

Pressures, Tests and Challenges - Part 2

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince emphasizes the importance of spiritual readiness and faithfulness in the face of life's pressures and challenges, urging believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit and accountable for their actions.

Duration: 28:20

Scripture: Matthew 8:12, Matthew 25:1-30, Luke 13:28, Ephesians 5:18, Revelation 3:17-18

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Faithfulness"

Description

This sermon by Derek Prince Ministries emphasizes the importance of being fully committed to God and not being lukewarm or complacent in faith. It delves into the parables of the unfaithful servant and the ten virgins, highlighting the need for continual spiritual growth, readiness for Christ's return, and faithful stewardship of the gifts and resources God has given us. The message stresses the significance of being filled with the Holy Spirit, living a life of faithfulness, and being prepared for the accountability we will face before God.

Transcript

Derek Prince Ministries Proclaiming the inspired word of God around the world. Derek Prince is an internationally recognized Bible teacher and author. Through books, audios, videos and radio broadcasts, Derek seeks to reach the unreached and teach the untaught.

In over 50 years of ministry, Derek has reached over 100 nations in more than 50 languages. And now, Derek Prince. A lot of people in our churches today are what I call fence sitters.

They're sitting on the fence. They're not really committed, but they don't want to be classed as unbelievers. And my little comment on this is, when the Holy Spirit comes to the church, one of the first things He does is to electrify the fence.

And that's why some people don't welcome the Holy Spirit. Because they want to stay comfortably seated on the fence. So what's the feature of this evil son? Well he says, my master is delaying His coming.

In other words, he's lost the vision of the imminent reality of the Lord's return. That's his basic problem. I've come to this conclusion.

That in churches where they do not proclaim the coming of the Lord Jesus as a reality, the standards of holiness will never be those of the New Testament. This is an essential truth to produce holiness in God's

people. So he says, my master has been away a long time.

I haven't heard anything about him. I haven't really been in close touch with him. I can live it up.

So he begins to beat his fellow servants. He becomes domineering. And it is very, very easy for people who help occupy the position of pastors to become domineering.

To control people. And it's evil. I've made this personal assessment.

That God will never put His anointing on something which man seeks to control. So if man wants to keep it under his control, God's saying, well carry on. But don't expect my anointing.

Unless I'm allowed to be in charge, you can carry on. You can go through your religious procedures. You can use all the words and the titles.

But the results will not be what come only from the anointing of the Holy Spirit. So he's domineering. He beats his fellow servants.

He eats and drinks with the drunkards. He begins to live it up. Now this is a very real temptation in the western world.

Especially in the United States. Somebody said to me a little while ago. He said, if you want to know the best places to eat in any city.

Ask the pastors. And I have to say, that is a pretty legitimate comment. God, I don't want to get involved in this.

But God, I became seriously ill in 1990, 1991. With a disease which normally kills people. If you want to know the name of it.

It's subacute bacterial endocarditis. If you're not a doctor, it won't mean much to you. But until they invented antibiotics, it was fatal.

And it could have killed me. And as I was there in bed, the very night before I was admitted to the hospital. I was asking the Lord.

I wasn't afraid of dying. But I had an intellectual problem. God, I believed in healing.

I preached healing. I've seen people healed. I've been healed myself.

Why am I not healed? And the Lord gave me a little overview. Of the way I've been living for years as a minister. Never involved in sexual immorality.

Never involved in drunkenness. Never misappropriating funds. But very carnal.

Living as if this world were all there is. My definition of carnality is living as if there's no future world. And God showed me how He hated carnality.

He gave me the text. Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated. And Esau is the scriptural pattern of the carnal man.

And that has changed my life. Thank God I survived. I think the Lord spared me because I was willing to learn my lesson.

Ruth and I quoted a scripture. The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death. That was true in my case.

And I want to say that I was living a respectable minister's life. I could tell you the ministers that I was associated with. Their names that you would all know.

We were all basically living the same way. I'm not judging anybody but myself. But we were in many ways extremely carnal.

I had another experience. I didn't intend to tell this. But I think God wants me to.

I do not believe that Christians are prohibited from drinking wine. That may shock you. But I believe Jesus drank wine.

And certainly Paul recommended Timothy to do the same. Now don't get controversial with me. Because I'm going to say it in a way that will set your minds at rest.

About September of last year. Ruth and I were staying in a hotel in Eilat. Where we'd gone just to get away from the pressures of ministry in Jerusalem.

And I had drunk maybe two or three glasses of wine. I was perfectly sober. But about 2 a.m. I was awakened with a sense of pressure on my brain.

And the word came to me, stroke. And thank God I knew something about spiritual warfare. Because I said, you spirit of stroke, I refuse you.

I'm not submitted to you. You have no power over me. No claims against me.

And it lifted. Then I got out of bed to go to the bathroom. And it took me three attempts to get out of the bed.

And when I began to walk to the bathroom. I could not walk steadily. I had to hold on to the furniture to get there.

Next day as I meditated on that. I concluded that having drunk that much wine. Had exposed my brain to this spirit of stroke.

And I made up my mind. I tell people I have a new diet. It's a biblical diet.

My food is to do the will of Him who sent me. And to finish His work. And for me the emphasis now on finish His work.

Because I've been in the Lord's service 50 years. And I believe I'm in His will. But I haven't finished His work.

And I made up my mind. If this would ever come between me and finishing His work. I'll never touch wine again.

And I've lived by that now. Now please understand. I'm not preaching against drinking wine.

Because you can be just as wrong on the other side. With all your legalism. I mean I've been a Pentecostal long enough to know what legalism is.

And in actual fact I think it was partly rebelling against legalism. That tipped me over on the other side. See, the pathway that leads to life is a straight narrow way.

And there are ditches on either side. One side is legalism. You can fall into that ditch.

Then you struggle out of that ditch. And if you're not careful, you fall in the opposite ditch. Which is self-indulgence or carnality.

We have to walk between the two. Anyhow, this is very real to me. That this unfaithful pastor or leader.

Became involved in drinking. And not merely drinking. But what is very important, drinking with the wrong company.

Drinking with the drunkards. And so Jesus says, The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him. And at an hour that he is not aware of.

And will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. So when he comes, the servant is not ready for him.

Did you hear what I read? The master will come and cut him in two. Who's the master? Jesus. Did you understand that Jesus is capable of cutting somebody in two? Bear in mind, He's not only the Savior.

He's the Judge. And He's just as thorough and faithful in His judgment. As He is in saving us.

And if you don't live for Him as Savior. You will encounter Him as Judge. Those are the only two options before any of us.

And then it says there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And I've been impressed by that phrase over the years. It occurs about six times or five times in the New Testament.

And so I made a little search which I'll share with you. Of the context in which Jesus says there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. My conclusion is, it's only for a certain category of people.

Those who've known all about it. Who've heard all the truth. Who've been close to it perhaps all their lives.

But never really committed themselves. And there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Because they will suddenly realize.

I was so close all my life. I could have stepped in at any moment. And I never did.

And now I'm shut out forever. And I can understand gnashing of teeth, weeping. Let me give you a little list of the cases in which it's used.

In Matthew 8, 12 it's used of the sons of the kingdom. And Jesus is speaking to his fellow Jews and saying. You're rejecting me.

But the Gentiles will come and they'll enter the kingdom. And you'll be shut out. And there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

People who've known it all. Had every opportunity. But never availed themselves.

And then in Matthew 13, verse 42. It's used of the people who are the tares in the wheat field. Looking exactly like the wheat but never producing fruit.

And Jesus says the angels will come. And root them up and throw them into the furnace. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Because all their lives they've been close to it. They've been in the middle of it. But they never entered into it.

And then here in Matthew 22, 13. No, I'm sorry. Matthew 22, 13.

The parable of the wedding feast. The one guest who came in without a wedding garment. You see, you didn't have to buy your wedding garment.

The host provided it. So it was sheer audacity. It was presumption to walk in without.

And when the master of the feast saw him. He said, how did you come in here without a wedding garment? And the man was speechless. And the master said, bind him hand and foot.

And cast him into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. You see again.

Somebody knew all about it. He'd received an invitation to the feast. But he didn't bother himself to put on the appropriate garment.

Which is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Then in Matthew 25, 30. We'll be coming to it if God wills and we live.

The one talent servant. And I'll be with them, him in a little while. And finally in Luke 13, verse 28.

The people who said to Jesus. We ate and drank in your streets. We heard all your teaching.

And Jesus said, depart from me you who practice lawlessness. I never knew you. And outside there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

You know, I have a modern version of. What it is to practice lawlessness. Because I see so much lawlessness.

In the church. In the ministry. And this is my little paraphrase.

To practice lawlessness is to do your own thing. To be answerable to nobody. To be accountable to nobody.

Just to go your own way and do it the way you please. Regardless of what other people do. One thing I've learned in the ministry.

Is if I want lasting fruit for my ministry. That fruit has to take root inside the church. And if I were to go into an area.

Which I don't believe I've ever done. And slight the pastors and the local leaders. And ignore them.

I could have a big meeting. And I know enough how to get people. For what I could call for.

But hundreds of people. And have a photograph taken. But there'd be no lasting fruit.

Because fruit has to grow inside the congregation of God's people. You have to work with the leaders in the local area. If you're really going to see fruit.

And they're not always easy to work with, believe me. God bless them anyhow. When anybody did something really wrong against my first wife and me.

My first wife was. Knew the scriptures well. She knew she couldn't afford to get.

Starting to say anything bad about them. She said, Lord bless him. You know how to bless him.

So now we're going on to the next. Now we're going into chapter 25. What's the first word in chapter 25? Then.

It's the tenth then. Now we have the parable of the ten virgins. What do they represent? Let me see what my outline says.

Now in the Bible ten is the representative number of a congregation. In Judaism they have to have what's called a minyan. That is at least ten persons before they can pray publicly.

So I think the number ten speaks to us of people in congregations. This is just my thought that these virgins basically represent churchgoers. I'll read the story quickly and then comment on it.

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise and five were foolish. You notice there's nothing in between wise or foolish.

Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight a cry was heard, Behold the bridegroom, go out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil for our lamps are going out.

But the wise answered saying, No, lest there should not be enough for us and you. But go rather to those who sell and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy the bridegroom came and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding and the door was shut.

Afterward the other virgins came also saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Assuredly I say to you, I do not know you. Watch therefore for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Don't be so deep asleep that you can't wake up. Now let me point out some things about those ten virgins that were common to them all. They all expected the bridegroom.

They all knew the bridegroom was coming. They were not unbelievers. They all had lamps and oil.

And oil is nearly always a type of the Holy Spirit. They'd had the Holy Spirit in their lives. And all of them slumbered, both the wise and the foolish.

There was only one difference. The amount of oil they had. The wise had oil enough and to spare.

The foolish didn't have a reserve of oil. And Paul says in Ephesians 5.18, Be not drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. Now most of us would agree that the negative command applies.

Be not drunk with wine. That's a sin. Why is it that so many religious people focus on the negative and never attend to the positive? The same command says, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

If it's a sin to be drunk with wine, it's also a sin not to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And the word there, and this you'll find I think in other translations, means be continually filled and refilled. It's not just a one time infinite.

Again, I've lived with Pentecostals so long, I know they say, I was baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1984. I spoke in tongues. That's wonderful, that's ten years ago.

What's happened in the meanwhile? Some people who make it a once for all experience, are the least sensitive of all to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Because they've got it all wrapped up in one packet that they got when they spoke in tongues. That's not sufficient.

Paul said to the Corinthians, I speak in tongues more than all of you. And obviously they did a lot of speaking in tongues. So Paul did more than them.

We have to be continually filled and refilled with the Holy Spirit. The ten virgins had had the initial filling, but they didn't have the continual refilling. So they were not ready.

Now an interesting thing is, the wise said to the foolish, go and buy oil. It had to be bought. It wasn't a gift.

So there are some things, some ways in which you have to pay the price for the Holy Spirit. Initially he's a gift. But if you want to remain filled with the Holy Spirit, there's a price to pay.

You see, I think of what Jesus said to the church of Laodicea. Which is in so many ways a picture of the church today in America. Laodicea chapter 3. Revelation chapter 3. Thank you.

Thank you sweetheart. It's really good to have you there. Sometimes it's a little embarrassing, but it's better than being wrong anyhow.

Now this is what Jesus said to the church of Laodicea in Revelation. Chapter 3, verses 17 and 18. Because you say I am rich, and I've become wealthy, and I've needed nothing.

Have you ever heard that kind of teaching? Did Jesus approve of it? Not the least bit. And do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. I marvel that people can be wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, and not ever know it.

That's astonishing. But I meet some people like that. Now Jesus gives them advice.

He says I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich. And white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed. Jesus said I'm not going

to give it to you.

You have to buy it from me. Gold tried in the fire. You know gold in the ancient world was valueless unless it had been tested by fire.

I believe that gold is faith. There. And Jesus said I want faith that stood the test of fire.

And you'll have to pay for it. By endurance. You'll have to hold out under the tests.

And then he said white garments. Not everything in the Christian life is free. These are things you have to pay for.

I'd also like to point out to you the difference between the evaluation of Jesus and so much contemporary Christianity. There was one church, the church of Smyrna, was poor and persecuted and didn't have much. And Jesus said, but you are rich.

But he said to the church of Philadelphia, of Laodicea, that had it all, you are poor. What would he say to the American church today? What would he say? Would he say you are rich or you are poor? You must answer that for yourself. I just want to point out to you man's evaluation is often the opposite of God's.

Jesus said the things which are highly esteemed amongst men are abomination inside of God. So they had to buy oil and they left it too late. When they bought the oil and arrived the door was shut.

And Jesus said, I never knew you. How do you understand that? This is my understanding. They were never amongst God's elect.

They'd come in, but God knew they wouldn't pass the test. Now this may not be the right explanation, but it's the way I see it. So, let me ask you, have you bought your oil? How do you buy oil? By prayer? By Bible reading? By waiting on God? It takes time.

It takes effort. It doesn't just happen. You have to make a decision.

So, that's the ten virgins. Now we'll come on to the next group. The servants with the talents.

It's from verse 14 through verse 30. It's quite long, 17 verses. For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.

And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one. To each according to his own ability. And immediately he went on a journey.

Now this is then, number 12, if you're following. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.

But he who had received one went and dug it in the ground and hid his Lord's money. After a long time the Lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents.

Saying, Lord you delivered to me five talents look, I have gained five more talents besides them. His Lord said to him, well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful over a few things.

I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord. He also who had received two talents came and said, Lord you delivered to me two talents.

Look, I have gained two more talents besides them. His Lord said to him, well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things.

I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord. Then, this is then number 13.

Then he who had received the one talent came and said, Lord I knew you to be a hard man. Reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the ground.

Look, there you have what is yours. But his Lord answered and said to him, you wicked and lazy servant. You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gathered where I have not scattered seed.

Therefore you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers and at my coming I would receive back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has more will be given and he will have abundance.

But from him who does not have even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Let me offer some comments. First of all, on the servants that made profit. The first and the second each gained 100%.

The one who had five gained five. The one who had two gained two. And the words of commendation to them were exactly alike.

Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord. The Lord did not commend the five-talent servant more than the two-talent servant.

Which tells me that what he's looking for is increase. When the increase was proportionate in both, 100%, he gave them exactly the same combination. What he's looking for, as I've already said, is faithfulness rather than success.

Each was rewarded with corresponding authority in Christ's kingdom. In other words, the way we serve in this life will determine our position in the kingdom of God throughout eternity. .

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