

The Presence of God

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson emphasizes the critical importance of maintaining God's presence in our lives and the dire consequences of losing it through disobedience and sin.

Duration: 1:01:43

Scripture: Exodus 33:15, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 6:33, Acts 17:27, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 13:5

Topics: "Gods Presence", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher recounts the story of Nathan confronting King David about his sin of adultery and murder. David is initially unaware of his own guilt, but Nathan reveals it to him through a parable about a rich man stealing a poor man's beloved lamb. David is overcome with guilt and confesses his sin before God. Nathan then delivers the consequences of David's actions, including the raising up of evil against him from his own household and the loss of his kingdom. The sermon emphasizes the importance of fearing the word of God and the devastating consequences of turning away from His presence.

Transcript

Heavenly Father, if we do not have your presence, if we miss your presence, we've missed everything. We thank you for your presence in this service tonight. You've been here.

You're here now. And I pray for a special unction and anointing of the Holy Spirit upon the message. Lord Jesus, I know you've burned this in my heart.

I know that without your presence tonight, nothing's going to be accomplished in the preaching. So I acknowledge you now, Holy Spirit, I ask you to come. We take authority over every demon spirit, over every lying spirit, everything that would rob people of hearing the truth.

Come, Lord, with the sword of the Lord and the oil of the Holy Spirit and cut and heal as you must. But Lord Jesus, do your work and prepare us, Lord, for your coming. Prepare us, Lord, to hear the truth and set us free.

Set us free. You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen. David committed adultery with Bathsheba. And the thing David did, the Bible said, displeased God.

And David, of course, after the deed, has his, of course you know he killed, had Uriah, her husband, killed in the front lines of the battle. And he takes Bathsheba into the palace and she becomes queen and he goes about his kingly business. And one day, King David is sitting in his court, holding court, perhaps meeting ambassadors from around the nations, because David was a very popular man and everybody wanted to make peace because he was a great warrior.

And I picture David in his inner sanctuary and he's holding court. And he's forgotten about it. It seems to have quieted down.

And suddenly, one of his emissaries comes into the chamber where he's meeting, doing his business of the royal court, doing government business and whispers in his ear, David, sir, there's a prophet by the name of Nathan at the door. And he looks angry, his face is determined and he says, it's a matter of life and death, he must see you right now. I can see David paralyzed, absolute fear, his face is ash and white.

Oh no, he knows, of course he knows, he's a prophet, God told him about my secret affair with Bathsheba. I'm exposed, this is the end. And he sits there ash and white and I'm convinced that David dismisses everybody in his presence and he says to the servant, give me a little time and bring him into my inner chamber.

And I see David go in there and says, oh God, I've sinned, I know that, but don't expose me, don't give me over to the hands of men. And I see David just taking deep breaths and sitting there in that chair getting ready for this prophet. If you've ever had sin in your life, you don't want to be around a prophet of God.

You don't want him looking in your eyes. And in comes Nathan with those blazing holy eyes. I'm glad I wasn't there, I don't ever want to be there, do you? When Nathan comes in and David, he's ash and white, he's gripping his chair and he said, yes, sir, Nathan, my friend, what is it? And David stills himself, here it comes, he's going to be exposed.

This man of God is heard from heaven and this affair has not been swept under the rug. Everybody in Israel is going to know about it, David has cheated, David has killed a man and now he's going to lose his kingdom, he's going to lose his throne, he's going to lose everything, this is it. And David stills himself and Nathan, rather than looking at him, I see Nathan moving around to the edge of the room and he says, sir, king David, there's a certain man.

And he's saying, oh no, that's me, he's talking about me, he knows all about it. He said, David, there's a certain man, a rich man. He said, that is me, he's wealthy by now, David's king.

And he said, he has a great herd of flock and animals. And David said, well, that's not me. And David suddenly relaxes, maybe he doesn't know.

And so Nathan begins to tell a story. He said, I'm concerned about a man, king, who's rich man and he has many cattle and a visitor came to his home and rather than him take one of his many sheep, he went to a neighbor and stole the only sheep that neighbor had and killed the sheep for himself. And by now David's relaxed, he doesn't know.

He doesn't know at all. And by now David's on his feet. And David is all ears now.

And David rehearses, now let me get this straight, Nathan. You're telling me there's a man in my kingdom and this man is rich, he's got a lot of cattle, and when a man came to visit him, he went to his neighbor. A

neighbor had a little sheep and that sheep was the pet of the home.

It ate with them, it slept with them, it was the pet of the children. The only thing was like a member of the family. And that wicked man went into that home and stole that little lamb and killed it.

So help me, Nathan, as God lives, I'll kill him. All I need is his name. The captain's at the door, I'll send him, give me his name.

Nathan wheels around and I see a bony finger. David, you're the man. You're the killer.

You're the one who stole the little sheep, the little pet. I see David just falling in a chair, speechless, paralyzed with fear. And he cries out, I've sinned against God.

And then come those terrible words of the prophet here in the scripture. You don't need to turn to me. He said, why have you despised, this is Nathan speaking to David, why have you despised the commandment of the Lord to do this terrible deed in His sight? Then came these awful predictions, these awesome things that were supposed to happen in his life.

He says, this is Nathan speaking, I'm going to raise up evil against you out of your own house. I'm going to take your wives before your very eyes and I'm going to give them unto neighbors. And he was speaking of the time prophetically when his own son Absalom would spread a tent on the roof and before all of Israel commit adultery with all of David's wives.

And he said, the sword's never going to depart from your home. But that wasn't what paralyzed David. That wasn't what paralyzed him at all.

David had seen what happens in a person's life when the presence of God departs. Because he'd come up under Saul. He'd seen a man of God called and chosen.

He saw a man of God fall apart. He saw the glory and the presence of God depart from a man and he saw a man come apart and become insane. He saw the madness, he saw the craziness.

He saw the absolute disintegration of a man who didn't have the presence of God with him anymore. And so David, remembering that, cries out, Oh God, I acknowledge my sin. It's ever before me.

Create in me a clean heart. Renew a right spirit in me. Cast me not away from thy presence.

Take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Why was David crying out? First thing, he's not thinking about the curse upon his family. He's not talking about the sword not departing from him.

He sees Saul's face. He remembers Saul fell down in front of a witch saying, God's departed from me. And David knew what happened when a man plays with sin.

When a man is disobedient to the Lord of God and takes God's Word lightly. And David is crying out, Oh God, Saul got an evil spirit and a mad spirit. Create in me a right spirit.

I don't want that spirit that came on Saul. I want a clean heart. Cleanse me.

Don't cast me away from your presence. Oh God, whatever you do, I understand you have to deal in righteousness. Understand that.

But oh God, don't take your presence from me. Don't lift your hand from my life. Don't take it away.

Now what happens? What happens when a man loses the presence of God? If you and I really had the fear of God in our life, we would look at the life of Saul and we would tremble. Because Saul represents the very epitome of what happens. It's the very picture of what happens to a Christian or child of God who loses the presence of God.

You look at this man's life. And it makes me to tremble. And this is what made David tremble.

You see, there are three things that happen to a person when the presence of God departs. And I want you to think about this now. You've seen it.

You may be experiencing it in your own life. And some of you are going to have to take account of your life tonight because I may be describing you. And by what I describe now, you may know, though you didn't know before you came to the meeting, you may know before I'm finished here in a few moments, that the spirit of the presence of God has departed from your life.

First of all, when a man disobeys God and he becomes casually indifferent to the commandments of the Lord, and that was the sin of Saul, casual indifference to the things of God, then God's spirit begins to depart. And when God's spirit departs, another spirit of the enemy comes in, and it's a melancholy spirit of depression. A melancholy spirit of depression.

Now, before I deal with this issue of the melancholy spirit that came upon Saul, let me tell you that not all depression is of the devil. There are medical problems. There's a substance in the brain called serotoma, for example, and if it's missing, there's almost constant depression.

Sometimes through, well, most of the times through crack, the dopamine in the brain escapes and it is not repleted again. And when the dopamine is gone from the brain, it causes depression. And I'm not trying to put anybody under a burden that has a chemical problem.

And I believe, by the way, that God can heal the chemical problem too. And I'm not trying to put you under burden. We've had people in these meetings who have come to New York City, around the country, under chemical depression because the substance is not produced in the brain.

And it has to do sometimes with diet. It has to do with many, many causes. But I'm not talking about that.

You see, there's another spirit. The Scripture said, Because thou hast not obeyed that which the Lord commanded thee, a spirit came upon Saul. A spirit of melancholy.

And I'm going to read it to you. You don't have to turn there, but it's in 1 Samuel 18. And Saul envied... Oh, well, here.

David had slain ten thousands. Saul his thousands. That was the song that they were singing.

Up and down the land. David has killed ten thousands. Saul's his thousands.

And Saul got angry. He got envious. This melancholy spirit that was upon him now was sent by God.

And it was not sent by the devil. And this is something I want you to see very closely now. And Saul envied David from that day forward.

And it came to pass on the morrow, the evil spirit from God. I tell you, you had better see it. 1 Samuel.

I can't. It's too serious to just quote it. 1 Samuel, the 18th chapter.

You won't believe it unless you see it in black and white. Samuel 18. 1 Samuel 18.

You see these people singing praises to David? And Saul says they ascribed tens of thousands to him and they only ascribed thousands to me? Look at verse 8, chapter 18, 1 Samuel. Well, let's start in verse 7. And the women answered one another as they played and said, Saul was slain as thousands and David as ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth or angry.

And the saying displeased him. And he said, they've ascribed unto David ten thousands. And to me they've only ascribed but thousands.

What more can he have but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. And it came to pass on the morrow that the evil spirit from who? From God came upon Saul and he prophesied in the midst of the house and David played with his hand as at other times and there was a javelin in Saul's hand and Saul cast the javelin for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. Now look at me please.

The original Hebrew here is very clear. Even the King James doesn't bring it out as clear as the original Hebrew. And here's the way the original Hebrew reads.

The melancholy spirit. A melancholy spirit was sent by God upon Saul and he feigned to prophesy within the house and that word feigned means to rave like a maniac. As soon as the spirit of God, the presence of the Lord departed from Saul, an evil spirit was sent by God.

Now I want you to know, I can show you five places in the Bible. At least five. I found four and someone told me there may be as many as five.

Places in the Bible where you hear this. That God, someone said, well God permits it. However you want to say it.

An evil spirit was sent. Let me just quote the scripture. That's good enough for me.

An evil spirit was sent by God or a melancholy spirit of depression upon this man. And suddenly this spirit comes upon him and he becomes irritable. He goes through the house knocking over furniture and he's raving like a madman.

Not only does a melancholy spirit come upon him but a jealous, envious spirit comes upon him. Suddenly they don't know this man. He becomes irritable for no reason at all.

He becomes jealous. He becomes irritable to a point where these moods will not leave. They just hang on and hang on and hang on.

I've seen this. I've seen it in Christians. No reason you can't put your finger on.

They can't explain it to you. This irritability. They can't shake the irritability.

It takes almost nothing to set them off. You see those who are supposed to be Christians who come into the house of God knocking, go home and knock over furniture. Anger, their faces turn red.

The veins stick out in their neck. And then a melancholy spirit. They're restless.

They can't sleep. This man couldn't sleep. Saul cast the javelin at David trying to kill him and Saul was afraid of David.

Look at verse 12. Look at verse 12. And Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him and was departed from Saul.

I don't think you can say anything more tragic about a child of God than that. That God had departed from him. Can you imagine? Think of it.

You sit here now as a Christian. Can you think of anything worse that could happen to you? I can't imagine anything worse happening in my life but that sin should be allowed in my life. That I would take God's word so casually and so indifferent and I would not believe that God meant what He said.

And I would make Him like a man like myself. I would not believe the prophets. I would not believe the Word of God.

And the Spirit of the Lord would have to say, I can't walk with you in that rebellion. And the Spirit of God departs. And when the Spirit of God departs, the enemy has place.

There's no wall. There's nothing. The wild boar of the force comes in, the Bible says, and tramples all the ground.

And then this melancholy spirit, this envious spirit, this jealous spirit, for no reason at all, absolute insane jealousy. He was jealous over his own son. This melancholy man is out battling one day.

His own son Jonathan had just won a battle. But he's got this idea, everybody's against me now. Nobody pities me.

Nobody loves me. And that goes with it. When the glory of the Lord departs from your life, you become self-centered.

You become that individual that says, the whole world's against me. Nobody really loves me. Nobody pities me.

Nobody cares about me. Have you been saying that? Have you been thinking that? Nobody cares. Listen to what, look at chapter 22.

Just turn over to 1 Samuel 22. Look at verse 8. And there you see the picture of what happens to a man. He said, all of you, he's talking to his whole army.

All of you have conspired against me. And there's none that showeth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse. That's David.

And there's none of you that's, what? There's none of you sorry for me. None of you feel any pity for me. Is that in your Bible? This man becomes a schemer.

He becomes a manipulator of people. And oh, friends, that's the grief of this thing. When the glory of God, the presence of God departs, a child of God who is living without the presence of God, without the spirit of God in his life, becomes a schemer, a manipulator of people, always working person against person,

manipulating in the house of God.

We have ministers of the pulpit who have lost the spirit and anointing of God and they do nothing but manipulate their people. You've been to churches like that. Manipulating.

Saying, the people are against me. I even know holiness preachers who preach that. Who believe the congregation against them for preaching holiness.

The congregation often is not against them for preaching holiness. It's because it's preached without unction and anointing. It's preached without the presence of the Lord there.

You see this on this man. Now, the second symptom is frequent confessions without a heart change and occasional powerful movings of the Holy Spirit without a heart change. Saul was always saying, I'm sorry, I've sinned.

He said it to Samuel. He was to wait to Gilgal. He said, don't do a thing till I get there and sacrifice.

But he can't wait. He takes matters in his own hands. Then he makes his own sacrifice.

And as soon as Samuel gets there and pins him down, he said, I'm sorry, I've sinned. He starts chasing David over the hills. And David finds him in a cave.

And David could have killed him. And he goes across and calls his name. He said, I could have taken your life.

And Saul says, I did you wrong, but you did me good. I'm sorry, I've sinned. He turns right around.

No change of heart. Starts chasing David again. This time, David finds him up on the hill of Hequila.

And his army's asleep. They've surrounded him. And all of his strong men are fast asleep.

David sneaks right in, takes his spear and his cruise of water. Goes across the mountain and wakes up the whole camp. And he said, where's your spear? Where's your water bucket, your cruise of water? He said, I have it.

And Saul knew that David could have killed him. Knew he was there when he slept. Could have put a spear right through his heart.

And again, Saul says, David, I've sinned. Oh, we have it here. People who repent, repent, repent, and the heart is never changed.

Why? Because the Spirit of the Lord's departed. The Spirit of God is gone from their lives. You can confess and confess.

I was preaching in a street rally two years ago in one of the parks here in New York. And the anointing of God was on me. And the Spirit was falling everywhere.

And over by one of the vans, I heard someone preaching with a powerful anointing. And one of our workers said, don't listen to him, he's high, he's high. He dropped out of Teen Challenge.

But see, he got close. Just like Saul did when David escaped to Ramah with the prophets. He went with Samuel.

He went there to kill David. But the fire of God was so strong. The Spirit of God came on Saul even though he had murder in his heart.

Even though he was a madman, he's insane. The Spirit of God came on him. And he began to prophesy.

And he ripped off his outer garments, just his upper garments. And when the Bible said he was naked, it meant his upper garment was gone. As were all the prophets when they prophesied.

And he began the ecstatic praises of God. He was worshipping God. And if you looked at Saul that day, they'd say, there's Saul among the prophets.

And this describes Christians who have no prayer life. They have no Bible study habits. But there will be times they get in a Holy Ghost meeting.

And God is moving. And the Holy Spirit is there. They'll speak in tongues.

They'll prophesy. They'll confess. They'll run to the altar every time there's conviction.

But the heart doesn't change. They don't hunger and thirst. They don't yearn after God.

They don't go back to the secret closet. They don't go home and get their Bibles out. The Spirit of God is not on them.

It was just like Saul. He prophesied all day and all night. He gets right up off of his knees.

Puts on his outer garment and goes back to his palace to connive to kill David again. Just as people who come to a Holy Ghost meeting and the Spirit of God will be so strong, they're carried away and they're swept away in it. But there's no change.

They don't seek God from that day on. They have no life of victory after that. They're carried away.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon him also and he went on and prophesied and he came to Naath and Ramah and he stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner and he laid down naked all that day and all that next night. Those occasional movings of the Holy Spirit. God never intended that you have a Christian experience where you have to have a red hot Holy Ghost meeting that the Spirit of God could come on you.

You should be walking and living and moving in the Holy Spirit. It shouldn't be spurts of blessings. The third symptom is a spirit of confusion.

No guidance and no personal word from God. I want you to go to 1 Samuel, you still have 1 Samuel, but look at chapter 28. 1 Samuel 28.

Saul was now surrounded by the Philistines. Look at verse 5. 1 Samuel 28, chapter 5. When Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not.

Not by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Isn't that an awful place to be in? Not a word, not a sound, the heavens are brass. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit.

That's a witch. That I may go to her. Can you imagine a child of God saying these things? I've prayed.

I've gone to evangelists. I've looked for a word from God. I can't get the word.

Nothing seems to bear witness to my heart. Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit that I may go to her and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there's a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

Now that's the witch of Endor. And Saul disguised himself and put on other raiment. And went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night.

He said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit. Bring me him up whom I shall name to thee. And he tells this witch to conjure up Samuel.

Look down at verse 11. And the woman said, Whom shall I bring up? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. When the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice.

By the way, she didn't bring him up. God brought him up. Nobody, no devil in hell could bring Samuel.

He's seeing, he's picturing his own fears. Listen to it now. Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice. She was shocked. The woman spake to Saul, saying, You've deceived me.

You're Saul. And the king said to her, Don't be afraid. What did you see? And the woman said, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

He said, What form is it? She said, An old man comes up, and he's covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel. And he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed himself.

And Samuel said to Saul, Why have you disquieted me to bring me up? And Saul answered, Listen to this. I'm sore distressed. The Philistines are making war against me.

And God has departed from me. And he doesn't answer me no more. Neither by prophets nor by dreams.

Therefore I've called thee that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore didst thou ask of me, seeing the Lord's departed from you, has become your enemy? The Lord hath done to him as he spake by me. Verse 18, Because thou obeyedest not the voice of the Lord, nor executed his fierce wrath upon Amalek.

Therefore hath the Lord done his thing unto thee this day. Disobedience. Saul.

Sin. And the reason he had this melancholy spirit from hell. This irritability.

This sense that everybody is against me. This loss of direction. This confusion.

This lack of a word from heaven. And now I'm beginning to understand why so many people come and say, I need a word, I need a word, I need a word. If you have the presence of God in your life, you have the word.

The word is coming. It will always be there. But you see, he was absolutely disobedient.

He kept saying, well, God couldn't be that mean. God really doesn't mean it the way he says it. Oh yes, he did.

God meant every word that he said. Alright, now those are the symptoms. How does a man lose the presence of God? How does a Christian lose the presence of God? How did this happen to Saul? Well, folks, the example is Israel.

And I want you to go to Exodus. And here's the main part of my message. And God's been stirring me and shaking me by what I've seen.

Exodus, the 33rd chapter. And the rest of my message will be coming out of Exodus 33, so quickly turn there. I want to show you the three steps of losing the presence of God.

How Christians lose the presence of God. How God's people lose the sense of his presence. Alright, now look this way.

Let me set this up for you, if I may please. Remember now that the children of Israel had been delivered from the Red Sea. Now you know coming out of the Red Sea is a type of salvation, don't you? You cross the Red Sea, that means you leave Egypt, that you leave the world.

As soon as they got on the other side of the Red Sea, they began to praise the Lord, they began to dance, and they began to sing. And all Israel sang with Miriam. All the women began to dance with their tambourines, and the song of Moses came forth.

And the people feared the Lord, and they believed the Lord and his servant Moses. And here's the song that they sang. The Lord has become our salvation.

He is our God, and we will prepare him a habitation. Now that's the promise they made when God delivered them from the enemy. God is my God from now on.

I'm going to prepare him a habitation. I'm going to have a place where he can come, and God's speaking about the heart. God was saying, I want a place where I can come and commune with you.

In fact, the tabernacle in the wilderness is a type of the heart. God was giving them an object lesson. He was showing them how this represents the heart, and he wanted to come down.

The holy place is to be right here. This is the temple of the Holy Ghost. God wants to abide right here.

And when they said, Lord, we'll provide you a habitation, God took it that they meant that they'd give him all their heart. God never intended anything else but to come down and abide in their hearts, that they would know him personally. I'll make you a place.

Isn't that what you said when you gave your heart to Jesus? Didn't you tell him that your heart would be his? That you'd seek his face? That your body would be a temple of the Holy Ghost? Isn't that what you

told him? You said, this is your place, Lord, this is your habitation? This is the end of side 1. Turn the tape over to side 2. Provide God a habitation in which the presence of God can dwell. They refused. They backed off from their word.

Now listen very closely, because this is very, very important. They ignored the presence of the Lord. They forgot his words.

You see, all God wanted was another tent. He wanted a tent set aside. In fact, the tabernacle became a tent.

You know, I hear people quote that scripture. You say, well, we're in the New Testament now, Brother Dave. Surely, didn't Jesus say, I'm with you always, even in the end of the world? Doesn't the scripture say, in fact, I'll give you the scripturmony.

Many people quote Hebrews 13.5. For he has said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. And they stopped there. They said, God's promised to never leave his people.

He'll never forsake us. But go down, when you go home and read Hebrews 13.7, the commandment that goes with that of absolute obedience to the word of God. And when you take his word lightly, and when you have what I call this casual indifference to the word of God, and what is it when you don't pray as a Christian? What is it when you're not called into the secret closet of prayer, but casual indifference to the word of God? What is it? See, it is people who do not prepare God a time or place.

They get so busy. If you stop right now and look over this past week, did you provide God a habitation for his presence? Did you go somewhere and shut everything out, and say, Lord, this is your tent. This is your place.

Here tonight, I provide you time and place for your presence to come and abide, and to be manifest. Let me see your glory. Lord Jesus, this hour is yours.

This two hours is yours. This time is yours. I promised you when I gave you my life, that this would be your temple.

Come and dwell in your temple. Come into the Holy of Holies. Now reveal yourself to me.

No, you went all week, didn't you? And you never did provide him a habitation. Secondly, the presence of God departs when the golden calf is erected. You know, God called those people dancing around, the golden calf stiff-necked people.

He said they're stiff-necked. They don't believe a word I say. They had seen the glory of God.

They'd seen the terror of his word. And God says, I mean what I say. And again, this lightness toward the word of God, and the judgments of a holy God.

But please don't ridicule those Israelites dancing around that golden calf, and say, how could any child of God, how could anyone who claimed to be chosen by God, dance around a golden calf, and say this is God. Don't put them down because the golden calf is still here. Golden calf is not television.

Let me tell you what the golden calf is. It's symbolic. It's something very deep and wrong in the heart.

You know what the golden calf is? And many of you here tonight, and I say it in love, have erected a golden calf in your home and in your heart. The golden calf is an attitude. And you know what that golden calf is? It's not your television.

It's the casual indifference that allows you to sit there without conviction. It's the casual indifference, the word of God, that you can have prophets, and teachers, and evangelists, give you a holy word that says, Thou shalt bring no abomination into your house, lest you be cursed just like it. And then, Thou shalt set no evil thing before your eyes.

Come out from among them, be ye separate and clean, saith the Lord. And over and over and over again, these scriptures are given to us. And you know what the golden calf is? It's that casual indifference.

And the way we add it to our attitude, God is joking. God's a joker. God's poking fun at us.

He doesn't mean that. I can sit in front of anything, it doesn't bother me. Brother David and his group are going too far, talking about television as an idol.

No, television is not the idol. The idol, the golden calf, is your casual indifference to the word of God, that lets you sit and watch evil junk without being convicted. The adultery, the materialism, the preaching of prosperity, that's not the golden calf.

The golden calf is the absolute casual indifference to the word of God in His judgments, that allows us to endure these things, to indulge these things, and not even being convicted after a while, to have a man stand before you and bleed his heart out. A man that you know, men that you know. I'm not talking about this, but I'm talking men that you know are shut in with God.

Men that you know are going to stand before a holy God and say, and you're going to be right there when you hear them say, well done, you blew the trumpet in Zion. You know it. You can sit there and that casual indifference lets you go right through it, and it doesn't even convict you, you go right home to it.

That's the golden calf. You know, for the past... Why? Don, I was thinking about this. Why? Why could these people take the word of God so lightly? So lightly.

Why could they be so nonchalant? Why could they do what they did? This nonchalance, not even fearing the word of God. Why? Because the prophet was gone. The prophetic voice was gone.

There was no reproof at this time. He was up on the mountain. He was the only reproof.

The only one there was soft on sin Aaron. He had no spiritual backbone. He had no spiritual authority.

And for the past 30 years in America, there's been no prophetic voice to speak of. Those prophets of God have been shut up like Moses up on a mountain. They're just now... God's bringing them out of hiding.

And they're coming forth with a powerful word. But in the past 20, 30 years, the reason we've had this nonchalant attitude to the word, the reason there's been no fear of God about the word of God, no wonder we can sit and watch the filth of hell and not be convicted. No wonder we can call prophets who cry out against sin gloom, doomers.

Why? Because we're so backslidden. We're so indifferent to the word of God. We've lost that fear.

But I tell you now, Moses is on the mountain. They don't hear that prophetic voice. They become indifferent to the word of God.

But I want to tell you, brother, sister, that's changing. There's a word coming forth from the land. Hallelujah.

These are prophets and prophetesses. These are men and women of God filled with the Holy Ghost. And they're coming out.

Brother, sister, if there's sin in your life, you're going to see. Before Jesus comes, you're going to sit under it. You're going to hear it.

If not here somewhere, you're going to hear it. You come here, I promise you, you're going to hear it. If not for me, one of these men.

God's presence can be recovered. Hallelujah. Now, I'm going to get to the good part.

How does a child of God recover the presence of the Lord? If he begins to see all these things happening in his life, he really wants to fear the Lord. Well, my first question is, do you really want the presence of the Lord? Because, you see, you can go on without the presence of the Lord and be blessed and prospered. And I'm going to show that to you in just a minute.

You can have almost anything your heart desires. You can go on and the angel of God will bring you into your full inheritance. You can claim every promise in the book.

You can have all the spiritual rights you want without the presence of God. Yes, sir. You want to see it? It has so shaken me and my soul.

That thousands and thousands of Christians are singing and shouting and claiming every promise in the book. And many of them have lost the Spirit of God. The presence of the Lord has departed.

All right, that's heavy, isn't it? All right, let's look at it. All right, Exodus 33. Verse 1. And the Lord said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it.

What did God say? Go up and possess the land. Is that what He said? Is that in your Bible? Look at verse 2. And I will send an angel before you. I'm going to drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, the Jebusite.

And I'm going to take you into a land flowing with milk and honey. For I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people, lest I consume thee in the way. All right, now look at verse 1 and 2. He said, I want you to go up to the land that I swear to give to you.

That's your inheritance. That's your right. I gave you these rights.

You go up. I promised it. Unto thy seed I'll give it.

Verse 2. I'll send an angel before you. I'll drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, the Jebusite. Is that what it says? You can go up.

You can go. Saul did just that. He went out and defeated the Philistines.

God let him defeat the Philistines on two occasions. He's still king. On the outward, it looks like everything's all right.

And God says, you can go up. In fact, he said, Moses, get the people, go. I'm going to send an angel to go with you.

But I'm not going with you. Because even though you have your eyes on this inheritance, and you want it, it's a land flowing with milk and honey, you've got a stiff heart. And there's something wrong inside.

And I can't walk with this people. I can't do it. You go up on your own.

Now, that's the question. Do we really want the presence of God? Do you want all the rights? Do you want all the blessings? Or do you want the presence of God? Do you want Him? Now, that doesn't say that you don't have all the rest. Oh, no, no, no, folks.

I want to go into the promised land, but I want to go with the Lord at my side. I want the presence of God in my life. Hallelujah.

Moses refused. He refused. Look at verse 15.

Verse 15. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up fence. I don't want an angel to go.

He said, I want God. For wherein shall it be known here that I and the people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and the people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth? Listen. Look at me.

Right in the eye. I have a preacher friend, and I love him. He's built one of the great churches in America.

You know what his staff says? He didn't need God. He didn't need the presence of the Lord. Words to that effect.

He's so talented. And God seems to, everything he touches is blessed because he's a good man. But see, there's not this concern.

There's not this thing for the presence of God. There are multitudes going up. Multitudes moving.

Building churches. Doing things without the presence of God. And if you don't have discernment, you won't know the difference.

You wouldn't know the difference. But Moses said, No, God. I'm not going up with an angel.

I'm not going up with anyone else. I'm going up with you, or I'm not going. And he went and told the people that.

He gave them the sad news. He stood before the people and said, I've just heard from God. We've been commanded to go up and possess the land.

We've been commanded to go in and take our inheritance. We're commanded to go and take our rights. And he's promised to send the captain of his army.

He's going to send an angel. But he's not going with us. Can you imagine what happened in Israel when that word came? Oh, that God would show us that that's what he's saying again today.

You can go up. Go ahead. I see multitudes in the church going.

The Spirit of the Lord is not there. God's presence is not there. He said, no, I don't.

I will not go. And I see three things here that they did. In fact, I'm going to read it to you.

Look at verse 4, 33 verse 4. And when the people heard these evil tidings, or this sad news, they mourned. First of all, they mourned. Number two, no man did put on his ornaments.

And I'm going to save number three for the last. But let's talk about these two things. First of all, they mourned.

As soon as they heard, God's going to let you be blessed, but he's not going to be with you, because you have a stiff heart. You really don't fear the Word of God. So, if you want to walk that way, that's fine.

And folks, the terrible consequences of that is that all hell breaks loose in the heart. The flesh begins to take over when God's presence is not there. Everything becomes flesh.

Everything becomes terrified. And for a while it goes all right, but then without the presence of the Lord, there's nothing at the end but confusion and the soft spirit. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned.

That means they wept, they sorrowed, they repented. You see, what they really came to a place was they found out that God meant what he said. They knew now that God said, I'm not going to walk with you in your sins.

I'm not going to walk with you when you don't take my word seriously, this casual indifference. I'm not going to walk with you like that. I love you.

I've called you out of Egypt as my own children. I've engraved you in the palm of my hand. But I will not walk with the people who won't fear my word.

And these people began to mourn, they began to weep. Do you know what God's message to the church on their last day is? Turn to me with all your heart. This is the prophet Joe.

Turn to me with all your heart and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning. And tear your heart and not your garments. And turn unto the Lord your God, for he's gracious.

He's merciful. He's slow to anger. And he repents him of the evil.

In other words, God says, I don't want you to go alone. I yearn to be with you. I want my presence to be upon you at all times.

Who knows? Repent him of the evil. Who knows? He may repent of the evil. Who knows? He will return.

He will return and leave a blessing behind him. What is that blessing? That's the presence of God upon us. Hallelujah.

Where are the Christians? Where are those people today that say, Oh God, I want your presence in my life every day. Every waking hour. When I work.

When I wake. Everything I do and everything I say. Jesus, I want your presence with me.

I can't live without it. And then when they look at the word of God, and they're told he will not walk with those who are stiff-necked and stubborn and holding to their idols, and they begin to mourn and they begin to repent and cry out to God with all their heart, that's the first step. This repentance.

This mourning for sin. This mourning for the loss of the presence. You know what it's like? They're mourning the loss of a departed loved one.

The presence of God. They're dead without it, aren't they? If you don't have a mourning in your heart right now, if there's not something that says, Oh God, I look over my past life, these past few months, and I've not walked in your presence. I've not really walked, bathed in your presence.

There should be a mourning. There should be a cry in your heart. Oh God, don't cast me away from your presence.

Renew a right spirit in me. Create a clean heart in me. That should be the cry and the prayer, the groaning of our hearts, weeping between the porch and the altar.

I think of all the lightness in the pulpit. I think of preachers telling jokes. I've been in service and I want to cry like a baby.

I hear men that, I say, Oh God, don't they know that your presence is not there? It's not there. Why aren't they mourning? Why don't they see it? And if God should lift his presence from this pulpit, or from any of these men, we might as well shut the doors. If you come into this house with a hungry heart, ready to seek God, and your heart is open, and you don't hear a word from heaven, and your heart is not changing, we might as well shut the doors.

We're just playing church. But they begin to mourn. The second thing, they put away their ornaments, their ornaments.

Now, Ezekiel said, Ezekiel brings this out, in the seventh chapter of Ezekiel, I believe it is, around the 19th verse. And he said, the children of Israel took their gold and silver and made images of their abominations. They made images of Milcom, the god Milcom.

And that was the god of the Amorites. And that was the fire god where they had human sacrifice. And it was a little god that had the head of a goat.

It was just a big barrel, so to speak. They built a fire in the middle, but it had a head of a goat. And they made these little gold and silver idols of mice and sheep and goats.

And they were just tying them. And it appears at this time that God seemed to have endured that because they were saying to themselves, well, this really doesn't mean anything to me. It's just sentimental.

It reminds me of our past life in Egypt. There's nothing. We don't worship this thing hanging around our neck.

We have a dear Catholic couple that got saved here. The whole family has been saved. And recently they said, well, could you preach a message about images one day? What should we do about idols? And I think most of their idols are gone.

There's still a picture, I think, of the sacred heart of Jesus or something. But you know, there is something here that God is saying, if you want my presence, if you really want my presence, put away all your ornaments. Do you want to see that? Look, get your Bible out again and look down at verse 5, Exodus 33, verse 5. For the Lord has said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, you are stiff-necked people.

I will come up into the midst of you in a moment and consume thee. Therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, until I know what to do with you. He's saying the least you can do, if you really want my presence, if you mean that, the least you can do is the obvious.

The least you can do is to remove away from your midst those things that distract you from me, the things that I don't like. The things that deepen your heart, you know I don't like, that offend me. You know those gods offend me.

And even though you say this is disrepresentation, it's sentimental, you know that offends me, get it out. Do the obvious. Do the practical things.

You say you want the presence of God, and yet you sit for hours and watch that idiot box? Come on now. You say, you sit here now hearing a message about the presence of God, and to me this is life and death. I'm not preaching a sermon to you.

I'm spilling my life to you. And I feel the anointing of the Holy Ghost. And I feel not only the wrath of a holy God, but the love of a holy God tonight.

And the love for His people. And He says, you say I want His presence? And yet you're going to sit in your living room and laugh the night away? To comedies? You want the presence of God and you won't even do the obvious things? What kind of a hold does this have on you? These things that God says, you know they offend me, and because they offend me and they offend my holy eyes, just get them out. Do the obvious.

Get rid of all your ornaments. And He said, when I see that, then let's talk about my presence. Don't even talk about it, folks, if you're going to sit in front of your idol.

Don't even talk about it. Don't expect it. I'm not talking just about television.

I'm talking about total obedience, going all the way with the Lord. You know what Zephaniah said? God said He's going to come and judge those who worship and swear by the Lord, and swear by Malcham. They swear by the Lord and they still hold this thing.

They can't let it go. There's something there just holding on and holding on and holding on. God keeps saying, lay it down, lay it down, lay it down.

Oh, they swear by God. I want His presence. But they hold on to this sentimental thing.

They won't even do the obvious. That's what bothers me. That's what I don't understand.

People can read these things that offend the Holy God, and yet they aren't offended by it. Oh, by the way, Joshua said, you know, his last message, the children of Israel said, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and truth, and put away your gods, put away your gods. And I got my stonks and cordons out and I looked at, put away your gods, put away your gods, put away, all through, put away your gods, put away.

And I got out the Hebrew, you know what that means? Turn them off. There's words that says turn them off. Turn off your gods.

Get your stonk and cordon, look it up. I'm not telling anything that isn't true. It's right there.

Turn them off. Well, I could build a whole message on that. Bible says they stripped themselves.

Have you done it? Have you stripped yourself of all those things that could stand between you and His presence? Have you stripped it? Said, God, you can have, there's nothing, there's nothing in this world worth losing your presence. There's nothing that I want to stand between me and you, Lord, and your fullness in my life. Brother says, that's where I'm at in my life.

I don't want anything to stand between. Gary talked about prejudice the other night. I don't want anything like that in my life.

I don't want that. I don't want pride. I want nothing standing between me and the fullness of His presence.

All right, the last thing, and here's the best part of all, and here's the most important thing. They erected a tent outside the camp. They erected a tent outside the camp.

Remember what I said? They promised God to build Him a habitation. The tabernacle had not been built yet. This is not the tabernacle in the wilderness.

This is a tent. Moses went far outside the camp and he erected, I believe he packed his own tent and went out there. He went way out in the wilderness, outside the camp.

Now, I want to read it to you. You have your Bible, Exodus 33, verse 7. And Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it without the camp. Now, that's not the tabernacle, the wilderness.

That's the tent. In fact, the Hebrew is tent. He pitched it without the camp, far off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation.

Look at this. And it came to pass that everyone would... What? Where did they go? They went outside the camp. Now, look at me.

Do you know what that tent is? That's a secret closet of prayer. I'm going to ask you, do you have a tent? Have you erected a tent in your life, in your home? And it's far out. It's far away from all the busyness.

It's far away from your husband, your wife, your children, and everything else. And you're going to... It's out there. You go out of everything.

You take a step. You say you want the presence of God, yet you have no place for Him to dwell. You have no time.

They go outside the camp and erect this. And you watch. At first, there's only a few go out there.

Only those who sought the Lord. Their hearts were stirred. And you see them going out.

The rest of them around there doing their thing. They're busy. They're saying, oh, I'm the chosen of God.

And they're talking about their inheritance. They're talking about the land flowing with milk and honey. But there are some people groaning and moaning and mourning over the loss of the presence of God.

And they're going outside the camp. And they're going out to the tent. Moses went out every day.

Joshua stayed there, lived there. Because God was preparing a new ministry. Moses' ministry was going to pass away.

Joshua was going to be a man shut in the tent. Where's your tent? Come on. Where's your secret closet? Where do you go to get away? Where do you go? You say you want the presence of the Lord? That's where God came down.

You can see it right here. Everyone who sought the Lord. And you see finally a line going out.

First a few and then more. They're going out. And the only ones who went out there are those who sought the Lord.

The grief of my heart. I'm going to close now in just a few minutes. The grief of my heart has been that I don't understand.

I've asked Bob. I've asked Don. I've asked any man of God I know.

Why? Why is it that people who really love the Lord. They really do. Fill with it.

You know, have the Holy Spirit, they say. Why don't they seek God? Why don't they pray? Why is it so hard to spend even half an hour a day shut in this book? You sit and read the newspaper. You can listen to everything else and read everything else.

Why is it that you don't pick up the book? Where's your tent? Where's your tent? You say you want the presence of God in your life. Do you have a place for him to come? Are you going to go out there and get along with him and say, Oh God, I'm not going without you. And it's in that tent.

God came down and said, Moses, I'm going with you. Right there. Read it.

Verse 13. Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight. He's in the tent and he's praying.

Show me now thy way that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight. And consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, my presence shall go with you.

Now give your rest. Hallelujah. He wants to go with you.

He wants to go with me. And I'll tell you this before closing. We're about to enter into a prophetic time in history that's too frightening for anybody in a public auditorium to even try to describe.

There's nothing in the prophets that clearly describe what's coming. You can read all through Jeremiah and all those terrible things, and there's nothing there in any language, in Hebrew, Greek, or English, that can describe what's coming to this nation and to the world. And we have a body of people today that are

not ready.

We have a body of people today who love to go to church and sing. They'll go to rallies. They'll go to seminars.

They'll go to conventions. They'll go to believers' meetings. They'll go to anything, but they won't pray.

They don't have a tent in their home. They don't mourn for the Holy Ghost. They don't mourn at all.

They refuse to put off their ornaments. And then they say, we want the presence of God. No.

It's coming down on us. It's roaring down like thunder right now. And you're not going to be ready unless you're shut in with God, and God's going to take His church right outside the camp.

That's why in Hebrews Paul said, let us go with Him outside the camp. Go to your secret closet. Get shut in with God.

Friends, you're not going to make it. You're not going to make it without that time with God unless you're shut in with the Lord and tell every day of your life, your heart's drawing out to Him. And I feel Him pulling me out more and more every day.

I feel Him drawing me out further and further outside the camp, outside of denominationalism, outside of all church structure, outside of all religious systems, outside to Jesus. Hallelujah. Bow your heads.

This concludes this message by Brother Dave Wilkerson.

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