. Pure and precious.

Haggai said, you run every man to his own house, while my house lies in waste. You see, the Lord Jesus is building a house right now. He's building one right here in New York City.

He's going to do it as in the past with a holy remnant, willing to work and clean up the mess. Did you hear what I said? Willing to work and clean up the mess. Go you to the mountain, bring wood, and build my house, and I'll be glorified, saith the Lord.

There comes a time you have to get your eyes off the ruin and get your eyes on what God's eternal purpose is. You know, Zerubbabel could have walked all through there, day after day, week after week, month after month, with his hands behind him in despair, saying the ruin, the ruin, it's awful. It's hopeless, it's hopeless.

And folks, I came to that place almost. God spared me. I saw so much ruin, preached so much about the ruin, and I'll never stop talking about the backsliding and the compromise in the house of God.

But there comes a time you can't just preach about the ruins. You have to get out of that, quit talking about it, quit thinking about it, and get into the heart of Jesus about what he wants to do in building a new body, a true church of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah.

You know, they looked around and they began to dig and start to come back to the house of God and think of God's purpose for them, and God sent them a message. He said, Be strong and work, all ye people of the land, for I am with you. This is Haggai 2, 3 to 9. Just listen.

Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? But once more I will shake the heavens and the earth. I will fill this house with glory. The glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord.

Now, the prophet Haggai is not talking about that second temple being built there. That's not it. The prophets, even Jesus said, speaking of our days since his time, since the birth of Jesus, this wonderful

hour of grace, he said the prophets yearn to see what you see and what you hear.

They would love to have your discernment. They would like to know what you know. All of their lifetime they were looking in trying to figure out what is God saying.

They prophesied to this generation. Haggai didn't know he was talking about another house. He's talking about the house that Jesus is building.

This latter house, this Jesus house with him at the head is going to have greater glory than every preceding house. That which is built on Jesus Christ the solid rock. He said I'm going to shake everything and be shaken.

And I'll fill this house with glory and the glory of the latter house will be greater than of the former, said the Lord. Hallelujah. He was prophesying to us.

Now, first thing they do is to build an altar in the midst of all the rubbish and the ruin. Go to Ezra 3, please. Third chapter of Ezra.

Now remember, the land is full of violence, robbers and thieves hiding everywhere. There are ominous threats on all sides. Ezra 3, 1 to 7 When the seventh month was come and the children of Israel were in the cities the people gathered themselves together as one man in Jerusalem.

Then stood up Jeshua, the son of and his brethren, the priest. Skip over to verse 3 And they set up the altar upon his bases, or the foundation for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries, and they offered burnt offerings thereunto the Lord, even burnt offerings morning and night. There was something happened Look at me, please.

These people had been busy doing their own thing. And God says No, I want to do something corporately. I want to do something with the body.

And he put it in their heart all of them to return to the city of Jerusalem, and they came from all of their settlements, and they gathered here in Jerusalem now. And they set up the altar, for fear was upon them because of the people. Drop everything, and get to the altar with the child of the Holy Ghost.

Drop everything, and get to the altar. Now, the altar, you know, represents the place where the Lord's presence is manifested. It's the assembly of true believers who corporately say, I give my body to you as a living sacrifice.

Beloved, God cannot reach his eternal purpose if everybody's going out, doing his own thing and not seeing the connection, one with another, those who have the same mind of Christ. He's trying to bring a people together, who think the same way in Christ, who speak the same language, and it's all Christ. He's building a people on that.

And he couldn't do anything it would continue to lie in ruins until they all came, and there was a cry in their heart. Drop everything, get to the altar. And brother, sister, if that's not in your heart, you won't understand what I'm saying.

If your interest come before the interest of the body of Jesus, now this church, this is a theater, there's no magic in this theater, no spiritual power in this theater, only what we have within us. We could be worshipping out in Central Park, there'd be just as much power. So God's not looking at buildings, per se,

physical buildings.

He's looking at these bodies of ours. But when we get together, when a true people who have a heart set on the Lord, they're tired of hype and entertainment and foolishness and they want God to cleanse them and sanctify them, and they believe God's word that it's possible to live an overcoming life in these last days, amidst all the ruin. But you see, it'll never happen until there's an attachment to this altar, until there's a willingness to build this altar.

And I'll tell you what God has done right in the middle of the ruin and the trash and the rubbish of Times Square. He has had a people to raise up an altar. They have dropped everything.

I'll tell you what, when I came to New York City, I'd tell you, and I know it for all the other pastors and staff, we dropped everything. We dropped our schedules, we dropped any attachment to any other call or any other place or any other people, because God said, go. I'll tell you what, I've been in this city you know, 27 years before, and well 30 years now, but I saw 27 years of ruin, and God said, let's go build an altar where the presence of the Lord Jesus can be manifested.

These people knew if they built the altar, the blood would be shed, and they knew there was shelter in the blood. And the Lord said to us, go, raise up an altar where people can gather and worship. They said they did it because of the fear of the people around them.

And they didn't build a fortress, they built an altar. We don't need a fortress mentality. We have a few preachers in this town, in this city, Pentecostal preachers, running around with guns on their hips, and guns underneath their thing, and bodyguards.

They're building fortresses. Why would I want a fortress? Why would I want a gun when I've got an angel walking with me? That's silly. And it's a lack of faith.

None of these preachers ever planned, no matter how wicked and violent and desperate this city gets, none of these pastors ever intend to carry a gun. Now I'm not going to preach against your guns and rifles. Probably not.

But you see, the Lord has a message for people who put their own interests first rather than the house of God. And I'll tell you what, the surest evidence of being a part of the Holy Remnant in this last day, the surest evidence is this urgency to drop everything and go with God's people to the altar. I don't mean this down here, but I mean this is the whole body, this is the altar.

This is where the Lord's presence is manifested. He manifests through holy people. Separated people.

He manifests His presence. I want to come here more than anything else. I want to be here to be with this body because there's fear, anxiety all around us, and there's shelter here at the blood.

The precious blood of the Lamb. Because we have this corporate confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ that He's going to keep us. And we've had hundreds of people tell us as soon as you walk in the doors, out of the wickedness and the ruin outside, there's a peace in here.

Just an absolute peace. The Lord has shed forth His light in His presence in this house. But Haggai says to you, consider your ways.

You've sown much, but you bring in little. You eat, but you don't have enough. You drink, but you're never filled.

You clothe yourself, but you're never warm. And you put your wages into a bag with holes in it. You look for much, and it comes to little.

And what you do bring in, I blow on it. Because you run to your own houses, and you leave my house in waste. See what happens when you don't put God first? See what happens when you don't put His house and His work and His body first? And what is the body of Jesus? It's you.

It's me. We are the body of Christ, and He's the head. We are the visible body of Christ on this.

The only Christ anybody's going to see is what there is in you and me. It's the reflection of Jesus in us. We're not little Christ.

He is the Christ. We're reflections of the Christ. We reflect His glory.

But He said, if you don't, and you're going to put your own interest first, what's going to happen to you, you're going to sow a lot, and you're going to bring in little, you're going to eat and never have enough, and you're going to drink and not be filled. This is spiritually. You'll close and never be warm, and you're going to put your wages into a bag with holes in it.

Some of you have that bag. You've got a big hole in your bag. Everything you put in there disappears.

I'm not talking about unpaid bills. There's a deep principle here in the Word of God. It said, you look for much, and it comes to little.

When you bring it in, I just blow upon it, and because you run to your own house, you leave my house in waste. This also teaches us, the altar teaches us, another distinguishing mark of the Holy Remnant is a growing desire to worship, to truly worship. Oh, everything that God's been doing in this church.

This is the one thing I value as much as anything, and it's that growing desire for people just to sit in His presence and worship. After this service tonight, we're going to do just that. After the altar call and everything, we're just going to worship.

Sometimes we're here 15 minutes, half an hour. Sometimes we've been here a whole hour just worshiping in the Lord. But that's the distinguishing mark of a remnant people.

They have this desire to worship. They don't want to come and just be spoon-fed. They don't want to be entertained.

They want to worship. They love the Word, and they tremble at it, but they want to lift their hands and their heart, and they truly are worshipers. The remnant are worshipers.

True worshipers. Alright, the second lesson I want you to see. God sent His remnant, a precious reviving.

I know I'll show you how it comes. Go to Ezra the 6th chapter, please. Ezra the 6th chapter.

Are you getting any of this yet? Well, I'm going to keep hitting it until you get something. Ezra 6th chapter, verses 15 and 16. And this house was finished on the third day of the month, Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

And the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with what? With joy. With joy. Hallelujah.

Now look at me, please. There are two things that accompany all true restoration revival. Number one, a grief and bliss over sin.

And secondly, that is followed by a great outpouring of joy sent directly from God. God baptizes a people with joy once they repent and have a total grief in their heart and a bliss over sin. You'll see it in this chapter so clear.

Oh, there came a revival of repentance. The people had mixed themselves. The holy seed had been mixed.

Go to Ezra, ninth chapter, please, and I'll show it to you. Ninth chapter of Ezra. I'm going to read the first four verses.

Now when these things were done, the princes came to me saying, the people of Israel and the priests, the Levites, have not separated themselves from the lands, doing according to their abominations, even the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and their sons so that the holy seed have mixed or mingled themselves with the people of those lands. Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers have been chief in this trespass.

And when I heard this thing, I wrapped my garment and my mantle, and I plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and I sat down astonished or confounded. And then were assembled unto me everyone that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away. And I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

Now listen closely. Ezra, by the Spirit of God, was shown the reason for all the ruin. He was shown the reason.

God said, the reason this city lies in ruins, the reason all of this happened is because there was sin. There was a mixture. The holy seed was mixed with the world and its system.

And judgment came as a result of it. Now I want you to know something, folks. Verse 5 and 8, read it with me.

And at the evening sacrifice I rose up from my heaviness and wrapped my garment and my mantle, and I fell upon my knees and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God. And I said, O my God, I'm ashamed and blushed to lift up my face to Thee. My God, for our iniquities are increased over our head.

Our trespass is grown up into the heavens. Since the day of our fathers, since we've been in a great trespass to this day, for our iniquities, have we, our kings, our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the land, to the sword, to captivity, to... This is the end of side 1. You may now turn the tape over to side 2. ...face as it is this day. And now, for a little space, grace has been showed from the Lord our God to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in His holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes and give us a little reviving in our bondage.

Now listen to me, please. God says I'm going to give you a little space, a little time to repent. I think New American Standard says for a brief time, grace will be shown.

Grace has been shown. God comes to a place of ruin, devastation, and He says this loud and clear. Listen to it, please.

He said, I'm going to give you a little time, a little space. And I believe this is the reason America has not gone down yet. God said, I'm going to give you a little time, a little space to look at your sins.

Brother and sister, I'm alarmed when I see that America, instead of turning to ... doing away with abortion, we are turning the other way. Even in the conservatives now, they're turning. The courts are turning all over the country, back, demanding abortion.

And when I see the trend, and I see the space and the time God has given us, we're in our eighth year of prosperity. Eighth year of unrivaled prosperity. And we all know the shoe's about to drop, and you wonder why.

And I think this explains, too, why God's pulling down the Iron Curtain. He's going to have a short period of time with special grace. A time for reviving.

I honestly believe with all my heart that this thing that's happening now won't last more than two or three years. I don't know. It's going to be a short time.

I would hope it could last more, said the Lord Terry. I don't know how long it will last, but He has opened the door, and there's a little space. He's going to give you space and time to repent.

And in that space and time, the prophet Ezra is saying the reason we've been spoiled and plundered and suffering like we have is because we've sinned against our God. We've sinned, but now we have a little time. He's given us a little space.

I tell you with all my heart, I have in me a sense right now, I've had it ever since we came to this city, that God's doing a quick work. He's doing a work. He's given time and space.

This church in Times Square could not have happened any other time. In His space and in His time and in His providence and in His timing, God told us, go to New York City, find and raise up a remnant, encourage them, build them up in Christ, and warn of coming judgments. Brother, sister, I see a remnant coming together, not just in this church, but in other churches.

You see it in China now. You see it all over America. There's a stirring.

It's not a big stirring, but there's a stirring among many pastors. They're beginning to preach holiness and righteousness. There's a hunger in the land this past two months.

Listen to me now. We have had in our Texas office 85,000 people write to us asking to receive our messages. That's on top of another quarter million on top of that already receiving them.

There's a hunger they express like I've never heard in all the 30 years of ministry. There's a cry for holiness and righteousness. I just, I received a call from a very well-known evangelist this past week, having a worldwide convention, said, Brother Dave, could you come in for two days and just preach holiness and repentance? He said, we're all beginning to see that the church must have time of

repentance.

Well, folks, that is not the message of this church. This message is Christ. But you can't get there but through repentance.

But you see, there's a little reviving. I don't see some world-sweeping revival that's going to sweep millions into the kingdom of God. I see a little space and just what he says here, and a little reviving in our bondage.

Hallelujah. A little time to leave a remnant. Now, where there's genuine repentance, God himself sends joy.

Look at chapter, go back to Ezra 6, and look at this with me, please. Ezra 6, 21. Ezra 6, 21 and 22.

And the, here's what happens when you repent and you lay down your sin. And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel. There's repentance.

They separated from the filthiness of the heathen to seek the Lord God of Israel. Did he? They kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful. Who did it? The Lord made them joyful and turned the heart of the king of Syria unto them to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

There it is. Repentance brings joy. People come to this church and they wonder why all the clapping, why all the singing, why all the happiness? Because it's inevitable when you truly repent and you do what they did.

They laid down their sins and they cried out to God and saw Him with all their hearts. God himself sends joy. You don't have to pump it up.

You don't have to work it up. I've been in churches where the pastor will say it's pretty good and he'll turn to his music director and say, can you liven this up a little bit? I've heard that over and over. Can't you liven this up? You don't have to liven anything up.

The Holy Ghost comes down and he brings the spirit of joy. Hallelujah. I've never been more joyful than when the Lord is purged and cleansed.

And I can look Jesus in the eye and say thank you Lord for your precious forgiveness. Alright, now I get to the heart of my message and I'm not going to preach a long time. Give me just 10-15 minutes more.

I'm going to take 10-15 minutes more. Now here's my point. Here's where God's heading with us tonight.

Listen closely please. Here's a revived, repentant, joyful remnant who still have a single tie to the world. And God in his mercy, he's just so loving, so full of loving kindness, so long suffering.

In his long suffering, he bore with these people, with this one thing that was left, the one thing that God's after. And it's a thing God's going to go after tonight. There were 99% separated from the heathen around them, but there was a single tie to the world remaining.

That single tie you'll find in the 10th chapter. That single tie. Strange wives.

We're going to talk about your strange wife. Seriously. Ezra 10.

Now when Ezra had prayed, when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children, for the people wept very sore. And Shekiniah, the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land. Yet now there's hope in Israel concerning this thing.

Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them according to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God. Let it be done according to the law. Arise, for this matter belongs unto thee.

We also will be of good courage, and do it. Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites and all of Israel, to swear that they would do according to this word, and they swear. Now look at me and follow me very closely now please.

God up to this point has been very, very patient. Now look at them. They've come out of Babylon, they've been delivered, they've had faith for all the promises of God.

I mean God fulfilled all the will of, in answer to their faith, He protected them. But I'll tell you, there was one thing still remaining. They were going through all of these religious exercises, they had their hearts full of joy that God had given to them, and God says, now that I've brought you out of Babylon, now that I've delivered you, and now that I see that you want to go on with me, and now that I've put my joy in your heart, and I've been very patient with you, now I want to get to the bottom.

Now I want to lay the axe to the root. I want to lay the axe to the root. You see, these men had been going to the religious services, they had been going about their duties arm in arm with alien wives.

Alien wives. Now I want you to, you know, this idea of getting rid of these wives and the children and sending them home, I read a liberal scholar yesterday, he said, this chapter, this episode in Ezra, of breaking up the families is abominable. He said, that's terrible.

He couldn't understand why God would want these families to be broken up. But I want to show you the mercy of God in that, first of all, before we go any further. Now remember, those heathen wives had no promise of eternal life, the only hope they had was to live more time here on earth and enjoy what they have here, that's all they have.

That's about what the world has out there. All they have is a little more time. So, if they had stayed married, I'll show you, they would have been destroyed along with Israel.

Their lives would have been destroyed by sending them home. At least they got what they could enjoy, a little more time. I believe it was an act of mercy, there's no question about it, but God was acting to keep intact His eternal purpose and that's a holy seed that's unmixed with this world.

Untied to this world. Now, with all my heart, I believe God put this inside of me and burned it in me to bring to you tonight. And I'm going to ask Him right now, the Holy Spirit, to give you a hearing ear and give me a voice of unction to preach it.

And I want you to follow me as I try to share with you what the Holy Spirit put in my heart. He knows that there's something in you, a form of compromise that could destroy you. He's not out arbitrarily just to keep digging and digging and digging because He enjoys it.

No, God wants to bring you into a place where there's freedom. The whole idea of God ministering to us with life and with reproof, loving reproof. And sometimes He said, whom He loves, He chastens.

And the purpose of the chasing and all of this grinding and working on us, this casting us into the refining fires is to get out the filth and the dirt to bring a pure body into the heart of Jesus. But I want to talk about that thing, that strange wife. Now, strange wife can be interpreted, anything that's alien in you in relation to the work of God.

In other words, anything that's out of character with the work of the Holy Spirit. Bob Phillips calls it the tracks of the Holy Spirit. That strange wife is that one thing in you.

Your strange wife or my strange wife is that one thing in us that God has still not gotten to. And I'll tell you what, He began to tell me over and over again, I heard it all week, and only till Friday night, late at night, I didn't see it. Because what I had been doing, making a list.

I'd been making a list. I said, well, Lord, what is that thing you're after? Could it be adultery? Do we have people in the church that, in spite of all of our preaching, are still slipping around in adultery? Is it fornication? Do we have people still rushing out of a meeting where the Holy Ghost comes down, and the presence of Jesus is so alive, and they walk out just dripping with the oil of the Holy Ghost, and go in and turn the knob, and sit and watch filth that comes right out of hell. Is that it, Lord? Could it be that we have some people in the body that are making friends with the enemies of God? In other words, they're too cozy with the world? Is it friendship with the world? And I started listing all these things.

I kept searching my heart, and I couldn't find it. I kept looking. I said, oh, God, search me, try me, see if there's been any wicked thing.

You told me you were trying to get at something in me. What is it? And I got so desperate, I just threw myself before God, and I said, oh, God, what are you saying? I know you're saying something to me and to the church tonight. What is it? God said, I want to show you what is behind it.

God said, I'm not after the fruit of disobedience. I want to get to the root of it, and I want to play the axe to the root and cut it off. You see, I was talking about the fruit of disobedience.

Adultery, fornication, lust, smoking, drinking, cursing, all of these things I could name. Those are the fruits of rebellion and disobedience. But there's a root to it.

There's a spirit behind it. And Bob started on it. I love how the Holy Ghost works.

Bob's last point this morning was that there's a spirit behind these things, and he stopped. Because God wanted to continue that, and God set the foundation forth this morning, if you were here. Behind it all is a spirit.

And the thing that God is after is that spirit that is in many of us yet. It's a spirit behind it. Why is it that these men in Israel, listen closely, why is it that in spite of the fact that they had four prophets screaming in their ears, they had Daniel giving them a stinging rebuke before they went out of Babylon.

Daniel said, We have sinned. We've done wickedly. We've departed from His precepts.

That's why we've been confused. Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His service to the prophets. They had these words of Daniel burning in their ears.

We have not believed His word. We've not accepted His word. They had in their possession the law of Moses.

They carried it with them everywhere they went. In fact, the scripture says they had completely ignored Deuteronomy 11, 18, and they had Deuteronomy. You shall lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul and bind them for a sign upon your hand that they may be frontless before your eyes.

God said, I want you to tell your children, your grandchildren, I want you to repeat it over and over again. I want you to tell them what I do. I'll bless them if they obey me, but I want you to tell them what I'll do if they disobey me.

They believed that one part. They believed everything about the blessings, and that's where the prosperity gospel has taken many in the church today. It's a one-sided faith.

They have faith to believe in the blessings, but they don't have faith to believe in the righteous judgments of God. Now, folks, there's a faith that goes with that. There's nothing could have been more clear in the law that they had.

They quoted it. I mean, they must have had discussion after discussion after discussion. They talked it.

They preached it. They knew it by heart. And here it was.

In fact, I'm quoting it to you just as they had it. Word for word, this is what Israel had with them. This is the law they carried.

When the Lord thy God shall bring you into the land, you shall make no covenant with them, you shall show no mercy to them, neither shall you make marriages with them, for they will turn away your sons from following me, that they might serve other gods. So the anger of the Lord be kindled against you and destroy you suddenly. Listen.

I read to you just a moment ago of Ezra when he found out that these princes and priests, the whole people had been carried away by this compromise. And I believe when Ezra, and this is only speculation, but I believe this is all my heart. I believe that when Ezra was pulling out his beard and his hair and he's on his face weeping and all the people that trembled at the word of God, I believe the word that made them tremble.

I believe he was quoting this. I believe he was crying these very words, Deuteronomy 7, 1-4. I believe he was saying this.

Lest the Lord destroy you suddenly. I believe he was crying it at the top of his voice. He'd stand and walk among the people preaching that message.

He was preaching this very thing. He said, you know it. You know it's wrong.

That thing is wrong. You have been delivered. You're not in Babylon.

You've been forgiven. I've been patient with you. I've put my joy in your heart, but now I want to get to the root of this because I can't build on this thing.

I can't build on a people until they get this out. How do they sin in the face of such a clear warning? The same way that we sin in the face of all the clear warnings because we have a full revelation now, more than they had and we still sin against it. That's why preachers can commit adultery along with congregations.

That's why people continue doing it because they really don't believe in the righteous judgments of God. And that spirit is a spirit of unbelief regarding the righteous judgments of God. They don't believe God means what he says.

And I'll tell you Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, they came with this message. Yes, God's promised to bless if we obey. And I get sick and tired of hearing people say that's an Old Testament message.

As if God was a God of mercy in the New Testament and not a God of mercy in the Old Testament. God was just as merciful in this Old Testament as he is in the New. He never changes.

He's a God of mercy, but he's also a God of righteousness. He's never changed. He said I'm the Lord that God and I change not.

In fact all of this, he brings this kind of a message because of his great mercy and love. Isn't it amazing? Delivered, forgiven, blessed, full of joy. Yet they're careless, frivolous, they're not serious because they're hugging something in their life yet they're hugging it.

I don't know what it is. It could be covetousness. It could be materialism.

It could be lust. It could be almost any of these things. They're still hugging it.

But what's the reason? Why is it still being hugged? Why is it still being clutched? Why does it still have the heart? Why? Bottom line. These men had faith to be protected, led, guided, blessed, joy. And when it came to hear about what God would do if you don't deal with that thing, well, I can't believe God's that way.

He's a God of love. God would never do that. Wipe us out.

Suddenly we've been in 70 years of oppressing and bondage. I can't serve a God like that. We have invented a God of pablum.

Candy cotton. A God who takes a brush and dips it in the blood of His own Son and just wipes everything out, no matter where your heart is, no matter where your will is, do as you please, just claim the blood. No, that's not what my Bible teaches.

No, He's going after a spirit. He's going after a spirit of unbelief. And I'll tell you what.

The day that hit me a number of years ago, I have never been the same. I have never ever been the same. The moment God spoke to me one day, I don't even remember where I was.

And I was reading about what God does to those who flaunt in His face after all of His mercies, His loving kindness, and His blessings, and His goodness, and His deliverances. And yet they continue in their sins, and then it suddenly hit me what God said He would do. And the fear of God came on me.

The fear of the Lord. I began to tremble at His Word, and I began to believe not only the blessings, I started believing the curses. I started believing it all, and I began to tremble at the Word of God.

And that's why I don't go when I go to a... into a motel. I don't go and turn on some R-rated movie. When I'm in a bookstore, I don't stand there and look at those R-rated or X-rated pictures, because there's a fear of God on me.

There's a holy fear of God on me. God means what He says. He said, set no wicked thing before your eyes.

How many, how many believe truly? Brother, please. Hold still for just a moment. I love you very much, but please hold still.

This message has to come. Listen. How many of you re-believe what He said? You shall bring no abomination into your house.

You shall abhor it, lest you become cursed with it. We don't believe that. And that's why we still have millions of Christians sitting around watching dirty movies or going to theaters and watching stuff that's made right out of hell.

They don't believe that, lest thou become cursed just like it. You become abomination just like it. Don't you know that there's a spirit in those things that'll leap right on you? You open up and you go, and that spirit there will leap on you.

He said, you'll become just like it. We don't believe that. That's why we sin.

That's why we don't deal with many of these things in our life. Well, we hear so much about the God of love. We hear so much about grace, but it's grace that leads us to repentance.

Hallelujah. I'm not mad at anybody. Just the devil.

Amen. I want you to listen. If you disobey my words, my anger will be kindled against you.

You'll be destroyed suddenly. You see, we have Christians who don't believe that they're under judgment. They don't believe this.

I know for a fact that many Christians today are under divine judgment. You say, what kind of judgment? Well, I just read it to you. Confusion of face.

Sowing much but reaping little. Bag with holes in it. Never satisfied.

Nothing turns out right. Calamity. Spiritual famine.

Relationships going sour. No sense of the Lord's presence. I'm not about to tell you that all suffering and affliction means that there's sin in your life.

Not at all. Because many of the afflictions are righteous, but the Lord delivers them out of them all. It rains on the just and on the unjust.

The Bible talks about fiery trials sent to try us. He said, don't think it's some strange thing that's come to you, but it's common to all. But you see, those who really love the Lord, when the trouble, the testing, and the trial comes, they hear a holy thunder from God that Brother Phillips preached about once.

You hear that thunder in your soul, and there's a prophetic word that comes and it fingers something in our heart. You see, the root of all of this, you've got to hear it, the root of it all is an unbelief in the righteous judgments of a holy God. Beloved, if we really believed what he says, what fellowship hath light with darkness? What fellowship hath Christ with the sons of Belial? He said, I can't be your father.

You can't be my son or daughter until you separate. How many believe that? You can't be your father. He can't lead you directly until you come out of the world.

We don't believe. We have people, we've got churches that'd be just excited about you growing up, mixing the world, and becoming a big star somewhere, even if you were in some R-rated movie. We don't stand for that here in this church because we're going to, I'll tell you what, I'm going to close in just a minute.

I do more weeping over one thing all week. I'll tell you there's a fear of God in my heart, but I'll tell you one thing and I fear more than anything else. This is the one greatest godly fear in my heart.

I have to stand as do all the pastors of this church. I have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ one day. And that hit me again this Friday night.

And it hit me again last night. Boy, it hit me last night. Oh God, the reason I want you to get down deep here into my heart and the hearts of the people tonight and to see that they're doing these things because they don't believe you will judge.

And a lot of them don't know that the troubles they're having is because they've not dealt with that unbelief. And you and I have got to believe God means every word he says and tremble at this book. Those people heard the word of God and they fell on their face and they trembled and they said, we'll do it.

Now God's patient. It took a long time for them to get up, but they had made up their mind. We're going to do it.

And they started. It hit me last night and I said, Jesus, I'm going to have to stand before you on that day and I've got to look you in the face. And I've got to answer to those to whom I preach.

Have I preached the truth? Have I preached the full gospel? We're going to have to stand before one day and present you who made this church your home. We've got to have you at our side and as we stand before the throne one by one you stand before Jesus. We're there as shepherds, as under shepherds.

And we have to answer. Now that's an awesome responsibility. And if you take, I don't think a man can be a true shepherd unless he weeps over that and grieves over it.

And that's what drives me to my knees and say, oh God, I don't want to entertain the people and that's what drives all these other men to their face before God. We're not trying to just dig and find sin. We're trying to get to the root of all unbelief and a true faith in this word, all of it, that God needs what he says.

And that thing, that unbelief in his righteous judgments, God wants to pluck it out and give you a trembling, a holy trembling for his word. I tremble at just speaking about it tonight. I tremble from head to toe.

You know what Daniel said? And I'm going to close in a moment. Therefore the Lord watched upon the evil. In New American Standard it said the Lord kept the calamity in store and then he brought it upon us for the Lord our God is righteous in all of his works which he doeth for we obeyed not his voice.

You know what he said? He said God judged us, but he was righteous in doing it. He was righteous in doing it because he kept it up. He kept it in store.

He held it back. He held it back. He held it in store.

All of these things that could have happened to us, God held them back, waiting patiently, patiently. He said we disobeyed so God brought it all down upon us. I've been on both sides of the fence.

I've experienced the righteous judgments of God. I don't want to fall under that hand anymore. I want Jesus to put the light on, turn the light on in my heart.

I want to show Jesus exposed every hidden thing. I want no hidden agenda. I want no secret thing in my life.

I want you to be able to walk into any place that my wife and I live. If you are a house cleaners and you could go through that house, you'd see nothing but what would glorify Jesus Christ. I want you to go in my automobile and there's nothing hidden anywhere.

No cigarettes, nothing hidden. There are no sex books. I want you to be able to look me in the eye and every pastor in this church look in the eye and say I see Jesus.

And I hear a word that digs in my heart and convicts me of my sin. And I want that unbelief out of me and I want to tremble at the word of God. Then I can stand before Jesus on that judgment day and say Lord, thank you.

Thank you for digging so deep. Thank you for the ax to the root because you're trying to build a people. Hallelujah.

Stand with me please. This is the conclusion of the tape.

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