

Removing the Stumbling Blocks

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson's sermon emphasizes the importance of removing stumbling blocks in our lives to foster spiritual growth and maintain a clear relationship with God.

Duration: 1:01:18

Scripture: Ezekiel 14:1-8, Ezekiel 14:13, Ezekiel 14:17, Ezekiel 14:21, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of removing stumbling blocks from our hearts and from the church. He warns that if we do not heed God's call to be honest and get rid of unforgiveness, bitterness, hatred, and hurt, God will bring judgment upon us. The preacher references Ezekiel 14:13, where God promises to send famine and cut off man and beast from the land if it sins against Him. He also shares a story of a man who appeared to be fine on the outside but was secretly struggling with alcoholism until he was confronted by a brother. The sermon highlights the detrimental effects of holding onto bitterness and how it can hinder our spiritual growth and the growth of others.

Transcript

Ezekiel 14 chapter, read the first eight verses with me, a message removing the stumbling blocks. Ezekiel 14 chapter, I'm going to read the first verse down to verse eight, follow me. Then came certain of the elders of Israel to me, and sat before me.

And the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face. Should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, every man of the house of Israel, that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him, that cometh according to the multitude of his idols. And I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are estranged from me through their idols.

Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, Repent, and turn yourself from your idols. Turn away your faces from all your abominations. For every one of the house of Israel, of the house of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, that separateth himself from me, and setteth up idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning me, I the Lord will answer him by myself, and I will set my face against that man, and make

him a son of a prophet, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people.

Therefore ye shall know that I am the Lord. Powerful passage of scripture referring to stumbling blocks. Now first of all, let me give you a definition of this term stumbling block.

A stumbling block is any sin that hinders the flow of God's grace and goodness. It is anything that you do to cause another Christian or someone innocent to trip up and fall. It's something you place in front of a young convert, a child, any other Christian, something you do that's graceful to the Lord that causes them to stumble or fall.

That's a stumbling block. I can illustrate it best by a letter I received on Friday from California. One of many thousands we received.

I was just intrigued by this, and the Lord caused it to catch my eye. This woman says here that in the court of California, an outstanding deliverance of a maiden girl who has suffered greatly from being vexed with an unclean spirit. She was born again two years ago.

She's had such a heart for God. She truly was growing in salvation through the blood of the Lamb. But she's been harassed often by the same manifestations as those mentioned in Mark 5 through to 5. That's out at night, cutting herself, screaming, the demon power screaming out at her.

She has been with her parents living, and they too appear to be very serious with the Lord. But no one was able to set that girl free. Keep in mind Bob's message this morning.

Why couldn't we cast it out? She was taken to a nominal believing church last Sunday. It was one, just as you heard about in your latest article, The Fear of the Lord in the Latter-day Church. It was a celebrity gospel, and they had pomp and ceremony, and nothing but rock and roll.

The rock and roll triggered signs and behavior of demon possession in the meeting. They took her to another minister of the gospel, who was unable to do anything, even in the name of Jesus. But her parents suddenly repented of ongoing rebellion and lingering in sin.

The girl was immediately delivered, and she appears today dressed in her own white mine and ready to go tell all her old friends what great things the Lord has done for her, and the compassion he had on her. These parents had begun to read the letter. It infers that they've let everyone, everywhere, whether mad at preachers and churches who didn't have the power, to set this daughter free.

And all along, they had caused a stumbling block. When they saw that there was no other hope, God, in a service, evidently, the word that was preached was convicted, got a hold of their hearts and showed them that they were the stumbling block, they were the cause. The moment they repented, the moment they got right with God, the girl was delivered instantly because the stumbling block had been removed.

The mother and the father were the cause of this girl's problem. Jesus said, Woe unto the world because of offenses. The same word for stumbling block.

Woe unto the world because of offenses of stumbling blocks or snares. For it must be that these offenses will come. But woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.

But whosoever shall offend, meaning trip up or cause to fall, any one of these little ones which believe in me, it's better for him that a millstone be hung around his neck and that he be drowned in the depths of the

sea. You know, in the East River, the police in the past 50 years have dug up many bodies in the East River that were tied or chained to a cement slab and they were thrown in either by the mafia or a hitman and they were drawn and cast into the East River. Many, many bodies have been dragged out of the East River and the Hudson River off the piers many times.

And what the scriptures say, better to have a cement slab tied around your neck and thrown into the ocean or thrown into the sea and buried than that you should be an offense or a stumbling block to an innocent child of mine. That's how God deals with it, that's how God looks at this matter of the stumbling block. In fact, God said there's a day coming, the Lord himself said there's a day coming that he's going to send his angels and they're going to remove the stumbling blocks.

They shall gather out of this kingdom all things that offend. And then it's your iniquity that shall cast them into the lake of fire, there shall be wailing and waltzing of feet. I heard, I knew of a pastor evangelist who had an associate that traveled with him and worked with him for over 10 years.

The pastor, the evangelist never once suspected that he was living a double life, never. He was drinking on the sly and hooked on pornography, addicted to pornography. When he traveled with the evangelist, unbeknownst to the evangelist, he would order drinks into his room.

And when he traveled alone on behalf of the evangelist, he would always check into Howard Johnson's or other places, where they had X-rated movies. And he would check in, order his movies, and his alcohol, and have a drink. And then get his scriptures out, and he carried the scripture cards and memorized scripture all day long.

The evangelist had no reason to doubt him because this boy would give the shirt off his back. He was loving, tender, kind. Always looking back, the evangelist wondered why he was always carrying mints.

He was trying to cover up his breath. Never once did that evangelist suspect that man. But you know, the Bible said, be sure your sinner finds you out.

Ten long years go by, not a hint of it. The man was clever. He'd sit under the thundering message of that evangelist.

He'd see thousands being saved and race back to his home, carry on his X-rated joke, and get drunk. And somehow get up in the morning ready to go with no sign. He was very, very clever.

He would drink when he got home in his little barn. He had a barn. He had a hidden supply.

Somehow this boy never suspected it. His children never suspected it. But one day, one day, a brother saw him stagger out of that barn.

He got to his pickup truck and just held on. And the brother said, you're drunk. There's no answer.

He said, look, you're drunk. He set him in the car, the pickup truck. And he said, what's going on? The man started weeping.

He said, I have never really been delivered from alcohol. I was an alcoholic. I've been drinking for the past ten years.

I've been covering it up. But right when he saw the commotion came out of the house, went to the friend of the ministry there and said, what's going on? She said, I'm sorry. Your husband's drunk.

She turned and said, oh, what's this all about? What do you mean he's drunk? He's drunk. He's been drinking for ten years. He began to sob.

And the wife stood there with her head as it couldn't possibly be. Revanses was informed. The man wept and cried and said, I'm so sorry.

And forgiveness is the easy part. Revanses said, I'm sorry, but I just can't have you with me anymore. Exposure never cures anybody.

They only do it for the Holy Ghost. Just because you've been exposed does not mean that you're clear that you can cry and weep, that you've hit this for ten years, and Revanses let him go. The only problem is that even though his wife wept and cried and forgave him, and his pastor, Revanses, forgave him, all that time there was a little 12-year-old boy behind a tree watching, shaking his head in disbelief because his real father stood right there in his earshot, in his home, and said, I've been covered, I've been drinking, I'm mixed up in pornography, I'm all messed up.

And there's that boy who looked up so much to his father, he thought that father was so spiritual, working as an evangelist, traveling around the world. Well, his God appears before him, cloak. Let me tell you, that was just probably two years ago.

Can you imagine what's happened? The little boy, he's hard. There's no question that boy would probably go to drugs. God can't talk to him now.

While he's weeping, crying and praying, he calls his father, his old father. There's a stumbling block. Stumbling block to that boy.

Here in New York City, a teenager can never make it because of all the politicians that have put stumbling blocks in their way. Passing out condoms in our schools. Our schools are a mess because of the adults who are passing the condoms.

Keeping their prayer on the street. They'll never make it through school without some supernatural help. Without becoming drug addicts, alcoholics and apostates.

With no moral values whatsoever. I wonder how many are like the 15-year-old girl from Christian Home. I won't name the church, but those parents of that 15-year-old girl had bitterness in their heart toward the pastor.

For three solid years, every Sunday and every time they met together around the table, the whole discussion was how they had been mistreated by the church, by the pastor, and they chewed him up, they spit him out. Full of venom and full of bitterness. Three solid years.

Poured it out of their heart. Anybody came along, our friends on the telephone, a little boy and a teenage daughter, listened to how this pastor was so inconsiderate and they were spilling the hurt to all of their friends. 15-year-old girl gets in trouble and she is taken to delinquency court.

Parents rush down, pastor hears about it, rushes down, and this woman there who couldn't stand that pastor and spent all kinds of venom about it, he said, she's a baby, pastor. Go help her please, she's just a

baby. How could it happen to us? Pastor goes in her room and she's waiting.

He goes in, she turns his chair, her chair around, don't look at him. Don't talk to him. Can't get through to that girl.

He knows he can't walk out. That bad man burned that girl. They sent her to hell outside of America.

Because they were stumbling blocks. Their gossip, their venomous tongue against the pastor, against the church, against the Christians, all of it was his bitterness. It poured out of them, just poured out.

That girl can't do that. She hates the pastor. She hates the church.

I've had, over the past 10 years, hundreds of letters from teenagers and young people who can't even stand their preacher dad because dad was a phony living a devil life. How many young people in this city are going to hell because of the stumbling block of their dad and mother? You've seen, perhaps you've heard the radio commercial of the parents who find the teenage boy is taking crack and dad says, where did you learn that? And he says, from you, dad. From you, dad.

You think it's innocent to sit in the house and just spew out what's in your heart at the sound of your children? One day you're going to stand before them and not point a finger in their face and say, dad, mom, it's that stuff that was in your heart. It was that attitude that you showed. You poisoned me.

I told you the pastor's son, who admired his grandmother, she'd been a missionary for 50 years in China, came home after her husband died in front of bitterness, parked herself in front of a TV set every waking hour and wasted away. Lost the touch of God. And that teenager, or that young man, just before he left for college, grabbed a rocking chair, stopped it, looked grandma in the eyes and said, grandma, I don't want anything to do with your God anymore.

All my life I heard you tell how Jesus can keep you in your dying days and here you sit wasting away. You don't even have Christ. I don't see Jesus in you.

All you do is complain and talk about how God has left you in this condition. And that family is a friend of ours. That boy is bitter.

The mother is absolutely confounded over it. You see, this man that had lived for 10 years, a double life, stumbling block to his family and his children and all of his Christian friends, he's like the elders that came to Ezekiel, sitting before him. They were in Babylon at the time.

And they came before him. What they were really saying, what's the word of God concerning deliverance? Are we going back to Jerusalem? Here they are sitting before him as if to say, tell us what is the mind of God. We're ready to listen.

We're ready to hear. And they're sitting there with their arms, with their hearts reaching out, and God speaks to Ezekiel. And he said, Ezekiel, take a look at these men in front of you.

They're living a double life. They're stumbling. They've got idols in their heart, and they're secret idols.

They're hidden in their hearts. Then came certainly the elders of Israel to man, sat before me. The word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face.

Should I be inquired of at all by them? There was something going on in their heart. Now outwardly they were not idolaters. They were not going up to some high place worshipping.

They never bowed down before a statue. Now in fact, these men would be shocked if we told them they had idolatry in their heart, and that they were stumbling blocks to all of Israel. They would have never, you couldn't convince them, any more than I can convince some of you here tonight, that you have idolatry in your heart.

Even though you worship and praise the Lord, even though you don't see it, there may be a form of idolatry in you such as these men have. We're going to talk about it. So they set up idols in their hearts.

They put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face. And then they come to the prophet to inquire of the Lord. Now you see, this man I told you about, his idolatry is very definable.

You can see it. If there's alcohol, if there's pornography. But you see, there's an idolatry that's hidden in the heart of so many that includes bitterness, grudges, unforgiveness.

It includes judging other people. It's a blindness to our own faults, but a very clear vision of the faults of others. And here's how it sounds.

This kind of idolatry has a voice. And it's somebody who feels intimidated or hurt by a church, pastor, friend, or on the job, whatever it may be. Mostly, if they're from the church, there's something like this.

Now, it's a husband and wife talking together, and it sounds like this. How can they do the things they do and put up such a foot in front of people? How is it that they're such phonies that they look so holy on the outside? Now, that's a judgment. You hear that all through Christianity.

You hear it everywhere. Paul said, Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he stands with all, where he shall be holding up, for God is able to make him stand. Why do you judge your brother? Why do you reduce to nothing your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

So then every one of us shall give an account of himself before God. Let us therefore judge not one another any more, but judge this rather. If you're going to judge, do it this way.

That no man could a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. And what the Scripture is saying to us now, you don't have time to look at the thoughts of anybody else. You've got so much to work with yourself.

There's so much in you that's still hidden. Get your eyes off of your brother. And if you're going to make any judgment of God, be a self-judgment, look at yourself, examine your heart and say, Oh God, is there anything I'm doing or saying in my life that's a stumbling block to my child, to my friends, to the body of Jesus Christ? Am I a stumbling block anywhere? That's what the Lord's saying, if you're going to do anything, you check your own heart.

Now, I don't think there's anything to be more dangerous than to become a stumbling block and offense to others. To be holding on to a secret sin, or a secret grudge, or to become judgmental. God says very clearly, Shall I be inquired of at all by these? He said, they come to you, Ezekiel, they want guidance, they want to know my mind.

And He said, since they have, they hold on to this idolatry, they've not listened to you, Ezekiel, everything you preach, going in one ear and out the other. Now folks, please don't think I'm getting hard. I'm not hard.

I'm preaching this in love. I don't have anybody in mind except all of us. You, God said, they have no right to hear me.

They have no right to anything but my silence. Because they have not yet listened. They have not obeyed what I've already lovingly and powerfully delivered through the mouth of my servants the prophets.

And in essence He's saying to Ezekiel, Why do they even think? How can they even entertain the thought that they'll get direction? That God will speak to them? Because they have not yet dealt with that idolatry that grudge that they carry. That spirit of unforgiveness. That hurt feeling.

That inability to look another Christian in the eye and have to go down this aisle so a man can piss him down that aisle. Can't even go out and eat with one another. Can't talk to one another.

Can't be associated. It can be in the home, it can be in the job, it can be in the church. We talk about the sins of idolatry, gambling, sex and drugs.

These great sins that God is digging deeper. He's digging down in their hearts. He said these men have something in their hearts.

They're not what they appear. There's an idolatry inside their hearts. It's not been dealt with.

And because that idolatry is there, no matter what I say is not going to count. They have no right. Very clearly.

Why should you inquire any further of the Lord? My Bible says they that come to Him must believe that He is and that He's a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. And if you come to Jesus with all your heart, you say, Jesus, I want to walk in holiness. I want to please You with my whole life.

If that's your heart cry, then you'll be rewarded. You'll be rewarded with a spirit of forgiveness, of tenderness. You'll be rewarded with a desire to go to every man that has hurt you and make things right.

Folks, I can't help it. For the last two, three weeks, I have been impressed to move in on this so that you and I, when we come into Times Square Church, there is nothing hindering. There's no stumbling block.

The stumbling block not only causes others to fall and be hurt, it hinders the flow of God's Holy Ghost. It hinders the flow of blessing. It blocks it out and drives you up.

So that when you're left to just go through the masses, there's no true amazing. Brother Bob told us this morning, if God's not just waiting for a certain time or clock, something on the calendar, in other words, a set time, would be God in His eternal purpose and said, next January 15th revival begins. No, the set time is that time when we measure up to the Word of God.

When we hear the sound of His thundering voice, when we hear prophets and pastors get up and do these things, that God speaks in all this language because He's trying to do something for His body. He said, I'm going to deal with sin so that they can open their hearts. If there's nothing blocking it, I can be a God.

They can be a people to me and I can be a God to them. It's a wonderful thing to have God with you. It's a wonderful thing to be able to look heaven in the eye and say, oh God, if there's something that's shaming and then there's nothing there, it's all clear, then the blessings begin to flow.

The revelation of who Jesus Christ truly is. Bible said, they're set up in their hearts. They're set.

I've got to tell you, with all my heart, I believe that no matter how anointed any one of the pastors could be, no matter how powerfully the Spirit of the Lord would come down, no matter how powerfully the Word of God would go forth, that our son who's sitting here tonight will not let go under any conditions of that Spirit who has a hold of your heart, that unforgiving Spirit, and I press that very clearly today, that unforgiving Spirit, a hurt Spirit, that has that bitterness. It comes out in your talk. It comes out in your walk.

It's there. It's a form of idolatry and it's a stumbling block. The Bible said it has to be removed.

God is so indignant at this sin, at this kind of idolatry, He said, I, the Lord, will answer such a person according to the multitude of his idols. First of all, He said, they're going to be separated from me through their idols. I will set my face against them.

I will cut them off from the midst of my people. God said, I will not put up in my church. We're talking about His body.

God says, I will not put up with children who, week after week, and month after month, and year after year, allow these judges to take root and set up those idols, and they set my country. God said, no, I won't permit it. God said, I'll separate them from my body, and I'll show you the three terrible curses that come upon those who will not weigh down this kind of idolatry.

God said, I will answer according to your idol. Listen, if you have the secret sin in you, it may be adultery, fornication, it may be lust, it may be an unforgiving spirit, it may be bitterness toward someone, bitterness toward me, toward any of the pastors, staff, somebody in your church has said the wrong thing. I shall look at you wrong.

And I shall grab at you. But first of all, I don't believe I shall grab. But you know, some people think it's a grab, because a man may have a stomachache and pain on his face, and he'll look at you with that pained look.

A lot of times I have that pained look. And I say, honey, it's just how I feel, it's on my face. When I get sick, it's on my face.

But God says, I'll answer you personally. I'm going to answer your prayer. But you know what that answer is? That answer is a delusion in itself.

God says, I'll answer you according to the idolatry that's in your heart. In other words, I'm going to answer you the way you would answer. I'm going to answer you the way you want it to be.

Because you've set your heart on it. I'm going to answer according to your idolatry. It goes something like this.

This is a true story. And I won't tell you the statement of what happened. And this pastor, who was married to a beautiful wife, who had children, fell in love with a young lady.

And they were having an affair. They were seeing one another. And they always prayed when they got together.

It wasn't an affair. Today it was prayer meeting. Prayer meeting.

And my! The pastor said they would get blessed. But they got convicted too. And they agreed to separate for a while.

And pray and fast to see what God said. A few weeks later they got together. Don't you know they both got the same scripture? About God giving you the desires of your heart? What a confirmation! Thank you Jesus! Their prayer was answered.

They heard just what they wanted to hear. God said, I answered them according to their idolatry. I answered them all.

I know a lot of people. And there's a sweet, still voice. The same one that came to bed and said, I'm going.

And the angel said, no. And the donkey said, no. And finally, he twisted God's arm, so to speak.

And the angel said, go. That was a permissible go, because he wanted to hear his heart was said on it. It's just what Jesus said to Judas.

Go, hear what's in your heart. Go. That was the word of the Lord.

Right from heaven. Right from Jesus. And listen.

A lot of people are hearing from the Lord. God's answer in their prayer. Isn't that a dangerous answer it is? What a delusion it is.

I tell you, I have heard so many things that God is supposed to have said. And I thought, Lord, you couldn't be saying all that. Oh, I wonder if people aren't hearing God answer their own idolatry.

Do you understand that principle? Listen, there are two kinds of churches on the earth. That's the candlestick church that's a light to the world. I hope that's what we are truly becoming.

Then there is the stumbling block churches. Stumbling block churches are full of darkness. You know, there are true pastors and there are false pastors.

There are true prophets and false prophets. But there are those that have been set up. In fact, from the very scripture, it says that God himself has deceived.

Verse 9. And if the prophet be deceived and he has spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet. And I will stretch out my hand upon him and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. He said, I'm going to deceive that prophet because he's already deceived.

He shut his heart and his mind. In other words, he's closed. Nothing I say is ever going to change it.

So he wants to hear. I'm going to lead him on. Hopefully God allows in his grace and mercy that he'll hit rock bottom.

He's hopeful that they'll see the futility of it. And the lying spirits behind it and everything else. And quickly bring them to a crisis.

So that God in that crisis can speak to them. But he said, I myself, I the Lord have deceived that prophet. Do you understand there are prophets that have been deceived and they stand before people? Listen, if you've got a stumbling block, you've got hidden sin in your life.

You can't sit under too much preaching like this morning, last Tuesday, or tonight. You can't sit under. So what you'll do if you don't want to deal with your problem, if you don't want to get rid of it and say, Holy Spirit, please, I want my heart open to you.

I want to be, I want clean hands and a pure heart to stand in your holy hill. If you're ever in the 101st act of God, you'll let the Holy Spirit dig into you just as we're preaching right now. But so Lord, could that be me? 95% of us, no doubt, said there can be no idolatry in me.

I told the Lord that last week. I prayed, Lord, could it possibly be that I have some form of this idolatry in me? And my immediate reaction was no, no way. Not a chance.

Until suddenly God began to speak. He said, David, you don't remember how proud you've been almost all through your ministry. He said, remember that time in Dallas you preached that convention to 12,000 people? And you came off that platform and you turned and associated and said, boy, I'll hit it.

And you felt so sorry for the speaker the next night, had to follow you. I went home and remember telling your wife, boy, he's going to have a hard time after tonight. I said, well, did I say that? It all started coming back.

He showed me service after service. He showed me a service in St. Louis where the General Superintendent of the Assembly of God was here. It was a national association of broadcasters and I was the special speaker.

And I turned to one of my associates, remember the time you said you were going to tear the place apart? Where's that effect? When you preached and God blessed and you went to the hotel room but you said to your associate to mix with the crowd to hear what they were saying. I said, did I do that, Lord? Yes, you did. Let me tell you.

God showed me years of pride. Horrible pride. Stinking pride.

And all the time, I'll tell you honestly, I thought I was one of the humblest preachers in America. I thank God that I was humble. I was getting up saying, don't clap for me.

Don't give me any glory. And let go home and exult in having hit a home run. And then he began to show me all the rest of the junk that was in there.

Well, not adultery, fornication, but things that are deeper than that. Go way down deep in the soul that we don't want to look at. The hidden grudges, the hidden fears, the hidden unbelief.

These men, they had what I call insurance gods. Insurance gods. They knew God had power.

But really, they'd been in bondage so long and God wasn't answering, so they had to give God. I'm going to say, God, but I need a little insurance on this side. So Ezekiel was taken by the hair of his head into an

inner chamber and he saw the elders of Israel worshipping the sun.

Oh, worship Jehovah, just in case I need a little insurance. And that's what a lot of Christians are into now. All y'all believe God can answer prayer unless they've got a lucky charm.

An insurance god. An insurance idol. Or they hear of something somewhere God is doing with some family, and they go and depend on that family.

As Bob was saying this morning, it's God, yes, but give him a little help. And it's called limiting the Holy One of Israel. It's limiting God.

These men limited God. They'd given up hope that God would deliver them. So either the sun or God showed him all of these creeping things in their imagination.

All of these things they were conjuring up. Not of God because God was not living on their time schedule. Now you, I told you the two kind of churches.

If you don't want to deal with sin, it'll happen. You'll walk out, as some have. And you will be led right into a stumbling block church.

With a stumbling block prophet and pastor evangelist. And you won't have to give up your sin there. You won't have to deal with some of these deep hidden things in your heart.

Like unforgiveness. Or bitterness. Or rebellion.

You won't have to deal with it. Instead, you'll have a man up there feeding it. He'll flatter you.

Tell you that in spite of what's in your heart, you can be a prophet. Teaching you how to prophesy. How to heal the sick.

And the whole time, you have not dealt with a stumbling block in the heart. It's just whitewash. And it doesn't work.

Folks, I'm going to stand one day before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. May the Bible be there. May the God, myself.

And I have an inkling in my heart that every pastor is going to stand there where his flock has been judged. We're going to stand there where Times Square Church. The whole flock of Times Square Church.

And everybody who's been in here listening to us preach. He's judging us. And after we pass judgment, he's going to judge every one of us.

And we're going to stand there. And I want to be able to know that when your name is called. By the God, by the God and myself.

We stand there with full assurance of faith. That we have delivered the land of Jesus Christ. And we love you enough to dig down into the depths of your soul.

And so you can't see the persons of God and not love your brother and sister. You can't have racial prejudice in your heart and be a man or woman of God. The most tragic stumbling block in the Church of

Jesus Christ in the last day is going to be racial prejudice.

This city is torn apart. I'm telling you prophetically that we're facing race wars in America. Worse than anything in the history of our nation.

We're in the brink of it right now. Not just New York City. It's all over the nation.

We've got black pastors, white pastors, Korean pastors are becoming politicians and activists. And they're standing in their pulpits whipping up this kind of rebellion. Whipping up prejudice and hatred.

And your biggest battle and mine in the last day is going to be this matter of loving one another. And keeping out of our hearts any seed of prejudice. Racial prejudice.

Beloved, that I was born and I grew up in a godly home. In a time when kids were taught from childhood that Jesus loves every race. We learn to pray for Africa.

We learn to pray around the world. We sing, Jesus loves the little children in the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight.

We sing that every service when we're in children's church. Jesus loves all the children, all the races and we were taught that way. But now in these last days, prejudice is even creeping into the church.

By the way, who are the mongers, the hate mongers? Most of them are preachers. They call him Reverend Al. They call him Reverend up in Detroit.

But I'll tell you what, there are just as many white men standing in their pulpits across America. Some of them secret members of the Ku Klux Klan. Some of them with hate and bitterness.

I faced it in South Africa years ago and I saw what prejudice can do to a church. I saw what it could do to the house of God. We had stadiums in these horseshoe shaped stadiums all through South Africa.

Cape Town and Johannesburg. And the committee that invited me had erected wire fences at the open end of the stadium and had erected bleachers outside the stadium in that open end for blacks. No black person was allowed inside the stadium.

There had to be out there. And on the pulpit, twenty-five, thirty ministers, local ministers in every city. There they are on the stage.

And I didn't understand the voice of that. I couldn't figure out what was going on except I was told that when I gave an invitation the blacks had to come to the right, the left to the right. They couldn't mix at the altar.

And by the time I got to Cape Town, I looked at those precious black young people outside and some of them with their hands in the wire looking and just wondering why they were being treated like animals behind a cage. And I turned to the chairman of one of my meetings and I said, Pastor, I want to open those gates. I want to mount them.

There's enough seats to seat all of them. I said, what happens if I go, I'm going to go off the stage, go over there and open those gates? He said, tell you what will happen, Mr. Nixon. The whole stadium will get walked out on you and we'll lead the way.

The pastors. It was to that effect. When I went down among the black young people, I said, one of these days this is all going to change.

They said, we know, Brother Nixon. We know. It's all going to change.

That's why South Africa will be the most unsafe nation on the face of the earth. That's why bloody riots are going to come. It's payday.

It's payday. I went into Soweto and held a crusade for blacks and we had a marvelous time because those who went with me, those were men, white men that had a heart for God and they hugged me and there was no race line. There was no color line.

But I saw. I saw. I saw what happens to a church.

The bitterness. The hate. I saw what it can do.

And I'm telling you now that you and I are going to be tested in these last days on this matter more. I warned about it a year ago from this pulpit. And I'm saying again, there is no place for bitterness or racial tension of any kind in the house of God.

You have no right to call yourself a believer in Jesus Christ and have anyone fit into a black or white or Korean or any other race at all. We received the third description in those days. And the number of the disciples was multiplied.

There was a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, the Greeks against the Jews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations of the distribution of bread and food. And there was a rumbling. In fact, the revival was at its peak.

God was moving. There were multitudes. And then they were multiplied.

Converts everywhere. But suddenly the enemy comes in with a racial problem. The Greeks rise up saying the Jews are getting better attention.

And it must have been like the human nature being what it is. I imagine it goes something like this. Well, what do you expect? The apostles are Jews.

So of course they're going to treat the Jewish white better than the Greek whites. And there was a rumbling. There was a murmuring in the camp of that first Pentecostal church in Jerusalem.

The enemy had brought this seed right into the church. And you hear in this church, you'll hear in any church that has a mixed multitude, you'll hear those kind of rumblings and murmurings. Folks, turn a deaf ear to it.

Walk away from it. Don't let a seed get into your heart. If I'm turning the radio on and I happen to hear one of these radio... There's a white guy here in town that so hates blacks it pours out of his face like poison.

One of these days, some of these men... If you live by the sword, you're going to die by the sword. And there is going to be payday, folks. You can turn on the black radio station and hear it promise nothing but poison from morning to night.

If you're going to sit and listen to that and feel your head, you're going to lose your salvation. You'll lose the love of Jesus. You won't be able to look across the aisle in a black or a white with the love of Christ.

You'll be sitting there with, oh my God, it's being replayed in your head. Now that's pretty plain talk, but I feel the Holy Ghost just all over my soul right now saying God raised up a church in New York with every race, every color, to set an example. Hallelujah.

Here's why God won't permit the stumbling block of racial pride, or racial tradition, or racial prejudice of any kind. Oh, it's a subtle thing. It'll creep into you.

You'll have to fight it. I was watching the other day Sister Gwen and the three beautiful black women. And I saw tears streaming down all their faces.

All the words seemed to speak more. See how beautiful black is when Jesus gets hold of it? Do you see how beautiful white is when Jesus is behind the sign? Folks, it's got to be dealt with. It has to be dealt with in your heart and mind because it is going to rage.

Oh, it is going to rage. You're going to hear things from these war mongers and these hate mongers and all of a sudden, hey, that's right, that's right. Yeah, yeah.

Yeah. I can't believe everything he says, but he's got a point there. Oh yeah, that's what I feel.

No, it's not the way Jesus feels at all. I don't care if he's white. I don't care if he's black.

I don't care if he's green. There's no place in the church of Jesus Christ for anything but the overflowing love. If you can't sit here tonight and reach out.

I had a man one time come from down south, and we were at the Nederlander Theater. And he had a thing against Jews. And he said, this big city of Jews, do any of those kind of people, those kind of people, come here? And he was just going on.

I said, yeah, right behind you, two Christians right there. And I wanted to say, hearing everything you said. Those two lovely Christians, that was David and his wife were in Israel.

Took them aside and just ministered the love of Jesus. Hugged them, and I hope they hugged all that prejudice out of him. We've got a city where blacks are against Koreans, and Koreans against blacks, and whites against blacks.

South Africa, you've got black against white, black killing blacks, blacks killing blacks in South Africa. Yugoslavia, you've got five different nationalities that are fighting and murdering. How many years, 440 years now in Ireland, Catholics and Protestants are killing each other.

Kids, generations after generations growing up in the church. They've seen it so many times since they're out to see if any Catholics are being killed today. Standing on the hillsides, these kids with sticks and stones and cursing.

The stumbling block right in front of their face. While Russia's been torn apart by racial tension of all kinds. The whole world is pleading on the brink of race wars.

Stand now in your spirit and say, oh God, guard me against this, guard me against this. I dread the very idea that anyone in this congregation, anyone in New York really loves the Lord. We've got Indians, we've got Iranians, we've got Egyptians, we've got everything you can name in this church.

You love it all? You love every bit of it? I'm going to move on. By this sermon may you be my disciples. If you have love, one for another.

You see why God went put up with it? Because the man in the street has an idea in his head. He believes that a church is supposed to be the last fortress that holds out against prejudice. That a Christian is one who's not prejudiced.

That's the testimony. And the stumbling block is that you are not that testimony. That on the job you listen to black jokes or white jokes and you listen to all of these Polish jokes.

Or Italian jokes. And you laugh at them. You laugh after the enemy sees it and you've got a stone head building in your heart.

Walk away from it. Or stand up and say nothing. Hallelujah.

Now I told you I would tell you of the three things that God said he would do. If we would not heed his call and be honest before him and get rid of all of the unforgiveness and bitterness and hatred and hurt. Get it out.

God said, 13th verse. Look at 13th verse. Ezekiel 14, verse 13.

Son of man, when the Lamb sinned against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out my hand upon it, and will break the staff of bread thereof, and send famine upon it, and will cut off men and beasts from it. Alright, look at me please. The first thing God said he would have to do, and he does it in a way of redemption.

Hoping that he would do a redemptive judgment. He said, I'm going to break your staff of bread. New American Standard said, I'll break your supply of bread.

God said, I'm going to cut off your living. I'm going to cut your living off. If you're going to hold prejudice, if you're going to hold bitterness, I'm going to, it's going to cost you, it's going to cost you your livelihood.

So I'm going to cut off your supply of bread. That doesn't mean if you're unemployed that you're under judgment, not at all. But there are many people who are going to be absolutely shocked.

One day they're going to be without any income whatsoever. God said, I'll cut off your supply of bread because you won't deal with it. I'm going to have to deal severely with it.

I'm going to have to show you something. I love you too much to let you just drift. I'm going to have to bring this crisis upon you.

And then secondly he said, I'll send a sword, verse 17. It's very clear, I will bring a sword upon the land. And say, sword, go through the land so that I cut off man and beast from it.

And in the family, in the individuals, you know what that means? It means war in your home, war in your heart. But it's a bitterness, that bitterness is going to spill out. Because you as a husband or wife, or you as

a single with a friend, you can have somebody agree with you, and you can spill it out of your heart.

And it will go so far that all of a sudden you'll turn on one another. And that same venom you show against others is going to be turned to one another. And your house will be nothing but a war zone.

Fighting, bickering. Verse 21 is very tragic. Verse 21, and in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth.

I'm sorry, I didn't write that one, I wrote verse 17. Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold, and my servants have given thee. May this, that I shall have images of men, commit whoredom with them.

And then go down to 21. That thou hast slain my children and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire. I'm sorry, I want chapter 14.

My pages got stuck. Verse 21, 14. For thus saith the Lord God, how much more when I send my four sword judgments, Pontius, and the sword, the famine, the noisome beast, the pestilence, the noisome beast, the demonic powers, demonic spirits, every kind of disorder.

Folks, last thing I want to say, look this way please for just a moment. Please believe me. I sense upon me an anointing of the Holy Spirit.

I prayed all week. I hadn't intended to preach this. The Lord just turned, and I was driving down the road.

I think it was Wednesday, and God said, clearly, remove all the stumbling blocks. Out of your heart, and out of my church. Remove them.

Preach removing. I didn't even know what he was talking about until I got along with God. And God said, preach it, because tonight, in this service, God is going to remove, finally, the stumbling block that's standing in the way of God's full blessing, the power, and life, in your home, and in your own very body.

Do you think God's just talking? Does God make idle talk? And does God mean what he says? Does God mean that your house will go in turmoil? That there'll be bitterness? That God will cut off your supply? Yes, absolutely, God means every word that he says. And we'll bring it forth as strong as he possibly can. Now, folks, I've got to close now, because I've gone more than I wanted to.

I just want to leave you with this. If you, tonight, will obey the Holy Spirit, and say, Lord, I'm thinking of someone that I have a grudge against. Or someone that's hurt me.

Or at least you perceive to be hurt. Or there's been an unforgiving spirit. Or you've been hurt, and it keeps, it's there all the time, it doesn't heal.

It's just that black wound that stands there, that's sore, and it won't heal. God wants to heal it tonight. And if you do, he's made you a promise.

You shall not want. You will be restored. I'll lay you down in green pastures.

There is no want to them that fear him. For the Lord God will be your sole and shield. The Lord will give you grace and glory.

And no good thing will he withhold from you that walk uprightly. God said, I'll not hold anything back from you. God's waiting to pour out his blessing.

He's waiting to save your kids. He's waiting to purify and sanctify your home, so that the joy of the Lord flows through your house. Stand, please.

What about your boss? Well, I'm going to talk about your wife. I have to tell you the truth. I've heard people in this church that come to me with such bitterness toward a boss or someone on the job.

Someone that's given them a very difficult time. And you build up this resentment. One of the officers came to me not too long ago and told me about a woman that was sitting in the back.

That someone had her seat, she said. She was ready to curse him out. And she got mad.

She got mad at the officers. She got mad at everybody. That's my seat.

Can you look anybody anywhere on the face of this earth? Can you look everybody in the eye and say there's nothing between us that's wrong? Can you look in anybody's face and say God's love be with you. I love you in the Lord. If you've gone to that brother, sister, in your family, of the flesh, mother, father, anybody.

If you make restitution, make things right. If your brother offends you, God says go to them. Go to them.

And tell them your problem. Speak it over. And then you've won a friend.

That could be your very best friend. I've had to do that. I've had to go to men that I heard just hated me, so to speak.

And I went to them and I said if I've done something, I need to know so I can deal with it. And usually it's something they heard that wasn't even true. And then when we get together and pray, they become dear friends.

I've set out to win every one of my enemies that I know to become my friends. That's a hard job, but God can do it for us. Hallelujah.

I'll tell you what. Revival. Revival.

I pray the Holy Spirit can follow, absolutely follow the purging, cleansing of the Holy Spirit when He faces you. When you put that stumbling block right in front of your eye now to deal with it, not to indulge it, but to deal with it tonight. If you have anything of an unforgiving spirit, if you have anything of a grudge toward somebody, if you have any of this in your heart, I want you to come tonight.

But I don't want you to come unless you've determined before this night is over, before the next few days of it, you are going to make it right. If you have to go make restitution, you do it. Now folks, it's not the kind of preaching that makes you shout and get happy, but it'll get results in your life.

It'll change the way God deals with you. It'll change so many. It'll open up the fountains of heaven.

It'll bring your children into fire. It'll bring the glory of God. It'll open up the doors and you'll come to this house rejoicing as you've never rejoiced before.

Hallelujah. Lord, deal tonight lovingly with all rebellion, bitterness, hate, hurt, unforgiveness, anything, O God, that's unlike you. Dig down and get every idol in Jesus' name, I pray.

Get the pride out. Take it all, Jesus, right now. This is the conclusion of the tape.

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