

7. Where Are the Men?

by Denny Kenaston

The sermon emphasizes the need for men to step up and lead their families and communities in a godly way, and provides a vision for what it means to be a mature, financially stable, loving husband, and wise father.

Scripture: 2 Samuel 23:1, Proverbs 22:6, Isaiah 3:1, Lamentations 2:19, Malachi 4:6, Ephesians 5:25, 1 Timothy 3:1

Topics: "Manhood", "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

Denny Kenaston preaches about the importance of men rising up to walk in God's ways, challenging them to be mature, financially stable, loving husbands, wise fathers, and dynamic leaders filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes the need for men to acknowledge their shortcomings, prioritize their relationship with God, and be the spiritual leaders in their homes, following the example of David and the Jewish tradition of blessing their children. The sermon calls for a revival that transforms homes and urges men to accept the challenge of spiritually mature manhood.

Transcript

The 7th of 11 messages on The Godly Home

Oh God, our God in this our day raise up men who walk in this way. Father, we know that it is Your will tonight. God, we know that there's grace enough. We just commit our lives into Your hands, Father. As we go into this service, dear God, we pray that You will use Your Word, dear Father, to stir the hearts of men tonight. We pray, Father, You'll use Your Word to challenge the hearts of the men that are in this room tonight. We pray tonight, God, that You'll bless the families that are in this room unto the third and fourth generation because of the decisions that are made here, God. We know that You need men. We know that You are going to and fro around this earth looking for men -- men who will dare to walk with God in the midst of a world that is fast going down the chute of hell. Oh God, we pray, in this our day raise up men who walk this way. And we ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen.

I think we can all agree this evening that the early church was filled with men like that. Maybe you felt as you were listening to the last little essay or poem that the standard seems pretty high, but I think we can all agree that the early church was filled with men who walked just like that. Who knew their God! Who were dedicated to God and nobody else! I think we can all agree that the early church was filled with men who walked that way. Where are the men tonight? That's the name of the message. That's the question that is given. That's the cry that comes out of our hearts tonight is, "where are those men?" Yes, God needs men. Yes, God is looking for men. Yes, God is going to and fro around this earth looking for men who will walk

that way. Yes, God needs the men, but where are the men? That's the question tonight.

It's become almost a household phrase among many of us. I wonder how many times I've heard people coin that phrase in the last several years of my life in the midst of a discussion on a Sunday afternoon when a need is brought forth and a burden is laid out and the men are sitting there in the living room discussing it. And someone will say, "Where are the men? Where are they? Where are the men to rise up and take a hold of this thing? Where are the men to rise up over there in Holmes county? Or rise up over there in Goshen, Indiana? Or rise up down there in Harrisonburg, Virginia? Where are the men?" The cry keeps coming out of our hearts as needs are around us.

Paul said to Timothy, "The things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." And, I believe, in Paul's days it wasn't hard for Timothy to find faithful men that he could commit the things that Paul had committed to him into their hands, and know that it would go on from his generation unto another generation. There in II Timothy, I believe it's chapter three, we see four generations of men there. And it was through faithful men that God continued to propagate the faith on from one generation to the next there in the early church. And we know as we study church history that Timothy did find faithful men, and those faithful men did commit the things that they learned unto other faithful men. And those faithful men found other faithful men also to commit the works of God into their hands. And today, there's a cry that goes out, "Where are those men? Where are those faithful men? That the work of God can be passed on into their hands. That we can know of assurity that the work of God will go on from one generation to the next. Where are those men?"

The burden of this message began to dawn on my heart ten years ago. I guess, the reason why it didn't before, I went to a Bible school. It was a good Bible school. There was about a thousand students there at the Bible school, and about 500 of them were young men. And there at the Bible school we were surrounded with young men who were the cream of the crop. That were -- had been picked from all over the United States and they went to one place. And I didn't know that there was a need for men as I was in Bible school.

There were young men all around me, and they loved God, and they were praying, and they were seeking the face of God, and they were reading God's Word. And I didn't notice there was a need for men until one time after Bible school -- a few years after Bible school -- I had an opportunity to speak in northern Manitoba. There I was traveling with a revival team, and the revival meetings were going on there. And it was about three weeks into the meetings, and they were planning to go one more week.

And the men that were in charge of the revival team, they asked me if I wouldn't speak to the ladies. They said, "We're going to have a ladies meeting, and we'd like you to speak to the ladies." So, I consented to that. And, I guess it was on a Tuesday evening they gathered the ladies together in an auditorium probably about this size right here. And 400 women packed themselves into that auditorium, and I spoke to those ladies on the power of a submissive spirit. And I spoke to them basically the basic principles that I spoke last evening to you sisters is what I said to them.

And I told them how that God has power for their lives. And how that they need to get in their place. And how that they can have a tremendous influence on their husband's lives, if they'll just find that place of power underneath their husbands authority, and take their hands off of trying to change their husbands. And I preached that type of a sermon to those ladies and gave an invitation. And it was a great blessing. Those ladies just stood up all over the auditorium, and they started making their way down to the front,

and they filled the altar -- all the way on this side and this side, and they filled the middle aisle up here, and they filled the aisle over here all the way to the back, and the aisle over here all the way to the back.

And there was no more room to put them! It must have been 150--or 200 of them that hit the altar, and I mean, brother, they hit the altar. They were weeping! And they were wailing! And they were crying out to God for their failures and broken over the needs in their lives. And I was really blessed. I was -- I must admit, I was somewhat surprised and shocked -- I didn't expect that. I knew that it'd be a blessing to them, but I did not expect such a response. Two or three days later, in the same area which was an area wide revival meeting, it was made up of several churches.

And this is interesting, too -- It was after the meetings had been going on for three weeks. And the men were supposed to be revived by then, but they had a men's meeting. And I went to the men's meeting. I was not asked to speak to the men, but I was at the men's meetings. And a message was given to them about taking their place and rising up and doing what God wants them to do in their homes. And this was basically what the message was about, and when the message was over an invitation was given, and three men went to the front.

And I sat there for the first time, and said, "God, where are the men? Why aren't they up here?" You see, I caught the tears of all the ladies the night before. They stood in line to ask me questions when the service was over, and tears running down their faces they said, "I don't know what to do. My husband doesn't seem to love God. He doesn't seem to be a spiritual leader, and I don't know what to do. Would you please help me?" I caught all their tears, and then it was a real shock for me to see how unconcerned those men were to respond to the call that was given to them.

Sometime after that I had another opportunity to speak in a church, and I gave a message to the ladies. And it was basically the message that I gave you ladies last evening. And after the message was over, it was opened up for testimony, confessions, or whatever. And again to my surprise, we stood for 25 minutes and listened to one sister after another after another after another stand to their feet with tears running down their eyes, pleading for grace that they may be able live according to the message that was just given.

It was a real blessing to my heart, again, to see that pliable ness that they had. A short time later a message was given to the men about their responsibilities. About the needs in their lives. About rising up and being men of God. And the meeting was opened up afterwards for anyone who would like to give testimony or make confession. And nobody stood up. Nobody. And again, my heart cried out, "God, where are the men? What is wrong with the men?"

I sat in a church service one day, and it was in a assembly where they sit in separate seating like we are here today. And it was at a specific meeting where all the young people sat to the front, you know, some churches do that. I think, some churches require that the young people sit in the front rows and this was one of those places where all the young people sat in the front row. And I knew those young people, and I knew their hearts. And I began to look across the front there, and I thought -- Well, I just decided, "I'm going to count how many young ladies and young men are here." And I started counting all the young ladies, and when I got done I had 31 one of them. And then I said, "Now I'm going to count the young men." And, ah, that's not wrong for a pastor to do something like that when he's looking at a group of people! I was beginning to think, "All right, if here's 31 young ladies, and that God would probably have most of them to marry someday, and find some young man of God, and raise up a family for God. So, I

looked over and I started counting the young men, and I counted them, "1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8." And then I looked around at the congregation a little more and I thought, "Maybe there's some in the back." No, that was it -- 8. 8 and 31? Now, I know there's more young ladies in the world than there are men. I know that, but there's not that many more. And, I said again, "God, where are the young men? Why aren't they here? Why aren't they in the front row? Why aren't they hungry? Where are they, Lord?" And, the cry continued to come out of my heart.

In my travels, I get around a lot and find myself in a lot of different homes which is a great blessing to be in different people's homes in different parts of the country and hear their hearts, and share with them, and hear what God is doing in their lives. But, so many times -- most of the time -- I found myself in homes and sat there, and had fellowship together, and if it happened to be a home where the men and the women sat together, I found the men to be sadly lacking for spiritual fervor and interest and desire. I found at the same time a real hunger and many questions and a lot of talk and sharing coming out of the ladies in the room. And many times when we drive away from a place like that, I would look over to my wife, and my wife would look over to me and almost say in unison, "Where are the men?" As again, we sat there in a home and listened to a lady talk and watched the man sit there and hardly had anything to say. Well, in all of these situations the men were there, but the men were not there! There were men filling the spots, but the men were not there! There were men sitting in the chairs, but the men were not there! There were men in the church-house, but the men were not there! I mean, they were not there! They were not on. They were not in tune.

And I prayed in my prayer, and I'll say it in the message, the potential of this message -- Oh, it's a tremendous potential! It has the potential of effecting your children to the third and fourth generation tonight. Unto the third and fourth generation of your children. Someone shared with me last night the effectual, fervent prayers, and the effects that fervent prayers have on the generations to come, and this individual was sharing how he had heard his mother pray. And heard her cry out to God when he was a little boy, and how she dedicated the children to God, and asked God to use them, and asked God to bless the generations to come. And he shared there with me how that the three of her sons became preachers, and four of her grandsons became preachers, and it just overwhelmed my heart again last night to realize the reality of how much we can touch the generations even after we're dead and gone. Our prayers if they've been prayers -- hot prayers touching heavens -- can touch the lives of our children, and our children's children, and our children's children's children, if we'll just be the men of God that we need to be in our homes! Oh, that God would raise up mighty men of God who know how to get a hold of God, who know how to touch heaven for the lives of their children. God ought to hear your children coming off of the lips of your mouth every single day of your life. And not those monotone prayers, brethren, but prayers of sincerity, and prayers of brokenness, and prayers of vision, and prayers of burden for your children. Oh, I think of the verse there. It's in Lamentation. It's such a sweet verse to me, but it's a good verse to talk to you fathers about tonight. It goes something like this, " Arise! Rise up early in the morning, and cry out in the night for your sons and for your daughters." That's what Lamentations tells us, brethren, "Arise! Cry out in the night! Lift up thine hands before thy God, and pour out thine heart before thy God for thy sons and for thy daughters and for thy children." Oh, listen that is how you have an effectual-- that's how you have an effectual prayer life with your children if you will know and get a hold of your God, and spend some time alone with God everyday pleading for those children.

I'm getting ahead of my message here. But, the burden is upon my heart. The potential of the message: leaders raise up leaders. We know it's so. There's a man who's a leader, you can just about count on his

sons being leaders. But, if there's a man who is not a leader, you can just about count that his sons won't be much of a leader either. Because leaders raise up leaders. That's how come there was so many leaders in the nation of Israel at one time. Because the men of Israel were leaders, and their sons grew up to be leaders. God reminded me while I was preparing the message today that it's not as bad today as it was in Ezekiel's day. And I agree it's not! I mean, here we are saying, "Where are the men?" But in Ezekiel's day God said, "I sought for a man and couldn't find one." It's not that bad yet, brethren. But, it's time that we allow the urgency of the hour to get a hold of our hearts. There is a need! It is a fact. It's hard to find men. And I realize some of the men that are hearing this tonight, you've heard it before. You've heard it time and time again. You've responded, and God is working in your lives. And I'm not wanting to discourage anyone tonight. If you're one of those men that says, "Amen! I'm going for it!" Well, then you just say, "Amen!" again tonight. God seeks men today. He's looking for men that are willing to stand in the gaps and take up the hedge. That's an interesting verse, "Stand in the gap, and then make up the hedge." You go and find a hole somewhere in the kingdom of God and stand in the middle of that hole. And pray heaven -- to pray heaven down on that hole. And while you're praying and standing in the gap, you build that hole back up, so that the wall will be built. God is looking for men to do that. There are many men in this room that are aspiring to the work of God. And we want it to be that way, and I thank God for everyone of you men that is aspiring to God's work, and you want to get busy for God. And you want God to use you. And you want Him to use you to win souls. And you want to see the kingdom of God built. I praise God for everyone of you. But, brethren, if you don't have your home when you get done, you don't have anything. What good is it if you go out and win a bunch of souls, and lose your children in the midst of the whole thing? What good? No good. One of the biggest gaps around is the gap of the home. We have to get this area right. All the rest of God's work hinges upon it.

So, the message comes crying to us again tonight, "Where are the men?" Where are men that walk this way? As the little poem says, "God's will for you men..." What is God's will for you men tonight? Well, let me just share a little bit of what God's will is for you tonight:

Number One -- It's God's will that you be mature men. Everyone of you. Aside from every relationship in your life, it is God's will that you be a mature man. Forget about your business now. Forget about your wife. Forget about your children. Forget about whatever leadership positions you're in. Number one, it's God's will that you be a mature man. What is a mature man? A mature man is a man who has learned to walk with God. A mature man is a man who is willing to be sensitive to the Spirit of God. A mature man is a man who is filled with the convictions of the Word of God. Nobody needs to tell him what to do. He does it by conviction out of his own heart and life. He is a mature man. A mature man is a man who has made commitment after commitment after commitment to God. As God gives him light, he said, "Amen." And God gave him more light, and he said, "Amen." And the years went by, and he kept on saying, "Amen," to the will of God and the Word of God. That is a mature man. A mature man is one who is living by the Word of God and able to teach others also. That's a mature man. And whether you're a father in this room or not, it's God will that you number one be a mature, Christian man. A mature man.

What is God's will for you men? It's His will that you learn to be financially stable. And I'm not talking about getting rich. God forbid. I'm not talking about building a big business. I'm just talking about being financially stable. It is God's will that everyone of you men learn what it means to be financially stable. So, that you can pay your bills. So, that you know where to spend your money. So, that you know how to give your money, and you know which way to give it. It's God's will that you be financially stable -- every one of you. And it's an honor to God if you're financially stable. I'm not talking about being rich tonight. God forbid if we

think being rich is godliness. I'm just talking about being financially stable. If you cannot be faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not commit unto you the true riches. It is foolishness to try go off and do the work of God if you can't pay your bills. God wants you to learn financial stability. It's His will.

What else? It's God's will for you men that you be a loving husband. A loving and a tender husband. One who recognizes the reverence of that wife who put the Lord in the chair last night. One who recognizes the great responsibility you have to sanctify your wife -- to endear her, to be gentle to her, to guide her, to make sure her needs are met, both physical needs and emotional needs and spiritual needs. God wants you to be a loving husband. In fact, if you're not going to be one, there's going to be a big hole missing in your life. And God will not be able to use you the way that He could and the way that He should. It's God's will that you be loving husband tonight if you're married.

God's will is that you be a wise father. A father like what we've been talking about this week. It's God's will that you be wise fathers -- tender fathers -- dedicated fathers -- seeing your responsibilities for your children. And taking your responsibilities, and guiding them, and waiting at the gate of wisdom, so that you can put into those children the things that they need for their lives day by day. It's God's will that you be a wise father.

And last of all, it's God's will that you be a dynamic leader. And I don't mean that you've got to be a bishop of a church somewhere. But, it's God's will that you be a dynamic leader. And you think with me for a moment, "Dynamic leader? Oh, that sounds like a big name." Well, let's look at it for a minute. If you're a mature man who has truly learned how to walk with God and get your prayers answered, and you've made those commitments to God, and the Word of God is conviction within your soul, and you live out a holy life -- you're a mature man.

If you're financially stable, able to give counsel to others about their finances. If you've learned to be a loving husband, and you've got a radiant wife, and everybody knows you've got one. If you've learned to be a wise father, and you've learned how to guide those children, and they're coming up in a right way that is an honor and glory to God, don't you think someone's going to want to listen to you? Yes, they'll want to listen to you. You'll have a ministry without even trying to get one.

And by the way, I believe that's how you ought to have a ministry. Forget about the ministry. Just worry about your own spiritual life. Worry about your financial instability. Worry about the relationship you have with your wife. Worry about the relationship you have with your children. Worry about your life bringing honor and glory to God, and God will open up all the ministry that you can handle. You will have more than you can take care of. Oh, listen! God is looking for men like that.

God needs men like that. But, where are they? And, if I can just say something to the young men here: Start right, young men. If you find yourself back there with number one or number two, you're not married yet. You don't have any children yet. You're not a leader yet. Well, there's two things you can start working on right now, and that is maturity in the spiritual life and financial stability. And I don't mean getting rich -- I'm talking about knowing how to handle your finances.

And giving it away to God. And giving it to God's work. Don't go off and spend it on some big fancy car, give it away to some missionary who is going over to Africa and give their live away. Learn how to handle your finances, young men. And learn how to walk with your God. And some day then God will give you a wife. And if you're here tonight, you young men, and you're about to get a wife, you ought to be studying everything you can about how to be a loving husband. You ought to be memorizing those verses in the

Bible.

You ought to be meditating upon those verses. Because, that's the next stage in your life. You're going to be a husband of a wife, and you need to be a loving husband. And there are many things that God wants to teach you about a relationship there. Go after it, you young men. And if you're here tonight, young men, and you've got yourself a wife, and maybe you've got one little baby, or maybe there's a baby in the womb right now, you ought to be studying everything you can about how to be a wise father to those children.

You see how God works it? One stage at a time. But, some of us we didn't get the stages down in order, and we've got to work on all of them at the same time. Amen? But, the grace of God is available for us to work on all of them at the same time. Truly it is.

Now think with me. Ah, this stirs my heart. If we would all lay hold of what we're hearing tonight, oh, what a church that would make. Oh, what a church full of men that would make. Amen? That would be a powerful church. That would be a New Testament church. That would be an apostolic church -- that's what it would be. Well, you may say tonight -- and I don't blame you a bit -- you may say, "The standards too high -- Whoooo -- you're shooting for the stars tonight, Brother Denny! Come down a little bit where we can get a hold of it, so we can have a little bit of faith in our hearts." Well, brethren, let's just stop and think of just a moment together here. Are those not the requirements of a leader in the book of Timothy? Aren't those the requirements? He must first of all be a mature man. He must know how to walk with God. He must have stability of convictions in his own life. He's got to have that. We know that's a requirement. He also must have financial stability. Clearly, he also has to be one who has his home in order. He's got to be a loving husband and have a radiant wife, or there's something drastically wrong. How can you put him over the church of God? And he also must be a wise father who has his family in order, having children who it's very evident they've been trained and guided in the right way. And, yes, he's supposed to be a leader also. So, there you have it. The standard is no higher than what God makes it. And anyone here who is aspiring to any kind of a place of leadership or work for God, those are the standards that God lays out. And I would just encourage you men to submit your heart to that standard and say, "God, by Your grace it shall be. In my own strength it cannot be, but by Your grace it shall be. I'm going for it." That's what I'd like to encourage you to do. Praise God, there is grace enough.

It ought to be the normal thing that the church be filled with men of God. That ought to be the normal thing. It ought to be the normal thing that the church be filled with prophets, and teachers, and exhorters, and evangelists, and men of wisdom, and leaders. It ought to be the normal thing. It ought not be that a church have one or two dynamic men in it and about thirty who are not. That is not God's will. That is not the early church. That early church was filled with men of God. That early church was filled with gifted men. The early church was filled with men who were leaders. And that is the will of God. It ought to be normal that the church have that. Prophets, and teachers, and exhorters, and evangelists, and men of wisdom, and leaders. It ought to be the normal thing that the sisters have spiritual husbands who are on fire for God. It ought to be the normal thing that the head of the house has got a fire burning in his soul, and everyone else in the house knows it. Amen? He's got a fire burning in his soul, and everyone else in the house knows it. It ought to be normal that every family have a man of God for a daddy. And all the children have a papa who brought a hot word from God today in devotions. It ought to be normal that something came off the altar this morning and (was) given to the family. That ought to be normal!

But, where are the men? The spirit of God is calling men to rise up and take hold of God and get the grace and face the responsibilities. The spirit of God is doing that. We know it is so. He is calling men to rise up.

How does the song go? "Rise up, O men of God, have done with lesser things." God is calling us as men to rise up in our spirit and take a hold of God. God is right there waiting.

Now God honors men. From creation God established His order, and honored the man. He made Adam the king of the earth, back there. He put him in charge of the whole earth. And he gave him a wife. God honors men. For the most part and in most situations, God leads through men. God gives direction through men. God hath ordained that the church be led through men. God hath ordained that the home be led through men. I believe God hath ordained that government be led through men rather than women. Oh, what a sad day we live in, isn't it? God honors men. All through the Bible we see God using men. Yes, sisters, God uses you! But, God uses men in specific and special ways that He does not use the sisters. Even the context of the Bible was written to men. Now, it's for us all, but it is was written to the brethren.

We are not saying that God dishonors women. It's just God's plan to place men in authority and responsibility. You know something that was very sad to me a few years ago? I was on an airplane. I think I was flying to Tennessee to do some church work. And there in the pocket in front of me there was a business magazine. I pulled the business magazine out, and there was an article in there that shocked me. It burdened my heart. That article was an article about six big business men. I mean, big corporate leaders, men who handle millions of dollars in a week's time. And it had this article about these six different men who had searched, and searched, and searched. They were old men, and they were getting ready to pass off the scene and leave the business to somebody else. They were too old to handle all the pressures of the business. And these six different men had looked, and looked, and looked for some men to take over those businesses, and they could not find them. And the article was written to show the six women that these men finally chose to take the charge and responsibility over these six major businesses in America. And I read that, and I just said, "God, it can't be! It can't be!" And I realize that's out in the world, but, brethren, the whole thing has infected us also.

God places the men in places of authority and responsibility. But, brethren, where much is given, much is required. Much is required, and we have to face -- we've got to face the facts on that. Yes, God has placed us in authority. Yes, God has given us responsibility. Yes, we can even be the boss in our house when we're not all we ought to be. We're still the authority of our home. Yes, sometimes our wives even have to bow their hearts when they probably shouldn't because we said to do it. But, we were out of order. Yes, God has laid that responsibility on us! But, brethren, to who much is given, also much is required. I've often said to people as they've struggled with being under authority, "I'd rather be under authority than in authority any day, because of the heavy load of responsibility that falls upon you when you're in authority." And, brethren, we have to let it fall on us. We are the men. We need to let that responsibility fall on us. We need to let the awesomeness of reality fall on us and say, "Here is where we are, and here's our needs." Let's turn to Isaiah chapter 3. We are accountable because much is given to us.

Well, the question is, "Where are the men?" There's probably a few answers to that. But, I believe, there's a couple of them here in Isaiah chapter 3 as far as the answers to, "Where are the men?" When men turn away from God and God's ways, God judges them, and takes away things from them. That's part of the "much is required" that balances out the "much is given." When men begin to turn away from God and from God's ways, God takes things away from them. And we know that to be so.

That is a New Testament principle. If you have something and you are not using that which you have, God will take even that which you have away. But if you have something, and you use that, God will add more to it. Let's read in Isaiah chapter 3, "For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from

Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water. The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient.

The captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counselor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator." Now, those are some very interesting verses. God took some things away from Israel. Why did He take them away? Because Israel, and most specifically the men of Israel, turned away from God. They turned away from God's ways. They turned away from God's voice. And eventually they turned away from God. And God said, "OK, I'm going to take something away from you."

Isn't it interesting what He takes away? The mighty man, the man of war, the judge, the prophet, the prudent or the wise man, the ancient or the old wise man, the captain of fifty, the honorable man, the counselor the one who can solve your problems, the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator. "Israel, you turned away from me! You went your own way. You thought your ways were better than my ways. You went your own way. You didn't hear My voice. I warned you. I sent prophets your way.

And you didn't hear Me. So, I'm going to take something away from you. Yes, I'll take away your bread. Yes, I'll take away your sustenance. But, there's something else I'm going to take away also, Israel, I'm going to take away the leaders. I'm going to take them away. They're not going to be there anymore. Those--those strong pillars in Israel, they're going to be gone. The eloquent preacher, he'll be gone. That leader, he'll be gone. That captain over fifty, he'll be gone.

That wise judge, he'll be gone. That problem-solver, he'll be gone. Those wise old men, they'll be gone. I'm going to take them all away from you, Israel. And what will you have left?" Verse 4: "And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable." That's very interesting, isn't it?

That sounds like America to me. And, I believe, verse 4 is not talking about little babies -- little children -- there, but it's talking about young men that should be following -- they're being the leaders. But, it sure reminds me of those three year olds that rule their fathers and mothers in the grocery stores. "The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient." That sure reminds me of America. Now, we just dump them -- we dump all the ancients in the rest homes, and forget about them.

Go and see them once a year, maybe twice a year. That's what happens. Why does it happen? Because America turned away from the Word of God and the voice of God, and America is fast turning away from God as a nation. And that's part of the judgment.

See, that's where the men are! But, the thing has fallen upon us also! It has fallen upon God's people! Look at verse 6, "When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand: In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people." "I don't want to be a ruler! No, you do it!" "No--no, you do it." "No, you be the leader." "No, you be the leader!" That's the way it is today. In fact, in many of the churches in this area if the lot falls on a man he just trembles, "Oh no! Now what?" No longer an honorable thing to be a preacher of righteousness and of the gospel. Oh no, now it's, "Ah--no, more responsibility, what am I going to do with it?" What's wrong? Nobody wants to be the leader!

A real eye-opener to me a few years ago I sat in a home and a bunch of men were sitting around there, and they had to decide who was going to have devotion that evening at church. And one man said, "Well, brother, you have the devotion tonight." "No," this brother said, "No, let Brother So-and-So have it." And Brother So-and-So said, "No, I don't have anything. You take it over here." And then this brother said, "No, you take it." And it was like they had a ball in their hand, and they were passing it back and forth: "No, I don't want it." "No, here you take it." "No, I don't want it. You have it." I'll take it! Where are the men that will say, "I'll take it! Give the ball to me! I'll run with it for awhile!" But, the problem is there aren't very many men who will rise up and say that. "Give me the ball. I'll run with it." And the reason why nobody wants to pick up the ball and run with it, is because they don't have that unction. They don't have that wisdom. They don't have the life of God burning within them. They don't have it. It's not there. And they know it. So, it's a burden to have devotion. Nobody's willing to rise up and take the discipline that it takes to pray and read the Word. And dig something up and get some fresh bread to give to everybody else. Nobody wants the responsibility! It's too much work. It's a judgment because we are leaving God's ways.

When men turn away from God and God's ways, He takes away their power. He takes away their authority. He takes away their wisdom. He takes away their stability. That's what happens. All those things leave! And the children turn against their fathers. Authority gets distorted. Leadership is lacking...And then the women step in. Right? I wonder how many times I've heard women say, "Should I just step in and do it? My husband won't have devotions, but he doesn't mind if I have them." You know, my heart hurts for the children and I think, "Hey, if he doesn't mind you having them, then sister -- Go for it!" But, I think, "Brother, wake up! Why don't you get some bread to give to your children?" Why should the wife be the one to say, "Do you think it will be all right if I went ahead and had devotions with the children? He doesn't mind." Well, I'd have to tell her, "Well, yes, but be careful, you know, you know how them men are. Those proud, egotistical men. You know, how they are. You've got to be careful with them, sister." And it is that way! That father ought to hang his head in shame instead. But when men turn away from God and turn away from God's ways, He takes their power away. He takes their spiritual authority away. He takes their wisdom away. He takes their stability away. And then their children start turning against them, and things don't work out any more. And the authority is all mixed up. And leadership is lacking. And then the women step in. There is more than one problem with the feminist movement, and I'm sure we all agree with that. Some of the problem with the feminist movement is the men. It 'tis the men. Not all, but it is the men.

So, the question is, "Where are the men?" And the answer is, "It is a judgment from the God of heaven." Somewhere back there, our forefathers failed. Somewhere back there, our forefathers failed. And as they failed, they lost their power. They lost their authority. They lost their wisdom. They lost their stability. And then a generation of boys grew up underneath that. And then another generation of boys grew up underneath that. And maybe that's where we are here tonight! I'm not blaming all you men tonight. I'm just saying this is the situation that we're in. Somebody did not walk with God. They did not put God first. They did not put God's ways first. And here we are. And the facts are the facts, that many of us are not the leaders we ought to be. And many of us would just as soon sit in a corner and let the wives speak up. And many of us are afraid to make the decision. We're afraid we're going to make the wrong one. And we'd just as soon let her do it! The facts are the facts that many of us are that way! But, we've got to break the chain, brethren! We've got to shake that thing off! We've got to do it! We got to face the facts. We need to acknowledge where we are really at. We need to acknowledge our needs. And we need to rise up, O men of God, and have done with the lesser things! And put God first in our lives! And put God's ways first in our lives! And be the leaders in our homes! We've got to do it.

Now, there are hardly any leaders, and it's true. Most of the time when father is not a leader, son will not be a leader. I wonder how many times I've caught the tears of a woman, of a wife who said these words -- weeping in despair not knowing what to do, trying to be sensitive, walking on egg-shells at her house because of that strong male ego-- these words, "How can I help my husband be a spiritual leader? He's a good provider. He's given us a good home to live in. He pays the bills. But, there's no leadership! He won't take any leadership. How can I help my husband be a spiritual leader?" Oh I hear that so many times, I get weary of it. And I give them the right counsel, brethren. I do. I tell them what I told them last night. "Sister, you get in your place. Sister, learn how to pray. Sister, be very careful. Sister, honor that man. Sister, build him up. Sister, write him a love note. Sister, do what you can to encourage him and admire him and accept him the way he is." But I must admit, sometimes I cringe inside my heart when I give that counsel. Because I know that some of those men are going to step all over them, and it won't do them any good. Because the man is a rebel, and he's not willing to bow his heart to God. And he's not willing to acknowledge his need. He's too proud. We're too proud, brethren. I've noticed that for years, even in revival meetings where God is moving in a mighty way. This side fills up fast, and this side fills up pretty slow. Why is that? Are we so spiritual we don't need to go? No! Brethren, we're too proud -- That's what's wrong. We don't want to acknowledge our needs. We want everybody to think we're something. And the truth is if we think that we're something, we're nothing the Bible says. And it's about time that we acknowledged our needs before God, and before others, and before our wives, and before our family! You ought to have an old-fashioned revival meeting at home sometime this week when the father sits down with the children and the family and says, "I've failed! I've failed! I've failed! Will you forgive me? I put everything else ahead of you. I haven't put God first in my life. The business has been so important." There ought to be some of that this week.

Who will rise up and put a stop to this terrible condition? Who will do it?! God is able. God is waiting. God is longing for somebody to rise up and put a stop to the whole thing! And it can be done. I mean, brethren, you can break that chain. You can do it in your generation, and turn out some boys that are leaders. And turn out some boys that are young men of God -- You can do it! The grace is available. God is calling you to do it.

You want to read something that will give you vision? Turn over to Second Samuel, chapter 23. We will learn from a leader here tonight. This is leadership class. David is speaking here in 2nd Samuel chapter 23, "...these be the last words of David," it begins the chapter by saying. Last words are important. In Bible days when somebody of importance had last words everybody who could get in there to hear them, gathered around to hear them. Last words. These be the last words of David -- gather around all ye princes!

All ye mighty men! All ye eloquent men! All ye judges! All ye counselors! All ye wise men! All ye ancients! Gather around! David is going to say his last words. "Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me. And this is what God said to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

And if he will -- and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." Here's what David was saying there as he gathered all these people around him. All of these men. All the wise men. All the princes. Here's what he's said to them, "I'm going to give you some of my last words. God spoke to me!

And this is what He said! David, he who rules over men, if you rule in righteousness, if you rule in the fear of God, if you rule under the anointing of God, if you'll rule and walk with God, if you'll rule men that way, this is what will happen!

"You -- your life -- your influence shall be on them like the sun coming up in the morning after a rain. And the sun comes up and begins to shine down on the grass. And the grass begins to receive strength from the sun. And the grass begins to grow like a clear morning after a rain when the sun is shining on it. David, that's what it's going to be like if you'll rule in the fear and the power of the God of heaven." And, I believe, that David passed that on to all those that were around him, because he knew that is what they needed to hear.

You know it's interesting to me too that the whole chapter following talks about David's mighty men. That's the grass, brethren. That's the grass that he had influence on! They followed David. They watched him take that sling and put that rock in his hand, and sling that rock at that giant, and knock that giant down on the ground. And they all rose up and saw his walk with God and his faith in God. And they joined themselves to him, and they followed him, and they walked with him, and they behaved like him, and they patterned their lives after him.

And David had scores and scores and scores of mighty men in those days. And, by the way, those weren't a bunch of carnal men either. They were mighty men who knew God. And the word goes out to us tonight, brothers, if you're going to be in a place of authority whether it be just your family, whether it be in a business, whether it be a place of leadership in a church somewhere, or in a school somewhere. If you're going to be in a place of authority, then rise up in the power of the Spirit of the living God, and walk with God, and lead your people in a God-fearing way and a righteous way!

And they'll prosper underneath you. They'll grow underneath your ministry. Whether it's just your children or whether it's a whole church full of people. They'll grow like grass when the sun is shining after a spring rain. That's what will happen to them! Oh, listen! That's exciting, brethren! God wants to do that with every single man in this room. And you say, "Well, I'll probably just -- probably never be more than just the head of my house. What's wrong with that?" What's wrong with that?

Some men raised a dozen godly children that went all over the world serving God. What's wrong with just being the head of your house? Hallelujah! What's wrong with being a man of God in your house and raising up a dozen godly children and sending them out all over the world for God? What's wrong with that? I think if that's what you did in your life-time, you did something pretty good.

Israel in David's day was filled with thousands of mighty men. You know it's interesting to me in light of that -- In light of that way of being a leader -- it brings my mind back to an illustration that I found as I was studying about the Jewish home. And the other evening I wanted to share it, but the clock was just going--going--going like this, and it fits in here real well. And that was the Sabbath evening in the Jewish home. Father was the center of the Jewish home. And, I believe that God wants each one of you men to be the center of your home.

God forbid, if you do it in carnality. But, God be praised if you'll yield to God all of yourself, and receive the power of His spirit in your life. God wants to make you the center of your home. God wants to make you the king in your home. God wants to make you the leader of your home. The head of your home. The most important individual in your house. God wants to make you that. That's the way it was in the Jewish home. The home revolved around father. On the Sabbath Eve, which would have been on Friday evening, the

father only went to the synagogue.

While he was at the synagogue praying prayers and receiving some preaching from the Word of God, the family was at home, getting ready for Sabbath Eve. The whole house stayed home. All the children stayed home with mama, and they got ready for the Sabbath evening meal. And the special plates were put out on the table. And the best of food that they could find was prepared. And a little bit of decorations were put around the house. And everything was cleaned real nice. And the Sabbath evening table was set and everything was all out there, and the family was just waiting for father to come home.

And then when father walked in the door of the house, his children lined up there at the door of the house and waited for the father to give each one of them a blessing. I mean, it wasn't a silly thing. They were longing for it. They were looking forward to it! They were waiting with anticipation. "Father's going to give me a blessing tonight. Father's always gives me a blessing. Every Sabbath Eve, I get a blessing out of father." And the father would come down through the line with the children, and put his hands on each one of them, and give them the blessing of Israel.

Well, I don't know what the blessing of Israel is, but I made up my own at my house! And he put his hand on the child, and gave him a blessing. And put his hand on the next one, and gave him a blessing. And his hand on the next one, and gave him a blessing. And put his hand on the next one -- and they'd be lined up there in a row, all waiting to get a blessing from their father. Oh, that our children would have such Godly fathers in their homes that the children would line up for a priest when he walks through the door to put a blessing upon their lives.

I got kind of tickled with Hannah the other day. I'd been giving her blessings lately, and she'd crawl up on my lap and she'd say, "Papa, would you give me a blessing?" I said, "Sure, Hannah. I'll give you a blessing." I put my hands on her head, and I gave her a blessing. And that little two year old, she did what only a two year old could do, and she looked up me and she knew she had my favor. She looked up at me and she said, "You can read me a book too." I'm like, "Yeaaaah, go get a book."

But, I'll tell you what. God wants you to be the priest in your home. God wants you to be a man of God in your home. God wants you to have the respect of your children in your home. God wants you to be in such a place that you can bless your children anytime you want to in your home. I mean, bless them! I mean, because you're anointed! I mean, because you're walking with God! Go ahead, put your hands on your child and just bless them. I do it all the time. It's fun. And, I believe God does it too. I believe He blesses them because I bless them. He does it in Africa. I think, He does it here too.

God is calling us, brethren, to rise up and accept the challenge of spiritually mature manhood. To rise up and accept the challenge of wise, financial management. Of gentle, loving husbands. Of wise, guiding fathers. And dynamic leaders who are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and filled with the power of a godly life. But, you know something? That just doesn't happen. I realize and we prayed for you tonight in the prayer room that you wouldn't be loaded down. I realize you can be loaded down tonight. You could go home just like this (whistle), "Impossible. Impossible." I realize you could go home that way, but you don't have to go home that way. You don't have too. Here's what you need to do. You need to say in you heart tonight before God, "God, do with me whatever you have to do. God, I give up everything for You." Some of you here -- you just need to get the sin out of your life. I mean, the channels not open! You're not a channel only full of blessing tonight. You couldn't give a blessing to your children, because the channel's all stuffed up. The channel of blessing is stuffed up with sin. It's stuffed up with selfishness. It's stuffed up

with your own ways. It's stuffed up with some pet sin that you're holding on to that you're not going to give up. You're not a channel of blessing in your home because of that. Some of you here you just simply need to change the priorities of your life. Everything is fine. Everything is clear with you. God is good to you. But, you need to change the priorities of your life tonight. Some of you just simply need to sell out to God. Some of you need to get born again! Maybe you're not even born-again?! You don't even know the spiritual reality at all. You need to get born-again. God wants to give you the power to live the way you ought to live.

You know, for some of you, if you just changed two hours of your life, it would change the lives of your children, and your children's children. If you'd just change two hours of your life tonight. You have 24 hours a day that God has given you. If you just change two hours out of those 24. It would have a profound effect upon your family, upon your children, upon your children's children. Just two hours out of 24.

Well, we're going to give you an invitation this evening. An invitation to respond -- an invitation to respond to the Lord. And I realize I lifted the standard pretty high tonight. I realize that. But, I didn't lift it any higher than God does. And I didn't lift it any higher than there's grace available to live it. I know that I didn't. I know that it's God's will. I know that God wants you to be these things that we've been talking about, brethren. I know God wants it for you life. We need to come face to face with reality. We need to come face to face with revival too tonight. Listen, if your revival has not changed your home yet, you didn't have a revival. You might of had a trip to the mourner's bench. And you might have got some things dealt with in your life, but you didn't have a revival. Revival will affect your home. It will change your home.

So my plea to each one of you brethren tonight is: Just deal with whatever needs to be dealt with. So, you don't have to go home discouraged tonight. Hey, listen. If the heavens are open over your life tonight, then you can just go home tonight and say, "Amen! That's right! That's what I want! I'm going for it!" But, if the heavens are not open over your life tonight, you may walk out of here like this, "(whistle) Too much for me. That is too high." But the invitation is open to you, and the invitation is open to you sisters also, if there is a need in your life. We didn't give an invitation last evening. If there's a need in your heart. If God convicted you about the message last evening and your own response in the home, the invitation is open to you also. And we're going to have an invitation. We'll sing a song, and you come if the Lord is speaking to you. You come if you're ready to deal with God about some issues. We're not asking for commitments tonight. Commitments were made the other evening. We're asking for anybody who needs to do business with God, so that you can be that man that God is looking for.

Let's just kneel for prayer, and then we'll have an invitation. "Our Heavenly Father, God, we come to You in the name of Jesus tonight and we cry again, 'Where are the men, Lord? Where are the men?' God, we know what has happened. We know that our forefathers turned away, dear God, they didn't take You serious. They didn't walk in Your ways. They left off hearing Your voice. They left off having the Spirit of God in their lives. God, some of them went on in their traditions, but had no power God. Lord, we know that is what's happened. And, God, here we are now tonight, but we're asking You, Lord, tonight that You break the chain, Lord. We know that we're needy dear God. We know we're men that have many needs, but God we ask You tonight to break the chains, Lord. And break these patterns, O Father. And raise up some men of God, so that the boys can grow up and be young leaders, O Father. That is our cry tonight. Lord, I pray that You will deliver some of these sisters from the despairing thoughts that they have. God, I pray, that You will deliver some of them tonight, Father, by the power of Your Spirit. Lord, I just commit the invitation into Your hands, and each one of these men into Your hands, Lord. God, we trust You. In the name of Jesus we pray, AMEN."

All right, you may be seated. We'll sing a song of invitation. Anyone who feels the need to respond you come. If there's no response, we'll close the meeting.

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