

# Judgment in the House of God

by Erlo Stegen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of personal revival, removing hypocrisy, and having a clear conscience before God and man to be effective instruments in God's hands.*

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 4:15

**Topics:** "Judgment"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about four individuals who gather together to discuss their problems. The first three individuals openly share their troubles, but the fourth person remains silent and wants to leave. However, the others insist that he stay and share. Eventually, the fourth person reveals that he has something important to share, like food for the road, that can be a blessing to others. The speaker then emphasizes the need for believers to not only teach others about God's commandments but also to live them out in their own lives. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the great task ahead and the need for God's power and revival to accomplish it.

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## Transcript

We thank God for all He's done for us. And it's our prayer that as you go back, that you will go well, and that you'll go with God's blessing. And may this now not be the end of it all, but may it be as if oil has been poured onto the fire in our hearts, that we'll be on fire like never before.

There's a great task ahead. It's huge. It's as if we haven't even started.

How will we do the straight work? It's impossible for us to do this on our own. It'll only work if God works in His mighty power through His Spirit by sending us revival throughout the earth. Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord.

We have heard so much. I don't have time to repeat it all. I had made some notes of all the different topics that were spoken about with what was said, but I thought if I had to say it all again, we'd sit here till tomorrow morning.

But there is something on my heart. It's like patkos, food for the road that I want to give you. Something that you can take along to your country, to where you come from, and may it be a blessing there.

I trust all of us here realize and recognize the great need that is in the world. As the Lord said, go to all the nations and teach all people not to know, but to keep all that I have commanded you. It doesn't help if I go

and teach people and I tell them do not steal, yet I myself steal.

I need to teach them to keep it. The theme, the urgency of the hour. We cannot face these mountains as it were that are before us, the difficulties that are before us in our own strength.

But there is a way to overcome. Let's read from the first book of Peter. First Peter, chapter 4, verse 17.

First Peter 4, verse 17. My eyesight is not so good anymore and then I don't see everything clearly. For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God.

And if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? Let us pray once again. Lord, we pray that your word will be like a lamp that sheds light, that everything will become perfectly clear. That no one will leave without having understood the mystery of the kingdom of heaven.

Amen. It is time for judgment to start in the house of God. We pray and say, Lord, hear all these people, lost souls that need to be saved.

And it's not wrong to pray for them. But God does not start there. He starts in his house.

And we are the spiritual house of God. In the book of Revelation, where the Lord wrote to the different churches after he had ascended into heaven. And he always addressed the letter to the angel, the messenger, the leader of the church of that place.

So when God speaks, he starts with us as ministers, preachers. There was a minister who was deeply troubled, concerned about his congregation. When he looked at the older people, and then the youth and the children, he was troubled and concerned because it was as if it didn't get through to them, as if they weren't touched.

Then he heard of a servant of the Lord, whom the Lord was using mightily. And he heard people saying, there's revival in that place, God is at work. It was a faraway place.

And he decided he was going to go to that place. And he decided to be with this minister for two full weeks. And he said he wanted to be with him all day.

Follow him all over when he prayed, whatever he did, he wanted to be with him. He wanted to learn from him, so off he went to that place. When he got there, he said, dear servant of the Lord, I want to tell you why I've come here.

I'm from a very hard place, difficult people that I'm with, things just aren't happening, I want to stay with you for two weeks. Where I come from, people don't get saved, they don't repent. And I've come here to learn from you, to see how you live, how you go about things, that that fire that burns here can be ignited in my congregation.

And that preacher said, brother, you don't need to stay here for two weeks. I can give you the solution right here. He said, it's not because I'm not hospitable, but you can go right back home now.

And I'm sure I can help you that God can start working. When you get home, go into your office, into your study. Move away your desk and the chairs.

Take away everything from the center of your study. And then go and sit in the middle. And they said, take some white chalk and make a circle around you.

When you've done that, put down your chalk. And then you pray and say, Lord, please start working and start right here within this circle. And he was upset.

It hurt him. He said, no, the problem's not with me. It's the other people.

Not me. But after a while, he calmed down and he reconsidered. And he said, well, there'll be no harm in me doing it.

Let me go back, because sometimes medicine is bitter, but it helps you. And the preacher said, well, I hear you pointing at the others, blaming them. Remember when you point at someone, one finger points at him.

Three point back at you, and the thumb points up that God is the witness that you are three times as bad as the one you are blaming. The Lord said, you hypocrites, take the block out of your own eye before you attempt to take the splinter out of your brother's eye. I preached overseas in Germany.

I asked the audience in Germany, I said, you are learned people, mathematicians. Can you tell me how many splinters there are in a log? One young person stood up and said, there are over a million. And I was surprised.

I didn't think it was so many. But it did something to me, and I thought, God, could it be that my mistake, my sin, is a million times greater than the fault I see in my brother's life? Now you cannot say that the Lord is telling a lie, that it's not the truth. So it makes one think, to realize how serious our sin is compared to my brother's sin.

So the Lord says, you hypocrite, get out the log out of your own eye first before you worry about the splinter in your brother's eye. Oh, and it's so easy to speak about the sins of other people and about their children. But when it comes to talking about our own wrongdoing, oh, how difficult it is.

I remember four preachers who got together as a prayer group, and they prayed. And one of them made a suggestion and said, Brothers, so often people come to us with their burdens, with their wrongdoing, their sins that they've committed, and they ask us to pray with them for God to forgive them. They come to us.

But what about us? Who do we go to? People come to us with their problems, with their difficulties, and they ask us to pray with them. Shouldn't we do likewise? As we are together, why don't we use this opportunity to share with each other? And maybe we also need to confess our sins, and then the one can pray for the other. And the others agreed.

One of them said, Brothers, let me start. On a Sunday, I preach two sermons, hold two services, and it's difficult, and I stress about it. By sunset, I am quite depressed already and in a real tension.

I'm so stressed that when my wife comes with something, or even the children, they just get near me, and then I'm irritated, and I am unfriendly with them. And sometimes I just walk out the house. I go around the corner, I light up a cigarette, just to calm myself.

Please pray with me, Brothers. And then the next one said, I also need prayer. I also have a stressful life, and there are so many problems that sometimes I just decide to go off to the cinema and just look at a movie, just to calm down.

And then the third one also shared with the others what was troubling him. And then they turned to the last one, the fourth one, they said, Well, Brother, what do you want to say? He said, No, there's nothing. I have nothing to say.

The others just didn't let him get away with it. They said, No, we all agreed that we'd do this, and you're also one of them. And he said, No, I'm not prepared to do this.

I'd rather just leave you, go home. One of them got up, locked the door, took the key out of the door, and said, You're going nowhere. We all agreed you're going to take part here as well.

They said, Brother, remember, we all agreed. This was an agreement. You agreed as well in the beginning.

You're going nowhere. We'll sit here till tomorrow. We're going nowhere until you've done it.

One said to him, Well, obviously you've done something rather terrible that you're not prepared to come out with it. They sat for hours, and they said, We are going nowhere until you've said what you need to say. But then eventually he said, No, all right, I'm humbling myself, I'm bowing, this is my problem.

And then they could pray together, and that was the beginning of a mighty working of God in that area. So God started working in his servants. The other minister that drew that ring around him, that circle around him, he went home.

He did exactly what that preacher told him. He went home, sat down in his study, or knelt down in his study, drew that circle around him. He said, Lord, I didn't expect things to go this way, but now I pray that you will work, start within the circle.

And then God started working through his Holy Spirit, putting his finger on one thing after the other in his life that was not acceptable to God. As Jesus said, When the Comforter comes, he will convict the world of sin. And he recognized it, and he said, Oh God, I've sinned.

And he said, Oh God, I've sinned. The following Sunday he got onto the pulpit and he started preaching, and it didn't take long he noticed one of the men in the congregation crying. And then another one he noticed was crying, and it didn't take long, there were a few, and they came to him after the service, they said, Please, we need to speak to you.

Pray with us, God has convicted us of things in our lives that are wrong. And God started working, and revival broke out. Now when we were still children, we were six in the family, and at Christmas time, my mother gave each one of us a book.

The book she gave me was about Werner Heuckelbach. Now this is over 60 years ago, but I still remember what was written there. He preached, and many got converted, but after a while it started getting less, less and less people were getting converted.

They were still, but not like in the beginning. And people also didn't come to the services as they did before. And that troubled him.

He sought God's face. God's word says that you will seek me and find me when you seek for me with all your heart. And he said, Let me just stop preaching for a while, let me just seek God's face.

He took his writing pad, he knelt down. And then he said, Lord, I want to examine myself. He took his writing pad, wrote down different sins, pride, haughtiness, etc.

And he says, For two weeks he was before the Lord, crying to God, saying, Oh God, work in my life, sanctify me. The prophet Malachi said, He will sit and he will refine you, silver and gold, and purify you as the sons of Levi. And we are those.

And he forgot about everyone else. He just focused on himself and searched his own heart. He poured his heart out.

And after that, the people started coming again as before, and they got converted as before. By that God reveals how he works. When he works, he starts with me personally.

Forget about the other people and just start with yourself. Yes, you preach. And you even preach the truth.

But what is it like in your own life? Often in the Bible it says, Be an example to others. But your works and your life speak so loud that I can't hear what you say. That's what someone once said to a preacher.

I hear you preaching and you can preach like few people, but unfortunately your works, your life speaks louder than your words. When the people heard Jesus preach, they noticed there was a difference. They said, When he preaches, it's not like the Pharisees and the scribes.

There's a difference when he preaches. He preached with authority, with power. But of the others, the Lord said, Hear what they say, but do what they say, but don't do what they do, because they don't practice what they preach.

You know the story of Esther, which we read in Esther. Remember the king that ruled at that time of a vast area right up to India and back this way to Africa. And he arranged a huge feast and invited all the important people.

After some days of feasting, he summons his wife that she should appear before him. She was a beautiful woman, the queen. When she was called to appear before the king, she refused.

She said, I'm not going there. She went against him. The king was upset.

He got his counselors together and asked for advice, what he should do after his wife had done such a thing in public. They advised him to just get divorced. So that's what he did.

He sent her away. And thereafter he got married to Esther. And God used Esther.

He worked through her. And so the first queen was no longer queen. She lost her position.

You sisters listen carefully. You may be a wife of a minister. Now at that time it was known throughout his kingdom that the queen had despised the king's command.

The whole world heard about her bad example. And so she lost her position. Now you descendants of Eve.

Be very careful how you live if you're a minister's wife. Because that news spreads like wildfire. And everyone will be talking about what you've done.

It is urgent. If you don't want to be ashamed before the Lord, make sure that your life is right. Even in Peter we read about the men.

Where it admonishes the men to live properly and to deal with wisdom as the weaker vessel. So that their prayers shall not be hindered. It's terribly important because we cannot afford that the relationship between husband and wife is not right.

As a wife be careful how you live, how you walk, how you talk, your whole way of life. Even the way you dress because the younger people are watching you and woe to you if you're not setting a good example. And you brothers, take note.

If things aren't right in your marriage and your prayers don't reach God, then we can never expect revival. We can talk about it for a long time. But if we don't live it, if things aren't right in our lives, all talking is in vain.

I remember in 1966 when the Lord started working through His Spirit in different areas. Someone phoned me at that time and said it's unbelievable what's happening. People are coming from down the mountains, they're coming, they're crossing rivers, they're coming from all over to make their lives right with God.

We can't believe what's happening. Come and see. There were wives that came from Durban and when they came and met these heathen black people that had got converted, they couldn't believe what they saw.

They say it's so wonderful to experience this, to see their happy faces and what God has done in their lives. And the place there got too small, there were too many people. And they converted the garage into a meeting place, put benches in, but even that got too small.

Every day God was at work and people were getting converted. But with time it got less, and more, and even less. And people started talking, they said what's going on? What is happening? Because people do notice.

And then one night this man arrived, he came to see me. And he said to me, do you know, have you noticed that that fire is not burning as it used to, the law is not working as it did in the beginning? He said, do you know that now it's three months where not one soul has been saved? He said, do you know why? I didn't say anything. He said, it's now three months.

Three months ago I sinned. He said, and since that time I've prayed to God, I cried to Him, but it's as if heaven is made of lead. I just cannot get through to the Lord, but today I have to make peace with Him and I need to cleanse my life.

I'm going to confess this sin and I want you to pray with me that God forgives me. So we prayed. Then he said, but now what must I do? Must I stop preaching? I said, you should have stopped preaching before you confessed the sin, but now you've confessed it and the Lord promises that if we confess our sin, even if they are scarlet, He'll wash them whiter than snow.

And if we hide our sin, we will not prosper, but if we confess and forsake it, we will receive mercy. And I said, as far as I can see, you've confessed your sin now and you can go back and continue. And he left.

This was at night. So just about at midnight the telephone rang and I heard someone on the other side of the phone who was very excited. I said, what is it brother? And it was this brother, he said, let me tell you what happened.

He said, after we spoke, I left and I went home. He lived on a place on a hill and the road turned in at the bottom. As you turned up the driveway, the headlights shone onto his home.

He said, as the headlights shone onto the home, he could see three men standing in front of his house. He went to them, greeted them. He said, brothers, what is it? They said, we have no rest.

We are guilty before God. We each need to speak to you. And one after the other they spoke to him, opened and poured out their hearts, confessing their sin before the Lord.

And from that time on people arrived daily to come to make peace with God. And so God continued working in revival power. He said, brothers, what is it? They said, we have no rest.

We each need to speak to you. We've heard much these days. Now will we go back, be instruments, weapons in God's hands which he can use? That God can work among great and small.

That the impossible becomes possible. Nothing is impossible for God. Brethren, that building out there is being built, and for me that is a sermon on its own.

It's about ten months now. We had nothing. But you can see now the auditorium standing.

Have you been there to look? And I say that building, that auditorium speaks. It says God's great. For him nothing is impossible.

So you too go and be an instrument in his hands that he can do great things. Make sure there's nothing that will hinder his working in your life and through your life. And I say that building, that auditorium speaks.

It says God's great. For him nothing is impossible. So you too go and be an instrument in his hands that he can do great things.

Forget about other people's sins. Go back and search your own life and heart and say, Lord, is there anything in my life that quenches or grieves your spirit? And if there is, repent from it. In 1 Timothy 4, verses 16 and 17, It's 1 Timothy 4, verses 15 and 16.

Take pains with these things and be absorbed in them so that your progress may be evident to all. And pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching. Persevere in these things.

For as you do this, you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. Pay close attention to yourself and the teaching. It's important that we pay attention to our teaching, that it is correct and right, not something that's crooked and wrong.

But here, the teaching is in second place. In the first place, pay attention to yourself. And then when you preach, you will save yourself and others that hear you.

Dear friend, there's no better advice that I can give you. But that you examine your life, your heart before the Lord to make sure it's right before Him. That you have a clear conscience before God and before man.

I don't doubt that God will do great things if we just do what His Word says. Pay close attention to yourself that you pray and say, Lord, help me to see myself as you see me. That we don't cover up and hide things, but that we will come to the light.

As God said, I know Abraham, I know him, I know that he will instruct his children and children's children and even his servants to keep My Word. As we heard even these days about knowing, how Adam knew his wife and she conceived. God said, I know Abraham, I know him and there's nothing he hides from Me.

There is total and complete fellowship and community. There is total and complete fellowship and community. So brethren, this is God's way.

Walk in it and you will see what God will do, how He will touch people in government, in leadership positions, teachers, everyone around you. The Bible says we should not quench, we should not grieve the Holy Spirit. Allow God to work in your life, then He will be able to work through you and others.

And four walls can't stop the working of the Holy Spirit. And if God works, He will work exceedingly above what you can even ask or pray for. So let us set a good example to people.

And even through love, where the Lord says, if you love each other, then they will recognize that the Father sent Me. That we are a good example so that God can work among people. When you go back, you can experience the mighty hand of God.

And so may it be with all of us and for all of us. Let's bow our heads. Lord, You have called us and You have sent us.

And You said, as the Father sent Me, so send I You. You sent us to all the nations in the whole world. We pray that Your words will work in our lives.

Lord, when we open our mouths and preach to others, that You will be able to work in their lives. Help us, Lord, that we will see how we live, that we live properly. And also give care to our teaching, that we may save ourselves and also those that hear us.

In Your grace, Amen. Now if God points at something in your life, obey quickly. Because maybe you twist things and you turn them upside down.

May we not just be hearers, but doers of His Word.

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