

Running the Right Race (Birmingham Conference)

by David Wilkerson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of running the right race, which is the pursuit of Jesus Christ, and not compromising the gospel in the pursuit of success.

Duration: 46:23

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:5-6, 1 Corinthians 9:24, 2 Corinthians 4:2, Galatians 1:6-7, Philippians 3:14, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 12:1-2, James 4:4, 1 John 2:15-17

Topics: "Dependence on the Holy Spirit", "Running The Race"

Description

David Wilkerson emphasizes the importance of running the right race in the Christian life, distinguishing between the spirit race, which leads to Christ, and the flesh race, which leads to worldly success. He warns that many Christians, including pastors, are caught up in the flesh race, leading to spiritual exhaustion and shipwrecked lives. Wilkerson calls for a return to dependence on the Holy Spirit and a commitment to preaching the uncompromised gospel of Jesus Christ. He encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with God, reminding them that true success is found in Christ alone, not in worldly achievements. The sermon concludes with a call to stand firm in faith and not compromise the truth of the gospel.

Transcript

I have no sound here whatsoever, please. I have no monitor. Okay, now that's fine.

But I don't know if you heard my son. It's a wonder I wasn't electrocuted here with all these wires that they have on me. We want to welcome you to this gathering.

And I don't know about you, but I came to receive a touch from the Lord. And we've been looking forward to being with you in this gathering. There's been a lot of prayer up.

It's been on the Internet and people all over the world have been praying. You know, people are concerned about this country, concerned about it, praying for it. This country has sent missionaries all over the world.

And God's people, everywhere we go, they're saying, what is the condition of the church? And my Bible says the gates of hell shall never prevail against the church of Jesus Christ. This is not about the

Wilkerson family, not at all. This is about Jesus.

It's not about me, it's not about anyone else. It's about the Lord. If you will, I would like to introduce a lady that probably has had as much prayer as anyone in the United States.

I mean, many of you that are on a mailing list have been praying for my wife, Gwen. Honey, wherever you're at, I think you're where you stand, please. This side, Gwen, right over here.

God bless you, honey. I have four children in the ministry. I have two sons in the ministry.

And Gary will be ministering with me all through this gathering. Gary has actually pastored longer than I have. And everywhere I go, people, even bishops come to me and say, Brother Dave, you're a fairly good preacher, but we relate more to your son.

And that makes me feel real good. He has pioneered churches, and he really speaks to the heart of pastors. He knows the pain, the suffering, the good things, the hard things.

And he ministers under tremendous anointing of the Holy Spirit. Gary, will you stand, please? He will be ministering tomorrow here. And on Sunday, in another auditorium near here, it seats 3,000 in the theater.

My other son, Greg, is going to be holding a youth conference expecting 3,000 young people on Sunday afternoon. Greg, where are you? This is my other son, Greg. God bless you.

Greg. Now, those introductions have been made. We're here.

Now, in our church, we very seldom go to the microphone. The Lord told me if I wanted to see His Spirit move in New York City, that we had to have communion every week and that we had to stay away from the microphone and let the Holy Spirit take charge. So, in all of these meetings, at the evening meetings especially, we'll have a full hour of praise and worship, and then we will have the preaching.

That's all we're here for. We didn't bring any books. The only tapes that we will be making available are the tapes of the preaching itself, and that'll be made available toward the close of the meetings.

I've been to meetings, and I got a little weary of so much merchandising, and I just felt, we felt we would like, and we do this overseas. We prayed in the finances for this before we came, and many of you here have already helped and given toward that. And so, we could just focus on giving as a part of worship.

We believe in that very much, and if you want to give, we won't say no. I promise you that. But we're here to hear the Word of the Lord.

I want to speak tonight about running the right race, running the right race. Now, conclusion of the service tonight, we're going to have the ensemble come back, and we're going to have a time of praise. We're going to praise the Lord, and we're going to just give God glory in a very special way here tonight.

Running the right race. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the power of the Holy Spirit. We thank you for being with us tonight in this house.

We thank you for those that have come from around the United States and other parts of the world tonight, and for this gathering. And Lord, we can't do anything without you. We need the special unction anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, who am I to say anything to pastors? Lord, I want you to speak through me. Let me be just a vessel. Bless Gary and bless me as we minister now.

Lord, you've told me that this would be a time of healing, that many have come hurt and bruised. Some are going through a testing time of their life, and this would be an encounter with you, Lord, that you would speak lovingly to our hearts, and you would minister to us, and we would leave this place unlike the way we came. There would be a change.

There would be something deep. Now, Lord, we hear that in conferences all over, and we're not trying to be something special or do something special. It's just that we're hungrier, Lord, than we've ever been.

We're needier than we've ever been. Holy Ghost, I'm saying, if you don't come, this is just another meeting. Come, Holy Spirit, give us ears to hear what the Spirit has to say.

God, speak. We want to hear from heaven. We don't want to hear anything else but from the throne of God.

Oh, Holy Spirit, you have to open our ears. You have to give us ears to hear what the Spirit has to say. Lord, help us to run the right race, to be on the right course, and to hear the right word.

I pray in Christ's name. Amen. Paul tells us that life is a race, and he said we're to run that race to win.

He said, so run that you may obtain, or in other words, that you may win the race. Now, there's nothing sinful about winning a race. In fact, Paul the Apostle said, I run not with uncertainty, but to obtain the prize that's set before me.

But before you go after the prize, you'd better understand the race. If I were to ask almost everyone in this house, what race are you running? You would say, I'm running the right race. Now, the older I get, the more I begin to comprehend that there are two races that Christians run.

There is the spirit race, and there's the flesh race. And if I were to ask you what race you're in, you'd say, well, of course, I'm going after the prize that is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. But you see, there are two races, and there are two prizes.

The spirit race, the prize, of course, Paul said, is Jesus Christ. The other race is the race of the flesh, and the prize is success. And this is the race of the majority I see all over the world are racing today for success.

Paul said, all run, but one receives the prize. One wins. When he says one wins, he's talking about a corporate body, a holy remnant of believers who have set their heart on Jesus Christ.

He is not just first. He's everything. He's not on some totem pole.

He's not one out of ten. He's the only thing. It's the focus of life itself.

He is the prize, and there are people that are seeking that and seeking that alone. That I may win Christ, Paul said, not that I may be successful. Now, let me speak to you first about this pursuit of success, this flesh race.

Paul said, this is the race that ends in shipwreck. And I tell you, after traveling all over the world in the last two years, over 50,000 pastors, Gary and I have seen it all over the world. We've seen the shipwreck of pastors and their wives and ministries that have gone into the race of the flesh.

Paul said, I keep my body or my flesh under, and I bring it into subjection, lest by any means when I preach to others, I myself become a castaway. A castaway is someone who survived a shipwreck and left adrift on an ocean. And he's moving, he's alive, but he is just adrift.

He doesn't know where he's going. He has no direction. And Paul the apostle said, I bring my flesh under, lest I find myself in the wrong race, running the wrong course.

If you could see in the spirit, this race, this flesh race, if you could just see the course, you would find people lying on the sides of this race course, exhausted, worn out, because the pursuit of worldly success or success among your peers, trying to find self-worth out of accomplishing something, building something for God, something people can see, that race is exhausting because it never ends. Because you put a stake out here and say, if I can reach this goal, you could be a pastor and say, if I could reach this 300, I'd be satisfied. But then you put the stake 500 and then 1,000 and 2,000.

And finally, you want the mega and find there's no end. It's exhausting because it's the wrong course and it's the wrong prize. Let me give you some examples.

The Lord used me to found Teen Challenge some 40 years ago for drug and alcohol rehabilitation, drug addicts, alcoholics. There are now over 500 of those centers worldwide. And to God be the glory for what he's done.

Everywhere we go, we meet the leaders, we meet the staff. But I have been so grieved over what I've seen in some of the majority, the vast majority of all of these drug centers around the world, the leaders are godly men and women that truly love the Lord. They are humble, they're broken.

And I've seen many of them start out so humble and so broken. They got saved at one of the centers, the Lord healed them of drugs and alcohol. And they go to Bible school and they graduate and they come back or they go to another city and start a drug center.

And I've watched these humble men get so busy, get so busy witnessing, counseling until they have no time for their families. They have no time to pray. They're not seeking God.

And when that happens, they open themselves up and they become a prey to the enemy. And I've watched young men who did nothing but pray and seek the face of God for direction. They had to pray with the boys and the young ladies and men that came into the programs.

They prayed even for food money. They prayed for money to pay the electric bill. And so broken, so humble.

And many of them were like my sons and daughters in the spirit. And I've watched them, they go to conferences, they go to meetings of the leadership and staff. This is all over the world.

And the shipwrecks that I have seen been astounding and heartbreaking because they started out so humble and so broken, but because they were not seeking God, they were so busy. You can get so busy working for Jesus, you forget who he is. You can get so busy doing for him.

And I see pastors and Christian workers running, running, busy, busy. They're not praying. They're not seeking God.

And they open themselves up to this flesh race and they go to a conference. And this is the way it goes. Hey, brother, what's God doing in your place? How many guys do you have? Do you have a girls program? We've got a girls program.

You have a girls program? Well, no, no, we don't have a girls program, but I got 50 guys and we're starting a children's program for little kids that are on pot and before they're getting hooked on heroin. And how many buildings you have? What's your income? And another brother said, you got any new ideas on how we can raise money? And the guys that have the big centers, some of them I've seen just come in like the Pope. I mean, it was such a, I'm not calling the Pope prophet, I'm saying like, I am somebody.

And the poor guys that have 10 or 12 in their center and they're struggling for finances, go home and they're frustrated because they say, I must be doing something wrong. I don't have it right because everything I do doesn't turn out right. I must not have it because I can't even hold what I've got.

And they put pressure on everybody around them. All their staff members are running because now they want to, they have, they're infected with this flesh race that somehow I have to produce something to show somebody. So they'll say, what a great pastor or what a great leader.

What a great work. What a man of God that happens in pastorates. I get letters from wonderful men of God.

They're saying, I'm not seeing fruit. I'm not seeing God move. And one after another said, there's got to be more to it than this.

And the most heartbreaking thing we've seen traveling all over the world. It's, we have preached in every conference about quitting the ministry about pastors that came. I was in Moscow a number of years ago and it started in Moscow about four or five years ago.

They came from Siberia, came from everywhere. And out of 1500 pastors, I said, how many of you have made up your mind? This is their last meeting, your last conference, you're going home and resign the ministry. 225 to 250 came forward.

It was going to be their last meeting. They're quitting the ministry. We were in a South American country, not too long ago, not many months ago out of 4,000 pastors.

How many of you have been actually contemplating quitting the minister and over a thousand pastors came forward. And it's all over the United States, all around the world quitting because they say, I am not seeing fruit. I'm not seeing the results.

Now, God is not against success. He that plows should plow on hope. The scripture says, you're a businessman.

You should invest. You should grow as the Holy Spirit leads you, as God leads you. If you have a job, you're to do the same thing.

If you're in the ministry, yes, God, God has made provision for, for fruit. And yes, a man is satisfied when he knows that he's walking in the spirit and the message that he preaches is touching hearts. And he

knows he's moving and walking in the power of the Holy Spirit.

See, the sin is seeking success through compromise, seeking success through compromise. Folks, let me tell you, you compromise one iota of the scripture. You compromise one iota of the revealed word of God, and you're moving into the wrong race.

You're moving into the flesh. One compromise with the word of the living God. Now, the day of Pentecost, you know very well, the early church, they preached without compromise.

The power of God came upon these men. They speak, they spoke with such conviction that men's hearts, men and women were pricked, the Bible said. They were convicted and fell on their face and cried, what should we do to be saved? In the early church, they preached repentance, resurrection, holiness, atonement through the blood of Christ.

They were not embarrassed by the scars of the cross. Those who lied to the Holy Ghost dropped dead. They preached healing.

They preached healing for the sick. They believed the blind could see. They believed the lame could walk.

They believed the deaf could hear because it was the word of God. It was written and they believed what was written and there was no compromise on the word of God. But by the time you get to Galatians, you see compromise creeping into the church.

Peter goes to Antioch and he's preaching to Gentiles. And when he's there, he eats and he drinks and fellowships with the Gentiles. And then the Jewish delegation of Jewish believers from Jerusalem who were part of the circumcision crowd, they believed and I don't know how Peter and those who were pillars in the church could endure it except that they still did not have this full revelation that Paul had received because they believed that according to their scripture that you had to be circumcised as well as believe in Jesus Christ to be saved.

You had to be circumcised. The circumcision group came down to Antioch and as they Peter had been fellowshiping with the Gentiles and when the Jews came and they were having dinner, he moved away. He got up from the table of the Gentiles and went over with the Jews.

I mean, it had to have been an embarrassing moment for Paul and for all of the Gentiles because Peter, he acted just like a Gentile. He was one of them. And here comes the group from Jerusalem and they still believe that you do not fellowship with a Gentile and you especially don't eat with them.

Peter gets up, leaves the Gentile table, goes to the Jewish table because the scripture says, because he withdrew fearing them that which are of the circumcision. He didn't want to embarrass. He didn't want to offend the Jews.

And Paul, the apostle was, there was this something in his spirit rose up and he rebuked Peter openly before both Jew and Gentile. He called it dissimulation. It's another word for compromise, being afraid to offend.

Paul said, you're not ministering uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. Peter, you and the circumcision people are compromising the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is wrong.

And what Pete, what Paul is saying to Peter now, Peter loved Paul. He knew he was one of the great soul winners of the church. He knew all about Peter walking the streets and people were healed on just falling under a shadow.

He knew about him going to the lame man at the temple gate and the man jumps. He's been lame from childhood and he leaps. He loved this man, but he says, I will not compromise the gospel.

Not one iota. I will not move. And in an act of love, he goes to Peter and actually what he's saying to get to the issue of what Paul said, look, Peter, this is wrong.

This is not the gospel that saved you. This is not what you preached at Pentecost. Something's happened, Peter.

Something's come into your message. This is compromise. This is not how you got filled with the Holy ghost.

This is another gospel. This is not right. This is not what's safe.

You're not preaching what you once preached. And there are thousands and thousands of pastors around the world are not preaching the message that saved them. It's not the message that filled them with the Holy ghost.

It's a compromised message. It's a, they are Fred afraid to offend people. In fact, they build their churches on this very con very concept.

What do you want? We don't want to offend you. Peter embraced those who were offended over the gospel of the cross of Jesus Christ, because the cross of Jesus Christ demands that you don't glory in the flesh, that you glory only in the cross of Jesus Christ and his shed blood. Do you understand the song we sang about the blood tonight? The blood that's never lost its power cannot be mentioned in many Bible churches and even charismatic churches today.

It can't even be mentioned because the blood has been removed. You would not dare say what Jesus said, eat my flesh and drink my blood because that's barbaric folks. I'm not preaching an anger, but I'm saying that even the secular world now here in the United States, they are trying to tear the word of God.

They're not breaking the constitution. They're mocking and breaking the word of God. God helped the man that compromises to get a crowd, to build a church and get more people into the seats.

Folks, you can build a big church. You can build a mega church. You can do all of that.

Now, folks, I know men that pastor large churches, 10,000 people tell us we run seven or 8,000 in New York City, a mega church. And I know many godly, godly men preaching a straight gospel. But I read and hear so much today that's 95% gospel and 5% of absolute compromise that grieves the Holy Spirit and how grave the Holy Spirit must be now.

A young evangelist singer came to me heartbroken, been to a Bible church of about 10,000. And while this evangelist was singing, the spirit of the Lord fell in this church that had never seen it, never touched the glory. And people begin to weep all over the church.

And a few started coming up and kneeling at the front of the church, just broken. The pastor met with his staff the next day and this came back, the evangelist came to me heartbroken about it. And the pastor said, never again in this church will we allow this to happen.

Never. He said, we are not here to offend people. Paul, the apostle said, I'm amazed that you so quickly deserted him who called you by the grace of Christ to a different gospel.

Some are distorting the gospel of Jesus Christ. Friends, let me tell you something. I thank God for praise.

I thank God where people clap their hands and worship the Lord. Folks, sometimes we've seen in Times Square Church and I've seen it other places. We were in Zambia in one of our recent gatherings and we saw the Shekinah Glory.

The Shekinah Glory, I'd never seen it in this fashion where the praise of God kept going up and up. I've been in meetings where it would peak out, but this was just going up and up until during that pastors were coming to the microphone and confessing sins and bishops were confessing sins and right into the microphone while people were praising God. God inhabits the praises of his people.

We thank God for that. But where the presence of the Lord is, there's a weightiness, a weight, an awe, a reverence. There's no lightness.

There's no joking. There's no foolishness. There's a weightiness to the presence of God.

But the Holy Spirit will not come to a meeting where there's lightness, where there's no awe, there's no respect for the word of God. He'll not come to you. He won't come to me.

He won't come to the house. Folks, I've told our people in Times Square, if we don't have the manifest presence of Jesus in all of our meetings, we'll shut the door because we don't have church. The only thing it makes church is the presence of the Lord.

Otherwise, it's just a meeting. But the Lord will not come where there's lightness about holy things, ridiculing the old paths that have proven so faithful, so powerful over the years. And where pastors on their screens show segments of the latest movies, and in those movies, Christ often is cursed and ridiculed.

And yet, here's a little segment that best illustrates the sermon. Folks, what an abomination before a holy God. I don't want to answer for that kind of lightness and foolishness.

I don't want to stand before a holy God and answer for that. When I speak of giving sinners, God will not come where there's a watered-down gospel, non-offensive. I speak of pastors who remove all the singing and preaching of Christ's blood.

In the Balkans, I won't name the country, but in one of the Balkan countries, I felt led to preach to pastors 60 years of old, age and over. And I'm saying, God needs you. And I kept, I don't know why the Lord had just given me that message that day.

And I was preaching. I noticed older pastors were weeping. And I said, I want everybody, 60 and over pastors and wives, come up here and let me pray for you.

And they filled the whole front. And one of the bishops came to me and he said, brother, you don't know how timely that message is because all through this country now, it's going through the Balkans. There's a

new doctrine.

There's a new thing among young pastors. We don't need anybody over 60. We don't want their ways.

God's doing a new thing. We don't need old pastors anymore. That is from the pits of hell.

That is from the pit of hell itself. And I'm not saying that just because I'm 73 and gray haired. No, no, no, no.

I'm saying that is not a new thing. Now, let me speak to you about the right path, the right course, the right race. And Jesus said, that's a narrow course and few there are that are on it.

Why does the other flesh road and many are running that race? If you're going to run this race for the prize, the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, you're going to go to Peniel. Peniel is where Jacob wrestled with, with the Lord. Jacob later said, I saw God face to face.

He said, this was God. Now God's a spirit. You can't wrestle with the spirit.

There's such a thing as the often he's, he's appeared in various forms to all through the old Testament. I don't know what form he appeared in, but, but Jacob said it was the Lord who wrestled with him. It's 20, 20 years since he has supplanted his brother Esau to supplant means to remove someone from a place of authority or inheritance and move into that place.

Yourself supplant means to remove one and move and take in, take the place. It's been 20 years since he's been at Bethel. That's where he put a rock.

Remember it had traveled at least 60 miles and he's now tired. And he evidently he was, had a camel had been racing in a camel. Uh, you couldn't go 60 miles by foot.

And he put Apollo, Apollo rocks there, and he puts his blankets probably against the rocks and he falls asleep. And you remember the dream there is the Lord high and lifted up. And there's a ladder angels ascending and descending on that ladder.

And folks, he's fresh from his sin. He's fresh from his deception. It's just been a short time that he's been there, but the Lord forgives him because the Lord sees something in this man.

He is forgiven or the Lord would not have shown him an open heaven. Now for 20 years, this man goes walking in the flesh. Remember what he said, if you bless me, just bless me, uh, prosper.

And Lord, I'm going to be good to you. I'm going to give you 10%. I'm going to give you tips.

You see, God doesn't expect so much of the young man, the new convert, the young pastor full of zeal and, and just doesn't have the history with God of pain and suffering. So God doesn't expect that much, but you see, he's 20 years from that. And for 20 years, he's been scheming.

He's been working in the flesh to be successful. This man wanted more than anything else to be independently free. He wanted to be wealthy.

He just didn't want folks. I've met pastors like that. Their one goal in life is to be independent financially so that they can give their full time to Jesus.

They say, and I've seen men go into oil. I've seen them go into real estate. I've seen them to go other places.

They're going to make enough money. So they're going, they don't have to be attend on a church. They don't have to depend on anybody.

They're going to be free. And I've seen them get their money and forget the ministry and forget what they started for. Jacob is now at Peniel, which means the face of God.

And that's, what's going to take you. If you're going to run this race for the prize of high calling God in Christ Jesus, you're going to come face to face with the Lord. And he's going to deal with your heart like he wouldn't be dealt with at Bethel.

You're not young in the faith now. You've had experience. You have a history with the Lord and he brings you to this place.

I'm not talking theology. I'm not talking from what I've read from the Puritans or any other old time or young or any other writer on the face of the earth. It's something that I've learned in my 73 years and 50 years of ministry that God expects more out of a true Christian worker or pastor.

He requires more of you. And God loved this man. He said, I'm not going to let you walk in your flesh anymore.

I'm not going to let you face your own plans and your own dreams anymore. And he brings them to this place. And the Bible says he was left all alone.

You see, he, in his flesh, he devised a plan. The Lord told him to go back to his home and God said, I'll be with you. I'll protect you.

But see an army of 400 Esau's coming with army of 400 toward him. And he receives this word and rather than fall in his face then and believe God and say, I'm going to stand in his promise. He devises a plan.

He divides his group, his family into two groups. The least loved go first Leah and her children and a whole arm, a whole herd of cattle and camels and donkeys and milk cows and sheep and goats. And he's going to bribe his brother.

He's he's going to do it his way. See, he's not dependent. He's an independent man.

And God says, yes, when you're young, I'll let you have a, I'll let you have a bit of independence, but I'm going to bring you one day. If you don't learn your lesson, I'm going to bring you to a place where everything's out of your control. There's nothing you can do.

And he can't do anything now. He can't control the situation where he's still trying. He sends Leah out and he leaves a long, a great distance between them and sends his beloved Rachel and Joseph and her entourage falling with another group of sheep and donkeys.

And what he said, if Leah gets killed, right? Rachel can see it and flee and maybe get saved. The Bible said he's left alone. And if you're a man or woman of God, you're going to come to Peniel.

You're going to come to a place when you're all alone, where your family can't help you. No ministry can help you. Nobody can help you because God has your back against the wall because he says, I'm going to show you what you've become.

I want to show you what's in your heart. I want to show you the flesh because you thought that you were doing so well, but I want to show you how you have gotten off on the wrong race. I want to show you the flesh that you're walking in.

There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. Please let me remind you that at this moment alone, he doesn't say one word about the danger he's in now. His focus has changed.

There's not one word about Esau. There's not a word about the tragedy that he thinks is about to come. He's not even trying to save his own skin now.

There's a whole new focus in his praying. God has brought him to this crisis. God brought him to this crisis.

God said, you go, and God interrupts the trip. And he said, no, we're going to have an interlude. We're going to have an encounter, Jacob.

And suddenly the wrestler turns to him and said, what's your name? He said, Jacob. And in the Hebrew, he's saying, supplant her. Now, folks, he's not talking about supplanting Jacob.

God's not trying to get him to say, well, I supplanted my brother. No, the Lord's saying, Jacob, you supplanted me. You removed me from being Lord.

You didn't consult me. You've not been consulting me at all. You just go and make your own decisions.

And you can't do that anymore because I am, I am raising you up in the inheritance of the fathers. And this is really, this is through which the Messiah is going to come. He said, this is not, I'm not going to allow this because I love you.

So he brings him this place and Jacob has to see now what's in his heart. Folks, if you don't know what I'm talking about, I don't know what kind of history you have with the Lord, where God brings you to a place where you have to look at your heart and when your flesh will rise up and every evil thing you've done, every failure you've ever made, everything in your life that's been unlike Christ to your husband, to your wife, if there has been adultery or fornication or pornography or everything's in your past, even though it's been under the blood. And even though the scripture said you to forget those things behind that will be replayed and replayed.

He will, this, the flesh will talk about things like the Lord's not answering your prayer. You fast and you pray and you don't see the results. The enemy will come in question about the reality of God and the reality of prayer.

He will come to you, the flesh will come and Satan uses the flesh to condemn you and bring a volume of guilt upon you like you've never known until you go home and say to your wife or your husbands, if you were a preacher, if you've been preaching, that was horrible. I don't even know. And see, Jacob says, well, you asked my name.

I'm asking your name. Who are you? What's your name? You see what he's saying after all these years, I don't think I know you. I don't know where I stand with you.

You tell me to go this way. You give me a promise. You give me a direction and you tell me what you're going to do.

And here I am in the middle of this and I don't see it. In fact, I see nothing but a battle. I see nothing but a struggle because you see, God is at work.

It's the Holy Spirit. And if you're here tonight and you're going through a struggle like that and you're saying, I don't know, God's passing me by. I see others blessed, but I'm not being blessed.

I don't see fruit or you have prayed and you sought God and you don't see it. And you're at the point right now where you feel like you're a failure and even thoughts of quitting and going into something else. Folks, this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

That's not the work of the devil. It's the work of God working in your spirit and trying to bring you to another place. And God said, you have supplanted me folks.

You're not walking in the spirit and I'm not walking in the spirit. I don't even know the Holy Ghost until God is in charge and tell everything in my life. Everything is under the direction and the government of the Holy Ghost.

Because when God changed his name to Israel, the root word is God governs. God is in control. And I wish I could have learned that when I was a younger preacher, that I would take everything to the Lord in prayer about my marriage, my children, name them, pray for them, believe God for them, but to believe that the Holy Ghost is leading my life.

I presume it's getting quiet because the Holy Spirit is speaking to us. I go home sometimes when I preach and I say, honey, everything was so quiet. I don't know if they got it or not.

It's probably what I'm going to say tonight. He says, tell me your name, please. Jacob asked the wrestler, what's your name? God wouldn't answer him.

He didn't give him the name because you see his name was linked to Jacob because it says God governs. And God just says, you have prevailed, Jacob. You have prevailed.

You know, we get the idea that he wrestled the Lord to the ground or he just outlasted the Lord or the Lord. You can't imagine the Lord would lose strength, do you? Who's going to defeat the Lord? If you really look at this and see what's happening here, the Lord says, would you leave me alone, please? Why would he say that? Because he'd already, the first thing the Lord did was cripple him. He crippled his flesh.

He put his hip out of joint. This man couldn't walk. How does a man fight? This is a man who is crippled and he's hanging on and all he can do is hang on.

Folks, I've been there when I have been crippled in my flesh, where I've been defeated in my flesh. And all I could do is hold on to Jesus. And that's all you can do.

You cling to Jesus. You'll hold on to him. No matter how crippled your flesh may be.

I know one thing. Jesus is alive. I'm going to hold on to him.

You say, oh, brother Dave, I don't know what you're talking about. All these things that come up from your past and all the feelings of faith. What did Paul, the apostle say? He says, Christ Jesus came to save sinners of whom I am the chief, not I was the chief, but I am the chief.

But for the grace of God, I couldn't even face God, but for his mercy and his grace. We were in Argentina. I think it was the pastor comes up heartbroken.

He and his wife in prison ministry and so discouraged, ready to quit. We felt so sorry. And Gary was praying with them.

And I was listening. Somebody 20 years ago had given what they said a word. You're going to be such a success.

You're going to win a multitude. You're just going to go from prison to prison. Gave him this long word.

He didn't get it from the Holy ghost. He got it from a man. And you know, now that's 20 years ago on, he said, I don't have anything.

My ministry is a total failure. Nothing of my so-called prophecy has happened. And now he he's doubting everything.

We prayed for him and God healed him. God healed him because now you see he's face to face with what looks like failure and the Holy spirit came. And now the man made himself a promise and we heard it from his lips from now on.

I'm not looking for numbers. I'm not looking for success. I want to minister to Jesus.

I want to minister to him. And out of that ministry to him, he can do with me what he please as a prince, you power with God and you have power with man. How did he, what were, what was that power? What is the power with God and with man with this? I close it's dependency.

When I become totally dependent on the Holy spirit, I don't make a move. I don't go, I don't speak this. I talk to him.

You see, Jesus said, I don't do anything on my own. What I see in here from my father, that's what I say. And that's what I do.

And God has promised that walk for every one of us. It's the only safeguard of walking the flesh walk. It's the only walk.

Listen to the scripture God gave me just before coming to the service. We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty. We don't walk in craftiness.

We don't handle the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commend ourselves to every man's conscience and the sight of God, we preach truth. He's saying that cuts to the conscience folks, what the Holy spirit has instructed me to do this evening. And this is the opening night of this gathering is that we would make a pledge in our hearts that no matter what the cost, we will not give what I owe to into pleasing men or to compromise the word of God.

We will not compromise the word of God. Hallelujah. Will you stand? Everybody stand please.

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