

Snared in an Evil Time

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson's sermon warns Christians about the dangers of being spiritually snared in an evil time and emphasizes the need for vigilance and preparedness as Christ's return approaches.

Duration: 1:09:24

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 9:12, Matthew 6:33, Luke 21:34, 1 Timothy 3:7

Topics: "Evil"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher warns about the snare of Satan and how many people, including Christians, are falling into it. He emphasizes the urgency of being prepared for the evil times that are upon us, as prophesied in the Bible. The preacher highlights the importance of forsaking the world and its temptations, and instead focusing on God and His Word. He also provides six signs of a Christian who is caught in a satanic snare, urging the listeners to examine their hearts and make sure they are not falling into these traps.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing to World Challenge P.O. Box 260, Lindale, Texas 75771 or calling 214-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to your friends. Ecclesiastes the 9th chapter and the 12th verse. I'm reading from King James.

For man also knoweth not his time, as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time. That's my message tonight, snared in an evil time. When it falleth suddenly upon them.

I read it again. For man also knoweth not his time, as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time. When it falleth suddenly upon them.

Holy Spirit, come right now. We thank you for your presence, O God. We thank you, Holy Spirit, for revealing Jesus in a fresh way to us tonight.

Lord, I need you. I need the quickening of the Holy Ghost. Thank you, Lord.

We believe we have that spiritual authority we heard about this morning. And we claim that authority of Jesus Christ now. We thank you that you're the Son of Man and you're the Son of God.

With all power, might, and authority, Jesus anoint us tonight to preach the word we pray, and to hear it especially. Amen. I want to talk to you tonight about one of the saddest catastrophes that I believe could ever happen to a child of God.

I can't conceive of anything more tragic than an on-fire Christian, who at one time had been on fire for God, becoming snared by Satan, when so close to the coming of Jesus. Snared by Satan at midnight. Nothing to me is more frightening than that.

Here is a picture of someone going along for quite a while in a favorable spiritual condition, enjoying the blessings of God. It appears that everything is secure. There's an appearance of steadfastness and strength.

Here's a Christian that you would never conceive that could fall. You'd say, anybody but him, anybody but her. But suddenly they change.

In fact, the preacher in Ecclesiastes says, this certain one who's being trapped or snared does not know his time. He knoweth not his time. He doesn't know that a week from now he may be dead.

He may be in eternity. He may drop dead at any time of a heart attack. But they went after Satan's lure.

They went after the bait that the devil set. Just like fish who see the lure and chase after that lure by the school, and they're suddenly in a trap. Just like the bird who sees the bait and swoops down to take the bait, and that trap springs and catches the bird.

He said that's what many are like. This happens in a time that's most lamentable. If it happens in quiet, normal times, it's one thing.

But to be trapped in days like these, to be trapped at the end of time, to have gone along so long, so far, so good, and then been trapped in the last day. And God has shown me, folks, that not just many, but multitudes, I say multitudes, are being trapped in these last days. Many who once worshipped among us, they're gone.

They're not here tonight. Some of you that are here now will not be among us six months from now, says the Lord. Terry, you will be in the snare of Satan.

You'll be trapped. Sad to say, but that's exactly what the text is about. Now, history proves that just before empires collapse, they reach the zenith of prosperity, luxury, and ease, and pleasure.

In fact, they become so indulgent that they'll go to war to protect not their freedoms, but their lifestyle. Did you hear what President Bush said last week? We are in the Mideast to protect the American way of life. But we don't even try to hide it from the world.

We call it a dream, the American dream. It's a dream. And we'll go to war to protect a dream that's vanishing.

Pompeii, Rome, Babylon, all of these empires were destroyed in a time when their inhabitants were boasting, I sit as a queen. I will never be a widow. I'm a queen.

My children will not be affected. I am safe. I'm secure.

Pompeii, Rome, Babylon, all of these past empires thought that their armies were invincible. They could never be defeated. And just before they collapsed, there was a pleasure madness, luxury, ease, riches.

And they were trapped. And America and many Christians included are going to be snared just prior to the collapse of the American empire. Now, the Word of God literally screams a message at us.

And it's this. The evil times prophesied by Jesus, by all the prophets, by the Old and New Testament, all of those end time prophecies have come to pass. They are upon us now, unfolding quickly.

The Bible literally screams at us the days of calamity that lead to Armageddon have come. It's a time to stir yourself. A time to awake, to rejoice because the day of redemption draws nigh.

The Bible screams, put aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets you. Draw nigh to God. Look up.

Put on your whole armor and get ready to stand in the evil time. Forsake the world and the things of the world. Heed the midnight cry.

Trim your lamps. Get ready to meet the bridegroom. Put off the old man.

Put on the new man. Run from the appearance of evil. Flee from evil company.

The Bible screams at us. Page after page. Get ready.

The time has come. Stir yourself. Awaken.

Now, in the face of all these powerful appeals of the Holy Ghost and the Word of God, multitudes are falling into the trap of the devil and many snares. Of the many snares mentioned in the Bible, I want to bring to your attention tonight just three of them. The first snare I want to bring to your attention is the snare of Satan.

The snare of Satan. Don't turn there, but in 1 Timothy 3, 7, Paul warns against falling into reproach and the snare of the devil. He's warning the church.

He's warning elders, in fact, to beware of falling into reproach or shame and the snare of the devil. Paul spoke of some in the last days who will need to recover themselves out of the snare of the devil. To recover themselves.

They were not in the snare. They fell into the snare. They need to be recovered.

To recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him at his will. Now, we know that the devil goes about as a roaring lion seeking who may devour. But who is he trying to devour? He's coming against those who have set their heart to seek God.

My wife and I were in a restaurant last night. We just felt like going up to Columbus Avenue. A certain restaurant the Lord laid on our hearts.

We hadn't been there in a long time. And the young lady that was waiting on us said, You're Brother Dave, aren't you? And I said, You're Gwen, yes. And Gabrielle, she's here tonight.

She's being baptized here. And she said, Brother Dave, ever since I made up my mind, She was a Catholic girl saved from Catholicism. Her kind of Catholicism was not charismatic.

It was a very powerful kind of idolatry. We've had many of you delivered from that kind of idolatry. And she said, Ever since I made up my mind to go all the way and be baptized in the world, This past week, everything's gone wrong.

They broke into my house and stole just about everything. About \$2,500, \$3,000 worth of stuff. Her rent was in jeopardy.

And she said, I want to hurry up and get baptized. And she's going down. In fact, they stole her tape.

She had to borrow tape to listen to the tape. Brother Don, and she's here tonight. But you see, that's where the devil's attack is going to come.

Those who sit here tonight who say, It can't be me. I could not possibly fall in the snare of the enemy. I could not be one that Brother Wilkerson's talking about tonight.

No way. I love him so much. There's no way he could be after me.

The fact that you love Jesus so much. That you've set your heart. Beware.

Watch out. Because the enemy... Now, we don't have to be afraid of the devil. But we have to be aware of his tactics, as Scripture says.

Please don't sit in a meeting tonight and say, That's not me. A satanic snare is anything of this world that takes hold of your heart. A satanic snare is anything of this world that takes hold of your heart.

Satan's lures are the things of this world. He uses the things of this world to be the bait, the lure. Now, the Bible lists a number of these satanic snares.

He says the number one is the love of riches. Ease and pleasure. Then he talks about growing associations with ungodly friends.

Building ungodly associations with ungodly people. He calls that a great trap. And there's another very strong satanic trap.

And that's a secret affair with a man or woman who's not your husband or wife. A secret affair. Adultery.

Fornication. Sexual sins. These are very clearly outlined in the Bible as satanic snares.

But all of these things are the harvest. They don't represent... They represent the harvest of a heart that still has some of the world clinging to it. Jesus can testify the wicked one cometh and hath nothing in me.

It says the devil comes at me with his lures and his bait and his trap. And I don't respond. There's nothing in me to respond.

You see, the devil knows what's in your heart. He can't read your mind, but he sees your actions. He sees what you do time after time, slipping back to that one thing that you still hold on to.

And he will set a lure or a bait to attract that very thing that's in your heart. He knows how to push the button, so to speak. He knows the kind of bait that you'll go after.

And Jesus said the wicked one cometh and hath nothing in me. Now those that are falling into the satanic snares of these last days are those who still have some of the world in their hearts. Beware tonight, if something is still clinging in your heart, if you have anything in the world still clinging to you, the day will come that you are going to fall into the trap of the enemy.

It's a demon spirit, Paul said, demons hath forsaken me, having loved this present world. Now I want to give you, there are many signs, but I want to give you six signs of a Christian who's caught in a satanic snare. Now as I go over these six signs, I want you to take inventory in your heart.

Don't say, well I know who that is. Number two, I know who that is. Number three, I know who that is.

Now folks, this is serious business. I want to see if you can find any of these six signs at work in your heart right now. And if so, you better say, God do something for me tonight.

It's dangerous. I come to you with a prophetic word and I want you to listen clearly. Here are just six signs that the Lord has given me of a Christian who's already got at least a foot in the devil's trap, snared in a satanic snare.

Sign number one, a waning of awe for God and a lessening of the fear of God. The awe and the fear of God that you once had that caused you to walk so carefully with the Lord, it's slowly slipping away now. It's been replaced with a lightness and a frivolity that's creeping in now.

And the reverence has gone from your life. The reverence of God, the awe of God, the fear of God, you are losing it. It's slipping away.

It used to be the one thing that kept you from sin. It was the one thing that you so desired. It gave you discernment.

It gave you hope in life. And now it's slipping away. Sign number two, a spiritual dullness and indifference that's setting in.

When you once couldn't wait to be in God's house, you loved to be in the secret closet of prayer. You spent most of your time talking about the things of God, what He was doing in you and in your family. Now you go through the motions.

The house of God and the things of God are not the most important thing. They're becoming less and less important. They're not the center of your life.

They're in the peripheral areas of your life. Dullness that leads to death. Oh, if there is a spiritual dullness of any kind, examine your heart.

If the things of God are not center, if your whole life is not wrapped around the house of God, if your whole life is not wrapped around the things of God, and everything else outside that circle, you are in the devil's snare. Thirdly, your place in the world is becoming more important than your place in the body of Christ. Christian friends you once loved now seem dull to you, less stimulating and even irritating.

Well, you found new friends in the world that seem more attractive to you. I can think tonight of at least two dozen people I'd like to be here tonight to hear this, that are gone already. For this very one, this number three reason I give you right now.

They found the Christian friends here boring, because their hearts were not centered on Jesus. And so they wanted to go out and find other friends that were more attractive. Where once you could see through all the sham of this world, a blindness has come now, and you're slowly turning away from the body of Christ, to the ungodly of this world.

The ungodly have your ear now, rather than the body of Christ. Think about that now. Balcony, all over this building, behind me.

Who has your ear? Is it more important to be with the body of Christ, or to be with those in your family that are not saved, or to be with those friends who are not right with God? Number four, a coldness in prayer and in worship. Where there was once fervency, a yearning hunger for God, and you once hated any interruption that would keep you from your prayer closet. Now you pray coldly.

You have less time to give to Him now. Your mind is not in the worship. You become bogged down with the thoughts of other things pressing in.

Now, I'm afraid we're going to have to really search our hearts right now. Everybody in this house. That's been one thing God's been talking to me for so long.

In fact, I wrote a message years ago about interruptions, of how the devil comes to interrupt us in our prayer. And I used to hate that, and God said, you must continue to hate that. Anything that would keep you from the prayer closet.

Anything that would take the fire out of your prayer. But now the fire has gone out of your praying. The life and love has gone out of your worship.

And in Malachi 1.3 it said, You say, behold, what a weariness it is. Number five, there's a weariness of the straight and narrow way. You once loved the narrow way of holiness.

Now, your road's getting wider and wider. You look back and call it legalism. You now say, no more bondage.

Never again will I walk so narrow. Oh, we have churches in this city that are filled with people who walked out of straight and narrow churches and found a wide one. They couldn't handle it.

There are many people who can't handle the message that goes forth from this pulpit. Because we point to a straight and narrow path. Jesus said the way is narrow, and it's straight, and few are be that find it.

But the way to hell is wide, and many there be that are on it. Number six, a turning away from the prophetic and judgment warnings of true shepherds. And you begin to desire a message of love and mercy.

Now, I believe God's a God of love and God's a God of mercy, but He's also a God of judgment and justice. No longer do we lay it to heart, the strong, provoking call to holiness. You once sat under the prophetic word.

And I have a feeling I'm speaking to a number of people here for the first time. You walk in here tonight, and God's going to put you right against the wall. You do it lovingly.

You once sat under the prophetic word, a thundering word from heaven that drove you to your knees, but now it irritates you. Satan has convinced you that it's negative. It's only dragging you down.

You're soon going to be shutting out all prophetic warnings, and you'll become your own guide, you'll become your own prophet. And that's a dangerous place. Do any six of these signs bring conviction to your heart? And if so, I ask you tonight, before this message is over, you cry out to God, say, Oh, Lord, I see a trap, I see a lure.

There's something laying out there. God, open my eyes. Take the blindness away.

The second snare I want to bring to your attention tonight is the sudden snare of Christ's coming. The sudden snare of Christ's coming. I want you to go to Luke 21.

It's amazing how quiet a church gets when there's conviction falling. I've never preached a message yet that it didn't hit my heart first. Luke 21, beginning to read verse 34.

We're going to see the second snare. See, God's exposing these snares tonight. Verse 34, Luke 21.

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, that's overeating, and drunkenness. And please notice that overeating and drunkenness are used in the same framework. They're one and the same thing in the sight of God.

And cares of this life, and so that that day come upon you unawares. For as a what? For as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.

And look at me, please. Jesus is here prophesying of a day coming just prior to His return. That the whole earth, all of mankind, will be caught off guard.

Will be taken suddenly. This is the snare of the sudden coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. So few will be looking for Him.

So few will be expecting Him. When He suddenly appears in the heavens. Beloved, you go back 1,900 years.

The first hundred years of the church. Consider that time after Christ's death. In the day of Pentecost.

And consider the next 50 years or so. How they did cry, even saw Lord Jesus come quickly. How they lived so expectantly.

They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Their cry was, come Lord Jesus. They expected Him at any moment.

They lived with great expectancy. Their hope and their life was in eternity. They were always looking up.

They were always thinking of His coming. That was the hope of the early church. That was the hope of the first church of Pentecost.

The Lord shall return suddenly in the twinkling of an eye. He's coming, the scripture says, for those who look for His appearing. But Jesus said, the whole earth, all of mankind, will be taken off guard.

I want you to remember what Pastor Bob told us recently in a message. That God is speaking to us through world events. And the key word is suddenness.

Suddenness. Think of all the sudden things that are happening right now. Suddenly, the iron curtain comes down.

Overnight. Freedom suddenly comes to countries that for years and years have been in bondage. Suddenly, Russia is crying for democracy overnight.

Suddenly, Saddam Hussein invades Kuwait. Suddenly. And God is trying to show us something.

He's speaking, He's screaming at us. Suddenly, suddenly, suddenly. Oh, you go through the scripture and you'll find this suddenness.

Jesus, in Mark, don't turn it, but in Mark 13, 35 to 37. What's there for? For you know not when the master of the house will come, at even or at midnight, or at the clock crowing, or in the morning. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

When I say to one, I say to all, watch. Watch. Jesus is saying, I've allowed things to happen suddenly to show you how quickly things in this world can change.

To prepare your heart for sudden changes. He's not only speaking to the Christians, He's speaking to the world. These sudden changes.

Brother, sister, there is no way that when I was a young preacher that I would ever conceive in my wildest imagination that I would live. I would live. I'm only 59 years of age, but live to see so many sudden prophecies being fulfilled in my lifetime.

Never. Never could we have conceived what is happening right before our very eyes. Amazing that the early church was 2,000 years at least removed from His coming, expecting Him at any moment, and all prepared.

And isn't it amazing, ironic and sad, that 2,000 years later the people that should be the most prepared are the least expected. Isn't that a frightening thought? That here we are, with God knocking on the door, eternity right beside us. Everything before our eyes spinning so fast we can't keep up with it, and the church asleep.

Multitudes of Christians fast asleep when Jesus said, don't you be like that, wake up. Because it's going to happen suddenly. The whole world's going to be caught off guard.

It's going to be a snare. It's going to be a trap. They're going to be trapped.

What are they going to be trapped in? Eating, drinking, and the cares of this life. Beloved, think what the scripture says of the days of Lot. They were eating, drinking, married, and given in marriage.

And they knew not. In other words, they were caught off guard when Sodom was born, the same in Noah's time. They knew not.

They were eating, drinking, married, and given in marriage. Now that doesn't mean that there was something sinful about them going to a restaurant. There was nothing sinful about them going about their business and being married.

Those are all natural things. The trouble was they were doing all of these things, wrapped up in their flesh, while a man was screaming judgment, while the word of God was knocking, while all the signs said, wake up, and they were going to sleep, with a prophet screaming in their ears. They turned it off.

How do the sinners today, who don't know Jesus, how do they live with such fear? And Jesus said it's going to get so bad that men's hearts are going to absolutely, they're going to stop with fear. They're going to have heart attacks. Just watching the things that are coming to pass on the earth.

They're bringing one of our American citizens home, who died of a heart attack, and was used as a human shield in Kuwait. He stood there, and the fear, he collapsed, he died on the spot. And people are falling all over the world now, fear of those things coming upon them.

And in that time, isn't it amazing? They see all these things that are coming to pass. Frightful things. Amazing that we know that Israel has nuclear neutron bombs, and we know that all they need is some provocation, and they're not afraid to use them.

We could be in a holocaust and Zacharias prophecy of those horrible scenes of all the protein, as I mentioned, being eaten up from the calcium, just bones remaining. We may see all of this in our time. We may see a limited nuclear or proton holocaust.

It's incredible we live with this. And sinners know that the whole world's talking about it. How did they put it out of mind? You know what they do? They just dull their mind.

Everything is absolutely pushed out. Back when I had television years ago, God forgive me. And that's another thing.

Many of you, you brought your idol back already. You're going to be there just when Jesus comes. I'm not saying you're going to lose your soul over that, but I'm saying I wouldn't want to be watching some garbage when the trumpet sounds.

Now, I lost my point. What was it? Oh, yes. I was giving you Don's test, see if you're listening.

I heard Johnny Carson say there was a Christian, some Christian singer, and she really put it, what do you think about God and about eternity? He said, I just put it out of my mind. He said, you can't live. You have to put him out of your mind.

You put eternity out of your mind. You don't think about it. Well, that's what's happening about the coming of the Lord now.

Just putting it out of mind. Going about business, not thinking about it. Not talking about it.

Not focused. I'll tell you, my whole life revolves around my love for Jesus and my longing and yearning to be with him. I expect Jesus right now.

While I'm preaching, I expect Jesus to come at any moment. Bible says, though, that the thing that's going to rob people of this, they're going to be so wrapped up in gourmet. You know what gourmet is? Becoming

all wrapped up in their foods.

You sit down with the average Christian in a dead church today, and you know what they talk about? Their wine and their food. Their drinking and their eating. That's the number one conversation among dead Christians.

In fact, the big thing in many circles now, in Christian social circuses, they call it gourmet. Going around trying new restaurants, French, exotic. That in itself, that's not where the problem lies.

The problem lies that these things are beginning to consume the heart and take up the thinking and the time, and Jesus is put out of mind. His coming is put out of mind. You want to go on? He that being often reproved and hardeneth his heart shall suddenly be cut off, destroyed, and that without remedy.

What God is saying, I've warned you, and I've warned you, but I'm telling you, I'm going to come suddenly. The coming of Jesus, you say the coming of Jesus is a snare to God's people? Some of them, yes. Jesus is telling his children, You take heed, lest your heart... He's not talking to the world, he's talking to his people.

He said, you. He was talking to his own disciples. You take heed, lest your heart be weighted down, and that day come upon you unexpectedly.

Upon you! He said, you, Christian, you watch and pray. Now, beloved, no matter what your doctrine is about the coming of Jesus, one thing cannot be disputed. My Bible said he's going to come suddenly in the twinkling of an eye like a thief, and he says, I don't want that day to overtake you as a thief.

You should not be taken by surprise. You should be looking, and your life should reflect that expectancy. Do you have that expectancy tonight? Ah, folks, we've got doctrines being taught today that delay the coming of the Lord.

I'll tell you, that's a doctrine of ease. That's a doctrine that'll lay you down in the bed of sin quicker than anything I know. That'll lay you right down in the lap of Delilah.

You know what it is? Jesus can't come till we subdue the earth. Well, let's party. We're going to subdue the earth.

I don't find that anywhere in this Bible. I don't find that anywhere in the New Testament church. They said, even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

They were expecting him at any moment. He said, I'm coming as a thief in the night. He said, it's going to be a snare.

Oh, what a snare it's going to be to those who say he's not coming for 45,000 years yet. They figure it's going to take 45,000 to 46,000 years yet to bring Jesus back to this earth. I've read that in a book.

45,000 to 40,000, I don't know where they got that figure. I don't even still can't figure out how he got it. Well, some of them, well, we can do it in 1,000 years.

Isn't that something? No more expecting his return. Folks, this great urgency, this longing, how can you long for him when you don't believe he's coming? How can you be yearning for him? And so what they say, oh, he's coming, he comes to us. He comes every day.

Folks, please don't fall for it. How, what a snare that's going to be for those who preach that doctrine. What a snare it's going to be on that day.

Trumpet will sound, they say, it can't be. It can't be, it doesn't fit my doctrine. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. So shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.

Comfort one another with these words. That's our comfort. Glory to God.

I had a sister this morning, lovely saint back here, stopped me and said, Brother Dave, I heard a message you preached, Redeemer comes to Zion. I think I preached that seven or eight years ago. She said, man, I heard you screaming and pounding that pulpit.

I got to thinking, well, am I not pounding enough anymore? I don't know. But on this one, I feel like pounding. The snare of a deep sleep from the Lord.

The snare of a deep sleep from the Lord. I want you to go to Isaiah 29. Here's a real tragedy.

Isaiah 29. I want you to go to verse 10. For the Lord, now who's doing this pouring? For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes, the prophets and your rulers or leaders, the seers hath he covered.

Oh, how tragic. The meaning is terrifying. God is saying, I, the Lord God, have cast upon you a deep trance of lethargy.

And that's what it means in Hebrew. A deep trance of lethargy. You do not see or hear as you once did.

You do not discern or understand anymore. Because I've shut your ears. I've shut your eyes.

And I've taken your spiritual understanding from you. I have veiled the message. I've veiled the message.

You don't see it anymore. You don't understand it. You're not hearing it in the heart anymore.

Because I, the Lord God, have poured out upon you a spirit. That's a breathing. A breathing.

As sure as he breathed the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. He says, I will pour upon you. It's a breath.

I will pour upon you the breathing of a deep sleep. Meaning, very clearly, I have poured upon you the breath of lethargy. A deep stupefying spiritual listlessness.

That you can no longer hear, see or understand. Look at me please. How can we face this tonight? That's what my Bible says.

The Lord. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep. It didn't come from the devil.

It came from God. The Lord did this. Why would God do something so incredible as this? Look at verse 13.

Wherefore the Lord said, forasmuch of this people draw near to me with their mouth. And with their lips they do honor me. But have removed their heart far from me.

And their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men. New American Standard says their fear is taught, or rather traditions learned by rote. But it's the same thing.

Now, here's what it means. Look this way please, quickly. It says, you turned your heart away from me.

But you kept the words. Bob and Don have preached about this often. You're still going through the motions.

Nobody knows but me, God says. But I see your heart. He said, you come to me with all the right words.

You come to me and honor me with your lips. But your heart has drifted. Your heart is not with me anymore.

Your heart is slipping away. Oh, this is why God says, I will pour upon you the spirit of a deep sleep. And that deep sleep means it ends in death.

It's a perpetual sleep if you don't get out of it quickly. A perpetual sleep. And you see these people, if you read on, turn to a soft message.

They turn to a message that blunts and dulls the fear of God. They turn to a message that is devised by men, with men's principles and men's rules. Listen to me please.

You go to a church where the Holy Ghost is not working. You go to a church where people only are trying to raise money to pay the bills. You go to a church where there's not a man of God on his face walking in holiness and repentance before a holy God.

You go to a church where the preacher is dead, the deacons are dead, and most of the people are dead. And what you're going to hear are six ways to improve your faith. Six ways to do this, seven ways to do that.

You've got principle after principle, line upon line, principle, precept upon principle. All based on man's thinking. And you'll sit there finally, where once you loved the prophetic word, and you were driven to your knees and you went home and said, Thank God, I would have been in hell, but someone put a fire under me, pointed finger at my sin.

But if your heart, if your heart doesn't stay true to Him and humble and broken before the Lord, it becomes irritating to you and something in the world grips your heart. The time comes, I'll tell you who hates prophetic teaching. I'll tell you who hates prophets.

I'll tell you who hates the truth. I'll tell you who hates holiness preaching more than anything else. Those who once sat on it and loved it and turned from it.

They hate it, they despise it. And they say, I was there and it's all legalism. It tore me apart, it dragged me down.

Folks, holiness preaching, righteousness preaching, judgment preaching, priest in love, balanced with mercy, will do nothing but bring spiritual life and hope to your heart. You know, there are some churches

today that exist for one purpose, and that's to warehouse Christians who have turned from the truth. To comfort those who want to stay in their slumber.

It's not church, it's a slumber party. If you begin to reject the probing message of His holiness, it won't be long until your eyes are going to be closed. You're going to be cast by God Himself into a deep lethargy.

And I've met people like this. Oh, how it grieves my heart. I weep over them.

I meet them a year later. And you know what they're saying? I found a church, they preach the gospel there. I'm not preaching against any church.

This is not the only church preaching the gospel, believe me. God's moving through the land in many, many places. But how awful to be asleep at midnight.

To see these things being fulfilled. But you've got to believe this in your heart right now. The Bible said, yet they would not hear, they would not listen.

The Bible says, they will go back. In fact, Isaiah 28, 13 is where you find the snare in this warning. They will go back and fall backward and be broken and snared and taken.

You find He's saying that in context of a people who once came to Jeremiah to hear the Word and said, would you please tell us what God is saying? And when they heard it and didn't like it, they turned aside. They went to their own teachers having itching ears. And Isaiah said, they're going back.

They're falling backward. They're going to be broken, snared and taken in their sins. All right.

Now I've talked about three of the many snares mentioned in the Bible, only three. But I see in closing tonight only three ways to escape these snares. And I want to quickly name three ways to get out of the snare of Satan, the snare of his sudden coming and the snare of a deep sleep from the Lord.

All right. The first way and the best way, one of the best ways to get out of a satanic snare is to quickly repent and return to your first love. Quickly.

Say, God, you spoke to me tonight. I see some of this in me. Lord Jesus, you did such a good work in me.

I won't let it go. I'll read that to you. This was the word of Paul to Timothy.

That good thing that was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which is in you. In other words, Paul saying, Timothy, God did a good thing in you. He did a marvelous work in you.

You hold on to that. You resist the devil. You see any of these things making in roads? You stand up by faith in Jesus' name and take authority and you repent on the spot.

Oh, folks, we live in this state of repentance. Hallelujah. Say, Lord, I'm sorry.

I'd run back and do your first works again. Run back to your first love for Jesus. This is the end of side one.

You may now turn the tape over to side two. I'll break the snare right on the spot. Ah, Satan will flee.

And those who return like this usually become stronger than they were before. Because now they're aware. Now they have their ears.

They have their antenna up. And they're not so cocky anymore. They're totally dependent on Jesus now.

Because they know they could fail without Him. Now the second way to get out of a satanic snare is by the rod. These snares, by the rod.

Now listen to me clearly. God has a way of whipping drowsy Christians out of their slumber. Whipping them out of slumber.

Now, folks, listen to me. I mean listen to me. If you ever had the rod of God applied to you or your family, And I think the greatest blindness we've had in the church is this matter of the rod of God.

Hosea 5.15 I will go and return to my place. He's talking about God speaking about a people who won't hear Him. They're trapped.

They're ensnared. They're in sleep. I'll go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offense and seek my face.

And in their affliction, they will seek me early. In their affliction, they'll turn to me. Now, he's talking about a certain few.

Sadly, the rod of God is the least effective way of coming out of a snare. And I'll tell you why. There are not a handful of Christians who acknowledge the rod when it comes.

It's just one of those things. Because you see, He's a God of love and I'm His child. God would never whip me.

God would never spank me. If you believe that, you don't know your Bible. Whom the Lord loves, He chastens.

And I want you to listen to this. There's a scripture. Spare the rod and damn the child.

And God's not about to damn His children by sparing His rod. And some of you are not willing to recognize that some of the things that have been happening in your life has been the rod of God trying to deliver you from a snare. Trying to get it out.

I've told you at least a dozen times. I'll repeat it tonight. The slap on the wrist first.

Just like the school teacher. Slap on the wrist. It's usually to you as an individual.

And I've had that slap many times. God says, I want your attention now. God says, I won't be fooled with.

You can't toy with me. My word is true. You can't play games with me.

And God is serious. And I don't think we realize how serious God is. And then we don't listen.

And the stroke comes down harder the second time. And we don't listen. We say, well that just happened.

Here it comes again. And, folks, I've been dealing in the past three months with numbers around this country and a few in this church. And I said, be careful.

Be careful of the rod of God. Now when it comes, it's coming in love. He says, I've done such a good work.

I'm not about to let you be taken over by the devil. I'm not about to let you go. I love you too much to let you be turned over to your own designs, your own ways.

I'm going to have to turn you over my knee and spank you. And I'm going to spank you good. And I'll tell you what, when my father spanked me the first time and it didn't work, the second time it really worked.

He said, if you do it again, you'll be back here the third time. Beloved, I recognize, you see, nothing happens in our lives by accident. Not when you're walking with Jesus.

Now it rains on the just and on the unjust. There are times there'll be death come to your family. And that's a natural thing.

The parents may be old. It's not because they're sin. But I'll tell you what, when things begin to happen in my life, I look around.

I immediately say, Lord, I go to the secret closet and say, Lord, are you trying to say something to me? Is there any error in my life? Now, if it's not there, you say, thank you, Jesus. Thank you. It rains on the just and the unjust and his grace will come and lift you up and he'll take you right through it.

But if it's the rod and you seek him, he'll tell you. He will speak to your heart and he'll show you and he'll bring you into a place of obedience. And if you say, Lord, that's me, I see it.

I know I'm making a wrong move, a wrong turn. I've been disobedient. You come to him and you repent and say, Jesus, I want to get back to where I was.

I'll do what you told me to do. Then he puts his arms around you and loves out all the hurt. And the rod is lifted.

Hallelujah. Am I in right theology, Bob? Bob's our theologian. Seriously.

And also Brother Don, but I see the rod coming. Now I'm prophesying. I see the rod coming for a number.

And when it comes, you won't admit that God is at work speaking to you. But I beg of you in the name of the Lord Jesus to open your heart, examine yourself before the Lord, and say, Lord Jesus, if you love me enough to spank me, if you love me enough that much, then Lord, please give me the power to obey. Give me the strength to do what I need to do.

Oh, how loving, how faithful. The Holy Ghost rushes in. My dad never once spanked me, and the hardest part was after he spanked me.

And every time he'd come down across my backsides with a strap, he had a big leather strap. Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child, and the rod of correction will drive it far from him. That's Bible.

And I'd scream like he was killing me. I'd scream before he touched me. The hardest part of all was to get up.

He said, now, come here, David. Hug me. I didn't want to hug him.

He'd spanked me, and I was hurting, but I knew he loved me. And he'd make me hug him. He said, David, I'm not going to let the devil have you.

God has his hand on you. And I'm coming against the devil every chance I can, and every bit of rebellion in you. And I thank God that's one of the reasons I'm here tonight in this pulpit.

All right, finally, here's the best way to get out of a trap. I talked about repentance and running back to him. I talked about the rod.

Now I'm going to talk about responding. Responding to the righteous fear of God. I'm going to read three scriptures quickly before I close.

Fear the Lord and depart from evil. Proverbs 16.6, by the fear of the Lord, men depart from sin, from evil. Proverbs 8.13, the fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

Now here's where I'm going to close. Here's what you must do. This past few weeks, I've been looking back over my ministry.

I started preaching when I was just a child. I'm 59 now, as I said. I've looked back, and I said, Oh God, how is it you've kept me? What is the one principle? What is the thing that has kept me from falling? And I look back a number of years ago, when God was dealing with me, in the periods where there were compromises in my life.

Now God kept me this way. God kept me from going over the edge. God kept me from... Now, technically, I was always... You could not call me an adulterer, because technically, you see, if you just look with lust in your eyes, technically you don't think you're an adulterer, but Jesus calls you an adulterer if you just look.

But see, I could always say, technically, I'm alright. But God said that's not enough. And I'll tell you, there was a time in my... I look back when God gave me an ultimatum in my ministry.

He said, David, I've warned you, and I've warned you, and I've warned you. Now, I'm not going to warn you anymore. I'm giving you an ultimatum.

And I'm telling you now, I can put my fear in your heart right now, and if you respond to that fear, that fear will be a bulwark against the devil. It'll be a bulwark against sin. By the fear of God, men depart from evil.

And I tell you, God gave me an ultimatum. And one particular thing God was saying, if I see you do it one more time, David, if I see you... You see, God is so merciful. He'll go along for years, months, weeks, and then suddenly, there it is.

That divine ultimatum. It says, if I let you go one more step, you turn yourself over to your sin. I can't help you because you're hardening yourself.

I have to give you an ultimatum now, and God does that to produce this awesome fear. Oh, I love him more than I've ever loved him. And I'll tell you what, this awesome fear of God produces a greater love than I've ever had.

It produces a love. A God that could love me so much as to put an awe and a fear and a reverence in my heart and a hatred for sin where so much God said, do it one more time, David. The anointing is gone.

And I'm going to have to take you. It's over. The destruction of the flesh that your soul might be saved.

And God came to me one day on one item, and I'd fought it and fought it and fought it. And God finally came to my room and spoke to my heart. He said, I'm making you know today, right now, David, if you want my anointing, if you want me, you can't ever do it again.

Ever. If you do it, I've warned you. And I'll tell you folks, I can't even begin to tell you the detail, but I just have to tell you this much.

I went one step toward it. And the moment I took that step, this is the gospel truth, I was in my office and lightning struck. Thunder.

Lightning. Blew up our telephone system. And God said, David, I mean it.

Next time, it's you. And that was a God of love. God of mercy.

I thank Him. I tremble at the thought right now. I absolutely tremble at the thought of touching what God has told me not to touch.

Or to think thoughts that I'm not to think. You say, well, don't those come... You resist them in the name of Jesus, but you don't dwell on them. Yeah, you used to play with it, you used to toy with it in your mind.

God says, no. Stand up by strength right now. Resist it, and I'll give you the strength.

You say, that's heavy. Let me read it to you again. By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil.

There may be many of you who have not received that divine ultimatum. You may still be in that period of grace. God is still grace.

I believe what God told me is the greatest expression of grace He's ever given to me. It's an expression of grace. He loves us.

Do you want to get out of that snare? Do you want to get out of that snare? Will you trust Him right now? You say, David, do you live under a fear? No, I don't live under a fear of dying. I don't live under a dread of God. I live under the awe of God.

I live under a dread of sin. Now, I'm telling you tonight, I would like so much to soften this message. I would like just to come down and take you in my arms and pat you on the back and say, you're going to be all right.

Oh, Jesus just loves us all. He does. But brother, sister, we serve a holy God.

And God's saying to some, you know, there have been some of you dear folks been up this altar 50 times. God's been dealing with the same sin. How long has he been dealing with it? How long has God been dealing with you? Do you know what it is? You don't have the fear of God.

You don't have the fear of God in your heart. You say, Mount Sinai, the fear didn't work. Oh, there was a man who saw it and it worked and his name was Moses.

There was a man who saw it and it worked. It was Joshua. It didn't work because they didn't have the fear of God.

That was not the fear of God, the lightning and the thunder. They rejected the fear of God. That's why they turned away from God.

It wasn't the thunder of Mount Sinai. No, that wasn't it, folks. It was the heart that turned it all off.

Will you stand with me for just a moment, please? I've never given a message that was hard without showing you the other side. Pastor Charles quoted a scripture from David. Get that microphone, get it in the Bible.

You quoted it. Delivered from the snare. That was my last verse and I forgot to read it.

I want you to get that out, Charles. Remember that scripture? Do you know where it's found? I'll get it for you here. Just get to the microphone and then quote it for us, if you will, please.

There is nothing that gives us more hope than the Word of God. Did you find it? Okay. Psalm 124, from 6 through 8, it says, Blessed be the Lord who has not given us as a prey to their teeth.

Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers. The snare is broken and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Blessed be the Lord who has not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers. The snare is broken and we are escaped.

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Praise you, Jesus. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

We are delivered. The snare is broken. Lord, break the snare of the enemy tonight.

Break the snare of Satan. The snare, Lord, of the weight and cares of this life of eating and drinking. Lord, break the snare of sleep and slumber.

Lord, there's a heaviness here tonight, but there's a reason for it. There's a reason because you're telling us to examine our hearts. Lord, there's an easy preaching in the land today.

It's producing a sleep. Lord, I would rather have this heaviness tonight if it will produce a repentance. A brokenness before you, O God.

I plead for this people. I plead for those in this building tonight. Lord, I'm not backed down from what you told me to preach.

You told me to preach it tonight. That many are being caught in the snare of the devil. And I had to prophesy against it.

That there must come in this last day a holy fear of God against sin. That we cannot toy with God. We cannot play with our sins and come and worship in this church.

We must lay them down. We must lay them down at the foot of the cross. O God, I plead with you for a cleansing tonight.

A brokenness. Now, beloved, you're either going to reject the word tonight. You're going to say, Lord, I want to be delivered from every snare of the enemy right now.

Raise your hands and ask God to give you a deliverance right now. Even the thought of a snare. Lord, open the snare.

Open the snare. Open the trap and set everybody free that wants to be free. Run quickly to Jesus and repent.

Run quickly to Jesus and repent. Hallelujah. Lord, if I preach the truth, you have to confirm it right now.

You have to confirm it. If you're in a snare, if you're in a trap, get out of your seat and come and stand here. If you're in a snare, come on, up in the balcony.

If you're in a trap, if you're in a snare, maybe you're just looking at the bait. Get out of your seat. Up in the balcony.

Go to the stairs and come down. If you're in a trap, if you're in a snare, if the enemies come against you, come on. The Lord has freedom.

He's going to deliver you. Deliver you. Hallelujah.

There are some of you who have never been to the altar. You've never been. You've never come forward publicly.

Why don't you come and join right now? Come and join these that are coming. Slip out of your seat. Obey the Holy Ghost.

Obey the Holy Spirit. Up in the balcony, wherever you're at. You say, Brother Wilkinson, I want to be delivered.

I want to be delivered. I don't want to be in a satanic snare. I don't want to be caught unexpected when Jesus comes.

I want to be looking and waiting. You know, the Lord just spoke to my heart something, and I want you to listen while they're coming. Keep coming.

The Lord just spoke to my heart. A few will walk out of here tonight and say, I can't accept that. I can't accept what Brother David said when God said, you're next.

He said that to Ananias and Sapphira in the Pentecostal church. He said, your husband's next. I'll tell you what.

We're going to be able to see clearer. When we come to the place, we realize that this is not a game. This idea of going to the altar is not a game.

This altar of coming and making things right is not a game. Look at me, please. If I'm to be a true shepherd for Bob and Brother Don, if we're to be true shepherds, I know what I had to come to my place, and I know these men have come to.

I had to come to the place where I just don't care anymore what people think of my preaching. I have to stand and deliver my soul, or I can't look Jesus in the eye. And I can't go home tonight and talk to my blessed Savior until I look you in the eye.

He said, even if I make you angry, even if you don't like my preaching and you think it's too hard, you have to stand after a time of just great worship and great praise and just stand heavy, convicted. That's the Holy Spirit. That's the Holy Spirit.

He's saying, wake up. Wake up. I think you that are standing here tonight, you feel that, that God is saying, wake up.

Wake up. Wake up. Lord Jesus, right now, send your Holy Spirit to awaken us out of sleep.

There are some, Lord, that are fast asleep here tonight, many at this altar. They've fallen asleep on you, Jesus. There's a slumber.

There's a deep slumber, but they come now, Lord, for repentance. And I believe, Lord, that you can break the snare just as you promised. I want every one of you that came forward to raise both hands to the Lord.

Just lift up your hands right now and say in your own words, I want you to pray right now. I want you to ask God to come down on you right now. I told you God's going to visit us, and I want God to visit you right now at this altar.

Cry out to God and say, Lord, I want to get out of the tricks of the enemy. I want to get out of the trap of the enemy. I want to be set free.

Call on him right now and say, free me, Jesus. Set me free. Lord, I believe you.

I come to confess. Lord, put your fear in my heart. I'm not going to walk with my sin anymore.

Jesus, I'll not walk with sin. Now, will you pray this prayer with me, Jesus? Say it loud, Jesus. I know you love me.

But I know your rod is true, whom the Lord loves. He chastens. Lord, I need you to forgive me and to cleanse me.

I face my sin. I face it now. And I tell you, Jesus, I want it out.

I want it ended. I want it ended tonight. Jesus, cause me to hate my sin.

I trust you, Lord, for forgiveness and victory and to set me free. Would you just in your own loving words say, I thank you for caring for me, Jesus. Come on, just lift your hands and thank him.

Lord, thank you for loving me. Thank you for putting your finger on my sin. I truly love you, Jesus.

I truly love you, Lord. With all my heart, I love you. I praise you.

This is the conclusion of the tape.

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