

Choose You This Day

by Gary Ellison

The sermon emphasizes the importance of standing for God and not compromising with the world, highlighting the need for a holy club in every church and the consequences of prayerlessness.

Duration: 47:46

Topics: "Decision"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for believers to stand alone and demonstrate their faith in God. He highlights the importance of personal transformation through a relationship with Jesus and invites others to know Him personally. The preacher also emphasizes the need to repair the altar in families and churches, symbolizing a return to true worship. He uses the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel to illustrate the conflict between evil and compromise, and the necessity of rebuilding the altar and seeking God's fire to fall.

Transcript

Tonight, 1 Kings chapter 18. I believe this is one of the most stirring scenes in all of Scripture. And I want to preach about it tonight.

That great conflict on Carmel. 1 Kings in chapter 18. Here we find in the pages of Scriptures that great story of Elijah's sign to determine the true God.

The true God. And brethren, I want to say to you today that what this world is looking for in this hour and I believe it's such a time as this that God has placed us here. Amen.

But it's in this hour that the world is not looking for more information or argument but what they're looking for is demonstration. They want to see the true and living God at work in your life and in mine. In your family and in mine.

Through your life and through mine. It's not more information. It's not even greater persuasion.

But it's a great demonstration of God coming down. And I want to share that with you tonight. We see this in the Scripture.

It was a need in that day. And brethren, I believe it's a need in this day. I want to invite you to stand to your feet in reverence to the Word of God, please.

If you'd be so gracious. I want us just to read. We're now in 1 Kings chapter 18.

We're going to read verse 30. We're going to see, I believe, one of the key verses in the chapter. Verse 30.

Then we'll move down and read verses 36 through 39 that we might see something of the context. And then I'll preach what God has put on my heart. Would you read with me, please? 1 Kings 18 verse 30.

Let's start there. The Bible says, And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

I believe this is one of the key verses in the text. The altar of the Lord had been broken down. Verse 36 through 39.

Would you read there with me now, please? And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that Elijah the prophet came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

And all the people saw it. They fell on their faces, and they said, The Lord, He is God. The Lord, He is the Lord.

Amen. Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your precious Word.

Thank You for this scene and the pages of Scripture. I pray right now You would quiet our hearts, and yet quicken our minds and our spirits, that we might understand what You have for us tonight, and that we might understand, Lord, the crisis of this hour, and how important it is, Lord, that we also repair this altar, not only in our families, but in our churches. God, help us, Lord.

Speak to us tonight, and I pray, Lord, that in these few moments together, our spirits would be refreshed by Your Spirit. And every family that's here tonight would leave here encouraged. Not drained and downcast, but leave here encouraged, and excited about identifying themselves with the living God.

Speak to us now, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

This conflict on caramel. Here is that stirring scene. Excuse me, I'm trying to finish my lozenger.

You can tell I feel at home now, amen. Alright. But there's a great scene in the Scripture, brethren, with Elijah, God gave him this sign, so that it would be determined and evident before all who is a true God.

You know the context, we won't take time to read it all, but there was a king named Ahab. And brethren, he was a pagan king, he was making wrong decisions, choosing wrong directions for the people, and he was literally heaping the wrath of God upon the land. Brethren, I'm telling you there was, in that day, confusion and trouble was ruling the land.

Why? Because they were attempting to create this strange mixing, this strange blending of evil with good. And that's exactly what we see today. We're attempting somehow to win the smile of this world, and at the same time have the well done of Christ in heaven.

I'm going to tell you, brethren, it's not possible. We as families, we as Christians, we as young people, we as children must go ahead and decide, I'm going to tell you, I've cast my lot and it's on Jesus' side. I've made some decisions, I'm walking through by faith in this life, but I'm walking not alone, I'm walking with my God.

In His day and in this day, the evil was close enough to the truth to ease the conscience, but far enough from the truth to condemn the soul to hell. That's what we're seeing today, brethren. Close enough to ease the conscience, yet far enough from the truth to condemn every soul that was devoted to it.

Now very quickly in the text we see three groups of people. I want you to follow me tonight. Three groups of people.

The first thing we see are the heathen that had gathered. The heathen, that's the first group. Look with me at verse 22, the Bible says, Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I, only remain a prophet of the Lord, and Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

Verse 26 and following. They're describing the heathen. This is the first group.

Verse 26, They took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, called it in the name of Baal, this false god, from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. Can't you hear them chanting? But there was no voice nor any that answered, and they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them and said, Cry aloud, for he is a god.

Either he's talking or he's pursuing or he's in a journey. Preadventure he sleepeth, must be awaked. And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lances till the blood gushed out upon them.

And it came to pass when midday was passed, and they prophesied until the time of the offering, the evening sacrifice. Now watch the Scripture, and I've got it well marked in my Bible, that there was neither voice nor any to answer nor any that regarded. Brethren, we see here in the text, that first group, here are the prophets of Baal, here are the heathen, here is that group, I want you to listen, they have already rejected the witness of the sky.

Does not the Scripture say that through the created order we see the eternal God and His power and His Godhead? They had already rejected the witness of the sky. They had already rejected the witness of the Scripture. No doubt Elijah had preached to them before.

They not only rejected the witness of the sky and of the Scripture, they had rejected the witness of their own conscience. And here they were still in all their attempts and activity, their religious activity, leaping on the altar, crying, screaming, chanting, even cutting themselves. And I'm going to tell you, their false gods still did not answer nor was moved.

The heathen. Without question, they looked down on the simplicity of the faith of the believing sinner. They were probably like the heathen in our day, very learned, used terms of science and philosophy to explain their beliefs, but they're still like the heathen that we see today.

They had reasoned themselves logically to the wrong conclusion. And so they found themselves in a mess and in an emotional state and in a big whirlwind of activity with absolutely no results. The heathen.

We see another group. The halting. First we see the heathen.

They had rejected the witness of the sky and of the Scriptures and of their own conscience. That conscience being that invisible part of man that lets them know right from wrong. It's there where God has written His moral law.

And I'm going to tell you, by the way, they read the Scriptures, believe it or not, they know it's right or wrong. But they had rejected it all. The heathen.

But also the second group is the halting. Look at verse 21. 1821.

We're developing the text. The Bible says, And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him. And if Baal, then follow him.

And what does the Scripture say? And the people answered him not a word. The halting. The halting.

Here they were standing in indecision. Here they were afraid to make a commitment. Here they were not willing to make a stand.

The halting. I'm calling the group the halting. No doubt relying on their natural bent.

They were attempting to blend the claims of Jehovah God with the claims of Baal. James chapter 1 calls them double minded. I'm going to tell you, brethren, you don't want to be a part of that group or the first group or the second.

Amen? We don't want to be aligned with that group called the heathen that is saying no to the full witness of the power and work of God in this land. Nor neither do we want to be a part of the group of the halting that are standing in indecision and afraid to stand alone and stand up for their God. The Bible says the double minded man is unstable in all of his ways.

The halting. There they are standing, unsure. It's like many Christians today, they're waiting to see the end result to determine the steps they will make.

When God says step out with faith by Me before you see the end result because I'll always bring the best results in your life when you do that. There was a third group and I'm calling it the holy. I'm going to tell you what we need today is a holy club in every church.

Amen? We need a holy club. We need a group of young people to just say I'm on God's side. I don't care what anybody else thinks.

Amen? We need a group of parents that says I want to be in God's holy club. I want to do what's right. I want to be a reformer in our day.

I want to be courageous. I want to stand for right. I want to stand for God.

I want to do what's right. Others can do what they will. I'm not going down that road.

Others can dress like that if they want. I'm not going to. Others can listen to that music.

I'm not committed to it. Others can be involved in relationships like that. But I'm not going to.

I'm going to serve my God. That's what we need. I mean young people just say listen, I love Jesus too much to do that.

I just love Him too much and He loves me too much. The holy club. This is the other group.

The holy. Who are they? Here we see the man of God in verse 22. Brethren, then Elijah said unto the people, I, even I, only remain a prophet of the Lord.

And brethren, he stood his ground. I want to be like that. God help me to be like that for my family, for Jesus Christ.

Here is the holy, this man of God, Elijah, standing alone for his God. Brethren, as we read the text, he had that sanctified courage. Listen, he feared God so much that he feared man so little.

He said, I'm going to stand and do what's right. If the others understand or not, it's not important. I'm going to stand and continue with my God if others go by the side.

He was that bright example to each of us in this moment. And I'm saying it wasn't easy to do it. But he did the right thing.

Now, watch as the scene unfolds. The first thing we see, we've already seen the groups, we've seen the setting. Now, watch the scene begin to unfold and we see, number one, iniquity is exposed.

Brethren, there was a crisis in the land, there were problems in the nation, and Elijah put his finger on it. Iniquity is exposed in verse 17 and 18. And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? Wow! In verse 18, he answered and said what? I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, and that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Balaam.

Wow! Iniquity is exposed. Brethren, I'm going to tell you, the common response for a man who has been brought into trouble by his sin is to find faults with others, right? Even with God. Someone else to blame rather than he himself.

So, this king, Elijah, they came into meeting. He said, you're the one that's troubling Israel. And Elijah said, I'm going to tell you what's troubling Israel.

Elijah laid his finger on the root of the problem, brethren. He said, it's you! You've sinned against God, you've rejected His commandments, you're worshipping this false God, Baal. Brethren, he wanted them to know that sin is always the source of trouble for the sinner.

And the text reveals that Ahab's greatest enemy was his own heart and his own house. He had rejected God and His ways. Iniquity was exposed as the scene unfolds.

And inconsistency was examined. After Ahab was confronted, then we find him confronting also the crowd in verse 21. I've already read the text, Elijah came to them in verse 21.

He said, listen, if the Lord be God, follow Him. If Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

Now, families, I want to encourage you tonight. We've got to choose sides. There is no middle ground.

And really, if you think somehow tonight, young person, that you can be in the middle ground, really you've already decided you're on the other side. Do you understand that? We cannot in our day have the smile of this world and the well-done of Christ. Jesus said, no man can serve two masters.

You're going to love one and hate the other. Either you've got to get on one side or the other. There is no middle ground.

I want to share with you some basic causes for this inconsistency that I see. What are some causes of a person wanting to try to be in the middle ground? They don't want to be so evidently identified with Christianity and neither do they want to be so evidently identified with the world so they're attempting somehow to have the smile of both. I'm going to tell you something.

You may get the approval of some of your friends. You may get the approval of some of your neighbors that are compromised. But I'm going to tell you, you'll never have the approval of God in your life.

And you'll never have therefore confidence to walk with Him and stand alone for anything. You can't be in the middle ground and have God's anointing. You can't be in the middle ground and be used of God.

You can't be in the middle ground and have dynamic children. You can't, Father! You can't, Mother! We've got to go ahead and come out. What are the causes of this middle ground? Number one is pride.

We're so concerned what others think about us, it moves us to change the way we dress, the music we listen to, and the decisions we make. Some of us are so affected by what people think of us it determines even where we live. Amen? What we need to do is what? I want to please God.

I want to be where God wants me to be and get there. Amen? And rest in it, brother. Let God use you.

Pride. Pride keeps us from that full reliance upon God. Another cause is slothfulness.

Slothfulness. 2 Peter 1, we won't look at all these verses, but it talks about the importance of giving all diligence and adding to your faith. Right? And instead of being diligent, that painstaking effort to move forward with God, we find ourselves in a state of slothfulness.

That's that opponent to that great and painful self-denial. And instead of denying ourselves of anything, we're protecting ourselves that we might have all that we want. Another great cause.

Pride, slothfulness, the love of the world. Brethren, when affection is placed on temporal things, we can have the better things God wants to give us. Right? We're talking about what causes this middle ground approach, this strange blending of evil and good, this inconsistency.

Pride, slothfulness, the love of the world. The Bible says, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. Now, I preached last night a little bit, God's not opposed to us having nice things.

But when those things have you, it becomes a problem. There's another cause, the fear of man. The Bible says in Proverbs 29 and 25, the fear of man bringeth a snare.

It's like a trap. It just catches our feet and holds us. But we can't take that determined action and steps that are necessary to walk with our God.

Powerful force that keeps us in indecision regarding the will of God. The ridicule and the scorn of men. Oh, what's so-and-so going to think about me? What's so-and-so going to think about me? I'm going to tell you what you better be thinking about is, what does God think about me? We're living in a day where at times, even in the church, we don't want to preach the Word of God and call sin, sin, and talk about heaven and hell anymore.

Or the need for repentance. Why? Because we're concerned somebody's going to visit and going to be offended. Brother, I firmly believe in the church where to keep the spiritual temperature a little bit hot so that people come in that want to compromise, they're going to get out or get right.

Amen? I believe in that. I don't believe in being mean-spirited. I don't believe in being critical, attacking people.

But I believe in preaching. And I believe in talking about sin and heaven and hell and the reality of judgment and the things of God so that those who need to get right can get right and those who don't want to get right will get out. They won't stay in a temperature like that very long.

But if we start wiggling there in the fear of man, I don't want to offend so-and-so because he's done that. I know his life. I don't want to preach about that because I remember there, a couple of years ago, they did that.

I'm going to tell you something. God's not going to come in power and demonstrate Himself there. Causes of inconsistency.

Pride and slawfulness. The love of the world. The fear of man.

I'm going to tell you that this is a big one right here. One of the causes that keeps us in that place of inconsistency, brethren, and keeps us seeking the middle ground instead of going and taking our stand, is prayerlessness. I've discovered that.

I've seen that in my life. Listen, without prayer, we lose power. Without prayer, we lose perception.

Without prayer, we lose the assistance of God's Spirit in our lives. Without prayer, brethren, who is going to guide us into the mysteries of godliness? Who will? Prayerlessness. What are the consequences of this middle ground syndrome? What are the consequences? I'm going to tell you number one, it insults the character and authority of God in the church and in your life.

Consequences. It damages your witness. Did the nation of Israel have a great witness among the prophets of Baal and the unbelieving heathen in that day? No.

They were standing there in indecision. It insulted God's authority and His character. It damaged their witness upon others.

It always leads to earthly mindedness and selfishness, brethren. And I'm going to tell you what that does in a church when you don't have men and leaders and families standing for what's right and saying, I'm sorry, I just love God and can't do that. When you don't have men that are willing to stand and do something right, what happens is then the hope is deferred among others.

In other words, my lack of standing up affects others. Amen? And it can happen the other way. When you've got four or five or six or ten men or twenty families that say, we're going to do right, let's go forward.

The pastor preaches and once in a while a man says, Amen. You know what? I'm going to encourage others to say Amen. I remember when we started the church in Mexico City.

You've got to remember, guys. In Mexico City, these guys were in the Catholic church. And what were they used to? They were used to about a twenty minute service where they did what they called the Misa, or the communion.

And they would walk in. They would do their little Misa. And after the Misa, they would leave.

So, these guys were getting saved and getting right with God. And of course, I was down there preaching and screaming and walking all over the place. And I said, it's all right for you guys.

I'm going to tell you. And I began to encourage them. If you agree with what I'm preaching, once in a while you ought to say Amen.

Amen? So, they started doing that. And once in a while, I started doing this right here once in a while. They got quiet.

I'd say, you ought to pray with your wives. They would, oh, Amen, Amen, Amen. Then it got to the point, brethren, where at times I was just doing announcements.

Hey, after the service, we're going to have, we'd call it convivio. We're going to have a little fellowship time. And they were just saying Amen.

They said Amen to everything. If they were in agreement, it was Amen. But I'm going to tell you something.

When we are in the middle ground, we're insulting God. We're damaging our witness. It will always lead to greater earthly mindedness.

But it also will discourage and dampen the spirit of others, brethren. And one of the greatest consequences is divine rejection when we're in indecision, seeking the middle ground. Because Revelation chapter 3 says what? When you are neither hot nor cold, Jesus said, I'm going to vomit you up.

Divine rejection. Brethren, indecision has plagued our churches. Indecision, I'm going to say it again, has plagued our churches.

We've come to a place where we are meeting and seeking a middle ground with the world and God. And I'm going to tell you, God's not going to meet us there. And the need of our hour is to say no to this strange blending of worldliness.

Brethren, it's hindering revival. It's bringing a spiritual coolness to our preaching and to our teaching and to our worship. And it is destroying the hope and confidence and faith of our young people.

I'm going to tell you, I've just come into the place where I believe the world is sick of religion just like I am. What they want to see is a demonstration of God. And I believe I'm coming to the decision where I understand that my own children do not want to see hypocrisy in my life.

They don't want to see inconsistency in my life. They want to see something that's going on in my life with God. And when they see daddy stepping out with faith in God, I'm going to tell you they're going to do the

same.

So what did Elijah do? He came to the scene. He called them to a decision. And the people are sitting there.

Indecision. Indecision. He said, I know what we need.

We need an infallible test. Amen. We see it here in the scripture.

Look with me quickly at verse 22 and following. Elijah came. He said, I even I only remain a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men.

He said, okay, here it is. Verse 23. Let us.

Therefore, let them. Therefore, give us two bullets and let them choose one bullet for themselves and cut it in pieces, laid on the wood and put no fire under. And I will dress the other bullet and lay on the wood and put no fire under and call you upon the name of your gods, your false gods.

And I will call on the name of the Lord and the God that answers by fire. Let him be God. And why not watch this? And all the people answered and said, it is well spoken.

All of a sudden, brethren, they're beginning to move out of indecision. What they want is not more argument. What they want is not more information.

What they want is not more of this or that. What they want is demonstration. I'm going to tell you when God answered by fire.

That's the God will follow. We'll follow him. Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, choose you one bullet for yourselves and dress it first for you and many.

Call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. And they took the bullet which was given them and they dressed it and called on the name of Baal from morning until evening, saying, O Baal, hear us. Can't you hear them chanting? O Baal, hear us, hear us, hear us.

Ours, ours. And there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon that altar which was made.

And Elijah began to mock them. Talking about a holy boldness. Brethren, I'm going to tell you that in verse 29, it came to pass when midday was passed.

And they prophesied in the time of the offering, the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. Brethren, I'm going to tell you. The infallible test.

He said, God, the God that answers by fire, let him be God. The decision was made. He said to them, take a side.

Stop your wavering and stop your playing around. Get ready to stand alone. God's going to move in and demonstrate himself.

I'm going to tell you, brethren. The appointed proof was fire that came down. I've said it two or three times in this message.

I'm going to say it again. We're beyond the point of arguing. There is a great need in our day for demonstration.

People are tired of hearing from us just, we go to that church. We're part of that group. We follow that sect.

What they need to hear is that I love the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus has transformed my life and family. I'd like for you to know him personally.

Can we come by one day? Can we have you to dinner at our place? Can we come by and talk to you? I'd like to open the Bible, the Word of God, and show you what God says about this matter. Amen? I'm Baptist. I'm not ashamed of it.

But brethren, the Baptist church has never and will never save anyone. Brethren, the altar fire was a sign of divine presence. The visual assurance of Jehovah's power and presence was when the fire fell.

In Elijah's day, as in our day, the fire has gone out in our churches. Are you listening to me? There's been this strange blending of evil and good to the point so that now to draw a crowd in the church, we're building what? We're building gymnasiums. We're having all kinds of entertainment and compromise.

We're even redefining sin in our churches. Brethren, we don't call it fornication and divorce and adultery and lying and all that. We just talk about, you know, some have habits that are not the best.

They're not the most healthy. We've got to take care of ourselves physically. And here we go.

We don't talk about repentance and the need to come to God and humble yourself. We talk about the need to how to reform your life. How-to messages.

I'm not opposed to how-to. Every message should be practical. But brethren, what I'm talking about is we've gotten to that place.

The glory has departed. And men are attempting to offer to God, I believe with all my heart, a strange fire. And God's not showing up.

So what do we see? Bigger buildings. Bigger this and that. But we're losing our children.

Losing the hearts of our daughters. Joining themselves to compromising men. Our own sons are growing up without conviction in their lives.

They don't have the conviction to say, that's sin, that's wrong, I can't do it. We've got guys that just kind of go with the crowd and depends on who's voting, that's where they go. Brethren, I'm going to tell you.

We need power. Amen? Some are coming to this place called church with a strange fire. I think of Leviticus chapter 10, the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu.

The Bible says they offered strange fire before the Lord and God took them out. We're living in a day again where we're playing games with God. We're defying men and we're creating despair in the human heart, because we're not having God meet with us.

When the great need of our day is for God to meet with us. The need of our day in our churches is the fire of the Lord. The power of the Holy Spirit.

I'm not talking about just yelling, I'm not talking about just emotionalism, brother. But I'm talking about God showing up and doing in a moment, in one visit, what we couldn't do for years or months or a thousand sermons. We need God to come.

Oh brethren, the same reason Elijah needed the fire to fall. For the same reason we need the fire of God to fall in our midst. And in our churches, once again in our families.

He needed it to combat error and sin. And we need the same, brethren. Our nation is in a crisis, our church is in a crisis, and I'm going to tell you there's a connection.

One reason our nation is going where it's going, is because God's people are going where they're going. We must make a stand. And I'm going to tell you something.

What I see here, and I'm going to share it with you right now. I believe one of the key verses, before the fire fell, before there was an evident demonstration of God's presence and power, Elijah did what? He repaired the altar of the Lord. Did you see it in verse 30? Elijah said, and all the people come near unto me, and all the people came near unto him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

I love that. This was the thing, this was the key. Listen, we must erect our altar, all at the altar, and all kept there.

Right? The altar is the meeting place of God and man, and there at the altar, a sacrifice is required. In other words, brethren, surrendered will, and bent knees, and death to selfish plans and worldly goals, something higher has got our attention. And it's a relationship with God.

It's knowing Him, and honoring Him, and winning His smile. Just like in Elijah's day, listen, trouble came because the altar was broken down, and the fire only comes after the altar is rebuilt. I want to apply this in two ways.

Number one, we've got to rebuild the altar in our families. There needs to be a place, brethren, where you meet, and I meet, men, where we meet, with our wives and our children for prayer and Bible reading. A place where it's set aside, and we're attempting as frail and as uninteresting as we are.

And at times, men, as how uncreative we are. I can be just about as dry as a piece of that carpet. But we've got to know, and our children need to know, that the Scripture and prayer is important to Dad.

The Scripture and prayer is important to Mom. The Scripture and prayer and spiritual things are essential to happiness and success in our families. We've got to rebuild the altar in our homes, brethren.

We've got to repair that thing, restore that thing, maintain that thing. We've got to have a meeting place where we get along with God. And God can speak with us.

And I'm going to tell you, the Bible is compared to water that is pure and clean, and I believe we read the Scripture to our daughters and to our sons. There is a cleansing effect that only eternity will tell of the measure. My wife challenged me one day.

She said, you know, we're always fateful to eat. I love to eat. I'm almost always hungry.

And she said, you know, we always take time to eat. It doesn't matter what the schedule gets like. I said, you know, you're right.

She said, well, we should always take time to read the Scripture then. In other words, before each meal, before we eat, we should read. I said, that's a good point.

So we started trying this. Now I have to confess that times were inconsistent. In the mornings we read Proverbs.

And before our main meal, which is about 3 o'clock, it's called comida. We're still on Mexican schedule here. We eat comida.

That's our main meal about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. We're reading through the New Testament. We just now finished Romans.

So we try to read a chapter before we eat our main meal. Proverbs in the morning. The New Testament we're reading through in the afternoons.

I appreciate my wife and challenging me to initiate that. And I'm going to tell you something. There's just something powerful about sitting down with your children.

And I know, maybe what you're thinking. You say, Brother Gary, you aren't very creative. I'm just not real creative.

But I believe God's a work. And sometimes I am creative. You can ask my wife.

Very rarely, but I try to be creative. But I'm going to tell you something. Building that altar where there is a focus in the Holy Scriptures is vitally important.

And because we're meeting with God there, brother, it's going to move us out of that middle ground. And the Word of God is going to build a greater faith and confidence in our hearts toward Him. And when we have that, when we're confronted with evil and compromise, we're going to say, no, I've found a better place to put my affection and heart.

And that's the way it needs to be in your family and in mine. That's the way it needs to be in this church. Brother, the root of sorrow and sin always speaks of the absence of that personal altar.

Oh, brother, the scene is unfolding. And what we need is that altar to rebuild. Listen, we need the fire to fall.

We need this in our lives. And I'm going to tell you, how does it come? It comes when we see the goal. And what's the goal? Look here at the text.

He repaired the altar. He called them near. You know, He poured the water on there, verse 34.

He said, do it the second time. They did it the second time. He said, do it the third time.

They did it the third time. And the water ran about that altar and He filled the trench also with water. And then, brother, you know, all the attention was there.

The prophets of Baal had failed and their false god did not hear, neither did He answer. And He came near in verse 36. It came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that Elijah the prophet came near and said, Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word.

Now here was the goal and here is the heart of Elijah. After he stated that, he said, hear me, O Lord, hear me, that the people may know that Thou art the Lord God and that Thou has turned their heart back again. And then the Bible says in verse 38, Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

Brethren, God showed up. That's what I long for. In my life, brethren, in my family, in my ministry, in everything that God allows me to put my hands to do for Him.

Brethren, I want the fire to fall. I want God to come and do something that I can't do. The heart cry of Elijah.

Listen, the only way we're going to see the fire fall, the only way we're going to see others convinced of the truth that God alone is God. That's what happened in verse 39. And when all the people saw it, brethren, the fire fell.

The Bible says they fell on their faces. Wow! And they said, the Lord, He is the God. The Lord, He is the God.

I mean, conviction fell. They were now convinced. Their hearts were stirred.

And their body was moved. Why? Because God showed up. Why? Why did He show up? Why did He come in such power and demonstration? I'm going to tell you, because it was the posture and heart of Elijah.

Did you see the three things that we read in His prayer? The heart cry of Elijah. Listen, if we're to see the fire from heaven, we must make His cry ours. Are you listening? First thing He did there in verse 36, He said, as He came near, He said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God.

That's number one. He said, You are God. You are God.

You are the true God. You alone are the true God. You alone are worthy of our worship.

You alone are worthy of our obedience and our love and our sacrifices. You are God. The second ingredient, He said, I am God's servant.

Do you see that? He said, let it be known this day that You are God and that I am Thy servant. I'm a zero. I'm just a messenger boy.

I'm nothing. You're God. I'm a servant.

Number three, He said, let it be known this day that I have done all these things at Thy word. We see here His cry. Here we see the very foundation of Elijah's faith, belief, and prayer.

Brethren, listen. He said, You're God. I'm God's servant.

I will obey God's Word. In other words, everything was God-centered. You're God.

I'm God's servant. This is God's Word. Man, listen.

He got there and God and His Word was exalted and God came down. Are you listening? And what we're doing at times in our churches, we're exalting men, we're exalting a program, we're exalting some kind of music something, we're exalting some kind of children something, we're exalting all kinds of things. Listen, I'm not opposed to programs if programs help us do what God has commanded us to do.

But just to have activity to say we have it, just to have a program to say we did it, just to have this to say we've got it, brethren, I'm going to tell you, it grieves God. And what we're seeing today in the churches is we are attempting to do the work of God with man's means and methods. We don't need man's means.

We don't need man's methods. We don't need a new message. We need to understand God's message and we need His methods and we need to see His power.

Oh, that God be glorified in our lives. Knowing God and making Him known. When it becomes the focus, I believe the fire will fall.

In our churches, if we would seek God in our homes, Lord, we want what honors You, we want to please You, we want to glorify You. As frail and as feeble as we are, God, help us to do that. We are Yours, You are our God.

We're following You. We're committed. We're coming out of this middle ground.

We're laying aside all this inconsistency. We're not going to look for ways to make compromise or concession with the world. We're going to align ourselves with You.

And when we do that, God, I want You to be honored. I'm going to tell you, I believe God's going to come and do some things in your life, through your life, through my family and my family, in this church. But they could be things that we would have never dreamed would have been done.

But God did them. Oh, brethren, when that becomes the focus, God is free to come and visit. Elijah had that focus, and as he focused there, God came down in power.

I want to ask you tonight, I believe if I were to ask you, how many of you would want to see a demonstration of God's power? I believe we'd all raise our hand, wouldn't we? You know, we get tired very quickly of services as usual and so forth. Amen? I do. I've been pastoring over 20 years.

Just over 20 years. And brethren, I'm going to tell you something. And I know that's not a long time, and it's not.

I'm not talking to you like I've got all kinds of experience. I don't. But I'm saying, I long to see God come down.

And I mean, do the unplanned, the unexpected, show up and help people to see they need to be saved, and help moms and dads to get right with each other, and right with their children, help young people come clean and come out of the closet with their secret sins. I mean, for God just to come and really meet with us. And I believe as we are right with God, and our focus is right on Him, you know what's going to happen? Others are going to see that, and they're going to fall on their faces and acknowledge He is the Lord.

Those in indecision will come out of indecision. Those that are lost will come to saving knowledge. Those that are already attempting to be focused will be reaffirmed, and the fan will be flamed.

Right? The flame will be fanned and encouraged that we're in the right way, and we'll stay there. I want us to pray for each other tonight. I don't know where you're at right now.

I don't know what's going on in your life. But I want to encourage you to obey God tonight. Would you do that? Maybe you're here tonight and you'd say, Brother Gary, pray for me.

I need to rebuild the altar in my home. I've made so many things a priority. I need to restore the altar, rebuild it there.

I need to rekindle that in my own family, in my own personal life. Maybe you're here and you say, Brother Gary, I'm a Christian, I'm a young person, but I haven't been really meeting with God in my personal time. That hasn't been something that's been the focus of my life.

But I want to rededicate my life to that. Let's pray one for the other. Let's let God have His way tonight.

Father, thank You for Your Word, and thank You, Lord, for Elijah. Lord, and how You came, and such great power demonstrated Your presence. Lord, there was something measurable there that day that happened, and it brought such an overwhelming impact on others.

Lord, they fell on their faces. Oh, Father, would You help us tonight, Lord, to be honest with You? Lord, we long to be strong in the faith. We long for our children's faith to grow and be strong.

Yet, Lord, we know what brings us out of that indecision and inconsistency. We've got to rebuild that altar. We've got to meet with You there.

Let You come and demonstrate Your power. Lord, please help us to be honest tonight as moms and dads and sons and daughters. Don't let us leave here, Lord, the same.

We invite You to come and stir our hearts. Brethren, while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, we saw in the text three groups of people. First were the heathen.

They didn't know God. So they had built in their mind false gods. If you're here tonight, you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

I invite you to come to pastor, to myself. We would love to open the Bible and show you how to know Christ as your Savior. Maybe you're here and you're that group that was the halting and you're there in indecision tonight.

You haven't really fully committed your life to God. I would invite you to come out of that place, that state of indecision. Commit yourself to the living God.

Maybe you're here and the best you know, you're walking to the Lord. I praise God for your testimony. The Lord has spoken to you about being in that place for God's glory and His honor becomes the passion of your life.

You obey God tonight. Do what He wants you to do. Let's draw near.

Can we do that tonight? Just humble ourselves. Let's obey God. Respond to Him in the way He would have you do in these moments.

We're going to turn the service over to pastors. He feels directed here. Just a moment.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/14/SID14512.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gary-ellison/choose-you-this-day/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net