

Prepare the Way

by Erlo Stegen

Preparing the way for God through repentance and humility is essential for experiencing revival and the outpouring of God's Spirit.

Duration: 1:12:16

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Ezekiel 33:7, Matthew 3:3, Acts 2:38, Acts 3:19, James 4:8, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 3:19

Topics: "Repentance", "Revival"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and preparing the way for the Lord in our lives. It highlights the need for Christians to humble themselves, forsake wicked ways, and truly repent to see revival and God's work in their midst. The speaker shares powerful testimonies of God's miraculous work, healing, and deliverance, urging believers to seek genuine transformation and spiritual renewal.

Transcript

I would like to thank you, all of you, for the hospitality that we've enjoyed here amongst you. It's a great joy for us to be here amongst you. I'd like to read a word from Matthew 3, the third verse.

A voice of one calling in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Shall we pray once again? We ask you, dear Lord, to be in our midst. Touch every heart.

Speak to us through your Holy Word. And may, because of the Holy Spirit, the Word be alive. Amen.

Here we read about John the Baptist. The Lord Jesus said of John the Baptist, of all those that are born of women, there is none greater than John the Baptist. Why was he the greatest? We don't know of one miracle that he did.

He didn't heal the sick. He didn't raise the dead. Wherein lay his greatness? Undoubtedly in what he said.

That's why what he said is of paramount and greatest importance. He started with, repent, because the kingdom of God is at hand. To repent means to change your mind.

Dear friends, when the kingdom of God is at hand, when God comes nigh to us, then we need to change our mind. Otherwise, the Lord will come and pass us by. That's why we sing, pass me not, O gentle Saviour.

Martin Luther said, God is like a rain, the storm comes, the clouds, if we are not prepared for it, it will pass by. That's why we've got to prepare for God's coming. Dear friends, the heathen, when they want salvation, they've got to change their mind.

And the Christians, when they want God to visit them, they've got to change their mind as well. Both the heathen and the Christians have got to change. Both the heathen and the Christians have got to change their mind.

The Bible says, if my people, that are called by my name, will humble themselves, pray, seek my face, forsake their wicked ways, I will here in heaven forgive them and heal their land. There he speaks to his people, that are called by his name, we Christians. And he says, if we pray, and forsake our wicked ways, is it possible for a Christian to have wicked ways? If it wouldn't be possible, then God wouldn't have said it.

And that's why John the Baptist told God's people, Repent, change your mind, prepare the way of the Lord. All over the world there are Christians that pray for revival and outpouring of God's Spirit. All over the world the people pray for their country.

But he says, if my people humble themselves, and forsake their ways, that means to prepare the way for God to come. That means to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus. We have to pray for God's work.

And God will send the revival. God will pour out his Spirit. And if we'd have an ear to hear, we'd hear him say, I'd like to do that.

I'm more eager to do it, than what you are to receive it. But there's no way for me to do it. And that's something I can't understand.

God being a sovereign almighty God, that he says he can't do it. He waits for you and me to prepare the way for him. But that's not impossible.

Because our God is sovereign, our God is the Lord of Lords. And we have to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. You can buy a beautiful car, even the most beautiful and most expensive car, but if you don't have the road, you're useless.

But the almighty, the sovereign God says, there's no way for me to do it. Dear friends, every promise in the Bible has got a condition. God says, I'll do that if you do this.

Jesus died for your country. He paid the price for your country. He'd like to save your country.

But he says to you, prepare the way for me. He says, there's no way for him to do it, if his people are not prepared to prepare the way for him. If we don't prepare the way for the Lord, the Lord won't be able to work in our midst.

And therein, we see the greatness of John the Baptist. He told mankind, prepare the way for God. Make it possible for God to work.

Some have told me that here in your country, in Italy, maybe 2% are Protestants. That doesn't mean that every Protestant is a real, genuine Christian. The others are all Catholics.

So you've got a big mission field here in your country. And that's where you've got to start. Jesus told his disciples, go to all the world.

But he said, you start in Judea. Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. He told them, first preach the gospel in Judea, in Jerusalem, and in Samaria.

And then he prepared them to preach the gospel all over the world. So we must first preach the gospel in our nation. Maybe you want to preach in China or somewhere else.

And maybe you don't preach here in your house. Start right there where you are. If you fail to do it right in your home, how can we expect that you'll do it and be successful far away? And the Lord says, if my people humble themselves, it's humbling if we Christians are told to repent.

We Christians are proud. If somebody points our sin out to us, then we are offended. If somebody tells us you're not a pure, a genuine Christian, then we get angry and annoyed with him.

But it's good if we accept it and we bow and humble ourselves. But to some people it's easier to choose hell, to go to hell, than to humble oneself and go to heaven. But it pays to humble oneself before the living, almighty God.

But we want to humble ourselves before the living, almighty God. And He says, when you do this, and turn from your wicked ways, He will heal our land. Are you listening to what God is saying? According to this word, God puts your country into your hands, into the hands of the Christians.

And if our country is not healed, dear friends, who is guilty? Nobody, but the Christians. That should make us cry out to God and say, God, show me, is there something wrong in my life? In Psalm 24 it says, who will ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who will stand in His holy place? He that has guiltless hands, a pure heart, and clean lips. Dear friends, are our hearts clean? Are our hands without guilt? Are our lips clean? Never spoken a thing that is wrong? He says, then we will be able to stand in His holy place and receive the blessing.

I remember when we prayed for revival. We were on our knees, crying to God. Saying, God, John the Baptist says, the man who comes after him is much greater than what he is.

He baptizes people in water. But the one who comes after him will baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire. That's why he wasn't able, he wasn't worthy to carry even his shoes.

And when we cried in 1966 to God and said, oh God, kindle your Holy Spirit and your fire in our hearts. And so in 1966 we prayed, Lord, fill our hearts with your Spirit and with fire. John the Baptist said so.

Jesus said so. He said, I've come to kindle a fire on earth. And there wasn't anything else that he wanted more than that.

The holy fire of God should burn in our hearts. And as we were on our knees and prayed. One Christian cried out.

He said, oh my eyes, my eyes, they are burning like in the fire. But we didn't see any fire. But this person cried out, my eyes, my eyes, God forgive me, they're burning in the fire.

And the Christians said, oh God, I've read books I should have never written. I've been looking at pornography. I've been looking at pictures I've never, no eye of a Christian should have looked at such vile things.

And just imagine all the things people look at nowadays. And so people look at those images day after day. Just think of the internet.

Where people, men, look at at midnight hour when the family is asleep. They look for hours at these satanic nude pictures. Those are part of the sins in the Christian's life.

And that's why they've got to repent of it. Sins that aren't done openly but in secret. Dear brother, dear sister, and young people, is there nothing done in secret in your lives, with your eyes? If there is something, dear brother, dear sister, and young people, that you do in secret in your lives, do you think that it's secret in your eyes? Jesus says, rather out with your eye, go into the kingdom of heaven with one eye than two eyes and to be cast into hell.

The second person cried and said, oh my lips, my lips are burning like in the fire. Thank God I've spoken so many things I should have never spoken. You know that Jesus said we'll have to give account of every idle word that we have spoken.

The Bible says that Jesus said we'll have to give account of every word that we have spoken. John Wesley could have said this. Because I haven't heard one idle word coming out of his lips.

Our tongue, our lips, are the worst part in our body. We would say our sexual organs are the worst, but God says the tongue is still worse. Just think of the things that come out of our lips.

The things that our tongues have spoken. Especially when they are kindled by the fire of hell. Gossiping.

And you, our sisters, you know that you speak the most. But the Bible says he who speaks the most has got the most sins. But I'm sorry to say that some men can sin as well with the tongues like silly women.

But we'll have to give account before God one day. And as we prayed, someone ripped a shoe from his foot and threw it far away. And said, oh my feet are burning.

And the next shoe was taken off and thrown into another corner. We were praying in a big huge supermarket. The owner of the shop was a Christian.

And when the shop was closed, we gathered there for a prayer meeting. And the person cried, oh my feet, they are burning in the fire. The Bible says God is like a consuming fire.

And the person cried out, oh God, I've walked ways I should have never walked. I've gone to places no Christian should have ever gone. There we saw God revealing himself as a holy God.

And we learned to know God's Spirit as the Holy Spirit. We say so easily and so glibly, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit. And we don't know what, we don't see the holiness of His Spirit.

Many call Him Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, move! But they don't recognize, they don't have the holiness of the Holy Spirit. And we Christians, what do we expect? That those of the world should repent of their sins. If the outsiders don't repent of their sin, it's because we Christians aren't prepared to repent of our sins.

It's because we Christians aren't prepared to repent of our sins. And Peter said, that the judgment of God will begin in the house of God. And in South Africa, when the Christians were prepared to repent, they said, Oh my dear husband, forgive me, I haven't been a godly wife to you.

A mother would go to the children, Oh my children, forgive me, I haven't been a godly mother to you either. And I could see other mothers who would go to their children and say, Oh my children, forgive me, I haven't been a good mother to you. And one would go to the other.

As I said last night, I started this repentance because I was the first sinner. So what should we do if we want to see other people repent? Children would go to the teachers and say, Please forgive me, I've sinned, I've been a bad student at school. And the fire of God, that started in the hearts, went from one school to the other, right to the universities.

And as God's people were preparing the way for God, God came down. There were no church bells ringing. No invitations sent out.

The Spirit of God would literally go into the homes and bring the people. The people would come day and night. For days we wouldn't have time to eat.

No time to sleep. Day and night the people would come. When we asked them, What do you want? They said, We want to repent.

The Christians came. The heathen came. And God started with the strongholds of evil.

The first person that came was a witch who had a training center for witches. And somebody came to me and said, There's a witch outside, could you please go and speak to her? I went to that witch. I said, What do you want? She says, I'm chained and bound with chains of hell.

Can Jesus break these chains? I couldn't believe my eyes and my ears. I had tried to win these people for Christ for twelve years. But I didn't succeed.

For twelve years I had served the Lord and I had never seen this. But afterwards I had seen the gift of God. And so that man who didn't even know me came to me and said, Can Jesus break these chains? I said, Who spoke to you? She said, Nobody.

Who told you to come? Nobody. My eyes got bigger and bigger. Her eyes got big, but my eyes still bigger.

And she said, Please don't waste my time, I've got to know, I'm going to die. Can Jesus break these chains? And then I saw that God was at work through the Holy Spirit. And you know what an old witch looks like? And as Jesus set her free, the first hundred demons came out, screaming through the air.

Then the second hundred. Then the third hundred. And then the face of the witch changed and she looked like a saint that had been living in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ for years.

And she said, Thank you Lord Jesus for breaking these chains and setting me free. And this witch began to say, Thank you Jesus for setting me free from these chains and setting me free. After this witch, another person came.

One after the other came. Sometimes we didn't have to preach to them. We'd ask them, What do you want? And they said, We are sinners.

We are in the hands of an angry God. Can we be reconciled to him? And they were like fruit, ready to be picked. One heathen man came and he cried bitterly.

Like Peter when he had denied the Lord. I opened the door and went to him and said, What's wrong with you? He was a heathen. He was a heathen and a chief, the king of the tribe.

He was a king of a tribe. And so he said, I have sinned. And because of my sin, I will go to hell.

And he said, Can Jesus save me? And the Holy Spirit had convinced him. And he repented from the depths of his heart. So what do many people do? They repent of their sins.

They confess their sins. But often they quickly return to the same sin. Like Peter speaks.

Like the washed trojan that returns to its vomit. Like the washed trojan that returns to its vomit. Why is it like that? Because our repentance doesn't go deep.

We aren't sorry because of all our sins. And sins that we have committed before God. And we repent the way Saul repented.

Saul the apostle turned into a Paul. And he never turned to be a Saul again. Some people confess their sin, their cigarettes.

The next thing they go back to them. So many people confess their sin, their cigarettes. But the next day they start to smoke.

And many people repent of their sins. But the next day they return to their vomit. So we have got to turn from our wicked ways.

The key to the salvation of your country is in your hand. And if it doesn't happen, if we don't repent. How will we stand before God? So if you don't repent on earth.

How can you stand one day before the judgment of God? And as it is written in the book of the prophet Ezekiel. And Ezekiel tells him. That if you don't ring the trumpet.

And your friend's blood dies. The blood will fall on you. What does it mean that the blood will fall on your hands? The Lord will accuse you.

Because you have killed that man. And God says to the Christians in Italy. And here in Sicily.

And says. Where is your nation? I demand their blood from your hands. And he finds you guilty.

Of killing and murdering your own nation. And that's why dear friends. Tonight is my last word to you.

God willing we are leaving tomorrow. Dear friend. May God open your eyes.

And that you realize. You will be held responsible. For your nation.

Maybe you say well I'm just a housewife. I'm just working in a shop. I'm not a preacher.

It doesn't matter. Because it's not you doing it. It's God doing it through you.

Because God says not by might. Not by power. But by my spirit.

We've experienced it over and over again in South Africa. South Africa was a difficult country. Often I prayed and said.

God if you send revival to South Africa. You can send it anywhere else in the world. And today we experience it.

It started in 1966. But today the fire is burning. Much more than what it did even in the beginning.

But even today. This fire is burning even more. Than it did in 1966.

We experience it every day. That the Lord's name is above every name. When the Christians repent.

When the Christians repent. Cleansing their lives. There can be so many sins amongst Christians.

Bitterness. Unforgiveness. One Christian having something against the other Christian.

If you read in the book of Acts. The early church were of one heart. One mind.

Even one word. And when you read it. You get the impression.

That Jesus meant more to them. Than anything else in the world. More than their own homes.

More than their own money. More than their own property. Some people would sell everything.

And bring it to the feet of the apostles. Strange that they brought it to the feet of the apostles. If somebody gives me a check.

And gives me money. I don't put it at my feet. I put it here close to my heart.

But the apostles said. Put it at our feet. Where is your money? Close to your heart? Or under your feet? It can start with the wife as well.

And said. Look. Let's not give everything.

We just do as it is everything. We don't know what will happen. To the church in future.

Maybe Peter and John will die. And what will happen to us. And we don't get younger.

We'll get older. And in our old age. What will we have? Let's take half.

And we just give half. But we just act. As if everything is there.

And Ananias came. He was held half. And gave the other portion.

But Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. Who is not only a Holy Spirit. But the Spirit of truth as well.

And the Holy Spirit said to Peter. Peter there is something wrong here. There is a rat smelling here.

And he confronted Ananias. Ananias. Did you sell.

That portion. For this amount? And he told him a white lie. To save him out of that awkward situation.

And he said yes. And he said yes. And Peter said to them.

Because you didn't lie to me. But you lied to the Holy Spirit. You lied to the Holy God.

Because you had that land. And it was yours. You could have kept the whole money.

It was yours. But why do you lie? You haven't lied to me. But to the Holy Spirit.

And as Ananias heard those words. He fell down dead. After three hours his dear wife came.

Peter held the pistol to her hand. And he challenged her and said. Sapphira.

Have you sold that portion. For this amount? Dear sisters. What should she have said? She had agreed with her husband.

She was one with her husband. We always cry and say. Oh shame.

The married people aren't one. Now this couple was one. And had agreed.

She couldn't let her husband down. And reveal his lying. And Peter full of the Holy Spirit.

And the Spirit of truth. Said. Sapphira.

Why did you become one. With your husband. The Spirit of truth.

Through Peter. Why did you become one. With your husband.

Because you became one. With your husband. In what is not right.

Before the eyes of God. And so he said. Sapphira.

The same men. That took your husband. Will take you dead.

And as soon as she heard those words. She fell down dead. Now dear Christian friends.

If. Sapphira would have been your sister. What would you have said? Maybe you would have said all that.

Not the blood. Not the love of God. Those are dangerous people.

They are not walking in God's ways. Ananias. Would have been your brother.

And Ananias. Did not walk according to. How the other brothers walked.

What could you have said. If things concern other people. Then it's easy for us.

But if it concerns your own children. If Sapphira or Ananias. Would have been your son or your daughter.

How would you mother. And you father. Have reacted.

Wouldn't you maybe have gone and said. I'm going to warn people. Don't go to the church.

That is a sect. Those are terrible people. And if here.

In your. City. Would be a church.

Like the early church. Who of us. Would have dared.

Join the church. And. If today.

There was a church right here. Where we find ourselves. Like the primitive church.

Where people die because of sin. Who could come to that church. What would happen.
With our secret sins. God was in their midst. And he was so holy.
That no one could stand. In front of his holiness. Maybe you can say.
I sing in the choir in the church. Maybe you can say. All right.
I sing in the choir. I am here. And thank God.
Those times are far away. Brothers. Those were people.
Full of the Holy Spirit. And there was no place. For the devil.
To enter that church. We got to the place. Where Peter and John.
Went into the temple. To pray. When they got to the gate.
Which is called beautiful. The beggar was there. Begging for alms.
For money. Peter said. Look at us.
I couldn't understand that. I said God. How could he say look at us.
We tell people. Don't look at us. Look at God.
Look at Jesus. Look at the Bible. Don't look at me.
Look at God. Don't do what I do. Do what I tell you.
But Peter. Full of the Holy Spirit said. Look at me.
And he said. Silver and gold have I not. But what I've got.
I give to you. In the name of Jesus arise. Now dear friends.
It's easy to tell people. Look at us. If we've just won a million euros.
Or a million dollars. And we can smile. But if you are penniless.
And senseless. And you've got no money. You must say silver and gold have I not.
Can you still tell people. Look at us. If things go against you.
If you are financially bankrupt. If you have a financial problem. You don't know what you'll do tomorrow.
Can you still tell people. Look at me. But Peter had something.
That was more important. Than silver and gold. And he said.
In the name of Jesus Christ arise. And that person arose. And at that point.
In the middle of the message. My sermon. I told them something.

That happened in a catholic cathedral. And in the middle of my message. I spoke.
About what happened. In a catholic church. A catholic cathedral.
There were thousands of people. In the church. And they had little baskets.
Or little plates. But they had a big table. And that table.
Was full of gold and silver. And those fathers. Of the church.
Counted that money. And a young priest came along. I can't say anymore.
Silver and gold have I not. Because that church. Is rich today.
And the young man replied. And says. Neither can he say.
In the name of Jesus arise. But what did he say? He didn't say in the name of Jesus. That young man said to that old man.
In the name of Jesus arise. Things have changed. The tables have changed.
What they had. We don't have anymore. What they didn't have.
We've got. And we are happy. And as I told the church.
Of this. Thing that happened. In a Roman Catholic cathedral.
A young person got up. Three months before. This person got converted.
And the tears ran down the cheeks. Saying oh pastor. Stop preaching.
May I pray. I said oh. What will this person pray now.
This person has just got converted. Maybe there are visitors here. And the person prays their own prayer.
And they say oh. This is a strange church. I didn't know how to react.
I didn't know if I was doing a long prayer. Or people could think it was a strange church. I thought this person is not a terrorist.
He wants to do it seriously. And I said alright pray. And that young person prayed a prayer.
That stirred and warmed my heart. A few simple words. Oh Lord.
We've heard what you did in the days of old. How you worked in the early church. Couldn't you repeat.
And visit your church. That your church will be like the early church. I said is this the fire.
The two disciples on the way to Emmaus. What they felt in their heart. When the Lord opened the scriptures to them.
I closed the service. I didn't finish my sermon. I went to my biological brother.
Who is here with me tonight. I said brother we've experienced a strange thing in church. The church.

The service was suddenly closed. But not by rioters. Or terrorists.
But because of a prayer. And if that prayer was of the Holy Spirit. Revival is around the corner.
And after a few weeks. God came down. Dear friends.
Prepare the way of the Lord. And when the church. And the children of God prepared the way for God.
He came down in South Africa. When the children of God. When the church of God.
Humiliated itself. And prepared the way for the Lord. Then the revival happened in South Africa.
Today still. Political people come. Communists come.
Politicians. People in government. Ministers.
They come. They seek God's face. The sick come.
The sick. Aged people come. The night before I left.
A lady came. When I looked at her body. It was as if she got burnt in a fire.
But there was no fire. The sickness of AIDS. This disease.
Was caused by the devil. She was totally blind. I told her to repent.
And come to Christ. And we prayed together. The next morning.
The day I left. I thought I'll get up early. And go and see what's happened to this woman.
She says this fire. Which burnt me is gone. I said what are your eyes like? She says I can see you.
Her blind eyes were open. That was the day I left South Africa. She says my eyes are being washed.
Friend and foe. Have got to admit. That God is real.
That he's alive. We haven't got time. To tell you all those things.
I would have loved. To tell you. Of all the miracles.
That happen now. They phoned me today. And told me of things that happened yesterday.
And the day before. I will tell you only one miracle. That happened recently.
Today they called me. Of something that happened yesterday. And the day before.
But you know there is that saying. If you meet a poor man. A hungry man.
There is no much sense. In giving him a fish to eat. He'll eat the fish.
But then he'll be hungry again. Rather take him. And teach him.
How to catch the fish. And if you have taught him. How to catch him.

His problem will be solved. That's why I thought. I'll just speak about this tonight.
How to catch the fish. If you want God to come down from heaven. And work in supernatural power.
And heal your country. Remember the words of the man. Who was greater than anybody else.
Born of women. Except for our Lord Jesus Christ. Prepare the way.
For the Lord in your life. Thank you. To me.
It's a privilege. To be with you tonight. When God.
Caught me. I said God. Then I want to follow thee.
With all my heart. And I have. Had the privilege.
To be. A witness of that. What we heard tonight.
It is wonderful to see. God working. In his power.
Through his Holy Spirit. It is wonderful to see. The blind.
The eyes open. It's wonderful to experience. Cripples coming.
And they go home. It's wonderful to see. Cripples coming.
And they go home. But to me. The greatest miracle.
Every time. When I experience. God's working.
I see that God heals. A person. From lying.
If I see. God working in a person. And setting him free.
From the lusts of the flesh. When I see. The power of God.
Healing a man. Who had been bound. By anger.
To see a person. Being healed. From jealousy.
To see. A young girl. Being set free.
From the obsession. Of boys. And to see.
A young boy. Being set free. From girls.
And that is. One of the biggest. Miracles to me.
Where God. Reveals himself. And sets the person.
Free from the things. Of this world. And I always say.
God. Why am I privileged. To be able to experience.

Things like that. I haven't deserved it. It's only by the grace.

Of God. And I have one prayer. In my heart.

That I may be true to thee. Lord Jesus. Right to the end.

Because we see. So many people. They start off well.

But they don't end well. And may God grant. That that what you've heard.

Tonight. Will bring forth much fruit. In our lives.

God bless you.

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