

The Wearing Down of the Saints

by David Wilkerson

The Devil's plan to wear out the saints is to deceive them through persecution, martyrdom, and great swelling words, making them doubt their faith and look to men for help rather than God.

Duration: 1:02:20

Scripture: Exodus 18:13, Deuteronomy 5:22, Ezekiel 14:3, Daniel 7:28, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 10:14

Topics: "Antichrist"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of people waiting in line to be prayed for and seeking a touch or word from a man instead of seeking God directly. The speaker refers to the story of Moses in Exodus 18, where he sat to judge the people and they stood in line from morning until evening. Moses' father-in-law questioned why he was doing this to the people instead of for them. The speaker emphasizes that God never intended for there to be a division between the pulpit and the pew, and that people should seek God directly for their needs.

Transcript

Down of the Saints. The wearing down of the Saints. Go to Daniel, please.

I'm not going to ask those, or if you have your Bible, if you don't have your Bible, you're naked. You should have had it. Don't come back without it, please.

Boys, you know that. Everybody that got your Bible? Let me see it. Hold it up there.

Let me see it. Isn't that something? Converted drug addicts bring a Bible and you're supposed to be a child of God and you haven't brought yours? You say, you trying to put me to shame? Yes. Yes.

The wearing down of the Saints. Daniel 7 chapter, beginning, read it, the 21st verse. I beheld in the same horn, that word horn means power, authority, that same authority made war with the Saints and prevailed against them.

Until the Ancient of Days came, a judgment was given to the Saints of the Most High, and the time came that the Saints possessed the kingdom. Look at verse 25. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out, shall wear out the Saints of the Most High.

Reading from the King James. Now some take that to be persecution. Some wear out, and they shall wear out the Saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Every head bowed, please. Holy Spirit, I need the unction, the authority of the Holy Spirit. My voice is weak, my body is weak, but you said your strength is made perfect in our weakness.

And so I acknowledge you now, Lord, give me a voice to speak. Lord, there's a message burning in my heart, and I can't preach it, Lord, unless the Word comes forth and the strength is given to me. So I acknowledge my weakness, and yet I acknowledge your strength in that weakness.

I bind every principality and power of darkness. I bind every lying spirit. I bind everything that would hinder the message from being effective.

Lord, let it find its mark. The devil's trying to wear down the Saints of God, but you're going to raise up a standard against this. Lord, do something supernatural, changing us, healing us.

God, break through in a marvelous way tonight. Give us your Word. Thank you, Lord, for the power of your Word.

We love your Word at Times Square Church, Lord. We're not just singing, we're not just praising, we come to hear the Word. We want to hear the Word, oh God.

Deliver it to us. Amen. There's a full-staff nursery for mothers who have, and any other children want to go to Children's Church.

Now you can go out the door, the ushers will show you where, and there's a full-staff nursery out there, and the ushers will also show you where that's at. All right, keep your Bible open to Daniel. The seventh chapter, we'll be coming back to that, and I'm going to take you through five or six other scriptures in the process of my message.

But I want to begin by telling you that this message has a good ending, because for a while you may think it doesn't, but I want you to start by knowing that this message has a tremendous ending. Not because I'm preaching, because all the prophets saw what Daniel said. Look at verse 28, the seventh chapter and 28th verse.

Hitherto, or up to, or nevertheless, at the end, here is the end of the matter. Now here's the conclusion of the matter. Hitherto is the end of the matter.

Now what's he saying? The end of all things, and you'll find that in verse 18. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever and even forever and ever. Hallelujah.

How many think that's good news? Yes, but before that happens, before that happens, look at verse 27. And the kingdom and the dominion, the greatness of the kingdom unto the whole heavens shall be given to the people of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. And that's where we have the conclusion of all things.

There's going to be a possessing of the kingdom. Now go back to verse 21 with me, if you will. I beheld, now this, before we possess the kingdom, there's going to be war against the saints, and the Bible said there's going to be prevailing against the saints, and the devil going to come and try to wear out the saints

of the Most High God.

Verse 21, I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. All right, look this way for a moment. There's a fourth kingdom.

There were four kingdoms that Daniel saw the last most believers, the Roman Empire, and out of the Roman Empire has come the ten kingdoms that exist even today. And out of this kingdom, and we don't know, I don't think anybody in prophecy knows clearly all the symbols of Daniel or Revelation, but this is backed up by Revelation, the 13th chapter. I want you to turn to Revelation, the 13th chapter, so we get a clear vision of a spirit that's going to arise in the last days, a raid against the saints of God.

Revelation, the 13th chapter, quickly, and I want you to begin to read with me at verse 4. And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, and they worshiped the beast saying, Who's like unto the beast who is able to make war with him? There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth and blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven. Now, that's all I want to read of that.

Oh, verse 7. It was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nation. All they that dwell upon there shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have ear, let him hear.

All right, now I need your attention. I want you to follow me, please. Now the gates of hell, the church of Jesus Christ.

That means at the end God is going to let us possess the kingdom. He's coming forth with glory and power, and every power and dominion will be brought under his foot. He's going to put his foot on all power and authority.

That's already concluded. That's everywhere written in the scripture. All the prophets saw it.

That's the end of what Daniel said. That's the conclusion of all things. The kingdom shall be given to the saints.

But first, there's going to be prevailing against the saints. There's going to be a persecution. There's going to be martyrdom.

This persecution is already happening all over the world. It's happening under communism. I've been to Poland.

Don's been to Hungary. We've been invited to go back to, we were invited to go into the Ukraine and Russia for meetings. And you hear these people talk about the persecution.

These scriptures come to life to them. They're not looking at some future time. They're living it.

They're living it right now. But you see, the Roman Empire did persecute the Christians, and many, many were prevailed against. They were jailed.

They were persecuted unto death. But there's going to be an acceleration of persecution also in the United States of America. I don't know if it's going to come to the place where we're going to be headed, because there's another kind of persecution that I think is probably more critical than having your head cut off, because suddenly you're in glory in God's presence.

Anybody, you know, I hear people say, I hate to focus in on any particular person, but you know when someone says, God threatens to kill me, I would say if the Lord called me home, I would say with Paul, I'd rather go. I want to be with the Lord. I don't know about you.

But martyrdom shouldn't scare us. But there's something worse, and you see it happening now. It's beginning to happen all over the United States.

Let me illustrate what I'm talking about. We have some people, and I mentioned last night, that are coming to this church that used to attend another liberal church here in New York City, and they're probably here tonight. There's a small group of them, and they're more and more coming out, because they got, they went into the lobby of the church, and they found homosexual literature.

That homosexual literature was depicting the homosexual lifestyle in detail. What they do in private, in secret, and it was obnoxious. It was off-color.

And also, the church is saying to the homosexual that God loves you just as you are, in your homosexuality. It's a lifestyle, and some even say a preferred lifestyle for many. And when they took a stand and said, look, this is wrong.

This is not what the Bible said. The Bible calls it sin. And I want you to know, at Times Square Church, we call it sin.

It's sin. Homosexuality is sin. Now, we don't focus in on homosexuality.

Drunkenness, alcoholism, all these things. Yes, and pride, and arrogance, all these things. Yes.

Now, we believe that Jesus heals homosexuals. We don't believe it's hopeless. We don't believe that you're weaned off of homosexuality, little by little.

We believe that you see the exceeding sinfulness of it. You see that God's wrath is against it. You face it.

You turn from it, and he gives you power and authority over it. But you see, these dear sisters and friends went to the authorities of the church, and they said, this is not right. And they said, well, you're not welcome here then.

This is the way the church is going, and they were asked to leave. Well, welcome. Welcome at Times Square Church.

We welcome you with open arms. You'll never go out in this lobby and see that here. You'll find literature that shows love.

You'll show, you won't find a confrontational gospel saying, well, hey, every homosexual, you're going to hell. We're saying that Jesus loves you, and you will repent. The Lord will set you free.

But you see, there's persecution coming. The time is going to come that if I stand in the pulpit and call homosexuality a sin, I can be taken to court. That's the kind of persecution that's coming.

You will not be able to touch any law about homosexuality. It's coming. The same thing with abortion.

You talk about persecution. They've got the whole Supreme Court behind them. We are murdering hundreds of thousands of babies.

This nation has blood on its hands. We're a bloody nation. Killed hundreds of thousands of babies.

And now the law stands up to protect it. These are areas where the persecution is going to come. The Scripture makes that very clear.

These bloodthirsty baby killers in America, they're not going to be satisfied until they not only say it's a rite, but they advertise it. How long do you think God's going to put up with this, by the way? There's going to be an Antichrist invasion. The Scripture said they show this power, this authority of Satan, this satanic Antichrist spirit shall come forth against the church in attempt to wear out the saints of the most high.

Verse 25. He shall speak great words. And the Scripture talks also about great swelling words.

I read to you from Jude. Don't turn there, but Jude 4th chapter, 4th verse. Certain men crept in unawares.

Beware, he was saying, of certain men who will creep in unawares to the church. They're ungodly men, and they're going to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. They're going to murmur, they're going to complain, they're going to walk after their own lust, and they're going to speak great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of an advantage.

This is a very serious charge by Jude, and it's backed up by the prophecies of this great prophet Enoch, who preached righteousness. And here's the warning of Jude and Enoch the prophet. This was made before Enoch was translated.

He had a vision of the future, he had a vision of our day, and he said in these last days when men are wicked and vile, you're going to have evil men, corrupt minds creep into the church and into the pulpits. They're going to be ungodly men, they'll put on a show of piety. They're going to turn the grace of God into licentiousness.

In other words, you can do anything you please as long as you come to Jesus. You can sin with your spirit, or rather your flesh, as long as your spirit's clean. That's, that doctor's sweeping the country right now, a liar right out of the pit of hell.

I'm telling you, you can pollute your spirit just as well as your spirit, or as your body. Your spirit has to be sanctified just like your body. But he said they're going to walk after all lust, they're going to have great swelling words, great words against God.

Having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. Now, I take that, that great swelling words, he warns it's going to come. There's going to be fantastic sermons, great swelling words, justification for sin, doctrines that justify weaknesses.

And here's how it comes out, you get it from the Christian rock and rollers. They say don't judge it, step aside, we've sanctified it. We took it away from the world, we took it away from the Bee Gees, we took it

all, we've sanctified it now.

Leave us alone, don't judge us. Great swelling words. You get it from those who think that their own goodness is going to save them.

I hear it all over New York City. Say, well, Reverend, what's wrong with me? I'm as good as anybody in the church. All I see in the church are hypocrites anyhow.

I don't hurt anybody. I love my kids, I love my wife, I'm a good family man, I pray at times, I go to church Christmas and Easter. And by the way, I don't blame them for going to church Christmas and Easter if I went to the church they'd go to.

So dead and dry and empty, they're just trying to get it over with. But you know the worst form of all is among the saints of God? This deception? You know what it is? These great swelling words? It's hero worship of favorite star teachers and evangelists. Hero worship.

I heard Pastor Simbler from my friend at Brooklyn Tabernacle say, Brother Davey come on, he said the stars are out shining the sun. The stars out shining the sun. Jesus is the sun.

We have created these star evangelists and star preachers now that drive around in chauffeured limousines with private pilots for their jets. We have one of them, if I told you his name you'd fall in your seat. He shops up here on Fifth Avenue in a store, you have to make an appointment to get there, his limousine pulls up there, you can't buy a suit less than \$2,000 in that store.

And his lotion costs hundreds of dollars. We've created that by heaping praises and going to them as if they were God to us. Having men's persons in admiration because of an advantage.

In other words, if I can call you on the phone or if you just minister to me in any way and relieve my pain, you can live as high as you want, you can do all you please, just minister to my pain. And you know, we've created a Hollywood evangelism. You know what God's doing? He's starting to tear it all down.

He said if you people are so blind and you're gonna send money to that, I'm gonna knock it down. And I'm not big physician, I'm not putting anybody down, but we got one dear brother, even though he's lost his ministry and everything else, he still cannot give up his chauffeur-driven Mercedes. And I still don't understand people without the discernment to see what we are doing.

We're creating this, we're creating pastors like that by heaping praises and worship upon men. Multitudes of Christians today are submitting to men and not to God. They've created a pastoral mediatorship.

We've made pastors mediators, we've made teachers mediators. There's only one mediator between God and man, that's the man Christ Jesus. Do you know what the favorite question of Christians today is? Of pastors? Do you have a word for me? Everywhere I turn, if I meet somebody on the street, would you pray for me? And do you have a word? And they're standing there like a puppy dog with their chin hanging out.

Please, a word, anyone, give me a word! And I want to say, don't you know him? Don't you walk with him? Is he hiding from you? I'm not, I'm not putting that down. It's just people flock to alders hoping some man of God will stretch out a hand to them and bind some demon, and he dealt with it this morning, or whisper some gem of wisdom. And you can hang on that word, and I see people come to Times Square Church, and they say, oh God, maybe tonight you'll help me with my problem, and they wait for God to pour out His

Spirit doing the singing, maybe it'll hit them doing the singing.

If it doesn't hit them doing the singing, maybe doing the special. Or surely when he's preaching, I'll get something, there'll be a word. And if they don't get it out of the sermon, they come up here and just hang.

Look, you can see that look. It's frightening. You look, it's a look of terror, almost panic.

Help! And whenever a crisis comes, most Christians, they don't run to the secret closet and talk to the Lord Jesus. First thing, when a problem comes, let's see, who can I call? 700 Club. PTL.

I've heard already, sick people come here. All the power you need to get healed is right here in this house. If you had faith and you're walking with Jesus Christ, but most people I know want to get an airplane ticket.

We had some people come in here that were from another country, over behind the Iron Curtain, about five of them, and they left their tour, and they wanted us to help them get airplane tickets to Tulsa. They thought if we just get to Tulsa, God's gonna answer our prayers. Of course, we didn't give any tickets to Tulsa, because I'm not putting Tulsa down, but you don't have to go to Tulsa.

If you have a touch of God, you don't have to go outside of your living room. You don't have to go outside your house. But you see, we say, they get together, get on the telephone, hey, I know what you need.

There's a brother, there's a brother in a church, that church, his name is Brother Discernment, and he calls out people, and I know if I can get there, and I'm prayed up, he'll call it out. Now, I'm not putting that down. God uses me in the streets as a gift of discernment.

I can, I see sins in people, and things about their life, that it never works in public, lest any man gets the glory. We make heroes, we make prophets. Look at God's great man.

Who can I call? Where can I go to? Some man, somebody to touch me. Do you know that Israel became worn down, looking to one man? I want you to go with me to Exodus. Go to Exodus.

You got to get this good down in your heart, because I'm trying to get your eyes off men, and on Jesus tonight. You know, we've had a revival here in Broadway, and we don't even announce who's the speaker. We've got five pastors that preach here, and they'll call our office and say, who's preaching tonight? Or they'll say, is Brother Dave preaching tonight? And we just say, come and see, because this is not a one man show.

We are brothers. I, during the songs, I just reached over and hugged Brother Phil said, I love you, brother. I feel so good working with you.

This is not a one-man show. We don't have Wilkersonites and Philippites or Victorites or anybody else. We have Jesus lovers and nothing else.

Hallelujah. Exodus 18. Yeah, I'm gonna start preaching now.

Verse 13. I want to show you what happens when one man runs the show. This pastoral mediatorship.

Verse 13. It came to pass on the morrow, this is Exodus 18 chapter verse 13, came to pass on the morrow that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood by Moses from the morning into the evening. What a line that must have been.

How'd you like to be in that line? Waiting to be prayed for. Not being facetious, folks. It's right there.

When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, what is this thing that thou doest to the people? Now, the New American Standard says do for the people. That's not the way it is. The original is very correct.

I studied it very clearly. What is this thing that you are doing to the people? Not for them, but to them. Why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning until evening? And Moses said unto his father, well, because the people come unto me to inquire of God.

I don't know when he ever had time to pray. Yeah, I know he had no time to his family, because when Jethro's father-in-law brought his wife and that, he goes in the tent and spends the day with Jethro's father-in-law. Tells him all that God was doing.

And when they have a matter, they come unto me. And I judge between one another, and I do make them know the statutes of God and His laws. And Moses' father-in-law said him, the thing that thou doest is not good.

Thou will surely what? Wear away. We're talking about the wearing down of the saints. And here's my message.

You'll see it now. Both thou and this people that is with thee, for this thing is too heavy for thee. Thou are not able to pour it thyself alone.

Hearken thou unto my voice. I'll give you counsel, and God shall be with you. Be thou for the people to Godward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God, and thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.

Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. All right, look at me if you will. I've got, I want you to make understand this.

This word term here, wear out, means to fragment to pieces. In other words, to wear down to the point of coming apart. In fact, we have a phrase, I'm coming apart.

I'm just simply coming apart. Well, that's what he's talking about here, the fragmenting of the Saints, the tearing apart of the Saints. And he's going to do it with great swelling words, of course.

But you, you look at this, this scene here, you look at that line, all those people, hours of waiting to see one man. Moses has become their mediator. He's become their answer man.

Now, Moses is sincerely trying to help. He's the meekest man on earth. He must have gone to sleep at night, burying the burdens of these people, crying himself to sleep, I'm sure.

Hearing the anxieties of God's people, and on the surface you could look at that scene, you walk by and say, isn't that something? Look at that man. Look at the time he spends with people. Look how available he is.

Isn't this marvelous that this man is so open to the people, the man, he is spending his life for the people. And the whole time it's wrong. The whole time it's wrong, because everything is focused on this one man.

He's become the mediator. But something is terribly wrong here. Jethro, his father-in-law, said, what is this thing you're doing to the people? The thing you do is not good.

Now, here's the heart of the message, and here's how the enemy is going to wear down the Saints of the Most High God. It's easy enough to see how Moses can be worn down, because he's got to sit there and listen to all these problems, and try to make peace, and try to pass judgment, and everything comes by his desk. He sits at the tent door, his tent door, and you say, well how can the Saints, how do the Christians get worn out? You see how Moses can, but how can they get worn out? Well easy, waiting for a man.

Waiting for a man. How is the devil going to wear out the Saints? He's going to get their eyes on a man. He's going to cause them running all over the United States looking for a man, looking for a touch, looking for a word, and you're going to wear yourself out.

It's simple as that. Nothing complicated about it. The devil is going to wear down the Saints by getting them so busy.

And friends, there's never been a generation with been more problems. Everything is accelerating out of control. I heard one of the president's men say, we are living in a day of unsolvable problems.

The problems can't even be solved anymore by any human mind, and that's true. You know there are problems in your life that can't be solved outside of God now. Isn't that true? Things are getting so complicated.

But here's the problem, Saints. This is what Brother Bob was trying to work, to bring to our attention this morning. He did so ably.

God never intended that there be a great division between the pulpit and the pew. Did you hear me? I don't see any line that he's drawn and said, you big chief, you little chief. You know what I mean? Borrowing your phrase, Bob.

We're to honor the ministry. We're to respect those that are called because of their high calling. Esteem them highly for the sake of the ministry.

I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about this line that we draw that God only moves through preachers. He only moves through preachers, and so we have people come that are spectators.

And going to church is almost a spectator sport, like going to see the Jets or the Giants play football. And people just sit there, and they hope, they can't wait. Man, if I announced, I'll tell you what, I could name five or six advances right now, and if I named, hey, I called them on the phone, they're coming, I'd hear oohs and ahs all through the audience.

Ooh, he's coming. Maybe then. I'll tell you what, when the church gets to where it should be, it's not even gonna need a healing advances.

They're gonna call for the elders of the church, they're gonna anoint them and pray for them, then they're gonna be saved and healed. And then when the church gets to the place where it's supposed to be, every one of us will come into the house of God from our knees, having been shut in with God, having touched heaven, and faith rising in our heart because we're shut in with the good book. God has a place for teachers and evangelists, yes.

He's anointed them for that, to that building the body and the edifying of the saints. But we have people who are too, I'm gonna have to say it, lazy. Lazy.

They don't read their Bibles, they don't even know what God says, they're not prepared for what's coming in these last days. I want to show you in Deuteronomy, go to the right to Deuteronomy, the fifth chapter. Deuteronomy, the fifth chapter.

I want to show you where God's people were then, and I don't see that we've progressed very much from there. From way back here in Israel, fifth chapter of Deuteronomy, verse 20, 22. Verse 22, Deuteronomy 5, verse 22.

By the way, look this way before we get into this. You see that big long line waiting for Moses? They've made a mediator, not by his choice, they've made a mediator. Look at that big line.

You stop someone at line, say, what are you waiting for? You see, I've got this big problem, and I've tried everything and it doesn't work, and Moses is a man of God, and I know if I can just get his ear. I have so many people say, well, if I could only spend ten minutes with you. Have you heard that, Bob? If I could just have half an hour of your time.

If I could just have an hour of your time. And you ask anyone that line, well, what are you waiting for? Well, what's that cloud of fire up there at night? What's that cloud by day? What's that rock where the water's gushing out? That living Christ, the Bible says, that they all drank from. You say, well, don't you know God at all? Does he mean nothing to you? Is this, is he just a figment of your imagination? And you look at that, that pitiful scene of all these people waiting.

Look at verse 22. These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire of the cloud and of the thick darkness with a great voice, and he added no more. And he rose to it two tables of stone, delivered them to me.

And it came to pass, when you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, for the mountain did burn with fire, you came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes and your elders. And you said to me, behold, the Lord God has showed us his glory and his greatness. We have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire.

We've seen this day that God doth talk with man and he still lives. Now therefore, why should we die? Now that doesn't make sense. Look at verse 24.

We've already seen that you can talk to God and not die. You say, we see you can talk to God and still live. Now look, look at this paradox.

Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the Lord our God anymore, then we shall die. For who is there of any flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fires we haven't lived? Now you go near and you hear all the word, all the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee.

And we will hear it and we will do it. Now look at me please. Do you see what happened? They said, look, we heard his voice.

We know that we can live, but we're afraid. They weren't afraid of dying. They were afraid of the consequences of staying in his presence.

Now listen closely. No sin can stay in his holy presence, and they knew it. Because the moment you come into God's holy presence, the Holy Ghost shines the floodlight on every hidden thing in your heart.

They weren't afraid to die. They said, we have seen that you can talk to God and still live. But why should we die? We know because all the prophets tell us that during this whole time, these same people had idols hidden in their heart.

They had a star that they brought. They carried it in a little altar, and I don't know where they hid it in Israel as they went through, but all through it the prophet said they carried this little star, they carried these little golden oxen, and they worshiped them all through the desert. And they wouldn't let go of that, because they were still lingering hopes about ever having to go back.

If they ever had to go back, this God was going to lead them back. And they knew, they knew, they'd heard from God. They heard his voice, but they said, Moses, you go hear from God.

You, you be the leader. You pray. You're called to pray.

You know God. He talks to you, and then you come back and you tell us what God is saying. And sadly, that's what many people have done in the church of Jesus Christ.

They've abdicated their rights to hear from a holy God. And the reason they don't want to hear from God, they know the consequences of hearing from God. They know that they're going to have to lay down idolatry.

They know that they can't live with any secret, hidden sin in their life. God said, oh, that there was such a heart in them that they would fear me and keep my commandments. They were not afraid of dying.

They were afraid of living in holiness. Sinner, backslider, I want you to listen closely. You say, Brother Wilkinson, I'd sure like to hear from God, and I've had a lot of people who are backslidden, and they're living in sin, or they're sinners, and they said, I really need to talk to a man of God.

When in reality, God's already talked to you. God has already talked to you. And by the way, 95% of all your questions be answered if you were in this book.

If you were really seeking this, you would need to go to a man. You would need a counseling session. If you were into this book, he would answer it.

And if you're on your face before a holy God, letting him examine your heart, you wouldn't have to run around looking for some counselor. I'm not saying it's sinful or wrong to go to a counselor, but when you go to a counselor, he should just be confirming from the scripture what God's already told you in your own heart. But I hear people say, well, I just don't understand.

I just, I've got to talk to somebody. I hear, I've got to talk to somebody. Well, isn't he somebody? What's wrong with talking to him and unburdening your heart to him? Rolling every burden on him.

What's wrong with hearing from heaven? Tell you what's wrong with it. You can't come in with unclean hands and impure heart. You sure can to a preacher, but you can't toward him.

Most Christians, though, would prefer to sit around waiting for a man or a word, somebody to show them the way. You know, Jesus saw the multitudes and he was moved to compassion. He said, I see them as sheep having no shepherd.

He looked out of them. They had no guidance. They were wandering everywhere.

And there's Jesus with all the answers right in their midst. And they're looking for answers. Isn't that a shame? Jesus is in our midst right now.

And if he were here, he'd walk the streets of New York. I believe he'd weep just like he did over Jerusalem. He said, oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I would have gathered you as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not.

You're still running around. They're running around the scribes and the Pharisees. They're running, looking into the pool of Bethesda to find an angel, an angel, a prophet, somebody.

Jesus said, you won't come to me. You won't come to me. And I don't see us having changed much since that time either.

Now, listen closely. I'm gonna give you an absolute principle. And it's this.

God refuses to negotiate with idolaters. He refuses to talk to idolaters. Boy, that's a big statement.

I'll prove it. Ezekiel 14 chapter. Are you gonna go with me? Ezekiel 14.

There's some powerful word here from Ezekiel the prophet. Very powerful word. Brother Phil has a powerful message on this.

And basically we're gonna find out God's saying, I don't talk to idolaters. I don't even let them ask me questions. There's not gonna be a single word of guidance to those who refuse to lay aside their pet sins.

He said, if you're gonna come to me with your pet sins, you're not even gonna get a word from me. And if I do give you word, it's going to be a word that will say yes and amen to every one of your dreams and schemes, but it'll be to your judgment. I'm gonna prove it to you in just a moment.

I'm gonna prove to you also. Listen closely. I'm gonna prove to you tonight how dangerous it is to put yourself, your future, your life, your spiritual condition in the hands of any man.

Can destroy you. Absolutely destroy you. I don't care how godly you may think he is.

You are not to put your life in the hands of any other human being on the face of the earth. Not your future, not your spiritual life, not your decisions. No! Show it to you from the Word of God.

That same shepherding thing is sweeping New York City again. And I'm gonna tell you what, it was incubated in hell, and I'm gonna show you from the Scripture how strong it is, how powerful it is, how dangerous it is. There's a strong warning all through the Bible against it.

All right, let's start verse 1. Then came certain of the eldest Israel unto me and sat before me, and the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face. Should I be inquired of at all by them? Look at me now. God says, here's the people that won't lay down their idols.

I've talked to them time and time again about certain things in their life. They don't want to lay it down, but they have confusion. They need answers to their problems.

They need guidance. They need direction. And God says, they come to me and here come the princes of Israel.

And now, they're the kind of people that come to Times Square Church often. They come saying, I want to hear a clear word. I'm not afraid of reproof.

I really want to hear the Word of God and I'll obey it. And these elders that came to Ezekiel, they knew God was with this man. They knew he spoke the pure Word of God.

They knew it in their hearts. Every word he spoke was pure, not a word fell to the ground. And that's why they came to him.

They're coming to him and they say, Ezekiel, we need a word from God. And look what God says, son of man, these men that come to you saying, show us a way. These men that want a word from God, they've got idols in their hearts.

They're stumbling blocks. They won't lay it down. So I be inquired.

I'm not going to answer these men. I'm not going to give clear guidance to these people. Now listen to me clearly.

You can wear yourself out. Listen clearly. You can wear yourself out seeking God and never find him.

If there's sin in your life. He said in the day you seek me with all your heart, you'll find me. But you have to, you have to back up on that.

If you seek me with a pure heart, if you seek me with all your pure heart, you'll find me. Because God said, I'm not even being inquired of by these who live in sin. Don't come to me.

If you won't lay down that idolatry, I put my finger on in your life. Don't come to me. Don't sound confused.

Don't say I need directs and I need a word from God. Don't do it because I won't negotiate with you. I won't give you a word.

He said, my sheep know my voice. They hear when I call. And I'm telling you on the authority of God's word, every true believer should be hearing from God.

You should be hearing from God every day of your life. Did you hear that? I'm going to say it again and I believe it with every ounce in my body, every ounce of energy in my body. I believe that if you're walking in righteousness before the Lord, and if you believe this Bible, if you're walking in the spirit and you're putting the flesh to death, you're laying down every idol and you're saying, now that doesn't mean you're walking in perfection in itself, but you're saying, I hate sin and everything he shows me.

I want him. I want everything he has for me. You won't hold anything back and you're coming to the light.

God is going to talk to you. He's not, listen, you can't charge God of hiding his voice or his face. That's worse than calling him a liar.

No, God, he said, Jesus said, my sheep know my voice. They hear when I call. My sheep, those who walk with me and those who talk with me.

The problem we don't, problem is that we don't spend time waiting on the Lord. You just going to rush into his presence and sit there. God will never invest his voice in people who don't really acknowledge it.

He will not invest his voice and his guidance with those who don't desire it with all their hearts. You're not going to cast it out as pearls before those who trample it. God waits until he sees your heart set on obedience and he knows that what he tells you, you'll act on it.

You'll act on it. If any man lack wisdom and we, I've heard that quoted, if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men generously and without reproach and it will be given to him. And I've heard people say, just go to God and ask wisdom and give it to you.

Well, back up, back up to the prior verse. And here's what it says, let endurance have its perfect result in you that you may be perfect, lacking in nothing. That means, first of all, make sure you're obedient to what God's told you to do.

Walk in that obedience and then go to him and ask wisdom and God will not hold it back. He'll never hold back from you what you need to know. God's not going to leave his people in confusion.

God never intended his people walk like they walk today with such confusion. The letters I received from all over the United States, it's mind-wracking to read the letters. You wonder, I sometimes say, God, do these dear precious ones know you at all? Do they ever spend any time with you? Do they not stand on this word at any time? Do they not stand up against the powers of darkness? You said nothing lacking in your obedience.

Now, let me give you a warning, and here's where it's very, very dangerous. It's absolutely tragic, and we see it all over the country. Look at verse 4. Therefore speak unto them and say unto them, Thus says the Lord God.

Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet, I, the Lord, will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols, that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because there are strains from me through their idols. Let me tell you what that means. Please, look this way.

He said, if you've got an idol in your heart, you've got a sin you're holding on to. There's a dark place in your heart, and you come to a man of God. You come to a servant of the Lord, just as this prophet.

He said, Now, if you want guidance, if you want to hear, I'll speak to you. And usually it comes out like the answer Balaam got, yes. He kept saying, but I want to go.

He was told no, but he kept insisting. You can keep insisting, insisting, and you can keep listening and listening until you hear the voice you want to hear. And finally, Balaam said, and the answer came, go, go.

And you can just keep waiting until you hear the right voice, and I'll tell you what, if you want to visit enough churches, you can find a preacher who will answer to the idolatry that's in your heart. And I've always said, I said it before, I'll say it again, pastors, churches deserve their pastors. If they've got a pastor who ministers to idolatry, it's because they're people sitting there that are full of idolatry.

If they had discernment, they'd get up and walk out. Mm-hmm. I had somebody this morning said, Bro, looks, in the way you folks have been preaching, aren't you losing a lot of people? Yes, we do.

We lose a lot of people, but for every one that goes out, God seems to send two more hungry people. Two more just as hungry, and then they say, look, I'm not afraid. I want to go on with the Lord.

I want sin taken out of my life. We preach holiness here. We preach separation from the world.

We're not preaching works. We're preaching His righteousness. But look what God says.

He said, they come to me, they come to the prophet, and I will answer. And He's going to answer through that prophet with a lying spirit, a lying spirit. And I want to show that to you.

Verse 6, therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel, thus saith the Lord, repent and turn yourself from your idols and turn away your faces from all your abomination. This is the end of side one. Turn the tape over to side two to continue.

The true test of a man of God is that when you come to him and ask him for a word, he won't give it to you until he knows for sure that you're walking in the righteousness of Christ. Because he knows that if the word that comes forth out of him, if he himself is not walking with God, it'll come forth as a lying spirit. And it will justify what you're doing.

Because the true word of God comes forth. If you're living in sin, if you have idolatry in your heart, when the true word of God comes forth, it comes forth as a hammer, and it'll shake your sense of security. It'll shake you to the bone.

If there's sin in your life, that man will say something to you that will shake you, just like he's doing right now to some of you, in this message. He's shaking you to the core. God will spit away your sense of false security.

It's a hammer that'll come down. There'll be no justifying of your sins. Because the true man of God knows that if he just speaks a word to you, trying to justify what you do, or trying to say, go, you are loved, you are blessed.

I want to tell you something. You can get not only the permissive will of God, you can get his blessing on everything you want to do. You can get his blessing, but it'll be a curse.

It'll be judgment. It'll be judgment. You can have it.

And I'll tell you what, I hear people come to me and say, Brother Wilkes, nobody's gonna take away from me. I know I heard from God. They've got a dream in their mind.

They've got a scheme. They've got something they want, and they're not going to let go. And they said, I've wanted this all my life, and I'm going to get it.

Sometimes it's a girl, and she wants a boyfriend, or she's got her eye on somebody. It can be a new house. It could be a new car.

It could be almost anything, material or spiritual or otherwise. They set their heart on it, and it becomes an idol. And they go to somebody, and someone lays hands on them, and they get a word of wisdom, a word

of direction.

And it confirms it. And they go pray about it, and there's a still small voice says, Yes! Go ahead, it's okay! And God says, I, God, will answer them according to their idolatry. It came directly from the throne of God.

You say, well, God cannot lie. I want you to listen. I want you to listen to this.

The Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all the prophets. Go to 1 Kings. You have to see it.

1 Kings. I'm going to be finished here in five minutes, but I want you to see this. 1 Kings, 22nd chapter.

Do you love the word? 1 Kings 22. Let's start verse 20. 1 Kings 22, verse 20.

The Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Raimath-Gilead? And one said on this manner, another said on that manner, There came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I'll persuade him. The Lord said unto him, How? Or wherewith? He said, I will go forth, and I will be what? I'll be what? A lying spirit in the mouth of what? And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also. Go forth and do so.

Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath. Who's done it? Is that in your Bible? The Lord. Now folks, look at me please.

Keep your finger right there. I said, that can't be. So I looked through every commentary.

I looked through everything, and even the Puritans and everyone else. Everyone's tried to say God permitted it. But finally, every man of God who knows the Hebrew, they said you can't back off from it.

It's there. The Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord has spoken evil concerning thee. Is that in your Bible? Now here's the danger.

Here's the danger. If you will not walk before him in righteousness, and you're not laid down that lust, you won't lay down that thing that God's been dealing with you about. You're looking for guidance.

You've got to hear from God. You need help. You're going to go to a man.

You're going to find the answer going to come. It's going to be a yes. A great big yes.

It's going to sound so divine. In fact, it's going to come from the throne. God sends it.

He said, you have that in your heart, and he knows it's the only word you're going to listen to. And he has to speed you towards your judgment, because folks, all ever since we've been a teen child, the only way we can help a drug addict, he may be smoking pot and come say, I need help. We can't help him because he doesn't think he's bad enough.

He has to go all the way down to rock bottom. He has to go to the end of it. And God will say, I have to bring you to the end of all your dreams and all your trusting in mankind and trusting in the flesh.

And he'll let you get stung. There'll be a message come so clear to you, and it's going to blow up in your face. And God's going to expose it as a lying spirit that it always was.

I, the Lord, will answer him. It is I, the Lord, who speaks through that prophet. It is I, the Lord, who speaks through that prophet.

Ezekiel 14, verse 8 and 9. God says, I'm going to set my face against them because they're going after counsel without laying down their idolatry. Folks, there's a scripture. I just want to run this to you in closing in a that children of Israel cried out for food, and God sends a rain of quails upon them.

You know, the Bible says, while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was even chewed up, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very severe plague. He answered the prayer, didn't he? He gave them the meat. But while the meat's still in their teeth and they're chewing on it, it was a direct answer to prayer.

God's anger broke out among them. All right, now I told you there's going to be a good ending to this. You ready for the good part? How many ready for the good part? Things get a little heavy here.

All right. How many of you not afraid to come back again next Sunday night, or Sunday morning, Sunday night, Tuesday night, and hear some more? All right. I'm not trying to prime you.

I just saw a lot of hands didn't go up. Here's my point now. Folks, let's get right to the point.

You can get the true mind of God. That's the good part. You can find his direction.

Simply stop coddling your sin, ask the Spirit to expose every hidden thing in your life unlike Jesus, and stop wearing yourself out, running around looking for some word. Stop running around. See, when the word comes, it's coming to me.

I had a man come to my office once, and he said, God sent me a long way to deliver word to you. I said, all right, I'll listen to it, but I want you to know something first. Before you say a word, I said, I've got two sons, and I said, one, I have a son-in-law lives right down here too, right down the road, and I've just spent lunch with him.

I was with him at lunch, and he's got an open door to my office at any time. We've got a telephone. I've been with him most part of the day, and I've communicated, and I'll tell you what, if I wanted to say something to him, I don't have to call someone else, because I'm in communion with him, and I said, I want to tell you something.

I've been in communion with the Lord late last night, most of the day. I've been in touch with my Heavenly Father, and he and I have open telephone line. There's no static, none at all.

I hear him clear, so what you say had better line up with the word that I've heard, because my father doesn't go to a neighbor to tell me something he wants to get to me, because he has access to me, and I've access to him. He proceeded to give me a beautiful testimony. I mean, he just flattered me then.

Didn't deliver what he thought he was supposed to deliver. You see, folks, there's no magic bullet, no instant prayer, no casting out of a demon's going to solve all your problems. We this morning will say it again tonight, and as long as you you're willing to hear it, there's no magic cure.

This is a walk of faith. This is a walk of digging in the book, getting in the secret closet, and seeking the face of God, and digging it out. You're going to sit in front of a television set, and watch, and laugh with Bill Cosby half the night, and stay up and watch the late show, and then come here and say, Brother Wilson,

pray for my lost kid, he's in jail.

You're going to come to this house and say, I need a word from God, and you spend all afternoon watching soap operas, and you say, well, have you been praying? No, I haven't had prayer, but I read my Bible once in a while. Oh, my friends, no wonder we don't hear from God. We're not ready for the flood that's coming.

We don't have a handful of Christians that read the Word of God anymore. We don't have a handful of wives, housewives, and this is what breaks me up. I want to cry, but I don't know what.

I've gone into Brother Bob's office, heartbroken one time, and I've asked God, I said, why is it that women, why is it that women don't seek God? There are not a handful of women here tonight that seek God. Not a handful. You're a good housewife, you're a good housekeeper, you love your children, do you turn a thing off, and do you spend just even an hour a day shut in with God? Do you even open the book? Do you even open it? No wonder there's confusion in our homes.

And then when judgment comes, when God tries to tap our knuckles and say, wake up, and things begin to happen in our home, things go wrong. He's saying, I want your attention, come to me. It's like a magnet.

He's trying to draw you into His presence to lead you and guide you. I'm sick and tired of all this running around seeking some formula, some answer. No, go to God, folks.

Go to Jesus. Fall on your face. By the way, I don't know if you know it or not, but you're a royal priesthood.

Just as much as I am or anyone on this pulpit, you're a royal priesthood. I want to read it to you. By the way, let us draw nigh with a sincere heart and full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure waters.

You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood of people for God's own possession. Hallelujah.

Don't you know God loves you? Don't you know God wants to give you guidance and tell you what to do? Folks, I love to pray with people. I love to lay hands on the sick. I love to minister, but God's going to tell you one of these days, what are you going to do when there, if there's none around? What do you do if there's none around? What if you do it by yourself? God puts you in a place where there's no one to call.

What are you going to do? You have to have something with him. And tonight, when I give the invitation, I have something in my heart the Lord's been pressing me all day about. That there would be people here tonight in this service that were swallowed up in sorrow.

Just swallowed up. We heard it last night. There was a young man here.

I don't know if he's here tonight or not. His wife was too sick to come to the meeting. Yes, your wife couldn't make it tonight, sir? She's on drugs.

Did someone come and minister to her? They called you on the phone. They want to come and visit. Okay.

You see, he's about to give up. Just about to give up last night because he's so burdened about his wife. He was swallowed up in sorrow.

And some of you may be here tonight. You know the tragedies, and with this I'm going to close. Look at me, please.

The tragedies, all of us, we've got to hear from God, folks. I don't know what I would do. I really, I wouldn't want to live if I didn't know my beloved's voice.

If I didn't know, I could go home tonight in my little room and shut the door and have him talk to me from his word and have him whisper to me, I love you, David. You're my child. And to feel the reassurance.

He said, I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you. I'll go with you.

And I don't have to look to a man. Oh, I'm submitted. Yes, I'm submitted.

And I sit and listen to the word of God. But God wants, the desire of the leadership of this church, that God would raise up pillars. Now, I say it lovingly.

I'll sit just as loving as I can. I've seen some of you come to the altar, almost every invitation. You're down here at the altar.

And I know why some of you are so hungry. But I want to tell you something. There's no need to come every time.

I want you to be able to sit in your seat and say, I'm going to work this out. I've got a secret place where I'm going to work this out with the Lord. I'm going to get a hold of him.

I'm going to dig into the word. And you should come. I want, I want to see, this leadership wants to see people want to go so deep in the Lord that they come to the house of God, bringing something with them.

Not just their burdens, not their trials, and not just looking for answers. But people come saying, I just don't want answers. I want him.

I want him. I want to be so wrapped up in Jesus. You come and just let out your love for him.

And God begins to move in those all around us. Hallelujah. Are you swallowed up in sorrow tonight? Friends, I've tried to preach it in love.

I've not tried to hammer anybody, preach it in love. You know my heart. I'm not down on anybody or anything else.

And we're here to help. But I'm talking to those, we're going to bow our head and pray now. And I'm one that, I want to pray with those who say, David, I've been swallowed up in sorrow.

And I've been looking to man. I've been looking for somebody to give me a word. And I want to have that relationship with Jesus.

People, I'm going to ask you a question. Be honest with me now. How many of you in this building, I'm going to have you raise your hand in just a minute, but think about it for just a minute.

You have to admit, David, that's me. I have not been able to hear from God like I should raise your hand. I've not been able to hear from God.

I've not been getting my directions that I should from God. Raise your hand. I don't be ashamed.

Nothing getting my message from God as I should have not been hearing from him. Fellas, God can talk to you. Yes, he can.

That's still small voice, but mostly he talks to you. You don't have to depend on still small voice. You depend on his word.

Here's how he talks to you right here. If you just get along with God, you'll find all you want to hear. It's right here.

Get into this and bathe yourself in it. Hallelujah. Lord Jesus, tonight, don't let anybody walk out looking to man.

We're going to look to you, Jesus, as the author and the finisher of our faith. You are our mediator. You're the one who cares about every need and burden of this house tonight.

You care, Lord, but oh Jesus, please forgive us for leaning on the arm of flesh. Forgive us for trying to look to man for an answer and not to you. Lord, if everyone in this building tonight got angry at me, if everyone would get angry and say, that offends me, and yet they go out thinking and saying, that's me.

I've been dependent on the flesh and not on Jesus. Then Lord, I wouldn't care because that's what you're trying to do. You're trying to get this people, me, our leadership, all of us, to look away from man, to look away from teachers and evangelists, to receive the teaching, yes, to be built up in the faith, yes, but oh Jesus, that we would have a line to heaven, that we would be shut in and waiting on God and cleansed and purified so nothing could block the voice of God.

Nothing could hinder the word of the Lord to our hearts. This is the end of this sermon. For a copy of this sermon or any other from Times Square Pulpit, write to World Challenge P.O. Box 260 Lindale, TX 75771 or call area code 214-963-8626.

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