

# The Laodicean Deception

by David Wilkerson

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*David Wilkerson's sermon addresses the spiritual deception of the Laodicean church, emphasizing the need for self-examination and repentance to avoid complacency in faith.*

**Duration:** 53:43

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 2:19, Ephesians 2:4, James 1:22-25, Revelation 2:20

**Topics:** "Spiritual Deception", "Godly Instruction"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of heeding the warnings and instructions given by God. He highlights the dangers of gossip and racial prejudice, which have been repeatedly preached about in the church. The preacher shares his personal experience of being consumed by the fear of future events and neglecting the message of the cross. He references Bible verses that warn against refusing instruction and reproof, emphasizing that those who ignore these teachings will face poverty and shame. The sermon concludes with a reminder that all Scripture is profitable for instruction and righteousness, and that it is crucial to listen and learn from God's word.

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## Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing WORLDCHALLENGE P.O. BOX 260 LINDALE, TEXAS 75771 or calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted, and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. On the Laodicean deception. You know, the Laodicean church mentioned in Revelation 3. Let's go there, please.

Revelation, the third chapter. Revelation, the third chapter. Hello, visitors.

Hello. Delighted to have you here. God bless you.

I hope you've seen all the tall buildings, and you're ready to hear the gospel now. Let's begin. Third chapter, verse 13.

Beginning to read, He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith a man, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.

I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and of need of nothing.

And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich and white-raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Amen.

My message again, the Laodicean deception. One of the most difficult things for any of us is to see ourselves as we really are. Can I repeat that? One of the hardest things in the world is for us to see ourselves as we really are, and as others see us, and as God sees us.

There's not a husband here in this whole auditorium that knows himself like his wife does. And there's not a husband here that doesn't know his wife better than she knows herself. Just ask them.

We are so quick to judge others, and slow to judge ourselves, to see what we have really become. We have no trouble seeing the Bible says a little speck in somebody's eye, and we miss the log that's in our own eyes. How blind people are to their real spiritual condition.

I was walking down the street here on 50th Street, and some man came running up to me, and he says, Stop. And he was bitter, and he was angry. And he told me, he said, I'd like to punch you out.

And he has been evicted from the church here. He was full of bitterness and rebellion. He said, Pastor, it's not fair.

He said, I know where you live. You live in a nice apartment, and you drive a nice car. I've seen your car.

He said, it's not fair. I live on the streets. He said, it's not fair, and I'm angry at God, and I'm angry at you, and I feel like punching you out.

I assured him I wasn't afraid of him or anybody else on the streets because I had a bigger angel behind me than he was. I'm not trying to be smart, but folks, I turned to him. I said, I want to tell you something.

I work for everything I have, and I didn't waste it on booze. I didn't waste it on drugs like you. And I said, by the way, don't you get a government check? He said, yeah, I get \$680 a month.

I said, you got it last week? He said, yes. I said, what'd you do with your check? You're standing here now saying you have nothing. What'd you do with your check? He said, well, I went to Atlantic City, and I gambled it.

And then he cheered up. He said, but Jesus knows my heart. He says, I was just trying to get even with you and God for the way you've been treating me.

He said, in actuality, your church owes me an apartment and set me up for a new lifestyle. And he meant it. He didn't know.

He goes down and wastes his SSI check, gambles it away, and then comes back and wants us to take care of him. And he really believes that. He's absolutely blinded.

He doesn't know. There's a lie on his hands. He doesn't know.

He just thinks, well, God excuses that, and God understands. I'm mad, so I'm going to gamble. He has no concept of his being right or wrong.

Absolutely, totally blinded. I tried to love the man. And I said, if you're hungry, I'll get you something to eat today.

But I don't want to hear any more of that. You're blind. You say, oh, but he's crazy.

That sounds like somebody who doesn't have a right mind. But you know, we're just like that. The rest of us as well.

We really do not know ourselves. And if God really shows it to us, I don't think we're ready to hear it. Often, we are not ready to hear what God sees in us.

Paul warned that the last day Satan would come, he would be working signs and lying wonders with all deceitfulness. And those who do not accept the truth, those who will not let it transform their life, he said very clearly, because they will not receive the love of the truth, for this reason, God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie. Now, folks, that has to do with seeing themselves as they really are, believing a lie.

I'm okay. I'm all right. There are people sitting in this auditorium right now.

You are not right with God. You really don't know him. Jesus is just somebody who was hung on a cross, but you don't know him intimately.

You have not brought your sins to him. You are sitting here this morning thinking everything's going to be all right. Do you understand, sir and ma'am? Do you understand that one day you're going to stand before him? The Bible said it's appointed one once to die, after that to judgment.

You're going to stand before God and give an account who said for every word, every deed, everything done in your flesh. Have you been forgiven? Have you been pardoned? Have you been to the blood of Jesus Christ? There are people that are absolutely convinced. Amazing.

These who are taking their life by this Dr. Death, Dr. Kevorkian, it's amazing to hear the way they talk. Some of these have never known God, never known Jesus Christ, and they have heard as a child. They know that they're going to die.

They know that death is not the end, that there's still another life. They're going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and they know that, and they just go out and say, I want to get out of my pain. There's no concept.

They go out terribly blinded to their own condition, and many people say, well, I'll get right with God just before I die. If I get cancer just before I'm about to slip into eternity, I'll cry out to God and I'll get saved. I'll get right with God.

No, not at all. My sister died just recently, never a day of illness, healthy, and no sickness, and goes to the hospital one day. She can't breathe.

Just a few weeks ago, and did an x-ray and found her full of cancer, and when my wife and I talked to her three days later, she was in the hospital and losing strength. Her whole body was full of cancer, had no warning whatsoever. In five days, she was gone.

The last three days, last two days, she was unconscious. She couldn't talk. There was no way, and you see, you don't know when you're going to be called.

I wonder if you're really thinking about that. Are you right with God? Are you blind to your spiritual condition? Are you blinded? Don't you understand that you're going to stand before Almighty God? That they will have a strong delusion that they should believe a lie. They'll be under delusion.

I'm all right. I'll take my chances. I can't understand how anybody would try to take their chances with their eternal soul.

Incredible. Now, the Laodiceans that I just read to you about here in Revelation, the third chapter, were under a great deception. They were believing a great lie about themselves.

To hear them testify, they were in a wonderful, blessed spiritual condition. They told the whole world, we are rich and priests with goods and have need of nothing. They're not just talking about material riches.

They're talking about the riches of the gospel. Our church is flourishing. We're increasing.

It's all about increase. Everything is increasing, but they are totally blind to their spiritual condition and how God sees them. Now, we know that they sat under the preaching of one of the most anointed teachers on earth.

That was Paul the Apostle. In fact, the letter to the Colossians, we know positively was read to these people in their church. Colossians 4.15 says, Salute the brethren in Laodicea and cause this epistle to be read before the church there.

And so Colossians, if you read Colossians, it's a call to examine yourself. It's a call to set your fixation on things above and not things on the earth. They had been preached to.

They had been told to humble themselves. They've been told to examine themselves. They're told to let the gospel.

Listen to what it says. Paul said, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching, admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. He's saying, let the word that you hear from my letters and from the preaching in your church, let it change you.

Let it judge you. Let it convict you so that you don't stand before God deluded one day. Paul warned them, examine yourself, whether you be in the faith, prove your own selves.

And here they are boasting about being under the blessing and favor of God, increased on every side, lacking nothing. And they're saying, God must be with us. Look at all the needs that are being supplied.

Look at the numbers. We're growing. God is blessing us.

God's smiling on us. We must have the truth. Folks, when I was a younger, I was a young pastor.

I went to a tent meeting of a very popular tent evangelist of the day. And that seated probably 5,000. And there were healing lines.

And the associate was a friend of mine, the associate of this evangelist. And everywhere he went behind the pulpit, a makeshift pulpit, he had a big sign. No man could do these miracles except God be with him.

No one could do these things. And that was the thing that really he thought he was all about. Don't judge my lifestyle.

Look at what I'm doing. I'm people being healed and I'm casting out demons and casting out devils. I have to be of God.

No man could do these things unless God be with them. The only problem was he was an alcoholic. And most of the time they had to sober him up to get him out on stage.

And I knew that. My associate knew that. My friend that was associated with it.

That evangelist died drunk in San Francisco in a motel. You see, the Bible says many will come on that day saying, we have done many works. We've cast out devils.

We healed the sick. And the reason the devils would leave when they were commanded to leave is simply because those demons wanted to confirm that man in his sins. It's not because the devils weren't because of Jesus.

The demons said, Jesus I know, Paul I know, but who are you? They're not going to obey a drunken man. They're going to obey him only to prove to him that he must be of God. Let him continue in his sins and try to bring a reproach on the body of Christ.

But the man was totally blinded. I talked to that evangelist once and you would have thought he's one of the sweetest men, godly man, and absolutely judicially blinded. He went out into eternity in his drunken stupor.

But the Lord says of these boastful believers in Laodicea, he said, you don't know it, but you are wretched. You are miserable. You're poor and you're blind and you're naked.

What a shocking indictment from God himself. You're blind to your spiritual condition. You're not what you claim to be.

You're hiding your real feelings. You are not as righteous as you think you are. You're not seeing the truth about yourself.

So is this possible for Christians to be a part of a Holy Ghost fellowship where there is preaching that is from the very throne of God, piercing, convicting, healing? Is it possible to be a part of a body like that and hear preaching that is anointed, that should be life-changing? Is it possible to sit in a church like that for week after week, month after month, even year after year, and not see yourself? That's exactly what's happened to the Laodicean people. And that's the Laodicean delusion. They could listen to this piercing gospel of Paul the Apostle.

They could listen to Apollos, a great man of God, and drift gifted in the Word of God. And Timothy. They could listen to all these great men of God and they are unmoved.

They are boasting about their spiritual condition and they don't know that they're blind and they're miserable and they're naked. They've covered it all up. It's not changed them.

They can say, Amen. Yes, folks, it's possible to attend a Times Square church or any church like this, where the Word of God is preached with authority, where pastors weep as they deliver it and they bring to you something from the very heart and throne of God and pray and beseech the Holy Ghost to drive the Word deep into your heart and change you. Let me tell you right now, some of you have heard and heard and heard certain truths that were designed by the Holy Ghost to get down into the very root of your problem, to change you.

And folks, if you don't allow that Holy Spirit to come and change you by the power of the Word, you get a hard heart. You get a hard heart. The Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword that pierces, but it will not pierce a hard heart.

It cannot. God will not thrust His sword into a hard heart. And you get hard by not applying the Word, not assimilating it into your life and saying, Oh God, that's me.

God, it's me. It's not somebody else. It's not somebody behind me, around me.

It's not somebody I'm thinking about more. That's me. Now, we know that this church is full of the Holy Ghost because this is a New Testament church and God, Jesus, when He spoke to them said, He that had ears to hear what the Spirit has to say, let him hear it.

So we know He's talking to a Spirit-filled people. These are not atheists. These are not heathen.

These are children of God. These are believers who are blind and miserable and naked, going around saying, I'm okay. In fact, they no doubt thought that, like many others in the New Testament churches that had problems.

All right, yeah, the Ephesians, they may have lost their first love. Yeah, at Smyrna they have their problems and some of the churches around may have Jezebel teachers, but we are rich in the Word. We have no need.

No matter what the others need, God has so filled us. We have everything. Folks, if you come to times where a church believing that here at Times Square Church, we have the only gospel, we have everything, we don't need to be broken, we don't need anyone else telling us what to do, that's wrong.

That's terribly wrong. I want to hear God's Spirit. We don't have it all.

I said, we don't have it all. I want you to go to Romans 2, verse 19, beginning to read, and you're confident that thou thyself are a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness. You're an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which has the form of knowledge and the truth in the law.

Thou therefore which teacheth another, teachest thou not thyself. Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayeth a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhors idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonest thou God, for the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you as it is written. Now folks, that's a terrible indictment to hear what the Apostle's saying.

He's speaking to the Roman Christians, for the name of God's blaspheme among the Gentiles through you as it is written. And he said, because you've been convinced that you have grown in the Lord to such a state that you're a teacher, you are a teacher. You've bypassed the others and you're lecturing people about their sins.

And what he's saying, you're in no position. You have not yet seen your heart. You've not yet seen it.

You know, I've known people who've been guilty of gross slander and gossip. And they've said in my presence, they start talking. I've had to stop them.

They start slandering and gossiping others. And they'll say, do you know that brother so-and-so is a gossip? Well, that's gossip in itself. They're talking about the slander of others.

And I'm sitting there and saying, that's you. That's you. You can sit down and explain to somebody all of their sins and you can see it so clearly.

Here's your problem. I did that once, a married couple. And I'm telling them all these things and my wife's looking at me.

And all of a sudden it hit me. I'm talking to myself. I'm not seeing it.

This is for me. There's a young man who literally tried to destroy my ministry with lies and slander, and so much so that even his friends warned him that God would judge him if he kept going on. But he went on teaching.

He's a teacher, kept on teaching, never stopped. In fact, he taught against the very things he was killing off against me. I never said anything, but word came to me by another party that he'd like to be reconciled.

But you know how he started it? He said, I'll forgive him. I turned to him and I said, for what? I said, I didn't do anything. But he's ready to forgive me.

And see, that's what happens. You can become so blind that you put on somebody else your own sins. What you really are, you project it onto somebody else.

Now, this is not the kind of preaching that will make you shout, that it can change your life if you receive it from the Holy Spirit. Hallelujah. There was a young evangelist, an acquaintance of mine.

He was preaching a powerful message against sin. He was preaching holiness. He was thundering how men ought to treat their wives with kindness and be faithful and true and everything else.

And after the service, a lady went up to his wife. His young wife was sitting in the audience. This lady went up to the wife and said, it must be something wonderful to be married to such a godly, powerful, holy man.

And the young lady turned, and I know this to be true. She turned and said, I wouldn't know what that's all about. I don't know that man that's preaching there.

That's not the one that goes home with me. He's on his third wife, and he still doesn't know. You'd think after being married three times, he would say, wait a minute.

Maybe I'm the one. He might, you'd think he'd look in the mirror and say, wait, one, two, three wives? And he's having trouble with the third. I think he would say, oh, holy ghost, is there something in me? But he

doesn't see it.

He's totally blind. He's still teaching. He's still preaching.

Isaiah, we read of a people totally given over to a lie and not knowing. Isaiah 44. I want you to see this before I go any further.

Isaiah, the 44th chapter. This afternoon, I'm going to be an evangelist. This morning, I'm a teacher.

Isaiah 44. I want you to start following me in verse 14. This is a story of a man who plants a tree, and he waters it, and it could be a cypress, the scripture says, or it could be a cedar.

And he plants this and watches it grow. And then when it grows, in verse 14, he heweth him down cedars and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengthened for himself among the trees of the forest. He planted an ash, and the rain did nourish it.

Then shall it be for a man to burn, for he shall take thereof and warm himself. Yea, he kindleth it and taketh bread. He maketh it God and worshipeth it.

He makes a graven image and falleth down thereto. He burns part thereof in the fire, with part thereof he eateth flesh. He roasteth roast, and he's satisfied.

Yea, he warms himself and says, aha, I am warm. I've seen the fire. And the residue thereof he makes a God.

See, half of it he puts in the fire, cooks his bread, and roasts his roast, and warms himself when it's cold. But the other half of it he carves into an image. He falls down to it and worships it and prays unto it and says, deliver me, for thou art my God.

He hath not known nor understood, for he hath shut their eyes that they cannot see, and their heart that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding, to say, I have burned part of it in the fire. Yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof.

I have roasted flesh and eaten it. Shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stalk of a tree? He feedeth on ashes. A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand? He has this little, can you imagine, you find it hard to imagine anybody could be so blind to their spiritual condition that a man could spend years babying this tree and making it strong.

He wants it straight and he waters it and he prunes it and then finally it's a tree and he cuts it down, cuts half of it for firewood, and the other half he carves himself a god. And all this time he's carving it, he's cooking with the rest of the wood and then he finally carves it, polishes it and stains it and he says, you're my god. And he falls down and he worships and he praises this piece of wood and he says, you're my god, now deliver me, deliver me.

And it doesn't dawn on him, hey, I have cooked half my god. I burned him, I burned my god and here he is on his knee and the bible said he's blind, he literally absolutely believes that that is his god. You know what it says to me that you can be blind, you can be blind and not know it.

Who is blind but my servant or deaf as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind is he that is perfect, in other words, he that's been so favored by god and blind as the lord's servants. My servants see many things but they observe not, opening the ears but they hear not. And what that means, my people have had long experience, they've heard the truth but it did not profit them, it was not mixed by faith, it did not impact their life, it did not change them.

Isaiah 42, would you turn left to Isaiah 42, verse 23 beginning to read, who among you will give ear to this, who will hearken and hear for the time to come? Who gave Jacob for a spoil in Israel to the robbers? Did not the lord against whom he sinned? For they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger and the strength of battle and it has set him on fire round about, yet he knew not, and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart. Look at that last verse there, he was set on fire, yet he knew not, it burned him, yet he laid it not to his heart.

What god is saying, I literally turned them into the fire, I judged them with fire and yet they didn't learn anything from it, they learned nothing by my judgment. This is the end of side one, you may now turn the table. For example, look this way if you will please, over the past few years, if you've been attending this church, you've heard from this pulpit time and again from pastor Carter, from myself and from visiting pastors, the danger of gossip, the danger of prejudice, racial prejudice.

Time and time again we've come with weeping and brokenness, and the word has been laid out as clear as it can be laid out. Let me say it to you lovingly, but with the hand of God on my head, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. If after all of this time, if after all of this time, you have not allowed that to work itself into your spiritual life, if you've not had your eyes open, so that you dare not speak a word against your brother, sister or leadership, that you have no racial prejudice left in you, that you can sit in this church with any color, any race, ethnic group, you can sit there and love just exuding from you, because of the grace of God that's been accomplished through the cleansing of the word.

The word has found its mark, it's cleansed you. We are cleansed by the word of God. If after all this time it has not cleansed you, if you still have that, then there's a hardness that's sitting in.

There's a hardness. And you know, it finally comes a place where the judgment of God itself doesn't work, because God is saying, here, I can turn you over to the fire. You can be so inflamed with gossip, that you just gossip and gossip and gossip.

You can have prejudice in your heart and come and praise the Lord and think that you're on your way to heaven, when in actuality, because of that thing in your heart, it's going to block you from entrance to the kingdom of God. But you can be so inflamed by it and be burned by it and not even know it. Everybody can see it, everybody knows it, but you... Oh, God help Times Square Church in the days ahead.

Folks, the riots are going to come. There's going to be an upheaval in not only New York City, but in every city in America. There is already a racial tension rising everywhere.

But oh, God help us. There has been a word come forth from this pulpit, a loving word, a strong word, a word from the very hand of God. It should be cleansing us all.

It should be purging out everything that's unlike Christ. It should be gone. And the only way that can happen is for you, every time you hear a message, is to bow your head before the pastor, start to the vans and say, Oh, God, send the Holy Ghost.

Give me ears to hear. Give me eyes to see. Melt my heart.

Don't let me be hard. There's never a time, Pastor Carter, that's preached from this pulpit that I don't sit there and say, God, I'm ready to hear anything You say. I receive it.

Prepare my heart right now. Give me faith to mix with the Word of God. I want to be changed.

Lord, if it's a hammer, I receive it. Break everything in me that needs to be broken. Expose in me everything that needs to be exposed.

If not, the easiest place in the world to get a hard heart is in Times Square Church or any other church that's preaching a straight, loving gospel of Jesus Christ. You can grow hard. You can grow bitter and not even know it.

So did James, first chapter. Are you with me? Well, it don't matter. I'm going to preach it anyhow.

James 1, verse 22, beginning to read, But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. That's the Laodicean deception. Hearing it and not receiving it until we become hard and blind, like the Laodiceans.

For if any be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he's like to a man beholding his natural face in a glass or a mirror. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Hallelujah. Do you walk out of church like, for example, this morning? Do you walk out after the mirror has been held? You know, God, by His Spirit, has been holding a mirror in front of all of us. He held the mirror up before me all week while I'm preparing this.

And I have to examine myself. Do you go home and on the subway or the bus, do you rehearse, do you replay it? Or do you just push it off and say, well, that wasn't me. Praise God, that wasn't me.

When all in all, it was you? Did you examine yourself before the Lord and say, oh God, work that into me? God, deal with me. God, speak to my heart. I receive it, Lord, I do.

And then He'll remind you of everything that you did that was grievous to Him and say, in love now, lay it down. And I'll bless you. I'll bless you.

I'll change you. Hallelujah. Aren't we changing? We're supposed to be changing from glory to glory.

Looking at this mirror, we'll be changed into His own image because it's Jesus looking out the glass. Hallelujah. Proverbs, don't turn to Proverbs 4.13. Take fast hold or get a firm grip on instructions.

Let it not go. Keep instruction forsee your life. Proverbs 5.11. How have I hated instruction, they will say, and my heart despised reproof.

I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers nor inclined my ear to them that instructed me. And here the writer is telling us that those who are going to face death one day in their last days are going to mourn. Why didn't I listen? Why didn't I take heed? The Scripture says, all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

All the preaching is to instruct us in righteousness that we may grow in grace. Listen to this. Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuses instruction, but he that regardeth reproof shall be harmed.

Let me read that again. Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuses instruction. Now, there have been a few people over the past few years that have come to me and they were in error.

They were not walking in communion with the leadership of this church and they were in rebellion. And they said, we're leaving. I said, all right, that's all right.

But let me tell you something, because we sit down and try to instruct in the grace of God. And I've said to them, all right, when you go, you can expect poverty and shame. You can expect to be turned over to poverty.

And word would come back to me and said, Brother Davis cursed me saying that I'm going to have poverty the rest of my life. All I was doing was quoting this scripture. That's all I was doing.

It wasn't from me. It was from the Word of God. I read it again.

Poverty and shame shall be to those that refuse instructions. And folks, the Word of God that comes forth is for instruction in righteousness, instruction in growth. And if it's not received, when it's given in love, remember what I said, it brings hardness of heart.

Now, I want you to go to one last scripture. Matthew 7. Seventh chapter of Matthew. Verse 22.

This is one I've already quoted, but I want you to see it before I close. Verse 22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? In thy name have passed out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works.

Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Now look at me, folks.

I've been thinking about that. I've been thinking about that. I'm going to close soon.

But I've been thinking hard about that. How is it that there are going to be so many? Said many. These are Christians doing mighty works.

It's in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus. It's in the name of Jesus. These people believe that they're Christians and they're going to be saved and they're doing mighty works.

They're casting out devils and all these things. They're healing the sick. And they're going to stand before God and he said, I don't even know you.

How could it be that people can go like this? And this causes me to tremble and say, oh God, search my heart. Let your word cause me to tremble. We're to tremble at this word.

God means what he says. Now he's merciful, he's kind, he's loving, he's tender. But he said, when I speak to you, hear it, do it, obey it.

And if you'll set your heart to obey it, I'll give you the power to do it. I'll empower you to do it. I'm going to close with this confession time.

This message is so important to me. The only way I know how to illustrate it is how God dealt with me. God gave me a vision a number of years ago.

I wrote a book on it called *The Vision*, about things that are coming. And it was pretty scary. In fact, I couldn't have handled it unless God had given me that one phrase.

At the end of the vision, God said, when you preach this, make sure you tell the people this, God has everything under control. And that finally, I preached for an hour on *The Vision* and everybody just, I mean, it was so heavy. And then I said, folks, I got a word from the Lord for you.

God has everything under control and the whole place would come alive because there was some hope. But I got to seeing all these things that are coming and that's all I talked about. I talked about the depression that was coming.

I talked about, I mean, everything about terrible things that were coming. Now, I'm not a prophet. I'm a watchman.

One of His many, He has millions of watchmen. And I got to, I got consumed with it. I didn't know it was affecting my family and it was changing me.

Because I was, at this time, I wasn't seeing the cross as clear as I should. And I wasn't seeing the hope. It was bringing despair.

And I would go into meetings and I don't know how it happened. I'd sit there. There'd be, these were all large conventions and meetings.

I'd sit there. And I wasn't aware until later that I was sitting there with a little bit of pride. You know, God told me something nobody else knows, you know, I ain't got the word.

And if I didn't like the meeting and there was some silliness, I'd say, this is stupidity. This is awful. This is not of God.

And I was so critical. Everywhere I turned, it was a spirit of criticism broke into my heart. And a dear friend of mine went out to eat.

And his wife said, Dave, what's going to happen to the economy? And that's all it took. Ah, six months we'll be in depression. And I went on and on and on.

And my friend got up, said, David, that's enough. He said, I can't stand being around you anymore. He said, you've taken all my faith, all my hope.

I'm a businessman and I'm having a hard time just keeping things together. And when I'm with you, I get so down. You just discourage me.

You have no hope. Bless God. Who does he think he is? I'm warning him.

His business might fail and he'll be glad I warned him. And I'm sitting there stewing. And I went home and I said, honey, did you hear what he said? He said, I heard.

And he's right. See, others see it and we don't. I went to prayer.

I said, God, is he right? Not only did God show me he was right. God said, that's just the outer peel of the onion. I'm going to peel you.

And you, when you peel an onion, you cry. I'd say by the time he'd done peeling me, it took him a month or there. So I began to see things.

God said, you become arrogant in the pulpit. You're arrogant in my name. Yes, I've shown you these things, but not to bring despair.

You're to preach that, to warn and then bring in the hope. Otherwise people are just going to be despair and want to give up. And I began to see that there's a pride in that.

He began to just peel and peel and peel. I have to tell you today, he's still peeling, but I was open to it. I said, God, I want to hear it from you now.

And I'll tell you, if you want to hear and know your own spiritual condition, you just go to the Lord because the Holy Ghost is honest. He's ready to tell you. If you go with an honest heart, he'll speak to you.

You'll be surprised what's going to come out. You're going to be shocked what God tells you. But if you do it, boy, you'll come out of that.

Folks, I have not arrived. I still slip back into some of these ways once in a while, but God's been faithful because I go home after I preach and say, God, speak to me. Let me take what I preach now and apply it to my own heart.

I've got to take some of this this morning and apply it to my own heart. Search my own heart, lest I stand before God and have to answer for preaching to others and not applying it to myself. Will you stand? You know, there's a saying about drugs, just say no.

That doesn't work. I could say, know yourself. That doesn't work.

But the Holy Ghost knows you. Yes, he does. He knows all about you.

Is there anybody here that loves Jesus trying to hide anything from the Holy Spirit? No, because you know you can't. So, the only alternative and the wonderful alternative is to come to him and say, Jesus, thank you for the word. I thank God that when I come to church on Sunday, I'm excited, aren't you? I'm excited about coming to the house of God.

I want to hear the word. Hallelujah. Sister Conlon preached the message here Friday and I've heard all about it.

People got convicted, so I'm anxious to get my hands on it and get convicted too. You should want to be convicted. I want to be convicted.

I want to change. I don't want to be next year what I am now. I don't want to be as stubborn as I am now.

I don't want to temper like I... Well, enough confessions. That's enough. I want to know as much about myself as my wife knows.

Are you open to that, folks? Hallelujah. Bow your head, let's pray. Lord, you're a loving Savior.

You want us to become like you. You want us to be humbled and broken. You want us to be aware of the things that need to be fixed because you're the fixer.

You're ready to fix anything that's wrong. I love you for that, Jesus, because you're not here to pound me into the dirt. You're not going to turn us over to the paw of the devil or the teeth of Satan or the lion.

You're here, oh Lord, to change us by your holy word, to cleanse us by the word. Lord, give us a receiving heart. Give us open hearts.

Open our eyes. Give us open ears and let us come to you saying, Lord, deal with me. Deal with me in love.

Lord, there are people here this morning that need to come back to your love. They've drifted away from your love and they're standing here hurting and broken. Folks, I'm going to stop for just a moment.

Look this way, if you will, please. That's the invitation I feel led by the Holy Spirit to give this morning. If you're here this morning and you're going through a very, very difficult time and you're hurting here, you're grieved and you're hurt and you're burdened, I want you to bring that hurt to him.

And if the Holy Ghost has dealt with you in any way, anything he's pointed out to you this morning, unlike him, I want you to come and bring it now and leave it here with Jesus Christ. If you're not right with God, are you ready, by the way, are you ready should Jesus call for you if the angel comes to get you? Honestly, are you ready? This is not to scare you, but I'm asking in all... Are you ready to meet Jesus? Are you ready to stand before him? If not, come and let Jesus come into your heart and change you. If you're backslidden, if you're not right with Jesus, if you don't know him as your Lord and Savior, come up on the balcony, just go to the stairs on either side and just come on down any aisle here, wherever you're at, all through this building.

Lord doesn't want you to leave. Jesus doesn't want you to leave this place until you get things right. He wants to make it right.

He's here to bless you. You may be visiting here and God sent you here to turn you around, to bring you back. Don't run, don't run.

Probably never be a better time than this morning to get things made right. Hallelujah. Lord, draw and woo and tug at hearts this morning right now so that everyone will feel your drawing, loving power.

Hallelujah. What a wonderful Savior. Move in close, if you will, please.

Make room for those that are coming. Move in a little closer. Amen.

God bless you. This is your day, please. There has to be a work of the Holy Spirit in you before anything can be accomplished.

Man can't do it. The words of man can't do it. Preaching in itself can't do it.

There has to be a work of the Holy Spirit that takes that word, makes it real to your heart, and you should be praying silently right now in your heart, Holy Spirit, open my heart to receive. Open my heart to understand. Take away the blindness from my eyes.

Some of you have been blinded because you've been able to indulge in your sin and do things unlike Jesus and not be convicted of it. You've just kind of made peace with it and you live with it. God wants to give you a hatred for sin.

That's where it begins, to hate your sin. Say, Lord, I'm not going to make peace with my sin. I'm not going to live with it.

Lord, I'm going to believe you to deliver me. Deliver me from everything that is unlike you. He's called the deliverer.

Hallelujah. And once you open your heart, He comes along and He says, I'll be your keeper. I'll establish you.

I will keep you. That's the work of the Holy Spirit, to keep you. I hope you came because you were drawn, not because I asked you, but because the Holy Ghost draws you.

The Holy Spirit is the one who has to do it all. The Holy Spirit, and He's here. He's faithful.

He's dealing with you right now. Will you settle some things? I don't have to name what it is. The Holy Ghost is naming it to you, isn't He? Isn't He speaking to your heart? He knows and you know.

Let's pray together. And I can give you words, but it has to come from your heart. And after you finish with the words that I suggest to you, I want you to speak then in your own heart, in your own words to the Lord.

And let's believe God together. For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. If it's in your heart, let it come forth and trust the Lord Jesus to hear.

He said, His ear is open to our prayer, to the cry of His people. Pray this with me. Lord Jesus, I humble myself before You.

And I come to You to be cleansed and healed of all my wounds, my sins. Break me, Jesus, of all pride and self-ambition. Cause me to hate my sin, but to love my Savior.

I confess I need You. I confess that I failed You. And I've sinned against God.

Forgive me, Lord Jesus. I open my heart to You now. I tell You, Jesus, I must have the Holy Ghost.

I need His power. I need His strength to break the power of the devil and the power of sin in my life. I can't do it myself.

I've tried and failed. Now You come, Holy Spirit. You take charge.

Lift up Your hands right now and say, Holy Ghost, come and take charge right now. Call on His name. Talk to Him right now.

Jesus, come and take charge. Holy Ghost, come, take charge of my life. Take charge, Lord.

Show me my sins. Show me how I failed You. Convict me.

Let the Holy Ghost convict me deeply, O God. And let me turn from my sins. Lord, let this be the beginning.

This is not the end all, but it's a beginning. And that which You have started, You will finish by the power of the Holy Spirit. God, speak to these who are here.

Just tell them now You love them. Just worship Him. Lord, I love You and I praise You and I thank You for touching my life today.

Lord, I need You. Tell them You need them. If you've strayed away from them, say, Lord, I'm coming back to my first love.

Holy Ghost, bring back that first love right now. We smite that unbelief in Jesus' name. Take my unbelief, God.

Take it away. Smite it. Thank You, Jesus.

Thank You, Jesus. Now, in Your own words, just thank. Give them a true thank You from your heart.

Lord, and say, God, increase my faith. Increase my faith.

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