

In Times Like These... - Part 1

by Erlo Stegen

In this sermon, Erlo Stegen emphasizes the urgent need for discernment and revival within the church amidst a morally declining society.

Duration: 59:54

Scripture: Psalm 139:23, Proverbs 28:13, James 5:16

Topics: "Discernment"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the current state of the world and the church. He emphasizes the need to recognize the immorality and lack of moral standards prevalent in society. The speaker shares personal confessions from individuals who struggle with temptation and seek comfort in worldly distractions. The sermon also highlights the importance of self-reflection and confession among ministers, urging them to practice what they preach and seek guidance from others.

Transcript

Let us pray. We invite you, Lord of Lord, King of Kings. We call upon your name.

We pray that you will be in our midst. That this time will not be in vain. Be in our midst, Lord, and touch each one deep in his heart.

Through your living word, may it not be the letter that kills, but may it be the spirit that will bring life. Amen. 1 Chronicles chapter 12, verse 32.

Of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do. Alright. I hope that every one of us here is a son of Issachar.

That we know what the times are, and that we know what Israel should do. I don't even think it's necessary for me to explain what these times are like. If we see what the world is like.

If we see what the churches are like. And when you see what the Christians themselves are like. When you look at the world, you look at the women, the girls, the way they walk around, the way they dress, you can see the world written all over them.

And that they are an immoral people with no moral standards. Look them in the face, look them the way they talk and walk. And across it is written, prostitutes.

The Bible says if you say you love your brother, you lie. The Bible says if you say you love God and you don't love your brother, you lie. The Bible says if you say you love God and you don't love your brother, you lie.

The worst type of cannibals are the ones that are in the churches. They say they are saved. They say we are saved, born again.

But they go into their rooms and they gossip about other Christians and other people. It's a pity that the gospel doesn't progress. There are more people being born today than there are people being born again.

And that is what drove me to my knees 40 years ago that God would once again pour out his spirit and work among mankind. Dear friends, there's never been a time in man's history where there were so many heathen and godless people in the world than today in spite of the Christians singing we are more than conquerors. And yet heathenism is taking over and we are ruled and governed by people who are not God-fearing.

In 1966 I already said that communism is bad even though some people said what's wrong with it? There's nothing wrong with it. But there are people who basically believe that God does not exist. They're atheists.

Now we say that's a devilish thing but they in 70 years almost conquered the whole world. Now we say we on God's side. We've got him.

He's the Almighty. But what is happening with the gospel even though we claim to be on his side? Now you know the reason why 40 years ago I went on to my knees and I said God of heaven if you're alive come down. Work.

Send revival. Pour out your spirit. That was the reason.

None other. If you look at the world, young and old, you look at the churches, you look at the preachers, then you must freely admit there's no hope. There's only one hope.

A genuine Holy Ghost revival. Not from below but from top from heaven. You try to bring the young into the churches.

The church is getting more empty. They're going to the disco. They go to the dances.

They go to the world. They go to sin. How will you win them? Organized churches have failed and so-called Christianity has failed and failed miserably and everybody should hide his head reluctantly in shame.

It says, oh God, oh God, oh God have mercy on us. Many people realize that we need revival. Who doesn't like the fruit of revival? When people repent in dust and ashes and turn to God and the living God is alive among his people.

Who doesn't like it? The man who doesn't want it is an enemy of the cross and is the biggest fool in this world. Your friends, there's a great danger. You look at the fruit.

You said, oh Lord, we need revival that people will repent. We need revival that people will become holy. We need revival so that the blind will see, the dumb will speak, the deaf will hear, the lame will walk, the AIDS will be healed, that they'll die of AIDS no more.

And the Ammonites were the archenemies of God's people. And God said in the Bible, Ammonites can't belong to the people of God. And if anybody wants to join the church of God or the congregation, better said the congregation of God, God's people, it must be a man.

After ten generations, not before then, can an Ammonite become a member of God's nation. They hated God's people. They hated God's work.

They fought tooth and nail. Thinking they were right, they had a reason and a cause to do so. Like Christians now, fighting other Christians.

If you pray for revival, you must reckon with unseen. People will hate you and turn their back on you because they are following the lusts of the Father, who is the devil. If you pray for revival, you must reckon with unseen.

People will hate you and turn their back on you because they are following the lusts of the Father, who is the devil. If you are still going to get babies, don't name your child Tobias. Don't.

I know of a man who said, a man of God, I won't even call my dog Nero because of what he did. That Roman Emperor. Be careful what you name your children, because they may turn out to be exactly that, what you called them to be.

Now we may ask the question, how did Tobias get into the very house of God and got the biggest room in that place, the most sacred place in God's house? He didn't get in through the back door. It was the priest who should serve the living God who put him in there. You know how he got? I can't go into detail, we haven't got the time.

Because of family relationships he got in there. Through marriage, giving his children in marriage, and his daughters in marriage. Marriage is a sacred thing, but it can be the greatest tool for the devil to do his dirty work in this world.

I know of fiery preachers, I know of Christians that were aflame, that because of the children going into the world, becoming worldly, allowing the devil, falling for evil things, the parents fell with them. And what are they today? The laughing stock of the devils. Tobias was a slave of the Ammonites.

How did he get in this superior position in the house of God? Because of family relationships. That's how he got a strong position in the church, in God's congregation. And that's why he was accepted.

You Christian parents and preachers of the gospel, beware, beware, beware, if Christ is not your all in all. Jesus said, if you follow me and you don't hate your father and mother, wife and children, even your own life, you can't be my disciple. And the downfall of many preachers is their own children.

And then they get soft. Then they lower their standards. Instead of saying, my child, if you go to hell, then go, but I'm going to heaven.

And that would save and shake the children, even if they don't get converted during this lifetime. But when that coffin goes into the grave, they will know, this was a man who stood for the truth. Don't sell your soul because of your wife, because of your children, because of your relations.

When we have children, then we become weak. Then with their godlessness and hellish, hellish things, your heart becomes soft. Of course, you use pious words.

You've just got to be loving and kind. But God says, the father that spares the rod hates his son. God says, the father that spares the rod hates his son.

Your child is wayward, goes its own ways, has illegitimate children. Instead of bringing it onto the right way, you're one with your child. You support it in its evil ways.

I'm sorry because of this. The time has passed, and now I've got to draw closely to an end. They didn't know the times.

The times, do we know the times? If there ever, ever, in the history of the church of Christ, the church should have been aflame, more than the early church, then it's the church today. We are about 2,000 years closer to the return of Jesus. But how far are we away from the standard we find in the Acts of the Apostles? You shouldn't just hate your father and mother.

Now don't go here and say, oh, Elo says we've got to hate our people. Look, you're a liar if you say so. You're a liar.

And if you're a liar, your father is not God in heaven, but the devil. You should hate even your own life. I said the world, the church, and you personally.

I remember some years ago, I was invited to a minister's conference in Pietermaritzburg of many ecumenical churches. And then I was asked, Elo Stegen, we would like to know your opinion. Something happened in our church.

I don't name the church. A terrible thing. And it's a great problem.

What should we do? How should we handle this affair? I said, what is it? I can't promise that I'll have an answer. But I'd like to know what your question is. They say the other day, one of our ministers, ordained ministers, stood on the pulpit and preached.

A fiery sermon. And then in the middle of the sermon, his wife got up and said, would you please stop? I know you at home. That suffices.

And she stopped her husband. And they said, what should we do with such a wife? And I was flabbergasted at that question. The way they put it, instead of saying, what should we do with such a priest? Because if he can't rule his house, his own wife, and his children, how will he take care of the church? And I think she's got to be congratulated.

She should have shut his mouth before that. In German, we don't call that a mouth. We call that a mouth.

Mouth is Mund. A dog has got a mouth. If you preach something, and your wife can't be your witness, that it's true what you say, then it's better that you shut your mouth of the dog.

You English-speaking people are too decent and too dignified. And one man said, you've got the three Ds. Decent, dignified, and dead.

Striving to be a spiritfull preacher. A vessel in God's hands through whom he can work. And your relationship with your wife isn't right.

Have you got no bane? No discernment? Don't you know the difference between A and B? In a certain city, there were some ministers. Four of them clumped together into an alliance. When they were together, they said, brothers, what problems could we deal with now? One of them said, oh brothers, people come to us with their problems.

They come to us with their sins. They come and confess. They come and confess.

But what about us? Do we go and confess? Do we go to someone who has got bane, who can help us? And he said, brother, you've got a point there. What's the use if we preach to others and we don't preach to ourselves? What's the use if we tell people to do things and we don't practice what we preach? The other one said, let's start today. Let's not just speak about this.

The Zulus say, let's not just sing, but let's do it. Let's start right now. Let's confess to each other and pray for each other.

Well, they said, we think it's a very good point. Who will start? One man said, I'll start. He said, brothers, dear colleagues, I must confess.

Sunday afternoon, if I've prepared for the service and have counseled people, later on, I'm under stress. My nerves are at an end. And there's only one thing I can do, is close the door and light a cigarette.

And then I smoke away my worries. Then my nerves are regenerated. I know smoking is not good.

We preachers, we never spoke against smoking. It's the doctors that did. We were too blind.

The second brother said, brothers, I've got to confess something as well. Just as my colleague has said, Sunday afternoons, when the evening comes, I'd like to run away from everything. I don't like to see my wife.

Whatever she says doesn't suit me. The children are so noisy. They shout, they cry.

And then I've just got to go downtown, go to the cinema, look at the bioscope. Well, today, we don't need to go to the bioscope. We've got television.

The world is right in our homes than the bioscope. But he said, then I go to the bioscope and look at the film, and then I'm quickened. I've got to go downtown, go to the cinema, look at the bioscope.

Well, today, we don't need to go to the bioscope. We've got television. The world is right in our homes than the bioscope.

They comforted each other. God isn't a liar. He says, if we curb our transgressions, we shall not prosper.

But if we confess them, bring them to light, we shall receive mercy. And the third one says, well, that inspires me to come out with this skeleton in my cupboard, a wardrobe of my heart. And I don't want to tell you what that man brought to light, being a preacher of the gospel.

But he was quiet. He says, brother, what about you? Is there nothing in your life? I don't feel like talking. Yes, but brother, you agreed as well, all of us agreed, that let's open our hearts, come into the light.

We are children of the light. How can we excavate darkness? And the brighter the light, the more comes to light. He shook his head.

He said, no, no. They said, brother, come out with that which is within, no matter how difficult it is. No one said, go to the door, lock the door and take the key with you.

And they said, brother, we promise you, we'll sit here till tomorrow morning. And you, if you haven't confessed it till tomorrow morning, we'll go through the day tomorrow, till you have confessed. You agreed, and now you want to break that covenant which we made? We won't leave this place.

We pray that God will deal with you in his mercy. He says, dear brothers, I can't. I apologize, but I can't.

Well then, if you want to wait, we'll wait. And if you've got time, we've got more time. And they pressed him.

Eventually he says, brothers, I can't, but I must bow. Forgive me for making you wait so long. My problem is this.

As you, brother, confessed your smoking, you, your films, you, your sin, I couldn't wait for the time to get out of this door, to get home to my wife and tell her what I've heard tonight. And I'd like to go to my friends and tell them what you are up to. But in spite of preaching your smoking, doing this, doing that, he says, that's my sin.

Are there such ministers here? The first thing they've got to do, they've got to go to the wives and tell them. They've got to go to the friends and tell them. They can't keep a secret.

They just can't. And the next thing the whole congregation knows about it. The first ministers, Tobias, was smoking.

The second one films, looking at immoral things. The other one, they debate Tobias as well. But in God's sight, you needn't sin with another woman.

You just lust after her and you've committed that crime. Dear friends, in God's name, I challenge you tonight and ask you, is there Tobias in your life? And this Tobias maybe hasn't just got a small place, maybe the biggest room in God's house. And you know that your body is God's house.

Maybe you understand now, maybe a bit more, maybe you understood all the time what these times are like. But dear friends, you can pray for revival till doomsday. You'll be the laughing stock of the devils.

You'll never get revival. Thousands and millions of people have prayed for it, they don't get it. There are very few and far between that experience it.

Unless Tobias is dealt with in your life, and for Jesus' sake who bled and died and gave his last drop of blood for you, deal with him right now, before you go to sleep. Otherwise, in spite of all our pious talking, it's just damnable and a cursed thing if we talk piously about things and Tobias is not dealt with ruthlessly. And Nehemiah said, when I saw that, I said, out with him.

Bring back the holy vessels of the Lord. Bring back that which belongs in God's house. And nothing that belongs to the devil should be found in God's house and in your life.

There were people who knew the times and seasons in which they live. Do you know the time now? The time which has struck on God's clock, for your life, for you, and what God is expecting of you. Whether you're from the DRC or Zambia, Zambia is a wonderful country.

It's the only country in the world that starts with Z and ends with A. Zambia. But even in spite of your living in that unique country, if you are not a Christian according to God's standard, woe to you, even if you start with Z and you end with A. And you Germans, French, all of you, nobody is excluded. I include myself.

And may God grant in His grace that we won't be hearers, but doers. And if we are doers, this world can't be the same again. Never.

If it is, it's because we are damned. Because we were not prepared to meet up with God's standard. And we didn't deal with Tobias in our life.

For those that aren't sick, let's rise and pray. Lord, you know for how many years we've been preaching the gospel. You know how long we've been preaching to others.

You also know whether what we've been preaching to others, whether we've been living up to it ourselves. You also know the state of our hearts, because that is your dwelling place. You know whether there are Tobiases in our hearts.

You also know whether some hellish thing has come into our lives through family relationships. Come, O God, know our hearts, search them, and see whether there is any wicked way within us. Amen.

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