

God's Heart for America

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince's sermon underscores the importance of recognizing God's judgment and the dual role of Jesus as both Savior and Judge in the context of contemporary issues facing the church and society.

Duration: 57:58

Scripture: Ezekiel 9, Ezekiel 16:49, Revelation 1:12-16

Topics: "National Revival", "Church Accountability"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker challenges the audience to take action and not be complacent in the state of the nation. He criticizes churches that make it easy for people to attend without demanding sacrifice or commitment. The speaker asks the audience to consider if they would be willing to give their hearts for America if Jesus asked them to. He then references two examples from the Old Testament, specifically Ezekiel chapter nine, to illustrate the principle of judgment beginning at the house of God.

Transcript

As I travel around, and I move in quite a number of different circles, I hear very, very little said anywhere today about the judgment of God. But when I read the New Testament, I find a great deal said about the judgment of God. And the person probably who said the most about it was Jesus himself.

And missing out the theme of judgment makes our whole view of God and our message unbalanced and incomplete. Why did Jesus die on the cross? To save us from the judgment of God. To save us from hell.

Again, I hear very little said today about hell. But hell is still just as real today as it was a century ago. And I know for one, if it hadn't been for the mercy of God, I don't doubt that I would already be in hell, confined to everlasting torment.

Which I richly deserve for all the sins that I have committed. I'd like to turn now to Revelation chapter 1, verses 12 through 18. Remember that the revelation is a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Never forget that. It's not a revelation of the Antichrist. It's a revelation of Jesus.

It's the most complete revelation of Jesus. There are at least 21 different titles of Jesus contained in this book. Far more than in any other book in the Bible.

And here is one of the revelations, beginning at verse 12 of chapter 1. Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the seven lampstands, one like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girded about the chest with a golden band.

His head and his hair were white like wool as white as snow. And his eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like fine bronze as if refined in a furnace.

And his voice as the sound of many waters. He had in his right hand seven stars. Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.

And his countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying to me, Do not be afraid.

I am the first and the last. I am he who lives and was dead. And behold, I am alive forevermore.

Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of death. Now I've pondered on that many times recently.

Of all the apostles, John was probably as close to Jesus as any. He was the one who had leaned on Jesus bosom at the last supper. And even after the resurrection, he was one to whom Jesus had revealed himself by the shore of Galilee and actually served a breakfast to his apostles.

He'd been really intimate with Jesus. And yet in this encounter, when he met Jesus, he fell at his feet like one dead. What was different? What had happened? Now I'll give you my understanding.

And let me say, you can disagree with me and still go to heaven. Provided you love me. I believe that here we have Jesus revealed as a judge.

It's not a new revelation, but it's perhaps the most powerful impact of that revelation that ever came to anybody. And you see, you really don't understand the plan of salvation. You don't understand the New Testament.

You don't understand the Christian life. If you don't recognize that Jesus is not only the Savior, but he's also the judge. God the Father has committed all judgment to him.

That all should honor the Son as they honor the Father. And I find that this is a theme that is almost totally lacking from the contemporary, quote, charismatic movement. Somehow we have forgotten that Jesus is the judge.

And all of us must face him, either as Savior or as judge. There is no third possibility. In fact, even if we are believers and know him as Savior, we shall also face him as judge.

There's a place called the judgment seat of Christ, before which every one of us is going to appear, if we are faithful to the Lord. I'd like to read what Paul says about that in 2nd Corinthians chapter 5. 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 10. For we, and this is, Paul is speaking as a Christian.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Now that word that's translated appear is much more powerful. It means we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ.

There will be no secrets, nothing will be hidden. Everything will be fully brought out into the open. We will be totally made manifest.

I tell people sometimes, if you have a problem about confessing your sins now, just think how much better it is to confess them now, than to have them made public before the whole universe at the judgment seat of Christ. We are not going to be judged for condemnation if we are truly in Christ. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

But our judgment will be an assessment of the life that we've led and the service that we've offered to Jesus in this body, that everyone or each one may receive the things done in the body. Whatever you do in the body you're going to have to answer to Jesus for. According to what he has done, whether good or bad.

And please notice there's no third category. You remember I said that earlier. You cannot sit on the fence forever.

You've got to come off on one side or the other. There are only two categories of our actions. They're good or they're bad.

There's nothing in between and everything that is not good is bad. And we are going to answer to Jesus for what we have done. It says of course that we will not be condemned.

But our life will be assessed and our rewards and our position in eternity will be determined at this judgment seat. There are various different scenes of judgment. I'm sure you're probably aware.

This word the judgment seat in Greek is bima. And it's used for the seat on which a Roman magistrate sat when he gave judgment. When Pilate was judging Jesus he sat on his bima.

Then there is the great white throne which is the final judgment of all who are remaining at the end of this long age. And then there is the judgment that we looked at I think yesterday. When Jesus sits on the throne of his glory and all the nations are brought before him.

The different seat of judgment indicates the different type of judgment. But we're looking at the judgment of all those who are in Christ. I don't say all Christians but I say all who are in Christ.

And there's one very important fact which is brought out for us by the Apostle Peter in 1st Peter 4 17 and 18. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God. And if it begins with us first what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now if the righteous one is scarcely saved where will the ungodly and the sinner appear? So where does judgment begin? At the house of God.

And should there, in case there should be any mistake Peter says if it begins with us. Bear that in mind. We will be the first to be judged.

Why? Because we have the greatest responsibility. We're the people with the answer. We're the people who've tasted the grace of God.

We're the people to whom God looks to represent him in the earth. That's a very very great responsibility and with it goes accountability. Now I want to take two examples from the Old Testament of this principle.

That judgment begins at the house of God. They're very serious and solemn examples. The first is found in Ezekiel chapter 9. I'll read the whole chapter it's only 11 verses.

You understand this is acted out but the principles are eternal. Then he, that's the Lord, called out in my hearing with a loud voice saying let those who have charge over the city draw near each with a deadly weapon in his hand. And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate which faces north each with his battle axe or destroying weapon in his hand.

One man among them was clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar. Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub where it had been to the threshold of the temple.

And he called to the man clothed with linen who had the writer's inkhorn at his side. And the Lord said to him go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it. A few people still understood God's standards, were committed to his will and were deeply intensely grieved over what was going on in God's city Jerusalem.

So the Lord said you go first and with your inkhorn you put a mark on the forehead of everyone who grieves and cries for what's going on. To the others he said, the other six men, in my hearing go after him through the city and kill. Do not let your eyes spare nor have any pity.

Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women. But do not come near anyone on whom is the mark and begin at my sanctuary. Where did it begin? The sanctuary, the house of God.

So they began with the elders who were before the temple. Not only did it begin with the sanctuary but it began with the leaders. Then he said to them defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain.

Go out. And they went out and killed in the city. So it was that while they were killing them I was left alone.

That's Ezekiel the prophet. And I fell on my face and cried out and said, Ah Lord God, will you destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out your fury on Jerusalem? Then he said to me, the iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great. And the land is full of bloodshed and the city full of perversity.

For they say, the Lord has forsaken the land and the Lord does not see. And as for me also my eye will neither spare nor will I have pity. But I will recompense their deeds on their own head.

Just then the man clothed with linen who had the ink on at his side reported back and said, I have done as you commanded me. That is a very vivid picture of God's judgment. It begins at the house, begins with the spiritual leaders and it is a judgment to death.

It's a judgment of total destruction. But before that judgment is released, God sends the man with the ink horn to mark on the forehead everyone who seriously grieves and mourns over the condition of God's people. And they, and they alone were spared from the judgment.

Otherwise the judgment fell on men and women, boys and girls, old and young. No one was exempted. That's the picture.

The principles are eternal. Then I want to turn to a passage in Ezekiel chapter 22, beginning at verse 23. And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man say to her, that's the land of Israel, you are a

land that is not cleansed or rained on in the day of indignation.

And there's only one kind of rain that can cleanse the land of sin. That is the rain of the Holy Spirit. If that does not fall, the land is not cleansed.

And then he goes on. And now I want you to notice the order of the people that he singles out. And it so happens in the English language, that every one of them, four groups, begins with the letter P. So it's easy to remember.

It's prophets, priests, princes and people. And observe again, it begins with the prophets. Goes on with the priests.

Moves on to the princes, the secular rulers. And only ultimately, the people. To whom much is given, of him much also will be required.

So now we have these words. The conspiracy of her prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion, tearing the prey. They have devoured the people.

They have taken treasure and precious things. They've made many widows in her midst. And notice the real motivation there is covetousness.

I've been so impressed by the statement of Paul. The love of money is a root of all evils. In fact, I've just written a teaching letter, called the error of Balaam.

I was really interested to see what was the motive that led Balaam in stubborn opposition to the revealed will of God, of which he himself had been a prophet. So that ultimately, he perished under God's judgment. And the New Testament which quotes Balaam, which refers to Balaam three times, makes it absolutely clear it was the love of money that led him to his destruction.

And Paul says it's like a dagger, the love of money, with which people have pierced themselves through and brought upon themselves many sorrows. And as I was writing that letter, I had a mental picture of somebody taking a sharp dagger that was poisoned and plunging it into their own flesh. That's what the love of money does.

Could we honestly say that the charismatic movement is free from the love of money? Could we not really say that most of the conspicuous people that have been toppled, their motivation was the love of money? I mean, I'll let you decide. But it seems to me it's clear. Brothers and sisters, we need to be on our guard, every one of us, including the preacher, against the love of money.

Because it's a root of all evils. Every kind of evil can come out of the love of money. And here we see these prophets were corrupted by the love of money.

And let me say what I think I've said before. If anybody claims to be a prophet in this present world situation and doesn't demand repentance, I challenge his claim. I don't have any confidence in a prophet that simply tickles people's ears and tells them exciting things about themselves and promises them all sorts of blessings in the future.

There was a group of, quote, prophets that went to Europe some time ago. They went to Germany, Norway, Sweden. And in every one of them they said exactly the same thing.

At least they were consistent. They said there's going to be a wonderful revival and it'll begin here, whichever country it was, Germany, Norway or Sweden. And it will go out from here to all the other countries, whichever it was not.

And they said precisely the same thing in each one of those countries. And that the tragedy is God's people were gullible enough to believe them. It's a solemn thing to call yourself a prophet.

You are especially the representative of God. First and foremost, the one who speaks out the counsel of God. I'm impressed by the fact that in the time of Jeremiah as Judah tottered to its disaster, I can only find one true prophet.

His name was Jeremiah. There were many false prophets who were predicting all sorts of wonderful things. The treasures of the temple that Nebuchadnezzar has taken will be come back.

In two years you'll see it. And the tragedy is this, that as I see it, the false predictions of the false prophets kept God's people from listening to the one true prophet. And I see something of the same in the charismatic movement today.

A lot of people promising peace to those who are not living for God. To those who are breaking God's principles and laws. The Bible says there is no peace to the wicked.

And anyone who promises peace to the wicked, is wicked himself. He's a false prophet. This is not something from the remote past.

We have the problem today inside the professing church, just as much as it was in the city of Jerusalem in the time of Jeremiah. We'll go on reading. The next verse.

Her priests, that's verse 26, have violated my law and profaned my holy things. They have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean. And they've hidden their eyes from my sabbaths so that I am profaned amongst them.

What's the great challenge? That there's been no recognition of true holiness and how it differs from that which is not holy. And when professing church leaders will admit into the congregation of God and even ordain as ministers those who are homosexuals, they're doing precisely what Ezekiel describes there. I just want you to understand, all this is not out of date.

It's intensely topical. It applies exactly to the situation in the church and in the world today. Then it says, her princes, that's the secular rulers, the presidents, the prime ministers, her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey to shed blood, to destroy people and to get dishonest gain.

Now I'm very little acquainted with the situation in American politics. Really to say the truth, I'm not interested in politics. I just make it a confession.

But I understand, I read somewhere that President Clinton carries a Bible and calls himself a Baptist. I would like to ask this question and I don't think there's any answer. In all the times he apparently attended church, did he ever hear a clear, honest exposition of God's attitude towards homosexuality? I would guess not.

Who failed? The priests. Did he ever hear a clear, honest scriptural explanation of God's purpose for Israel? I would guess not. Who is primarily responsible? Not President Clinton, but the church.

If he'd heard the truth and turned against it, he would be responsible. But if he listened to professing Christian leaders who did not clearly delineate the line between the holy and the unholy, they are responsible. And God holds them responsible.

And finally, when we come back to the prophets. Verse 28. Then we're coming to the people last.

Verse 28. Her prophets plastered them with untempered mortar, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, Thus says the Lord God, when the Lord had not spoken. What does that mean, to plaster them with untempered mortar? Elsewhere, Ezekiel says, they built a wall, but the plaster was untempered.

And when the rain came, the wall fell down. And there's a lot of untempered plaster in the church today. I'm not out to attack the church.

I'm simply stating things that to me are simply incontrovertible facts. There's a lot of preaching that doesn't really deal with the issue of sin. What's happened to sin, somebody said.

Well, it's just the same as it always was. It's deadly. It's totally destructive.

You can turn your back on it, but it'll stab you in the back. It's really interesting in a way, some of the secular media are more concerned about this issue than most of the church. The last news issue of Newsweek dealt with the issue of shame.

Probably some of you have seen it. Shame for psychologists is a dirty word. You have to get rid of it.

You can get rid of it by sweeping it under the carpet. But under the carpet, it's still there. And then we read verse 29.

The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery. Is that true in America today? And mistreated the poor and needy. And they wrongfully oppressed the stranger.

Now, I'll turn there, because I happen to know it by heart, but we'll turn there. In Ezekiel 16, there is a condemnation of Israel and Jerusalem, comparing them to Sodom and Gomorrah. And in verse 49, God lists the sins of Sodom.

And it's very interesting, he doesn't mention homosexuality. But he states, the social and spiritual conditions which will inevitably produce homosexuality. Listen.

Duke, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom. She and her daughters had pride, fullness of bread, abundance of idleness, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy. How much does that apply to contemporary America? Pride, fullness of bread, abundance of idleness, and a failure to take care of the poor.

Those conditions are what produce homosexuality. So, we cannot stand back and say, well, we're not responsible. Because if we fostered and tolerated and enjoyed those conditions, we are responsible for what they've produced.

Now, I am not here with a negative message. About a month ago, just about a month ago, when we were in Auckland in New Zealand, the Lord woke me up at about 2 a.m. and that's the time he tends to wake me up if he's got something to say. And this was so serious, that I did something I very seldom do.

I had to get out of bed, kneel by my bed and pray. And God was dealing with me also, but he said to me, dear Lord, he said, are you willing to ask me, Jesus, to give you my heart for America? I said, Lord, what are you asking? I don't have any way to understand the depth of your grief over America. And you want me to ask for your heart for America? It came to me, the word that really sums up the attitude of Jesus toward America at this time is disappointment.

He is disappointed. He has done for this nation more, I believe, in many ways than he's ever done for any other nation in human history, spiritually and materially. And what has been the response of the nation? I think disappointment is the mildest word you could use to express the reaction of Jesus.

And he said, are you willing to ask me to give you my heart for America? I really, this was a very real interview. And I said, after a while, Lord, the people of America have been so kind to me. They've honored me.

They've supported me. They've brought my ministry forth. How could I ever say I won't ask you to give me your heart for America? So, I'd have to say reluctantly, I said, okay, Lord, if that's what you want, give me your heart for America.

And a little while later, Ruth and I prayed together on that. And we said, Lord, give us your heart for America. And I want to tell you, it's a broken heart.

It's a heart that's deeply, deeply grieved. He says it, he said, what more could I have done for that nation than I have done? And see how they've responded. Now, I am aware God has his precious saints in America.

Many of them. Some of them are here this morning. But listen.

Now, this is God's response to the situation that he's described. So, I sought for a man among them who would make a wall and stand in the gap before me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it. One man.

And one of the most tragic statements in the Bible was I found no one. Not even one man. And said, therefore, I have poured out my indignation on them.

I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. And I have recompensed their deeds on their own hands. Notice that therefore.

If I could have found one man, I could have spared them. How is it with you? Can the Lord find somebody? More than one person? Can the Lord say to his church, will you stand before me in the gap of this land? Will you make up a wall that I do not have to pour out the last drops of my wrath upon them? That's a question I'm asking you this morning. Some of you have been bringing personal needs to us.

Needs for healing and prayer of other kinds. We are not indifferent. But I have stalled because I had a feeling that until this issue was dealt with, God would not release much of his grace.

And I do believe if we respond rightly this morning, God can do some wonderful things here. I want to go now to the prophet Amos. I owe something to John Anderson for directing my attention to Amos and Hosea.

They are the two of the most up-to-date prophets for America today. And unfortunately most American Christians hardly know what they say. Let me tell you this.

All Scripture is profitable. The doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness. All Scripture.

If you don't study the whole Bible, you're depriving yourself of God's provision for you. And let me say the minor prophets are minor only in length, not in content. One really good example of this is that Paul based his whole doctrine of justification by faith on part of a verse in the prophet Habakkuk.

How many of you know about Habakkuk? I've heard people say, there are so many millions of born-again Christians. Some people say 30, some say even 40 million in the United States. I say, well if they are, where are they? And what are they doing? And why is the nation going downhill steadily all the time? There's only one explanation.

If they really are Christians, they are salt that has lost its savor. Do you know what Jesus said about salt that has lost its savor? It's thenceforth good for nothing. Good for nothing, that's bad language isn't it? But to be thrown out and to be trampled underfoot by men.

And I want to tell you that if the church of the United States does not change, it will be trampled underfoot by men. And there are a lot of men pretty eager today to trample the church underfoot. Is that right? There's an extraordinary hatred of Christ and the church today in the United States.

I came here first, as I told you, in 1963. I told people I was a minister. And everybody showed me respect.

I wasn't used to it because you don't get that treatment in Europe. But I was impressed. Porters, doctors, everybody.

It's not so today. Today it's probably wiser not to tell people what you are, if you're a minister in this country. Because there's a deep undercurrent of hatred and contempt for everything associated with Jesus Christ.

You might think that Ross Scott and I conferred about this, but we didn't. But it's here in my outline. This is proof.

1 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 31. Well let's go back to verse 27. 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 27.

Therefore, and I always say to people when you find a therefore in the Bible, you want to find out what it's there for. And Scott very clearly explained what it's there for. He did a masterly job.

Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. I think a better translation will be answerable to the body and blood of the Lord. He cannot plead ignorance.

But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. Now verse 30.

For this reason many are weak and sick among you and many sleep, many have died. Many who? Many Christians. I've been in a lot of healing services.

I don't think I've ever heard anybody pinpoint that as a main reason why Christians are sick. They have partaken of the Lord's table in an unworthy manner. And Paul writing, I mean if ever a church was charismatic, it was the church of Corinth.

And he said for this reason many of you are weak and sickly and many have died. If you're seeking healing here this morning, I think you need to check on the cause of your being sick. Is it because you haven't really discerned the Lord's body? You've had a critical, uncharitable, negative attitude towards other Christians.

When Scott said, examine yourself. I had to confess, Lord as one particular minister, that I haven't really respected as I should. And I repented and asked God to forgive me.

Now what's the remedy? Verse 31 and 32, For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the law that we may not be condemned with the world. As I see it, there are three possibilities.

First of all, the best is we judge ourselves and repent. If we don't do that, the Lord will chasten us. And a lot of sickness, including some I've experienced, is the Lord's chastening.

And I thank God by His grace, I recognized it for what it was and I repented. And people graciously say to me, you look so good, better than we've seen you. Well, one reason is the Lord chastened me and I repented.

That's the second possibility. The third possibility is the Lord chastens you and you don't repent. And then you are judged with the world.

Those are only three possibilities. Judge yourself and repent. Let the Lord judge you and chasten you and repent.

But if you don't go those first two routes, then, and you continue in your stubbornness, your disobedience, you'll be judged with the world. That's the way. So, I want to suggest, as has already been suggested, that we take a little time to judge ourselves.

As, I don't really like the word, but the charismatic movement. Because we are a conspicuous group in this nation. And we have quite a lot of publicity and we make a lot of rather high claims.

We are identifiable. Some of you may not be charismatics. Well, God bless you.

That may be better for you. And this is not confined to charismatics. But I tend to deal about the things that are most obvious to me personally.

Now, in closing, I want to go to Amos chapter 6. I'm going to read the first six verses. Now, much of what Amos says does not literally apply to you. But I think if you make the necessary adjustments for time and culture and situation, a great deal of it does apply to the Christians of America today.

Amos says, Woe to you who are at ease in Zion. In other words, you're claiming to be God's people. Zion is the place of God's dwelling.

And trust in Mount Samaria, which at that time was still a very noble city, a large city adorned with many wonderful buildings. Notable persons in the chief nation, that's Israel, to whom the house of Israel comes.

Go over to Calvary and see.

And from there go to Hamath the Great. Then go down to Gath and the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory? I would say to the United States, look back in history.

Think of all the great powerful empires that have arisen and flouted God's judgment and perished. History is littered with the ruins of empires that didn't recognize God. Is America going the same way? Verse 3, Woe to you who put far off the day of doom or judgment, who cause the seed of violence to come near.

The theme of judgment is very remote. It doesn't really concern you. It's a long way away.

Maybe there will be a time of judgment, but it's not right now. That's the attitude. Who lie on beds of ivory, stretch out or sprawl on your couches, eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall.

So these people are living in luxury and feeding on the best. And if you compare America with the other nations of the world, most Americans are living in luxury. People don't think that way if you only compare yourself with other Americans.

But as I said, I think earlier, listen, you have a bed to sleep on. A high proportion of the world's people don't ever have a bed. You have sheets on your bed and you change the sheets.

You can choose what you eat and you have something to eat. Nearly 1 billion people don't have enough to eat. So most of us by the world's standards, including me, we are wealthy.

We're privileged. And we have to bear in mind that we're accountable for that. And then it goes on, it gets worse and worse in a way.

Or more and more close to charismatics who chant to the sound of stringed instruments and invent for yourselves musical instruments like David. So we have all sorts of spiritual music. We have new songs and new choruses and it's quite an industry.

Is that right? It's a very wealthy industry. As an author of books, I've learned that there's a much more demand for Christian music than there is for Christian books. There's a lot of money to be made in the Christian music industry.

And wherever there's money to be made, there's danger. Going on, verse 6. Who drink from bowls and anoint yourselves with the best ointments. Now you don't drink from bowls, I'm sure of that.

But you do really live on the fat of the lamb. And you're pretty interested in your food. And why is it that 60% of American people today are overweight? Has that got anything to do with the way we eat? Jesus warned us against surfeiting and drunkenness.

Surfeiting is overeating. He said, lest these things keep you from being ready when I return. Of course that doesn't apply to charismatics.

We all know we're going to be ready anyhow. We're charismatics. We speak in tongues.

We can quote a number of scriptures. And we attend a church. The kind that tells us what we want to hear.

That's not true of many of you. But it's a picture. I think I've updated it so that you can see it's not out of date.

Now then. This is the punchline. The end of verse 6. But are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

Joseph is the title of the Northern Kingdom. Which was under God's judgment and perished very shortly afterwards in a total disaster that left nothing. Even the stones of Samaria were rolled on the hill.

And you can go there today and see where the stones rolled on the hill. Nothing was left. This was not far away.

I think not more than 50 years away. And yet there they were living it up. Having their chorus singing.

Inventing new instruments. And totally unconcerned for the fate of their nation. Not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

Let me ask you. If the Lord were to send out amongst the Christians of America today the man with the ink horn by his side. Would he mark you? Or would he pass you by? Are you really grieving, sighing and crying for the condition of your country? Or are you more or less indifferent? Well, we've got it all right.

We're pretty settled. We're in a good church. As somebody said, a user-friendly church.

We got a letter from one of Ruth's former Christian friends. She said, I'm attending a user-friendly church. And I said to Ruth, whatever is a user-friendly church? Well, she said, it's like they use with computers and other things.

They make it easy. And there are some churches that make it easy. They don't demand too much.

Don't talk about sacrifice or laying down your life or dying to yourself. Just let people come, clap their hands, sing some happy choruses, user-friendly. That's not what God is looking for.

I want to ask you. I feel I have authority from the Lord to ask this. I feel the Lord showed me there in Oakland what was going to happen in this meeting.

I pray it may happen. I want to ask you. If Jesus said to you, would you ask me to give you my heart for America? How would you answer? How would you answer? If the Lord says, I'm looking for a man or a woman to stand in the gap, where would you be standing? Don't go on with the music as usual.

Don't go on with the program. I'm so much in agreement with what Ross has said. Programs are for organizations, not for organisms.

I want to challenge you. Would you this morning, after due consideration, tell God, the Lord Jesus, give me your heart for America? I'm not a born American. I have a tremendous burden in my heart for my native land of Britain.

Most of you are born Americans. Would you be willing to share the Lord's burden for this nation? I believe this is critical. It's either this or total disaster.

I believe disaster will come in due course. But I believe myself that God has many, many souls in this nation whom He has chosen for Himself. And He's waiting with infinite patience until they've been gathered in.

So, would you just consider that for a moment? What is your actual attitude towards your own nation and your own people? Are you indifferent? Are you satisfied with where you are? You can't be satisfied with the way things are going in the nation. That would be impossible. So, what are you going to do about it? Are you going to do anything? Or you're just going to go on with business as usual? Go to a happy meeting, clap your hands, sing the choruses, hear a sermon and go back to living just the way you were.

I want to give you an opportunity in a few moments to make a response. I have a feeling that if you want to make this kind of commitment and please weigh it in the balance carefully before you do. I want to get you out of your seat.

I think there's something very important about moving at certain points. And I want to invite you to come forward or go round anywhere you can and kneel. Oh, I so much agree with kneeling.

Interestingly, in that article on shame in Newsweek there was one judge who was dealing with a juvenile delinquent who had raped his younger sister. And he said he demanded in fact repentance. And actually the word repentance occurred in that article.

Isn't that amazing? And he said, yes, yes, I'll come. He spoke to his sister and he said, sorry I did that for you. And the judge said, that's not enough.

I want you to kneel down and ask forgiveness. He said, I won't do it. Well, then you can go back to prison.

Spent another week in prison. Thought better of it. Came back and said, I'm ready to do it.

This is a secular judge. And he kneeled before his sister and said, I'm sorry for the way I treated you. And the whole room dissolved in tears.

There's something about kneeling. I've said to people. In fact, I said it, I think, on the 700 Club.

The thing about us in church is we're so stiff, starchy. We've only got two postures. Standing and sitting.

We walk in, stand, sit down, stand up, sit down, stand up, sit down and walk out. That's not worship. I'm not going to preach my sermon on worship.

That'll come later. But worship. The primary attitude of worship in the Old Testament is being prostrate on your face before God.

Worship is lifting up your hands, stretching out your hands, clapping your hands and even dancing. It's worship. And you've got a spirit in your body which longs to express itself.

And you, because of religious background, have been throttling that spirit. I would say, let go. If you really want to make this commitment, don't be too respectable.

Last night, I think, I forget when it was, Ruth and I were praying about this. And she did something she very seldom does. She leaned over and put her hand on my chest.

And we were both trying to pray. And we couldn't get any words out. And I understood then, this is groanings that cannot be uttered.

You can't say them, but they're inside you. They're painful. But don't try to utter them, because they cannot be uttered.

But there's other things you can utter. So, I believe I have the mind of the Lord. Scott and Nedra, if you'd come up.

Ruth, if you'd come up. John and Esther, can you come up. I believe in being surrounded by men and women of God.

I don't believe this is a solo act. Now some of you may have planes to catch, I don't know. But if you have heard what I say, come up on the platform.

And you're moved to respond. Then, think it over. And if you really want to do it, get out of your seat.

Come forward somewhere, there's plenty of space. And kneel. And if you're not satisfied with kneeling, prostrate yourself.

Please don't do this, if you're not making a real commitment. Because God will hold it against you. There's an angel that records.

And you can't say before the angel, it was a mistake. I really didn't mean it. But you see, there is enough intercessory potential in this congregation.

To make a significant difference. Now, just cry out to God. I've got no program.

He wants to hear your voice. I think He wants to see your tears. Say, Lord, we've failed our nation.

We've been living in comfort. And having a good time. And enjoying our meetings.

And singing our choruses. And the nation has been going downhill. And we've done very, very little about it.

Lord, we're sorry. We repent. Change our hearts.

Take away that hardness. That selfishness. That self-centeredness.

That self-love, Lord. Deliver us from it, we pray. In Jesus' name.

Lord, pour out Your Spirit upon these people here this morning. In the name of Jesus, release the Spirit of grace. And supplications on Your people here this morning, Lord.

May no one go out of this room who has kneeled. And remains unchanged. Pour out Your Spirit, Lord.

Pour out Your Spirit, Lord. Some are here sick because they haven't lived worthily. Lord, if they repent, we pray You'll heal them.

In the name of Jesus. In the name of Jesus. Oh Lord, let Your healing grace and mercy come to us in our desperate need.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

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