

The Danger Of Complacency

by Don Currin

This sermon emphasizes the danger of complacency in the church and the need to restore spiritual passion. It highlights the importance of removing doubtful things in life, living for eternity, not counting one's life dear unto oneself, and never being content with one's spiritual state. The speaker urges listeners to press on towards the high calling of God and to seek revival through a personal relationship with Christ.

Scripture: Acts 20:24, 2 Corinthians 5:9, Philipians 3:14, Matthew 25:31, Revelation 3:15

Topics: "Complacency in the Church", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

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Transcript

Well, good morning everyone, it's a joy to be here and to be around so many fine people that the Lord has done a work of grace in your hearts. I'm very thankful to be here on the platform with so many men that have had such a significant investment in my life and my ministry. And last night, Denny certainly was used to the Lord to stir my heart once again, so grateful for his ministry and thankful for what God is doing in these days.

I just came from Bucharest, Romania, and the Lord is doing such a glorious work there among many of the national church planners, the missionaries there, and especially among the young people. It seemed like the Lord had just really given us favor in the eyes of the young people, and they responded to the message in tears and brokenness, and then came to Niagara Falls, New York, last week for a series of meetings, and once again among the young people there was such a brokenness. So it seemed like in my age, at 53, the Lord's given me more and more favor among the younger generation, and God is doing a good work, and I'm very thankful to be a very small part of it.

With that in mind, let me just mention something to you. We have a very small table out there in the foyer, and basically it's representing Heart Cry Missionary Society. Perhaps some of you have heard of Paul Washer.

We relocated our ministry from Gainesville, Georgia, to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, to be a part of Heart Cry Missionary Society and to work alongside of Paul Washer. We'll continue to do our ministry, but when I have windows of time, I'll be representing Heart Cry on the mission field, taking groups of pastors with me, as well as groups of young people. And our church, First Baptist Church of Muscle Shoals, is doing a true church conference in February of next year.

And we have Brother Paul Washer speaking, as well as Jay Adams, the New Thetic Counselor Father, as well as other good men. If you like the tenor of this setting, then you'll certainly appreciate the tenor of that setting as well, because it's intense preaching, fervent praying, and very passionate Christian living. And I tell you, it has a contagion effect on you to be around some of these great men.

Men, as Paul says, not really great men, but men of a great God. And I tell you, I've been blessed and ministered to and benefited through that influence. So anyway, the brochures are out there, true church.

And the theme this year is church discipline, the real key to church growth. You know, if I run my head into a wall, my head's not going to grow, it's going to swell. And sadly, many churches across the land today, the churches are swelling, they're not growing.

And when the trials come, and the intense pressure from the world begins to be applied, and problems arise in the church, oftentimes those churches are not sustained because it's superficial growth. We've filled our churches full of a mixed multitude that are made up more of goats than sheep, because we've used the marketing strategies of the world to advance the kingdom of God, and God will never bless it. So God is giving, much like Denny said last night, us the lust of our own desires, he's turning us over to those things, and we're seeing superficial growth, which is not legitimate biblical growth.

And I believe that the catalyst for real biblical growth, church growth, is church discipline. So the whole theme of the conference will be underscoring biblically the importance of church discipline. If you'd be interested in this conference, the brochures will be out there on the table in the foyer.

I want you to take your Bibles, if you would, this morning with me and turn to the book of Amos, the book of Amos, and I want to speak this morning on what it seems as if these days has been an ongoing leading of the Lord as I go from church to church and conference to conference. It seems like there have been more messages that God has burned into my heart to address this great need in the church in this hour. And I want to speak this morning on the subject of the danger of complacency and how to restore your spiritual passion.

If you would, let me direct your attention, please, to Amos chapter 6, and perhaps it would benefit us not only in reverencing the word of God, but maybe keeping some of us awake this early in the morning to stand in reverence to the word of God. Amos chapter 6 and verse number 1, the scripture says, Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came. Pass ye to Colnath and see, and from thence go ye to Hamath the great, then go down to Gath of the Philistines.

Be they better than these kingdoms, or their border greater than your border? Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seed of violence to come near, that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall, that chant, that chant to the sound of the vial, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments. But they are not grieved for the

affliction of Joseph. Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive.

And the banquet of them that stretch themselves shall be removed." We'll stop there. Shall we pray together? Dear Father, we come to you in the name of your Son. Very grateful, Father, that you have put grace in our hearts.

That's the only reason we're here today, is because, Lord, your grace has taken root in our hearts by the power of your Holy Spirit. Father, we thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you that he is the reviver.

We bless you today, Father, that potentially, Lord, he is the one that we desire to have preeminence in this revival conference. Lord, we want no man to get glory. Lord, some of these men are very polished speakers.

Lord, many of these dear brethren out here are more qualified to speak than myself. Lord, all of our talents and abilities and accomplishments and feats and our list of accomplishments for the kingdom of God's sake, we don't want any of that to take precedence over Christ. We would pray in these next few moments, Lord, that you would reign, take your truth, and exalt your name.

Make your name great among your people. Lord, make us passionate for Christ. Lord, much like John the Baptist, I pray, God, that you might make us burning and shining lights in these days of darkness and apostasy.

Lord, I'm not going to be duped into believing, Lord, that you can send another spiritual awakening. Lord, in spite of the gross carnality and the profound indifference and, Lord, the way the world is corrupting itself, Lord, even as David said, I would have fainted if I had not believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. But, God, I believe that you can do it again, and I pray, God, that you might give your people a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

God, would you come this morning? Even as Denny said last night, oh, God, if you do not come, Lord, this will be a boring conference. So, Lord, may it rise above the academics of revival, and may, Lord, we enter into the reality of the presence of Jesus afresh. Come in our midst, Father.

We ask these things in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated.

You find in this text that we just read in our hearing that the prophet gives a solemn warning to those who have become spiritually careless. Their reliance on their religious heritage and prosperity has produced a deadly complacency toward God. Like those in the New Testament church of Laodicea, they are increased with goods and have need of nothing, especially God's.

Their trust in their wealth has led to a neglect of God. And you'll note something from the outset, brethren, that Amos does not issue this warning, woe be to those who are at ease in Zion. He does not issue this warning to the drunkards, to the adulterers, to the God-haters of his day.

This is issued to those that are spiritually complacent. They're indifferent toward God. Tragically in our own culture of affluence, we live Christianity on a lounge and we forget that it was born on an old, ragged cross.

We have become so consumed with pleasure that we see the life of self-denial a threat to our happiness and certainly something that is unnecessary for eternal salvation. It was Charles Spurgeon who warned,

doeth that man love his Lord that would be willing to see Jesus wearing a crown of thorns while for himself he craves a chaplet of laurel? Shall Jesus ascend to his throne by the cross and do we expect to be carried there on the shoulders of applauding crowds? Be not so vain in your imagination. Count to the cost and if you're not willing to bear Christ's cross, go away to your farm and to your merchandise and make the most of them, only let me whisper this in your ear, what should a man profit, be profit if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? You recall the hymn writer, George Bernard, who penned the words to that blessed hymn, the old ragged cross.

One of those stanzas goes like this, oh, that old ragged cross so despised of the world has a wondrous attraction to me for the dear lamb of God left his glory above to bear it on dark Calvary. You know, friend, my fear is today that the cross of Christ has lost that wondrous attraction to the average professing Christian in the church. Sadly, the cross no longer possesses that attraction.

It is looked upon with such contempt within the church in this day and hour that many are ashamed of it. Those who sought to forget the ultimate judgment of God by immersing themselves in the affluence of the mountain of Samaria here in our text are like the vast multitude in the church of North America. Our generation is attempted to remove coming judgment from its thinking and preaching so that lost people are made to feel comfortable in church.

Now, please don't misunderstand me. I think we need to minister to lost people. I think we need to go out of our way to accommodate them and help them in the spirit of gentleness.

The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men. But I tell you, friend, sometimes it seems as if many churches are watering down the influence of the word and apologizing for the effect that their lives have upon people that are dead in trespasses and sins. Our generation is attempting to remove judgment from its thinking and preaching so that these lost people feel comfortable in church.

Tragically, many, not a few, but many are sleeping the sleep of spiritual death because of the unwillingness of preachers to proclaim the reality of impending doom. Listen to me, brethren. The day the tsunami came and swept tens of thousands of people away there in Indonesia and the surrounding countries, many people were unconscious of the potential devastation because they were intoxicated on pleasure.

That is the picture we have here in Amos chapter number six. Now, I want to make this very simple this morning, and I agree with Spurgeon, there is a blessing in brevity, but I want to share with you some things that God is burning on my heart, and I trust that he in turn will burn upon your heart this morning. First of all, I want us to consider what it means to be at ease in Zion.

That's our text, verse number one. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion. What is the definition? What is an applicable definition? But what is, first of all, the biblical definition of being at ease in Zion? It means to be careless or secure.

You see, the idea here is these people were resting on their religious laurels, their religious traditions, and their prosperity, and this affluence had bred a deadly complacency. John Gill said Zion was a stronghold, the city of David, the seat of the kings of Judah, where their court was kept and the princesses and chief men resided and thought themselves safe, the place being well fortified with walls, towers, and boards. And ease here is referring to an easy, prosperous, comfortable circumstance of life.

That is a picture of our churches in North America. The idea is that they were resting on the laurels of their own tradition. Now, what does it mean more personally to be at ease? Listen carefully.

When one is at ease, they neglect God. They neglect God. You know, my problem with coming to conferences like this is that oftentimes all this does is jumpstart some cold, carnal people that have been that way for years.

Can I say this to you? If you've been cold and carnal, if you've been dabbling in things that are wicked and abominable in the sight of God, if your life has been the living example of a hypocrite, friend, I tell you, perhaps you don't need a touch of God in revival. You need to be born again. I agree with J.C. Ryle, where there is no holy living, there is no holy ghost.

And if you're in Christ, I tell you, he will make you holy. Doesn't mean you're perfect, friend. We're not talking about perfection.

We're talking about perseverance. We're talking about rising up when we do stumble, when we do sin, when we do grieve the Holy Spirit. But to stay in a constant state of complacency and apathy for month after month after month and year after year is not a good sign that we've ever been born again.

Perhaps you're seated there today and you're a stranger to the grace of God because God's grace will make you holy, make you like his beloved son. What does it mean to be at ease? It means to neglect God. It means to live indifferently toward him.

It refers to a people who profess to know Christ, but live carelessly. There is a neglect of prayer, holiness, obedience, family worship, and the life of consecration. You see, when one is at ease, biblical truth is not altogether denied, but neglected.

God's word no longer governs what they do, where they go, what they watch on television, or how they think. Guarding their hearts, their tongue, and their time is often looked upon as legalistic. They desire a savior that delivers from hell, but not one that delivers from self and sin.

It's interesting, friend, that one of the purposes of Jesus dying on the cross, and by the way, oftentimes we only glean the benefits that man receives in Christ's death on the cross, but there are stores of redemptive purposes in Christ laying down his life on the cross. And what is found in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 15? The Bible said that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him. You see, Christ saved us to deliver us from a self-centric life into a Christ-centric life.

And if you're in Christ, friend, I tell you, you can't remain in a carnal, careless state very long. God, whom he loves, he chastens and scourges every son that he receives. To be at ease in Zion is to live carelessly, to neglect God.

But there's a second thing I want you to see from our text, and that is the effects of being at ease in Zion, the spiritual effects of being at ease in Zion. In Amos chapter 6, verses 3 through 6, we find four different things that we should expect to see when we are in a state of spiritual ease. Number one, there is a complacency toward approaching judgment.

Now, look with me, if you would, at verse number 3. The prophet says, he that put far away the evil day and caused the seed of violence to come near. Now, what was the evil day? It was a day of reckoning. It

was a day of judgment.

It was a day when all mankind would stand before the bar of God and give an account of themselves before God. It's a day where God will go through the books and judge the world by his Son, Jesus Christ, in truth and in righteousness. And what you have here is a people that have become so indifferent.

And in their indifference, they had dismissed from their mind, put far out of their thinking that there was a day of reckoning, a day of judgment coming. And as a result of that, there was no fear of God before their eyes. Therefore, in their judgment seats, in their places of court execution, wickedness was running rampant because there was no sense of God and no fear of God in the lives of those who had leadership positions to lead and to judge the people.

They had caused the seed of violence to come near the cause of their complacency and the deficiency in fearing God. Does it bother you like it bothers me that there's so very little preaching on judgment these days? Brethren, when's the last time you heard a message on hell? When is the last time you heard a message on the wrath of God? Can I tell you, can I just stir up your mind in a way of remembrance this morning? Our loved ones are headed for a judgment that is indescribable if they've not cast themselves upon the mercy of Christ. Where are the Jonathan Edwards these days that preach such messages as sinners in the hands of an angry God? Where are the Asa Nettleton's? If you study his book, the sermons from the second great awakening, I tell you, the titles themselves are hair raising.

The man saw over 30,000 people converted, not decisions, not praying prayers, but converted in his day in the second great awakening. And you read through some of those titles there, and such a title as abandoned by God exists. And a sure destruction for the impenitent.

We're not hearing messages on wrath. That's why there's so much psychology in the church. People have got to be constantly helped up and propped up because God's never changed the hearts.

At best, the house has been swept and garnished. And all of it comes as a result of such a dearth of preaching on wrath and judgment and hell. I asked Martin Lloyd-Jones on one occasion during an interview with Christianity Today.

I said, Dr. Jones, tell us, in the light of the plight economically and politically and ecclesiastically in the church, in the British Isles, what do you believe that God is saying to the Christians there? What do you believe God is saying to the country? And Lloyd-Jones, without hesitation, said, I believe that God is saying, flee from the wrath to come. Every round of questions, everything they brought up about the problems in the British Isles, his same answer was, flee from the wrath to come. And then he closed the interview.

They said, do you have any concluding word, any parting word for us? And once again, he spoke very succinctly. He said, flee from the wrath to come and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Can I tell you something? Revival preaching, I'm finding, is gospel preaching.

The reason we're not seeing genuine revival and sustained revival, as Denny mentioned last night, is because there is such a dearth of gospel preaching in the lands. And sadly, even as my friend Paul Washer said, the reason for that is not that we're not preaching the gospel. We don't understand the gospel.

We don't understand the nature of the gospel. And you see, gospel preaching is not only gospel promises, friend, it is gospel warnings. I like the words of Solomon Stoddard, the grandfather of Jonathan Edwards.

What a great heritage he had. But Solomon Stoddard said that the purpose of preaching is not to strut our wit or eloquence, but to set the consciences of men on fire. Can I ask you something, friend? When's the last time you heard preaching that sets the consciences of men on fire? You don't hear it these days.

Rather, we have preachers who sugarcoat the message, who prophesy smooth sayings, who say, peace, peace, where there is no peace. That's where we are today. And that's why our churches in Canada and the United States are in such a pitiful condition.

We have overlooked, we have dismissed intentionally judgments from our minds, and even in our preaching. Whatever happened to the days of men like Leonard Ravenhill, who used to say, if in heaven they sing worthy is the lamb, in hell they will sing the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. I tell you, friend, if you've ever had the privilege of sitting under preaching like that, that is the mercy of God.

Don't ever scorn it. Don't ever back off of it. You welcome preaching with intensity that will not only preach gospel promises, but also gospel warnings.

Because I tell you, some people are going to have to be awakened out of their sleep. As Whitfield said, the church is in a deep sleep, and only a loud voice will awaken it. And thank God that God is raising up some men today with a prophetic message.

There's a second thing you find in our text here. Another effect of being at ease in Zion is there's a love for pleasure more than a love for God. Look at verses 4 and 6. Chapter 6, verses 4 and 6. The scripture says of these people, they lie upon beds of ivory.

This priceless furniture they have had imported in. They're stretched out on their beds of ivory. They stretch themselves up on their couches.

They eat the lambs out of the flock, the choicest of meats, and the calves out of the midst of the stall. Look at verse 6. They drink wine in bowls. Not in cups, not in goblets, but in bowls.

You see the picture of overindulgence here. And they anoint themselves with a chief ointment. These people are given the pleasure.

Isn't it interesting what Paul would say in 2 Timothy chapter number 3? That one of the marks of the last days is that men will be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Then would it surprise you if I were to tell you that last year professing Christians spent billions of dollars on entertainment? Would it also surprise you if I were to tell you that professing Christians in North America spent more money on cat and dog food than they invested in missions? Isn't it a sad commentary? You can see where our priorities are. And why are we so desperate and need a touch from God? My wife and I went out to dinner one night.

We're standing in line to be seated. And in this particular restaurant, they had television monitors throughout the restaurant. As we're standing there talking, I looked up and apparently someone had missed their cue.

Because most of those restaurants, they have sports or they have news. They have something that's entertaining, perhaps some type of a sitcom of some sort that people love to watch. But on that particular occasion, someone had missed their cue.

And the channel there throughout the restaurant on all these monitors was a documentary on global starvation. And the commentator and the cameraman would pan these cameras back and forth from child to child. And you can see the malnutrition.

You can see their noses were running and their lips were parched and saliva had just dried in the corners of their mouth. And the corners of their mouth were cracked and their flies were caked all over their faces and their heads. And their bellies were terribly inflated from starvation.

And suddenly I looked down below and I saw people. They were drinking and they were eating and they were laughing. And everyone was oblivious to the need of the world.

And I thought, what better picture of the church in North America even in the church, friend, we're so given to pleasure. It seems as if there's such a gross insensitivity to the needs of those, even physical needs of those in the world, the world in which we live. I don't know about you, but I'm 53 years of age and I have determined more than ever not to waste my life.

I do want to finish in a blaze. Much like Jacques Troup, he said, oh, God, I was born in the fire. Don't leave me standing in the ashes.

He saw a glorious revival. He longed to see it again. But he wanted to live passionately for God's glory, to be a zealot for Christ.

But I tell you, friend, it's amazing to me. It was something that I am quite taken back with of the things that people are delving into and becoming consumed with to waste their lives. It's like the couple, 58 years of age, the man and the lady was 51.

They retired early so they can move to the beaches of Boca Raton, Florida, and they live on the beach and daily, seven days a week, walk the beaches to collect seashells. Can you imagine these people standing before Jesus Christ one day and saying, Lord, see my shells? And I think of how I sat right here in the state of Ohio at a pastor's table one night and he had invited a man and his wife to have dinner with my wife and I. And the lady, she boasted and she talked about for 30 minutes how she spent six and a half hours every day on the Internet playing the stock market. And I thought, what a waste.

What a waste. But you see, this is one of the effects of being at ease, friend. We're given to pleasure.

I mean, we spend no expense for creature comforts as long as it accommodates my desires. But there's something else I want you to see here in verse number five. There's an increased desire for entertainment that leads to sensual music.

There's an increased desire for entertainment that results in a sensual sound of music. Look at verse five. It says they chant.

The Hebrew word there means mindless worship. They engage in a mindless worship to the sound of the vial and invent to themselves instruments of music. And then they justify by saying, well, David did it.

But the sound that David composed was an entirely different sound than what these people are composing. I know some of you are probably sitting there and you said, Brother Curran, he's a legalist. He's narrow-minded.

Friend, nothing could be further from the truth. I will say this. I believe everybody that's on the narrow road is narrow-minded.

Friend, I tell you, if Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul were living today, they'd be the biggest legalists in the world. Hard sales. But I have some flexibility in music.

I think there's some tremendous choruses that have been composed today. And I think they're written to some wonderful music that makes the spirit soar toward God. I don't have a problem with that, friend.

I love the old hymns of the faith, but I love many of the present-day choruses that are God-centered and biblical. But there is much of sounds that are coming out of the contemporary church today that are soulless and sensual and do nothing but cater to the flesh. You know, I suppose sometimes I'm tempted to ask some of these people that are so caught up in their music, and the only reason it seems like they come to church is for the music, this question.

If they took the music away, would you still follow Jesus? And I tell you, I've been in some meetings before that you've got some performers that come in, and they will sing, and they will play their instruments, and they're rocking and rolling up there, and I'm sitting there, and I'm grieved on the front row. And as soon as it's over, their performance is over, they move out the side door, they pack up their vehicle, and they move on. They won't even stay for the preaching.

Something's wrong. My former pastor, T.P. Johnston, said, the message we preach today is walk in the spirits, but our music says walk in the flesh. Have you ever thought about the importance of trying the spirit of music? Can I give you just some things? Once again, I don't think that these things are narrow.

I think they're very biblical. But here are some good tests for music, just in passing. Number one, can I hear the word of God clearly over the music when it is sung? Matthew chapter 13, verse 23, everybody talks about the importance of gospel music, but listen, friend.

Before a sinner can come to Christ, there are two things that they must experience. Number one, they must hear the word of the gospel, and secondly, according to Matthew 13, they must understand it. My concern is, how can they understand something that they cannot hear? Do the lyrics take precedence over the music itself? Fannie Crosby said, it is never right to take the lyrics of Zion and put them to the tune of Babylon.

Secondly, here's another test. Does the music enlarge my vision of the glory of God? Exodus chapter 13, after the Israelites had been delivered, you recall that the Lord engaged in that glorious song, that praise to God as their redeemer, as their deliverer, and it's interesting, friend, as you study that, it's completely God-centered. It's full of God.

Does the music enlarge my vision of the glory of God? Third question, does it produce the fruit of holiness in my life? Romans chapter 6 and verse 19. Number four, does the music communicate sound biblical doctrine? Colossians chapter 3 and verse 16. And here's a final test.

Does the music tend to sedate the mind and make it insensible to God's truth? In other words, friend, to which part of my being is the music most ministering to? Romans chapter 13, verse 14. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof. Yes, Martin Lord Jones warned, we can become drunk on music.

There is no question about that. Music can have the effect of creating an emotional state in which the mind is no longer functioning as it should be and no longer discriminating. He said, I have known people to sing themselves into a state of intoxication without realizing what they were doing.

Music. But there's a fourth thing I want you to see, and that is in verse number six. You find here there's a growing insensitivity to the needs of those around them.

Look at the little phrase there in the latter part of verse six. They are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Now, it's very important to note, friend, who Joseph is here.

It's representing, it's a title for the common people. And during this day, these common people were poverty stricken. They were struggling to make ends meet physically while these people were living high on the hog on the Mount of Samaria.

And those that were so victimized by their affluence, their prosperity, were insensitive to the needs of these people that were struggling just to survive. Can I tell you something once again? It seemed like sometimes we're so inundated with our creature comforts in the church that we're insensitive to the needs of those around us. Perhaps those in our neighborhood.

Perhaps those around the world. Perhaps those in our own congregation. The story is told of a fishing village that was just inside a cove off the ocean.

And ships would come and they would try to deliver their cargo. There was no problem as long as there was no turbulence. But if there was any measure of storm, the ships were in peril.

The story goes how many times the ships would crash on the rocks during the storm. And the people in the village, the fishing village, could hear the cries of the perishing. One day, someone got the idea, you know, perhaps we need to do something.

There are many men losing their lives. It'd be good if we built a very sturdy platform there just inside the cove. So if the ships are dashed on the rocks, we can reach out and we can rescue the perishing.

Now, wouldn't you know it, it seemed to work for a while. And then someone said, you know, at times our lives are in peril because the wind is so brisk. It'd be good to put a wall around that platform.

And so they did. And then somebody suggested a roof over that thing. Because after all, at times the rain comes down in torrents and the visibility is non-existent.

And so it'd be good if we had a roof over it where we could still reach out and rescue the perishing. Someone suggested a door because after all, it got cold and damp at times. So they put a door on the structure.

And then somebody said, well, we've got some carpet. And they laid down this beautiful carpet on the floor. And then someone said it would be nice to have a TV because after all, while we're waiting for the next ship, it would be good to stay abreast of current happenings.

And so they bought a television. And then it wasn't long before somebody supplied it with a refrigerator and then a bed and other creature comforts. And wouldn't you know it, friend, it was a sad story.

The ships continued to come. They entered that cove. And when the storms would brew, the ships were dashed in the rocks.

The sailors were cast into the sea. But the people in that little room could no longer hear the cries of the perishing. And that's where we are in the church today.

We're way too pleased in our local churches. We're too consumed with pleasure. You see, they have become insensitive to the common people.

They were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Well, let me move on. I want to give you a third thing just in passing here quickly.

The judgment that awaits those who are at ease. You notice here in Amos chapter six, verses seven through 14. And I'm just going to highlight this for you for the sake of time.

But follow with me in your Bibles. Notice it says there in verse seven, God says, therefore, now shall they go captive. The scripture says toward the end of verse seven, that they shall be removed.

Then you look at verse eight. God said, I applaud the excellency of Jacob and I hate his palaces. Therefore, will I deliver up the city? You move on to verse nine.

It says that they shall die. And then down in verse number 11, it says the Lord, for behold, the Lord commanded. And he will smite the great house with breaches and the little house with clefts.

Look down in verse 14. Once again, God manifesting his judgment. But behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel.

And then at the latter part of verse number 14, he says, they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hemath under the river of the wilderness. Have you ever noticed this? How many parables in our Lord's Gospels are devoted to warnings against laziness, complacency? Have you ever considered what is given to us in Matthew chapter number 25? You recall the parable there of the talents, how one man was given five and another two, and one man was given one talent. And the first two, they invested them well, they used them well, and they earned that commendation, well done, thou good and faithful servants.

But the one man did not invest his talent wisely, but rather he went and hid it. And I want you to listen to these words. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man reaping where thou hast not sown and gathering where thou hast not stroved.

And I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth. Lo, there thou hast that is thine. Now watch what he says in verse number 26.

His Lord answered and said unto him, thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sow not and gather where I not strove. Now, what was the result of this? What did this master do to his servants? You read on and you see these very alarming words down in verse number 29. For unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

Watch the destiny of the servant now. Cast ye the unprofitable servants into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Brethren, this man did not lose. His eternal reward, he lost his soul. Faith without works is still dead, still dead.

And if you do not invest your resources in the kingdom of God, if your faith is not alive, if it's not evident in your life, friend, perhaps you are a stranger to the grace of God. You see, it's interesting, this very text, as you move on, you find there also in Matthew chapter 25, verses 1 through 13, the ten virgins, what was the problem? They were not prepared. They did not have oil in the lamp.

They were not readying themselves for the bridegroom's return. And they were shut out. And then you find the words of our Savior there in Matthew chapter 25, verses 31 through 46.

Look at that with me for just a moment before we close. Matthew chapter number 25, verse 31. Once again, what is the judgment upon these people? Why does it come? It is because of their slothfulness.

The scripture tells us that they, in verse number 33, that he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. And then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come you blessed to my father and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was a hundred and you gave me meat and I was thirsty and you gave me drink and I was a stranger and you took me in.

I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. But notice in contrast to that in verse 37, then shall the righteous answer him saying, Lord, when shall we be a hundred and fed thee or thirsty and gave them drink? And he gives them the reason why.

But you notice as you read on that in verse 42, there were those that did no works. They did not. They were not sensitive to the Lord in accommodating the needs of those about them.

It says in verse 42, for I was a hundred and you gave me no meat. I was thirsty and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger and you took me not in naked and you called me not sick and in prison and you visited me not.

Then shall they also answer him saying, Lord, when saw we be a hundred? And he tells them when. Then shall he answer them. Look at verse 45, saying, Verily, I say unto you inasmuch as you did it, not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.

And there shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous unto life eternal. Now, for you, listen to me. I believe that if we're indifferent and complacent, it is not a good sign that the work of God is transpired in our hearts.

And can I tell you something this morning? I believe a person that has been that way for many years without any conviction or evidence of chastisement of God upon their life is still under the sentence of spiritual death. They've never been born again. Listen to what Spurgeon said.

It is one of the surest marks of a lost and ruined state when we are careless and indifferent concerning God. And once again, my only problem with conferences like this is they attract people that want another spiritual high, but it only lasts for a few days or a week. And then they go right back into their sin like a dog to its vomit and like a sow that was washed to its wallowing in the mire.

And there's no grounds of assurance for him if that is your lifestyle. There's no assurance that you're truly born from above. Let me close with this this morning.

I want to just give you some practical ways on how you can stir yourself out of complacency. Because, friend, perhaps this is the prelude to real revival. This is the beginning to real personal revival for you.

How can I stir myself? I am concerned, preacher. And perhaps the very reason you're concerned this morning is because you have been birthed into God's kingdom. If you're sitting there and you could care less, friend, it is not a good sign that Christ has saved you.

But if you're in the Lord Jesus, you are concerned. You say, preacher, what can I do to get myself back on the cutting edge of spiritual passion once again? Let me close with this. First of all, I would encourage you to remove anything that is doubtful in your life.

Anything, listen, that is causing spiritual passion to wane. Anything. Any sin, any weight, any idol, any relationship, whatever it is that's distracting you from Christ and causing spiritual passion to wane, part company with it.

The Bible says in Acts chapter 24 and verse 16, herein do I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense between God and all men. Can I tell you something, brethren? Spiritual passion is not self-induced. It doesn't come as a result of dragging yourself out of the bed and going through some type of physical exercise.

Spiritual passion begins by doing business with God and clearing your conscience. Because these weights and these sins can take their toll upon our life and drag us, be a spiritual drag on our walk with Jesus Christ. I'll share with you how revival began with me.

Back in the late 70s, not long after I graduated from Bible college, God began to put incredible pressure on me. There were things that he had forgiven me for, but I had not righted the wrongs. There were some things that I needed to make restitution in.

Yes, the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses from all sin. But there were some things that God said, you're not going to have a sense of my affirmation. I will not be able to use you to the extent that I desire to until you put these things right with others.

The very first thing that I had to do is go back to Bible college and admit that I cheated on examinations my first year there. I asked the president of that school to forgive me, and he did. And I asked him, I said, what do I need to do to make this thing right? And he told me.

The second thing I had to do is call the Internal Revenue Service and admit that I cheated on my tax returns. I remember the agent from the Internal Revenue Service. She was on the phone, and when I made my appeal to her, she stuttered and stammered.

She said, well, nobody's ever done this before. And I said, well, that's beside the point. I said, I'm calling to ask you to forgive me as a representative of the IRS.

And she said, I forgive you. And I said, now tell me what I need to do to make this thing right. And she did.

And in those days, I noticed something that the promise of God was, yea, and amen in Christ Jesus, for if we draw near to God with clean hands and a pure heart, God will draw near to us. Reality began to be

more and more in my life. Christ became a reality.

His presence became more real. Joy, unspeakable and full of glory. What an affirmation that it was well with my soul.

It was because I was approaching Him with clean hands and a pure heart. Remove anything doubtful in your life, anything that is causing reality to wane. Number two, listen, resolve to live for eternity.

Resolve to live for eternity, brethren. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verses 9 and 10. Whether we labor that whether present or absent, we may be accepted.

The word there means affirm, approved by Him. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad. And I tell you, in my library at home, I have over 4,000 volumes.

A large portion of that library is the biography and autobiography of great Christians. And friend, here's what I've noted. Those that were set apart by God from the common love that God used so greatly for his glory.

Without exception, the men and women that God mightily used were people of eternity. They did not wait until tomorrow things that needed to be put right today. You see such things in journals like Robert Murray Machine, who recorded, I love to live on the verge.

Brainerd said, I love to live on the brink of eternity. But Shane, do you know what he would do to always keep eternity in view? He would visit regularly the sick and the dying in his congregation. He said their infirm stay as they were on the threshold of eternity was a vivid, sober reminder of how quickly he would stand before God.

And he did, because he died at 29 years of age. We must live for eternity. Number three, listen, just two more.

Count not your life dear unto yourself. Acts chapter 20 and verse 24. Paul said, but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry.

Can I tell you something, brethren? The reason many people are not finishing their course with joy and the ministry is because they have never come before God and said, Lord, from this day forward, I will not count my life dear unto myself. There will always be a drag. There will always be a diversion.

If you're living for yourself, that's when you come and say, God, I want you to take all of my affections and all of my ambitions and all of my life. Lord, I count not my life dear unto me any longer. Charles Spurgeon never missed an opportunity to take advantage of an illustration.

It tells a story of a soldier under Antigonus, the mighty ruler, and how this soldier had a terrible disease that was soon to bring him to the grave, but he would always rush into the charge and he would fight at the front of the battle in the hottest parts. It goes on to say that the reason he did such is because his pain prompted him to fight that he might forget his affliction because he thought I have nothing to live for. But the day came when the conqueror Antigonus learned of the valor of his soldier and he had him cured by one of his most prominent doctors of that day.

From that moment on, he was conspicuously absent from the front of the battle. For he says, now I have something worth living for health, home, family, and other comforts. And he would not risk his life as he had before times.

Now, once again, I told you, Spurgeon never misses an opportunity to take advantage. Listen to this. He says, when our troubles are many, we are often by grace made courageous in serving our gods.

We feel that we have nothing to live for in this world, and we are driven by hope of the world to come to exhibit zeal, self-denial, and industry. But how often is it otherwise in better times? For then the joys and pleasures of this world make it hard for us to remember the world to come, and we sink into an inglorious ease. Can I tell you something? You have the problems that you need.

Perhaps you say my maid is not very cooperative. Perhaps you're thinking my children are wayward. They rise up against me at times.

Perhaps you say things are not going very well at the church right now. My expectations are not being met. Perhaps you've just learned that you have cancer.

But friend, would you capitalize upon those things and turn them for good, to use them for God's glory? That may be the very thing that you need to keep you on the cutting edge of serving God passionately. And then finally, here's number four. Never be content with where you are spiritually.

Never be content with where you are spiritually. The Apostle Paul, Revelations, the recipient of miracles, yes, many innumerable. All these great manifestations of God's power and works, and yet he said in Philippians chapter three and verse 14, I press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I press, I strive, I pull myself up. I keep on going. I refuse to be encumbered by things of the past, whether good or bad.

I press on. Listen to me. When you hear a message like this, oftentimes you're stirred.

Perhaps you feel the stinging, the stinging effects of God's Holy Spirit. You're awakened temporarily out of sleep and you have good intentions, but you don't follow through and do anything about it. It's like laying in the bed in morning.

Have you ever been sound asleep before? And the sleep was very, very sweet. And someone came to the door and said, it's time to get up. Or perhaps the alarm clock went off.

Or maybe someone came in and shook you. But the sleep was so sound and so sweet, you didn't want to get up. And so you moved.

Perhaps you turned to the other side and you found yourself falling back into sleep, except it was a sounder. And even a deeper sleep. Can I tell you something, friend? There'll be some people in this revival conference.

You're going to hear a message or there'll be a word that's especially for you. And it will awaken you out of your sleep. But I warn you, if you don't rise up, old men of God and women of God and do something about it, you may fall back into a deeper sleep.

And it may be the sleep of spiritual death. Because Ralph Saterre and others will tell you how many people have come to conferences like this and they get stirred up and they went back and because it didn't work or it didn't last, they go into apostasy and they leave God totally. It may not happen to you.

It may not happen to you. It may not happen to me. I encourage you today, because I'm so frustrated.

And I don't have all the answers and I've tried to make it work before. Listen to me, friend. I say this in love to you.

A bruised reed will he not break and a smoking flax will he not quench until he brings judgment into victory. If you feel so frustrated and so defeated and so distant right now, I'm telling you, Jesus is near to you. And he's the great reviver.

And he can come along and heal and restore and revive your spirit. And he can make it last. As long as you determine your life, I'm going to be enamored with Christ and Christ alone.

Revival victory is not in a principle. It's in a person, Christ. Look to him and he will revive you.

God bless you. Let's all pray. Father, I just rambled on, Lord, this morning, it seems.

But I pray, God, that you might take this content and that you would use it for your glory. Thank you for your people, Lord. These that have come, we just think so many folks have come from some great distances.

And God, I pray that no one would leave this conference feeling like it's just not going to work for me. I remember what happened in the past and didn't last. Lord, I pray that this time that their focus would be on Christ, that they would press on.

Lord, when it comes to such vital areas as prayer, secret prayer and consecration and cross-bearing and the study and meditation of your word, Lord, that they would learn to use those things as a means to feed off of Christ and that you would make them, Lord, passionate servants of yours. Lord, when we take this warning to heart, we'll be unto those who would ease in Zion. God, deliver us from indifference in these days and keep us, Lord, by your grace and for your glory on the cutting edge of eternal realities.

And we'll give you praise and honor in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Well, the altar is open. Prayer room is open. If God is speaking to your heart, let me encourage you to go there and tarry there as long as it takes for God to bring what he's spoken to your heart about to fruition.

I mean, you know, here's my concern. Oftentimes, we only tarry on our knees long enough to tell God what we have to say and not long enough to hear what he has to say to us. And so I encourage you, take advantage of these days of God's speaking to your heart.

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