

Wreckers of Churches

by Emanuel Esh

The church's failure to manifest God's glory and make all men see the fellowship of the mystery of the gospel is due to its failure to see the right thing, focus on spiritual warfare, and be vessels unto honor.

Duration: 1:05:50

Scripture: Ephesians 3:7

Topics: "Dishonor"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by expressing joy and gratitude for God's power and grace. He then reflects on a testimony shared by someone who felt alone and without anyone to witness to them. The preacher questions the role of the church in reaching out to those in need and emphasizes the importance of sharing the message of salvation. The sermon also includes a fictional dialogue between demons discussing their struggles to infiltrate churches where prayer and genuine fellowship are present.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Lord, we come to you this evening again.

Our hearts are overwhelmed with joy at your mighty power, at your marvelous grace that reaches down and touches sinners of such kind. Yea, we all are in need of that marvelous grace. Lord, would you now fill this vessel with your power and your Spirit.

Lord, would you now speak to the congregation. Would you flow, Lord, through this vessel, your burden, in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.

You may be seated. Well, that was a truly inspiring testimony. I wish I'd be able to just flow right on out with that and preach a good salvation message, but that's not what the Lord has laid on my heart for

tonight.

So, you have to bear with me. One of the thoughts I had as he was sharing was, he shared how that there was no one there to share with him and witness to him. Why not? And my question is, where was the church? Where was the church? What was the church doing? And where was she? I don't know the number of churches represented here.

I'm guessing it's probably 40, 50. I don't know. But where are we? And what are we doing? If I were just to draw a dot for each church that is represented here, on this board up here, I suppose I'd need to make about 50 dots all over, just picture the churches all over this nation at this point.

If that represents you, I want you just to bear that in mind a little bit. Because God has called the church to a specific work. And part of that work is to make manifest to other men the glory of God.

Through her love. One for another. And then there's a scripture in Ephesians 3. Turn there quickly.

Ephesians 3, 7-11. Wherefore I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, Paul is speaking, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles, people like that that have never heard, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. Yes, to make all men see. Where was the church and what was she doing? To make all men see what is the mystery of the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hidden God, who created all things by Christ Jesus.

To the intent, this is the second witness. Yes, the church needs to be a witness and a testimony among men, but also to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reading that version in NIV, it says this in verse 10. His intent was that now through the church the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realm. And God has chosen the church to manifest His glory to mankind and also to the principalities and powers in heavenly places.

Paul says it in Colossians, he says, For this cause, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. God is desiring that we would receive spiritual understanding. Why? That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to His glorious power.

Think about that. Strengthened with all might according to what? His glorious power. That's awesome.

Unto what? All patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. Many times when we think of the power of God coming down and visiting us, we think of great and mighty things, don't we? But here it implies that the purpose, one of the purposes of receiving this glorious power is unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. The title of the message tonight, brothers and sisters, is Wreckers of Churches.

Wreckers of Churches. But if you have the power, this kind of glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness, that is where we need the power of God. To be patient and to be longsuffering one with another.

Giving thanks to God, to the Father which hath made us meet, to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us, brothers, from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. That's what Paul is saying in Colossians.

Now, why Wreckers of Churches? I don't get much involved in the many churches that are out there. But sitting in a meeting here several weeks ago, I heard the grievous news that there were four churches mentioned that are basically falling apart. And those four are represented here, I believe.

That was a grief to my heart. Why is that happening? We know that Jesus said to Peter, He said, And by that verse, we can gain some insight and knowledge that there is a war going on. It indicates that there is a war, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

So, it means that there is a prevailing going on, that it means that the gates of hell are there, and it does mean that something is working against the church. But Jesus Christ promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church. When we think of Wreckers of Churches, I'm not speaking of a big bulldozer out here pushing down a building.

I'm not speaking of someone lighting a match to a church and burning it down. We're not even speaking of the coven of witches down the street doing their incantations, nor of the local witch doctor throwing his curses at us. That's not what we're speaking about.

We're not speaking about the persecution of the churches. When Saul was persecuted in the church, the church prospered. Persecution causes the church to prosper.

What are we talking about? The wrecking of churches is done from within. We want to look at some spiritual warfare tonight. Just a few things.

And I don't want anyone to take what I say and put over emphasis on the devil or so forth. But I do believe that we need to face reality or we'll wake up someday when it's too late to a ruination of some of our churches. What is really real? What is real? Romans 1.20 has a couple of verses for us.

Romans 1.20 says, For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen. The invisible things are clearly seen. How many of you can clearly see the invisible? But it says that they are being understood.

They are understood by the things that are made. The invisible things are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power in Godhead. And then in 2 Corinthians 4.18 we have another verse that says, While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.

For the things which are seen with these eyes are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. And so we understand that the things that we see with these eyes are temporary things, but the things that they represent behind what we see are eternal things. That is some of the foundation for what I want to

share about tonight.

Ephesians 6 says, For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Why then do we allow churches to be ruined? I believe it is because we are not seeing the right thing. We are not looking at the right place.

We end up looking at my brother and at my sister and we end up speaking words which are not right against the brother or against the sister and thereby we become vessels in the hand of the enemy in ruining churches, in wrecking churches. That is what happens. That's what happens.

You and I are vessels. We're just simply vessels and you and I can choose who we'll serve. We can choose, we have the mental ability to choose whether or not I'm going to allow the Lord Jesus Christ to use this vessel to his honor and his glory or whether I'm going to allow the devil to use this vessel for his glory, for his destructive purposes.

Satan is very real. Ephesians 4.27 says, Neither give place to the devil. James 4.7 says, Submit yourselves to God.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 1 Peter 5 says, Humble yourselves therefore unto the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil is as a roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour.

We have a very clear picture here that there is a devil out there who is walking about. The devil is walking about and he is seeking whom he may devour. And he will use anyone, any brother, any sister who yields themselves to him, he will use them for his work, his evil work.

And one part, a major part of the work of Satan is wrecking churches. He does it shamelessly. He does it continually.

And so we will lose if we don't have our focus in the right place. If we're wrestling with flesh and blood, we're the losers. But the Bible says we wrestle not with flesh and blood.

My question is, what is happening when a church is wrecked? Someone has been wrestling with the wrong thing. And someone was being used as vessels in the hand of the enemy. 2 Timothy 2.20 says, But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

In a great house there are vessels of gold and silver. And then there are vessels of wood and of earth. There are some vessels in the house that are unto honor and there are some vessels that are unto dishonor.

My question to you tonight is, what vessel are you? Are you a vessel unto honor or are you a vessel that is being used for dishonor? Some of the vessels of dishonor would be the toilet where all the garbage goes in or the garbage pail. Vessels of dishonor. But in a great house there are also vessels of gold and silver.

Vessels that are to drink water out of. Vessels that we can eat off and so forth. What kind of a vessel are you tonight? What kind of a vessel have you been? And just reflect with me.

Have I allowed the devil to use this vessel to the destruction of God's work? Turn with me to 1 Kings 22. We want to look at the reality of our enemy tonight. 1 Kings 22 This is the story of Jehoshaphat.

A king of Judah. 1 Kings 22 A little bit of background before we read the Scriptures here. King Jehoshaphat, he was king of Judah.

Ahab was king of Israel. There was a divided kingdom there. And King Jehoshaphat went down to visit the king of Israel.

And the king of Israel, Ahab, he invited King Jehoshaphat to go to battle with him against Syria. To go and take Ramath Gilead. Jehoshaphat agreed to go with him.

I'm not sure why he did that. But he agreed to go alone. And before they went to battle, he wanted to hear what the prophets had to say about this battle.

And that was a normal thing they would do. They would inquire of the Lord about how the battle would go. And so, that is the little bit of background of the story there.

We could begin to read. I think I'll just tell the story. What happened there is that Jehoshaphat, or King Ahab, had 400 prophets.

And they went to these 400 prophets to ask them how the battle was going to go. And they all said that it is going to be well. You're going to win the battle.

You're going to be victors in this battle. Well, King Jehoshaphat was not quite satisfied with the 400 prophets of Israel and Ahab. So, he asked, is not there a man of the Lord, a man from God around here, who could prophesy also? Oh, King Ahab said, yes, there is one.

His name is Micaiah. But I don't like him, he said. He doesn't prophesy good to me.

I don't want to hear what he has to say. And so, they had Micaiah come. And the messenger who went to bring Micaiah, they told him, they said, well, Micaiah, now, this is what the 400 other prophets said.

Now, you better say something in line with that. And so, he came there before the king and he also prophesied the same thing. And King Jehoshaphat said, he inquired him and he said, I want you to tell me the truth of what is going to happen.

And then Micaiah said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd. Verse 17. And the Lord said, these have no master.

Let them return every man to his house in peace. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, did not I tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me but evil? And he said, hear thou therefore the word of the Lord. Now, look at this picture.

The prophet Micaiah saw something there. And he said, I saw the Lord sitting on his throne. And all the hosts of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left hand.

Now, who do you suppose was standing at the right hand? And who do you suppose was standing at the left hand? Evidently, there was two groups there. Because, as we read, and the Lord said, who? Now, look at this. The Lord said, who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And

one said on this manner and another said on that manner.

And the picture here is that someone came, something came and said, this is what I will do to try to bring that battle to pass. And another one came and said, this is what I will do. And finally, it says, and there came forth a spirit.

These were spirits and I believe they were evil angels probably coming from his left hand side. I believe probably God's holy angels were on the right hand side. But on this side, there must have been some evil angels because here's some evil spirit came and he said, I will persuade him.

And the Lord said to him, wherewith? How are you going to persuade him? And that evil spirit said, I will go forth and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, thou shalt persuade him and prevail also go forth and do so. Now, behold, now, therefore, behold, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these by prophets and the Lord has spoken evil concerning thee.

Do you see the picture? Do you read something like this and just kind of think, well, that's a nice little story. Or can we read something like this and realize and learn something about the principalities and the powers of darkness, rulers and wicked places and so forth. There's reality to these things.

I've asked a family to come and share tonight a family version of a song that they did several weeks ago. And they titled it Records of Churches. And I want you to listen to what they have to share.

And afterward, I want to share some more of what God has made on my heart. The records of churches. The prince of the legions of darkness was sitting ensconced on his teetering throne, awaiting an army of specialized demons whose job was the wrecking of churches.

Report, barked the prince. One by one, they came forward and told of the churches they had wrecked. Wantonly, shamelessly, splitting them up with a pitiless, morbid effect.

I drove the wedges, said jealousy slyly, a shriveled black imp with a glare. I invaded their thoughts with satanical skill. It's a sin to break up, fellow Christians.

Oh, yes, mere mistrust. I am far more effective. I sit on their shoulders and whisper.

I perched there for instance and say to a member, your brother's a teller of tales. Next, I say he's a liar. Then I say he's deceitful.

Then I say, you just watch him a bit. And before very long, he sees all kinds of things and soon becomes sour and bitter. Up came a demon, slander by name, to tell of his tell on the churches.

You wouldn't believe, he said with great fame, of how many Christians do listen to all of my words, lies and delusions, hypocrisy and evil conclusions. And then I whisper, go tell your neighbor, brother and sister of your concern for this member. And before they know it, I have my net set and every gossiper falls in it.

Ha, you would never have one but for me, despised him so with this bat. I fill their minds with despising thoughts and tell them, look how this believer does this and that. Then I say, they're not near as spiritual as you.

You need not treat them the same as you should. Ho, ho, laughed old hatred, veteran demon. You'd send him to have one but for me.

I take special delight in splitting up churches, he chuckled with hideous glee. Up piped an imp, pride was his name. If it were not for me, he cackled.

If I had not got them all stirred off wrong, you'd be shots with still mighty shackled. Backbiting bitterness, envy and boaster, covetousness all took their turn. Spite made a hit, hatred another, with tales that would make your ears burn.

Did you get them all, roared the prince from his throne. They were shamed faced and suddenly still. They shriveled in silence and trembled with terror.

Appearing dejected and ill. Report, barked the prince. What have you to say? One quivered, you simply don't know what it's like in some churches.

We are demons of darkness and simply can't get through the glow. What glow? We don't know just what, said the imp with a tremulous grin. For one thing, they start the day with a prayer for each other.

And that kind, well, it's hard to get in. So, said the prince. It is true, countered jealousy.

Oh, you don't know how I've tried. I have pounded their ears, I have battered their brains. But I had to get out, or I died.

The moment I come to a believing Christian, they call him the one, you know who. And he comes, and I haven't a chance in the world. In that case, prince, just what would you do? And I, sir, said hatred, have neither a chance.

Not a ghost of a chance, I say. When Christians sing and rejoice, ministering one to another each day. You can't say that I haven't tried, pouted anger.

Sometimes I'll even get in. And just when I think I am winning the battle, they jump up and call me a sin. I, said old merciless, lolling around.

If hatred can't do it, why bother? For with love in the way, those brothers and sisters do nothing but slay for each other. And I, mumbled envy, I know who's at fault. It's that foe who again is alive.

They sing about him, and they talk about him. And I haven't a chance to survive. Pride crouched low, so the prince of the ranks would forget that he even was there.

He spied him in spite of it. Pride, why did you not tempt every pair? I tried for my pride, but what can you do? Some won't even bite, some repent. And the enemy comes, and he chases you out.

And sir, when he sins, you are sinned. Are there many churches left where we haven't a foothold? The prince of the specialists inquired. Quite a few, sighed theimps.

They are simply impervious. They have left us all weakened and wearied. Those churches prevail and remain steadfast.

It's no wonder the Christians persevere in God's work. They get harder and harder and harder to wreck. Those churches where the brothers and sisters have Christ at the head and pray for each other are honest, sincere, and true.

Fervent in love, one for another. Encouraging and strengthening too. And frankly, we'll tell you, to break up that kind is more than we demons can do.

Thank you, Dunn family. Jesus, in the book of Revelations, he very clearly, as he spoke there to John the Revelator about the churches, he mentions about the church of Smyrna in chapter 2 that there were some in the church who were of the synagogue of Satan. Of Pergamos, he says, it was Satan's throne and his dwelling place.

In that city, not necessarily the church, in Tharatarra, there was that woman Jezebel and her fornications. The spirit of Jezebel was in that church. Worldly, dressing, fornication, turning people away to other things.

That's what Jezebel practiced. And she specifically is known as the mother of harlots and one that wears makeup. That's Jezebel.

The doctrines and the depths of Satan were there. To the church of Philadelphia, he says, that he would make them of the synagogue of Satan who weren't walking with him. What kind of a vessel are you? Why is it that in some churches, and maybe some of you who travel a lot or are visiting a lot of churches, you go to a church and you sense that there is a heavy oppression there.

Or maybe you sense there is a darkness there. Maybe you sense there is something wrong there. I've been there.

I've seen it. I've seen a darkness there. What is it? And are we not aware? Do we not realize what the enemy is doing? Let's look now at 2 Samuel 15 for the text.

This is another area that I see is very clearly an Old Testament principle of, in this case, wrecking a kingdom. But I believe that the spiritual powers of darkness behind this place are the same as they are today. I see the very same things manifesting here as I do today in the churches that are having a difficult time.

2 Samuel 15 is the story of Absalom's rebellion. Beware of Absalom's. The spirit of Absalom, I believe, is one that wrecks churches today.

Rebellion from within. It's not the ones persecuting the church from the outside. It's not the spiritual.

It's not those covens out there. Yes, they may be praying against you and so forth, but the only way that they can come in and wreck your church is if they have access to the vessels that are within the church. The only way.

And as you look at all these churches up here, I know that when you have that many churches that are being effective in the kingdom of God in their land, it is not going to be unnoticed by the enemy. He will attempt to distract them. He will attempt to take them the wrong way.

He will attempt to bring wrong doctrine in. He will attempt all manner of things to try to wreck and ruin the church as you heard by the poem that was quoted. But really, the only way that he is going to be able to wreck the churches is if he has vessels within the church that he can use.

Are you a vessel unto honor or a vessel unto dishonor? Absalom is the son of David, the king of Israel. At this time, in 2 Samuel chapter 15, we're going to go down verse by verse here. Verse 1, it says, And it came to pass after this that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses and fifty men to run before him.

Absalom had murdered his half-brother who had raped his sister, and in anger he had done that, and he was kept away from King David for a number of years there. Finally, he was welcomed back to Jerusalem, but it was about two years before David finally met him again. And in verse prior to this, it says that Absalom came there to the king and bowed himself down, and the king kissed him.

And it seemed like David forgave him. But then, look at what Absalom did. Absalom, he rose up in self-exaltation and pride and arrogance, and he took these men, he got fifty men to run before him, before his chariots, and what those fifty men basically were doing was they were exalting Absalom.

And that is the spirit of self-exaltation, which is a very prominent thing that comes into the churches, and that is one thing that will work its way into ruination and wrecking of churches, is the spirit of self-exaltation, pride and arrogance. Verse two, And Absalom rose up early and stood beside the way of the gate, and it was so that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is one of the tribes of Israel. And here we see that Absalom was a young man.

He was full of ambition. He was full of selfish ambition. He had a goal in mind.

He wanted people to think well of him. And so, where did he go? He went out there to the city gate, and whenever someone came in to see the king with a problem that they had, he would ask him where he was from and so forth, and would dialogue with him. He was very ambitious.

And sometimes young Christians are very ambitious, and I like it when they're full of zeal. Praise God for that. But oh, if we're not careful, these ambitious ones, they can get out of their place.

It may be a self-motivation that is taking them and wanting them to be lifted up and to be seen of men, and what they do, they actually go down to the gate and they kind of get people on their side. Wreckers of churches. Verse 3. Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right, but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

Craftiness and casting doubt against the leader. Casting doubt in the minds of the people against the leader. Well, you have a good point.

What you're saying is right, but I tell you, the leader won't really hear you. There's no use talking to him. He won't listen to you.

He's too busy. Casting doubt into the minds of the people. That is what Absalom was doing.

I tell you, be careful. Wreckers of churches. Do you think King David has time to listen to you? Do you think the pastor will take time to sit down with you? He's too busy.

Here, I'll tell you what we'll do. Tell me your problem. I can take care of it.

Craftiness. Verse 4 Absalom said, moreover, Oh, that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice. I, I, I. Look at me.

I would be able to help you. Oh, if I would just be made a judge in the land, I'd be able to help you. No, we would never say those words.

If I were just one of the ministers, or if I were a deacon or ordained as one of the elders, I would be one who would then be able to help you out. We would never say those words, but listen. Wreckers of churches are working.

Be careful. Deep in the heart of this selfish man is where it lies. No, we wouldn't say those words, but be careful.

Am I a vessel of honor, or am I a vessel that is going to be used to dishonor? Verse 5 And it was so that when any man came nigh to him to do him obedience, he put forth his hand and took him and kissed him. Why would he take this guy's hand and kiss it? It is flattery. Flattery.

Oh, beware of flattery, leaders. A flattery mouth worketh ruin. Did you know that? Oh, my.

And you know, the old man, if self has not been crucified, if self has not been broken of its own way, then that old man will stand right up there beside you. Every time you get to preach, every time someone gives you a praise or something, the old man just gets up there and just huffs at his chest and just loves it. And flattery will feed that old man so well.

Oh, beware flattery. A man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his feet, the Bible says. Oh, that God would help us to recognize what is happening when these things happen.

Verse 6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. Did you ever think about it? That if you are in this place and you kind of think that you're better than the leader and what happens in these small churches sometimes, someone may be given a place of moderation and you think you should have been given that place of moderation and so what you kind of do instead of supporting that moderator, you kind of draw some others around and you kind of draw them up after you and you kind of steal their hearts.

That's stealing. Did you know that? It is a sin of stealing. Stealing brothers and sisters away from their rightful place of supporting the moderator, the leader, whatever it may be.

Stealing the hearts of men. Records of churches, they're at work. The records of churches are working.

Through me. Through you. They're working through someone.

Verse 7, And it came to pass after forty years that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed unto the Lord in Hebron. Pretense. I call that the good boy syndrome.

I'm a good boy. You know, I grew up in the king's palace and I grew up a Christian and my parents were Christian and I always went to church and always did pretty good. Well, what about those sins? No, no, they're all back there.

I'm a pretty good boy. So, he puts on pretense there in verse 7 and he pretends like he's a really good boy and he says, I made a vow and I need to go keep my vow to the king. Verse 8, For thy servant vowed a vow when I bowed at Yeshua in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again into Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.

Oh, I made a vow that if I would be, if I ever come back to Jerusalem again, then I'm going to serve the Lord with all my heart. But what was he doing? He was a hypocrite. He was speaking smooth words to the leader there.

He was speaking smooth words to his elder. He was speaking smooth words to the king. Why? Why? Why? He had some deep things working inside of him.

I tell you, the wreckers of churches are working. Do you recognize them? Wreckers of churches are working. Verse 9, And the king said to him, Go in peace.

So he rose and went to Hebron, advantage taken. Taking advantage of the unsuspecting one. He trusted you.

And you asked him if you could go there, and he said yes. You took advantage of that. Verse 10, But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, as soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

And that's treason. Now the wrecking takes place. Now the wrecking manifests itself.

But you see, all of this was working a long time before it ever manifested. And that is what grieves my heart. That these things are working.

The enemy is using vessels inside the church to bring about the ruination and the wrecking and the splitting and the dividing of churches. Where are you tonight? Where am I tonight? Am I a vessel that God can look at and use for His honor and His glory? Or am I a vessel that Satan is delighting in? No, he don't use me full time. But sometimes those words that come out.

Verse 11, And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem that were called and they went in their simplicity and they knew not anything. The sad part of this is that there are innocent people involved. Innocent people are involved.

Oh, what a grief when the enemy comes in and destroys the testimony of that living, functioning body of Christ. How is it? Why? How did it happen? Oh, it's because so-and-so came in with a false doctrine? No, it's not. I don't think so.

That might be the issue on the surface, but there's other things underneath if I may say it that way. Amen? Innocent people are taken up with it and many lives, many are discouraged and lose hope and lose their way. Is it not true? Not only do you fail in being a testimony to those around you who are not saved, but you fail in the area of the people within the congregation who get discouraged and lose hope and they fall away.

Verse 12 Absalom sent for Ahithophel. He went after the key man in David's kingdom. He needed one of the key men.

He knew the value of that man. And so Absalom got him and that's another one. Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor from his city, even from Gilo, while he offered sacrifices.

And the conspiracy was strong for the people increased continually with Absalom. Beware of Absalom. Beware of that underlying motive of self-exaltation, self-ambition, that of craftiness and that of wanting people to look at you and to see you and, oh, I know brothers, this is where we live.

Is it not? Is this not reality in our lives? Is this not where you and I live? Is there any hope for us? There is hope for us. There is victory in these areas. There is freedom from these selfish motivations and ambitions.

And there's many questions that I cannot answer tonight. But, is there a right time to leave the church? Yes, it is. But, don't take a whole bunch of people with you who have done all the backbiting, all the slander, all the gossip, all these things.

Lots of questions. Have you been used by these wreckers of churches? Slander, backbiting, gossip, evil speaking, holding grudges, unforgiveness, hatred, bitterness, wounded spirit. Maybe you have a better than thou attitude.

Maybe you look down on others. Maybe you despise other men's ministries. If you feel insecure in your ministry, you're liable to despise others.

Look down on them. Maybe you have a critical spirit against others or so forth. I tell you, they're wreckers of churches.

Maybe you want others to think well of you and you want them to look up to your ministry. And maybe when you see someone else's ministry prospering, there is something within you that is jealous and envious so you have to run him down to make sure that he doesn't prosper. I tell you, wreckers of churches.

These are the wreckers of churches. It's not my brother. It's not my sister.

And it's not my pastor. It is the principality and powers behind it all. And you and I have to make a choice.

Am I going to allow that evil thing to have any access or right to use this vessel? Am I a vessel of honor or dishonor? Am I building or am I wrecking? Am I a nurse that gently cherishes her little ones? Am I a father who loves his sons or am I harsh, critical, hard, blasting people when they do wrong rather than forgiving? Oh, brothers and sisters, am I being used by the Lord Jesus Christ or am I being used by the devil? You know, it's no great gift to be able to see your brother's need. If you think you have a gift of seeing other people's needs, sinners can do that. Sinners can do that.

But I tell you what, it takes someone who is seeking after God. I say it this way, it takes a man of God to see his own need. And you might be sitting here today still wounded from what that brother said about you, and he's sitting here also, and you're thinking about his need tonight.

That's very easy to do. Sinners do that. That's what sinners do.

But it takes a man of God to really look at his own heart and say, how have I taken part? Have I taken part in wrecking churches? With my mouth. With my lips. How have I allowed the enemy to use this vessel to dishonor God's work? But I also want to assure you that there is freedom from that.

It is the way of the cross. It is the simple way that it's been so clear for 2,000 years. It is simply repent.

Repent. Yes, you can open this hole in the front of your face and through that hole make confession of a lifetime of sin and be free from it. Isn't that amazing? The devil may have you bound with a lifetime of sin, but like our brother testified, he opened this hole up here and he just simply confessed and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and what did God do? We can deal with a lifetime of sin in a moment.

When the Holy Spirit is coming down and is pressing upon us and the weight of sin is lying heavy upon our shoulders, then that is the time to repent. That is the time to go and get it over with. If God is speaking to your heart tonight and is pressing down and weighing on your shoulders your sin, the sin you've taken part

in, whatever it may be that God has spoken to you about tonight, then this is the time to make it, to do it.

This is the time to move. If God is speaking to you that way. Do we have a song with it, Kenny? Colossians 2.15 says, and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

You know, Christ made a show of them openly. They are creatures of darkness and they hide. Their nature is to stay hidden.

But if you will tonight have a desire to be free, you see you have been used of Satan, you see that you are a partaker of these evil deeds, I tell you, make it manifest. Come up here to the altar, make your need known, go back there to a prayer room and open up your heart and open up your life and make a confession and don't hide anything anymore. Get everything out in the open.

Let the light of Christ shine down into your heart and dispel all the gloom of darkness. Let's stand. Number 610 is, shall we sing? When in our hour of awe we know not where when days and nights this hour overcame Him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.

We know the end of Satan. We know that he will eventually be cast into the lake of fire, but he is loose at this season and he's out there to kill and to steal and to destroy. Jesus, when He was walking down through Samaria, the Samaritans didn't receive Him and the disciples said, Lord, wilt Thou that we would call fire down from heaven and burn these wicked sinners up? They meant it well.

They wanted to do what was right, but you know what Jesus said? He said, Ye know not what spirit you are of. How often does that happen to you? That you don't realize what spirit you are of when you speak. How often is it that you lose your temper or you say something evil against a brother or sister and you don't even realize what spirit you're of.

Let's sing some more. Don't wait. But I want to encourage you sisters.

If you are God is speaking to your heart tonight, you are also welcome to come. We want you to come. You are a vital part of our homes.

And if God has spoken to you, we want you to feel free to come also. If you've been caught in backbiting, gossip, and so forth. Let's sing.

Come while you can. Let's sing.

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