

The Call of God - Standing Together Fast

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson's sermon highlights the importance of remaining faithful to God's calling amidst trials and the necessity of prayer for ministers in distress.

Duration: 21:57

Scripture: Jonah 1:1

Topics: "Pastoral Ministry", "Faithfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of pastors and Christian workers leaving the ministry. He highlights various reasons for this, including financial pressure, dryness, fruitlessness, and rebellious congregations. However, the speaker emphasizes that there is a calling that cannot be ignored. When standing before the Lord, it will not be about accomplishments or influence, but about faithfulness. The speaker encourages pastors to hold on to their calling and the Word of God, as it ignites a fire in the soul that cannot be extinguished.

Transcript

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This recording cannot be posted on any website. However, written permission to link to the Times Square Church homepage may be requested by emailing info at [timesquarechurch.org](mailto:info@timesquarechurch.org). Other recordings are available by calling 1-800-488-0854 or by writing to Times Square Church Tape Ministry, 1657 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. I want to just talk to you shortly before we go to prayer.

This is about prayer. These meetings are about prayer. It's also about the ministry and about congregations who are so hungry for Jesus.

And I presume those that have tuned in today are really praying people you would not have wanted to be a part of a prayer meeting. This is a three-day prayer meeting and also fasting. And we invite those to fast with us wherever you may be.

And you may not be going through what I want to talk about tonight. This is just a short message. I have no homiletical outline, just something God spoke into my heart today as I was walking down the streets of

New York.

I've been thinking about all the pastors who know they've been called of God. They know that the word has come to them. This was said about Jonah.

Jonah was called. You see, there are many gifts, but there's only one real calling for a minister of the gospel. If he has the word, if the word has come to a man or a woman, it puts a fire in the soul that can't be quenched.

And you can't put that out. The Holy Spirit, even though it may wane, even though it may go down through what you've gone through, when you are called, it's not a career. It's a calling of God.

And there are many listening to me now. And the Holy Spirit, while I was walking the streets, said, I want to speak to certain individuals, to pastors. And I feel very strong that that's what I want to pray about tonight, especially for pastors who are listening, ministers of the gospel who are really going through the trial of their life.

I read a story. I read in a periodical yesterday. I believe it was the day before.

Twenty five hundred churches are closing every week around the world. Twenty five hundred churches. I've been traveling for the last five years and ministers conferences around the world.

And it's a heartbreaking thing to hear. There are literally thousands who are leaving the ministry, pastors and even evangelist teachers. Some of it is because of financial pressure.

Some of it is because of just the dryness, fruitlessness, some because a congregation is rebellious and uncaring. They feel unloved and overworked. But you see, there's a calling that you can't get away from.

I don't care how you see when when I stand before the Lord, it's not going to be about answering to the competition that we face in the Church of Jesus Christ today and in the body of Christ. When we get to stand before Christ, it's not going to be how. What great thing did you do? What kind of an institution did you establish? What kind of great ministry? What kind of how wide was your influence? It's not going to be that at all.

It's going to be based on one thing, and that's faithfulness, faithfulness to the call of God. And this is where Jonah missed it. The Bible says of Jonah and I'm not going to go deep into the story.

You all know the story. But this is what the Holy Spirit was speaking to my heart. Jonah was called and he was given a destination.

He was given an assignment. He was told simply arise, go to Nineveh and preach what I told you to preach. And it was about judgment.

But you see, this man was overcome by fear. He gave in to a fear of failure. I'm sure that Jonah prayed diligently.

He was a man of prayer. He was a man who feared God. God would have never entrusted him to go to a city and preach repentance unless he'd been walking with God, unless he had the word burning in his soul.

And I'm sure he came to the Lord and said, Lord, I'm going to go preach this. I'm going to do my best. I'm going to obey the call.

I know I'm called. I know I'm sent. But when Jeremiah preached this same kind of message, you sent judgment.

When Isaiah preached it, you sent judgment. You honored them. They were not put to shame.

And when Ezekiel preached it and warned, he lived to see the day that his prophecies were fulfilled. Are you going to do that for me? Are you going to honor me? Or am I going to preach and look like a fool? And I have no results. And then I'm going to die one of these days.

And I have nothing to show for my ministry. People have not repented. And he said, I know you're merciful, God.

And God, I have a hint in my heart that I'm going to preach this. And you're going to have a mercy party. And you're going to have mercy on these people.

And I'm going to have to walk away and come home with my head hung in shame. But, you see, that's not what the call of God is about. The call of God is not about the great things we do or the places we go, the things we've seen or done.

It's our relationship with Jesus Christ and obeying the call and taking on the assignment he's given us and staying at that assignment through every storm, through every heartache, through every persecution, and not running. This man ran. He ran from his calling.

And I'm saying to you that you cannot run from that calling. There are some listening to me now, maybe some in this house. You know that God called you.

You're not a hireling. You know that God put a word in your heart. And you know that there's something of a fire in you that says, if I don't preach, woe is me.

I've been preaching for 50 years. And I've never once doubted my call in 50 years. I've been tried.

I've been tested. There are times I was dry and empty. There are times I would have wanted to quit, but I never, ever questioned this call.

And there are some listening to me. You have been truly called of God. You remember the time.

You remember the place. I remember my call, eight years old, kneeling in an old-fashioned camp meeting and giving my life to God and hear the Holy Spirit speak to my heart and say, give me your life, preach my gospel. And I've never regretted it, never doubted it.

But now I meet pastors all over the world who doubt their calling. They doubt it because of persecution. But, you see, there's been persecution in the church of Jesus Christ from the very beginning of the church.

There have been hard times such as you and I have never known. Bodies cut asunder, homes that were torn away, and children ripped from their mothers' bosoms and thrown into fires and into lakes and rivers and oceans. But, you see, Jonah runs from God.

He's trying to release himself from the burden of the Lord. He's trying to release himself, saying, I've had it. This is enough.

I don't want this responsibility. I don't want the pain that goes with it. Now, in my flesh, I want to say to every hurting pastor, well, I feel so sorry for what you're having to go through.

I feel so sorry that you're in such pain and you're under great affliction. Let me talk to you honestly from my heart as a father, a father in the church of Jesus Christ, 50 years of preaching. We have to know intelligently how to pray for ministers and those who are called of God.

There has to be a biblical right way to pray for one another. We can't just pray any prayer. Let me give you an example.

Here's a man who is running from God, and God prepares him well, and he goes into the belly of what he calls hell. And he admits, he tells God, God, I know you're doing this. In other words, this is not the devil.

I'm in affliction, not because of the devil. The devil's not doing this. God, you have cast me into the belly of hell.

These billows that are waving over me, these problems that I face now, this emptiness, this depression I'm going through. This is Lord Jesus. There's something you're dealing with me about.

And I'm beginning to see it. It was in the belly of the well that he came to become a praying man. He had heard from the word of the Lord.

But this man began to pray. He said, I began to cry out to the Lord. Now, if you had the opportunity to pray with Jonah one day after he'd been in the belly of the well, what would you have prayed? How would you have prayed for Jonah? You say it, folks.

I am saying this in if I know my heart and the utmost love that I've ever felt. How do you pray for a minister? How do you pray for an elder, a deacon, someone called of God? And you're going through some great affliction. Now, folks, there are so many causes of affliction beyond our ability to comprehend.

David said, if I had not been afflicted, I would not have sought the Lord. That's one very important cause. But if you had the opportunity to pray for Jonah, he's running from the Lord and he's brought affliction.

How would you pray, Lord, here's a man that's hurting. Here's a man who's despondent and he's depressed and he's in the pit of darkness. Great problems have faced him because, you see, if you run from the call of God, it's not that God tries to get you.

You know, some people say when he's thrown into the belly of the well and God's prepared the well, he's cast him into this pit. People say, God's getting him back. He's running and God's making him pay.

No, no, not at all. This is a miracle. This is God doing something out of grace.

He's trying to save the man because he so loves those he calls. He will never let them go. The only way you can be let go is if you harden your heart and you curse his name and you walk away and say, God, I don't want you in my life.

But in a time of affliction, because somehow in the ministry you lost heart, somehow you may not purposely run. You may not have just quit. But something has happened in your spirit that is so broken you that it's so cautious.

I'm useless to the kingdom of God. I don't count anymore. And this terrible fear of failure, not competing with someone down the street, some young guy who's just suddenly been so blessed, apparently.

And the people sit in your little congregation say, why aren't you blessed, sir? Why aren't you doing great things like that? God doesn't measure those great things there. He measures the faithfulness of every man who's called no matter what the place may be. But how would you have prayed for Jonah? God asked me that today.

David, how would you have prayed for Jonah? Are you going to do it like you do most of the time? You come up and say, well, God, deliver him right now. Lord, I'm going to pound heaven until you deliver this man. He's hurting.

He's suffering. God will come back. So I can't answer that.

He's got two more days. I'm trying to do something in his life. I've allowed affliction.

I'm not telling you it's not because of sin. It's not because of that. It's something God can't get a hold of until he takes you through the belly.

He's in here. I remember a young lady coming to an altar here, and I told this congregation when she was weeping. She was crying after my message convicted.

And I happened to just felt an impression of the Lord that she was crying. And I was going to go down and pray with her. Hey, it's OK.

Don't cry. And the Lord said, don't you do it. Don't touch her.

She's under conviction. She's in a relationship that's wrong. You can kill her.

And she's fighting me. Wait till I'm done. Wait till I'm finished.

You see, I want us to pray the prayer. Here's what I would like people to pray for me. Probably nobody hearing part of this service needs prayer more than I do.

Not to be successful. I'm 75, and I don't care about those things. I've proved everything I've ever wanted to prove in my life, and I'm on my last trips around the racetrack.

But if you were to pray for me as a minister of the gospel, I would ask you to pray like some of our intercessors that are on our mailing list that pray for me. They say, Pastor Dave, we pray that you be faithful. Because there are not many faithful fathers anymore.

A lot of them have fallen. Pastor Dave, please, we're praying that you be faithful. They're not praying that I be blessed financially and have a bigger house.

They're not praying for any of those physical things. They're praying, oh, God, keep our fathers, keep them faithful. That should be the prayer we pray.

God, keep the ministry faithful. Take away all of those assignments we put on ourselves that are not of God. The burdens we carry and the gimmicks we get involved in and the projects that we undertake that are not mandates from God.

And we get burdened down, and we're not free in the spirit. I would that God free us. And I would that prayer being made anywhere you may be hearing and listening to me now, that God would raise up faithful pastors who in their time of trouble and sorrow and pain.

And I'm telling you, the more I've walked with God, the longer I've walked with him. I realize looking back over my afflictions, and they have been many. I feel like Jacob sometime leaning on the cane, saying many in heart have been my afflictions.

But I know that I know many of those afflictions. God has allowed in my life to bring me back to the prayer closet, to get my face back to seeking him so that I can come to the pulpit after all these years. Not with some dead letter, but something of life, something that speaks life.

And, folks, that's what we need to pray for one another. God, the Bible says, Joan out of the belly of well, the Bible says, and the word came to him the second time. And Jonah said, yes.

And he went to Nineveh and he preached. I'm asking God for you, pastor, pastor's wife, Christian worker, deacons, elders. I don't think God's going to answer some of our prayers until he he does something in us.

I believe some of his prayers are not answered yet because there's some work that God's trying to do. John is closer to himself and he knows he has to linger with you. He has to allow some of this so that you will come to him like the pastor with his eye closed.

Pastor, I talked to today who called me. And he said, but I am so down. I'm so depressed.

I can't find a doctor anywhere that can help me now. I've been from doctor to doctor, place to place. I live in continual pain and I feel like forsaken of God.

He said, I don't want to die, but I'm too tired to live. And I'm listening to this. And I said, oh, God, see how I wanted to jump in.

And because I was screaming in my spirit, God, give me scripture. What prayer do I pray? How do I reach him? See, you could not have reached Jonah by your prayers or anything you said when he's in the belly of the well. You couldn't have said a word.

This is a spiritual battle. And I said, God, I am speechless. In fact, I told the pastor, I said, look, I don't have any word.

I don't even I can't even pray. I don't know how to pray. Then he said this, and I got the clue.

He said, I have an inner knowing in my heart that all of this that I'm going through and all this pain is not just physical. It's something spiritual, something God's trying to say to me, something he's trying to accomplish in me. He's trying to bring me to a place that he could never have brought me unless I go through this.

He said, my prayer now for the day, my prayer now is this. And this is how I'm joining him in prayer in my devotions. Now, I'm not praying for his deliverance right now.

God will deliver God in his time. As soon as God has gotten the attention, as soon as God has said what he wants to say, then as soon as there are determination, deliver, die. I am the Lord's.

I'm going to trust him because it's a battle of faith. The devil is trying to destroy your faith and God's trying to bring you back to a renewed word. He wants to give everyone listening right now a fresh word from heaven.

He wants to renew your spirit and he's going to do that. And my prayer from my heart for you is, oh, God, help us now in our affliction just to turn to you and hear your voice. Seek your face, humble ourselves before you and believe that he will keep his hand on me.

Lord, this is my prayer for the body of Jesus Christ tonight. This is my prayer for those within the sound of my voice who don't know which way to turn now. Lord, we pray for those who are bereaved, those who are bereaved, those who have lost somebody.

We pray the spirit come and comfort Lord. But even then we can't reach. There's nothing I can say.

There's nothing this body could do. We can pray. But, oh, God, in the final analysis, it's a personal thing that you do when every one of us with bereavement or with sorrow, with pain, the things we don't understand, we go to you and we cry it out and we unburden our heart to you.

And we allow the Holy Spirit to come and renew our spirits and lift us and change us. Lord, draw us nigh. Lord, let there be a cry go up from pastors everywhere and from Christian workers and from the body of Christ.

Lord Jesus, you will do only what is right for me and you will lead me only where you want me to be led. And you'll bring me out victorious and you'll give me a fresh word from heaven. Will you stand, please? This is the conclusion of the message.

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