

New Beginnings - Gideon's Army I

by George Warnock

George Warnock's sermon explores the themes of spiritual dependence, the dangers of pride, and the importance of imparting God's truths to future generations as illustrated through the story of Gideon and the Israelites' journey into Canaan.

Duration: 1:19:45

Scripture: Genesis 1:3, Psalm 78:2-4, Isaiah 55:10-11, John 5:46, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Hebrews 10:5

Topics: "Beginnings"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the book of Judges and how God allowed areas of resistance to remain in the land so that the younger generation could learn war. The preacher emphasizes that God's principles of truth must be established within us so that we are ready for any challenges that come our way. The sermon also mentions the story of the Israelites receiving manna from heaven and how they gorged themselves on quail sent by God in anger. The preacher highlights the importance of relying on God for our daily bread and not accumulating wealth for selfish purposes. Additionally, the sermon touches on the topic of discipline and the consequences of not correcting children, leading to rebellion and societal issues.

Transcript

I want to look into the book of Judges today. God had brought the children of Israel across the Jordan and into Canaan, the land that he had promised. And we're told that God said, I'll give you the whole land, but it'll be little by little.

I will not let you take immediate possession of the land, lest the beasts of the field increase upon you, so that they could take all the land from the inhabitants. But if they did not cultivate it, subdue it, if it remained in its wild condition, then the beasts of the field might encroach upon them and do them a lot of damage, even though they'd driven out the enemies. And so God's purpose in your life and mine is to bring us into that rest that remaineth for the people of God, which is coming to that place where our own works have ceased.

For he that is entered into his rest has ceased from his own works, as God did from his. And that's something God has to show us from time to time, because how do we discern that which is our works and that which is his? And I'm sure that always remains a problem with all of us. Is this really the work of God that I'm engaged in, or is there intermingled with it a lot of my own works? So God has to prove us in that,

and he's told us that he will not give us just a complete reddened of all the enemies immediately, because even though those spiritual hosts, those enemies are real enemies, which are spiritual hosts of wickedness, even though we conquer over them, there are still areas in our own nature that could rise up to take the place of God if we have not come to the place where the old tendencies of the old life are completely subdued.

These are areas that are, I think, very critical as we go on with the Lord into further places with him. We're inclined to think that if we come into the inheritance that God has for us, coming into those provisions of his grace, that we're free of any danger, that the more we come to function in realms of the Spirit, the less we are in danger of falling. But just the opposite is the case, that the higher we come into spiritual realms in God, the more subtle, the greater the danger that lies in our pathway, because pride is there and the enemy can come and cause us to fall in pride where he could not defeat us in anything else.

So they would come in and take the land and drive out the enemy, as it were, if somehow the land, don't forget the land is, we are that land, we are that inheritance of God. Having defeated all those enemies that we can see there so clearly that God reveals, there can develop, if somehow God hasn't come in and established his own nature and character within us, there can rise up these beasts of the field, pride, a sense of self-achievement. Those things can rise up and bring devastation, even though there have been great victories fought and won.

So we should never be amazed or surprised if some great man of God who has gone into great depths in God, has great power with God, has a great ministry in the realm of healing, miracles, casting out of evil spirits. We should never be surprised if such a one can fall, though we are. Oh, this man, I remember one lady, she heard some rumors about this man, I don't care, I don't believe it, I just was there and I saw people healed, I saw miracles.

She went on like that. It's things like that that can bring a man of God to his downfall. That's not the sign that he is spiritual.

Those things can bring him to his downfall, to have that power and that authority, and But somehow, only God can test and try the hearts. Somehow there can come in, see what great things I've been able to do for God, see how marvelously God is using. And perhaps he won't say it, perhaps he wouldn't like to think that he's even thinking it, but there's that tendency there.

So pride isn't something that you plan on getting into, it's not something that you devise, it's something that creeps in unaware. And the more you get, the more tendency there is to pride. And that's true in the natural realm and it's true in the spiritual realm.

The more we can attain in the realm of spiritual gift and blessing, the greater the tendency is to pride. And so we can thank the Lord if along the way he is faithful to humble us, to cause us to owe, to expose, cause the pride within us to be exposed, to bring us to confusion or whatever, that God might truly develop within us a contrite and a humble spirit, because that's where God will dwell, that's where he wants to dwell. So coming into Canaan is a wonderful thing, but if God does not establish that Canaan life within us, not only give us the ability, the power to overcome the enemy without, but to have the grace of the Lord established within, we're in a greater danger of falling than before, and greater will be the fall.

So these are very serious things, and I guess it doesn't bother most of us, because I know that's all right for those great men out there, but pride doesn't just come to the great, it comes to the small and the

insignificant. I remember one time the minister said there was a young fellow who stood up in the church, and he said he was a fellow that didn't have any reputation for anything. He had no excellence, no charisma, and he was concerned about the pride of his heart.

And he was thinking, oh, you get proud? How could you get proud? You see, pride doesn't come just to those who have something to get proud of. It comes to those who realize there's nothing within them, but they slip away from that understanding if God starts to do something. It doesn't matter if you're small or great.

That poor man, that slave released from his slavery, he's nothing, he never had anything. He's subject to pride. He starts to get a few things, begins to think, see what I've got now.

And you can be proud of the gift you have, proud of the gift you have. And yet, why? Unless the feeling comes, I've attained to something. But did God give it? When you didn't have it, did he give it? Yes? Well, then, how can there be any feeling that I've succeeded or I've attained if God gave it? Paul says, if God has given you something, why are you glorious if you had not received it? And I used to wonder what he was saying.

He says, if you're boasting, you're boasting about something that God gave, and if God gave it to you, you have nothing to boast of. If God gave it, you have nothing to boast of. And so you come to a place where you sort of feel, well, this is something that I grew into, this is something that I developed, something that I attained to.

So it doesn't matter whether you're great or small, that thing can arise. We don't plan on it. And Paul speaks about the young man, and Paul says not to set him in as an elder.

Lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. And one note in a Bible I had indicated that he was saying, lest he fall into the same kind of condemnation that Lucifer fell into. Because God had made him high and lifted up the anointed cherub that covereth, and everything he had was from God.

And his life and his ministry would depend totally upon him drawing from God. And he enjoyed that position, we don't know how long, as the anointed cherub that covereth. The anointed cherub that covereth, reminding us, of course, of the covering cherub on the Ark of the Covenant that covered, as it were, the glory of God, as in a place of defense to guard the glory of God.

Immediately we think God doesn't need any defense, but his glory does. Yes, that shining forth of his glory does, because in the shining forth of his glory, it comes upon all his creation. And so it seems that Lucifer's position was to make sure that all created beings, somehow, he would guard that glory of God, and be diligent to so fulfill his ministry that if there was any creature that would begin to steal God's glory, he would be there to protect it.

So that it is a great ministry, a wonderful ministry, but he fell himself perfect in wisdom. His heart was lifted up, and instead of all glory and honor to him that created him, it was, I will be like the Most High. I will ascend.

I will take my place in the congregation. And so he fell. And so pride isn't just something that pertains to mankind or the carnal nature.

It was in the power of these heavenly creatures to fall, because they had a will that God that made gave them a certain will, enabling them to do right or to do wrong, to continue to honor him or to go their own way. And they were dependent for their own safety upon honoring God in all things, to serve him in him only. They were dependent upon him so that even the celestial beings draw from God the means of their spiritual livelihood and health comes upon dependence from God.

And so God, when he had his people out there in the wilderness, prepared for them the corn of heaven, called in one place the bread of the mighty, the bread of the mighty ones, so that his people on the earth could partake of that same sustenance from God that the mighty ones in heavenly places partook of, which is basically drawing from God, for without him and apart from him there is just no life. He gave them the bread of the mighty, that in drawing from God we might always honor him and recognize him and obey him and serve him. So he gave them the bread of the mighty, which was manna, intended of the Lord to keep them totally dependent upon their Creator, intended of the Lord to keep them totally dependent.

They didn't understand that, they didn't like it. But in that manna there was the ingredient upon which the heavenly hosts feed, that which would enable all creation to draw from him, so that everything that God has made, things that we can see and cannot see, is totally dependent upon the Creator. They have beauty, they have glory, they have wisdom, and you see it in all things that God has made.

And yet no matter what he has made, they all are totally dependent upon their Creator for their very existence in life. God made them that way. He wanted to make this holy nation that way, and so he brought them out into a barren and waste and howling wilderness, something that completely baffled them and troubled them and revealed the iniquity of their hearts, for it was in that place that God would make them to be a people totally dependent upon him, for the very bread they ate, the very water they drank, the very life they lived.

And God brought them there to cause them to know that, but he doesn't always tell us why he brings us to certain places, until afterwards. And afterwards Moses tells them that the Lord was leading you these 40 years in the wilderness to prove you, to try you, to cause you to hunger, and he fed you with manna, that you know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. He led you, he caused you to hunger, his purpose was to prove you, to try you, and to make you know that man doesn't live just by the things of this world, this food that we grow and eat, but we live from abiding in relationship with him where we can hear what he has to say, by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.

And I puzzled over that, he caused you to hunger and he fed you with manna, in the same breath, until I think the Lord began to show me that there was in that manna nothing that would satisfy their appetite, but everything they needed for their journey in the wilderness, everything, not a thing lacking, physically, spiritually. Some things that they partook of in that food that we're not partaking of today, because we get sick along with the world. They didn't, and yet they despised the food because it didn't satisfy their appetites.

I remember a young man from Germany I met years ago, he was probably 14 or 15 when the war ended, and when the money system collapsed, they were hungry. I don't know if they went through any actual starvation, but the money system had collapsed and they were hungry until things got reorganized, and they'd go out in the field, they heard that there was a certain herd there in the field that they could gather and cook and get a little strength from it, and he says, they'd fill up on it, they'd make sort of a soup out of

it, and fill up until they couldn't take a bit more. But he says, in just an hour or so they were hungry, but they were full, they couldn't take any more, but they were full.

I was thinking of that, not then, but recently, that the manna was something like that. They'd eat three quarts a day. Now, that's a lot.

I don't care what it is. They ate about three quarts a day, and they were full, but they were still hungry. And they said, we hate this light stuff, it doesn't satisfy us.

And God made it that way, that they might know that their real life was not by bread only but hearing from God. Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord does man live. So they said, we hate this food, but we despise this loathed food.

Give us something to eat more substantial. We had it good in Egypt. We had the fish and the garlic, the leeks, the onions, and here there's nothing before our eyes but this light bread.

Nothing before our eyes. What we see with our natural eyes is this fluffy stuff, that we're going to eat it until we're full and we're still hungry. And God wanted them to be hungry, that they might know that their life didn't consist just in what he gave them to eat, but that they must feed also upon every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

God answered their prayer. He answered their prayer. I know sometimes it's taught, just ask God for whatever you want and he'll give it, and when he gives it, you thank him for it.

God wants us to begin inquiring, not just asking him for things. If we keep on asking God for things, not being sure whether it's God's will or not, but we want it anyway, God may give it to you. If you insist on, God, I insist on this, I want to do your will, God, but I want this here for sure, but I want to do your will.

This has got to be part of it. If we insist that God must answer our prayers when God seems to be saying, wait a while or are you sure it's my will, we're sure it's his will, so we keep asking. God might well answer our prayers if we insist on it.

So I think the safe way is, I know we have to have faith and confidence to know this is God's will, we know it's his will, we cannot let any unbelieving thoughts come in, we must insist on it. But I trust that even when we do, that there is in our heart that prayer may be not always spoken. Lord, I'm confident this is your will, but nevertheless, Lord, thy will not mind be done.

God answered their prayer, but in answering their prayer, we're told he sent leanness into their soul. Another translation says he sent evil diseases, but the fact remains that God was not pleased in answering their prayer when they said, give us flesh, and they insisted on it. So Moses cried unto God, and God said, I'll give them flesh to eat, they'll have enough for a month.

Oh, Moses said, if we slew all the herds we got, that couldn't. God said, is my hand shortened that I can't do this thing that I have said? And so in the evening the quail descended like rain, and it came and covered the face of the ground. All they had to do, they didn't have to get down on their hands and knees like they did to gather the manna, because there was a lot of work in that, because it was a small light thing and it rested on the dew, and they had to get down there and gather it, and they had to be diligent about it, because if they didn't gather it before noon, there wouldn't be any left, so they had to gather it.

Even though God gives us the bread from heaven, it requires diligence on our part to partake of it. And in a way, God made it easy for them, because they flew around just about arm's length. All they had to do was grab those crazy birds and put them in their sack.

And it says that the men in Israel that gathered the quail gathered about 65 bushels. They were so starving for something substantial, but it was in God's anger that he sent it, and it didn't do them any good. They just gorged themselves on it.

What did he want to do with 65 bushels of quail? And when I was trying to answer that question, I thought, what in the world are people hoping to do with the millions that they're accumulating? What are they hoping to do with it? And Jesus said, when you pray, say, Give us this day our daily bread. Give us what we need. God was angry with them because of that.

They never came to know his ways. But he answered their prayers. I believe we've got to begin to search our hearts to know God's mind when we insist that God answers our prayers.

Make sure it's because it's God's will. Otherwise, let's always have that provision in our prayer. Lord, if it's not your will, please don't answer my prayer.

Please don't answer my prayer if it's not your will. So they come into Canaan, and God left certain enemies there, even though Joshua conquered the land and distributed it amongst the children of Israel. God decided he would leave little pockets of resistance there, that there are children coming in, that God may be able to train them in the art of war.

So even though God brings us into this great land that God has promised and somehow brought us into real fruitfulness in him, he still leaves areas of resistance because there's always a new generation coming up. And though they didn't have to contend with the struggles of the wilderness, they had to contend with the enemies in the land. And I believe that this generation we're in today has to contend with things that my generation earlier didn't have to contend with.

And I had to contend with things that my parents didn't have to contend with. And that's the way it is. But the principle is the same and God's provision is the same, that each generation should so walk with the Lord and so come to know the Lord that they will be able to impart to the next generation that which they need for their generation as they grow up.

And then they grow up and then it's been a new way, it's been a new kind of life for them, different problems and all that, but they come to know the same God and so they will be able to impart to their children. And that's what I mentioned this in class a little. That was the substance of the prophecy of Asaph, the psalm of Asaph, Psalm 78, when he said, We will not hide them from their children, speaking about the dark sayings, the parables that their fathers knew for what the children of Israel did and the life they lived and the pathway God led them in the Old Testament.

It seems that Asaph was calling that whole way of life a parable, because it is a true story but nevertheless it had a higher meaning. So he said, I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old which we have heard and known and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and his strength and his wonderful works that he has done.

For he established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God but keep his commandments, so that God's way and God's provision is that each generation of the church should be able to impart to their children, the upcoming generation, principles in God, parables of truth, that though it's a true story, it happened once and as it happens again it will be in a different setting. So you can't say specifically, well, yes, I know what you're going through, because the kids can say, you don't know. But there is a certain principle that functions through any area in which God leads us or any generation, and that is no matter what you're going through, if you have the foundation of truth in your heart, no matter what you're going through, that foundation of truth will mean as much to you now in this evil age as it did to previous generations, because the heart of man is the same.

I know man is always finding out new inventions, and we like some of them, but with every good invention that comes forth, there are evil inventions. But the principle is the same. God wants a people whose heart will be set upon him.

And for every evil invention, God has something in his storehouse that will be a storehouse of grace to match any evil invention that man brings forth. And Paul tells us that. Or he says, the offense went on its way in ever-increasing dimensions.

It reigned, sin reigned unto death. The sin of Adam began a kingdom of sin and death that reigned with increasing proportions until evil got worse and worse and worse and worse. But Paul tells us in Romans 5 that where sin did abound, grace did much more abound.

So there is a principle in God. And if the church goes on on earth another hundred years, and we don't know what God's plans are, we know we've come to the end, I believe, of this particular order, but we can't say specifically what the state of the church or where they will be in a hundred years from now. We don't know.

And there's no use of trying to think we do know, or trying to come up with dates and so forth, because God ignores all of that. But the principle is there. Sin was going to increase because the kingdom of sin and death began when Adam sinned.

And it would reign and reign and reign unto death. Its power would increase, the power of sin and death would increase, and we've seen it, especially in the last hundred years. For up until then, it seems that as far as the world was concerned, life was very simple.

Everybody got their living from the farm, basically. And in the last hundred years there's been literally an explosion of knowledge, that in the last hundred years there's been more actual increase in technology and knowledge than in all previous centuries as far as we know. A friend of mine was at a conference, he was a businessman, and he drew the graph of the increase of scientific knowledge.

He drew a graph, and it went along and the line went along, hardly any change until the beginning of the century. And then he started to go up with it, and up and up and up. This was 20 years ago.

He says, It's now at a place like you can't even put it on a graph. We just call it an explosion. But I'm saying that with all of that, there's been the same explosion of evil.

But Paul says, Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound. God has grace for the explosion of evil in the world. God has grace to counteract it.

It's a principle in God. So we think, Oh God, you must come forth soon and do something. I know he's going to.

But if he doesn't, if it goes on the way it is another 10 years or 20 years, God's got grace sufficient for our families. So there are these principles that we have to get into the hearts and minds of every generation where there is failure. And Asaph said, The reason for this, telling it to your children, their children, their children, their children's children, is that the truth of God will be kept alive in the generation of God's people and that they will not be that stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that set not their heart aright and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.

Margin rendering says, They set not their heart aright, they prepared not their heart, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God. Revealing to you and I the fact that if our hearts are not prepared by God, we will be that stubborn and rebellious generation. Anything God wants to do in our lives, the heart has to be prepared.

He goes on to say that that generation that God brought out, the children of Israel, he goes over their history. Though God had been, and he recounts the wonderful things that he did in dividing the sea and causing them to pass through and making the waters to stand as a heap, leading them as a cloud and all the night with fire, cleaving the rocks in the wilderness, giving them drink out of the great depths, brought streams out of the rock, caused waters to run down like rivers. Having blessed that nation, as a nation there has never been anything like it in the history of mankind, how God blessed the nation of the children of Israel.

Bringing them out in a mighty deliverance, miraculously looking after them. But because their hearts were not prepared, they became rebellious and sinned yet more, tempted God, spoke against God, said, Can God? Can he give us bread? Can he provide flesh? They believed not in God, they trusted not in his salvation, they sinned still, they believed not, they did flatter him, they lied unto him with their lips, they tempted God, they limited the Holy One of Israel. Unbelievable! But Asa said it's because they didn't prepare their hearts.

I believe this is the day of the preparation of the hearts of his people. I know many of you are keyed up with the thought of going forth and doing things for God. If God gives you that call, and then along with the call, sometime down the line gives you the word to go forth, God bless and God prepare, because God is going to raise up a new generation, is raising up a new generation, is preparing his army.

He is preparing his army. We know that. But I'm saying, don't let that become a vision.

And if you truly know that that's God's way for you, that's good, but God wants to prepare your heart. And he wants you to know that if your heart is not prepared, you can go forth and you can heal the sick and raise the dead and evangelize nations. You can see miracles, you can see water out of the rock, you can see the manna coming down from heaven.

But if your heart is not prepared, you might be blessing millions of people and you yourself will not come to really know God. And that's tragic and it's awesome. It's true.

Solomon came to the throne a humble man, a humble man. When Adonijah, his brother, in the pride of his heart, said, I will be king, and God had already declared that Solomon was going to be king, Solomon just, we don't read that he did anything about it. And Adonijah said, I will be king, and he got 50 men to run before his chariots, and they had a big feast and they called the king's sons together, except Solomon, of course.

They had a big feast, and Adonijah is the new king. Solomon wasn't worrying about it one bit. And Adonijah had a priest on his side by the name of Abiathar who faithfully stood at David's side all through the reign of David.

And Adonijah had Joab by his side, Joab who was David's general who fought great victories for David, and they became great men. Joab and Abiathar, the priest, Joab the general of the army, knowing the wars of David and seeing victory and triumph, stood with him in his rejection. And then they sided with Adonijah, the rebel.

David heard about it and decreed that Solomon would sit on the throne. Nathan the prophet came in and confirmed, along with Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, that David had declared Solomon was going to be king. So Nathan's blessing was on the new king, and David's blessing was on the new king.

And Solomon, in the humility of his heart, went and offered up a sacrifice at Gibeon. And he said, Oh, Lord, God appeared to him. He said, What do you want, Solomon? Solomon said, God, you've given me the charge of your people.

I'm but a young man. I can't rule over this nation. God, give me an understanding heart.

And God was so pleased with him that he asked for simply an understanding heart that he might judge righteously. And God said, I'm pleased with that, and I'm going to give you that. And in giving you that, I'm also going to give you riches that you didn't even ask for.

I mean, I'm just trying to emphasize the humility of this man and the wisdom that he had. And you read about it. In the very first test that came along, God gave him wisdom to decide whose baby this was.

There were two babies, two women. One died, and the one made an exchange during the night. Who's going to decide that? The case came before Solomon.

Oh, you can't do that, Solomon. Give it to her. Solomon, with the wisdom of God, said, She's the mother.

Fear came upon all Israel when they heard that story. The fear of God came on them. Here's a man.

Yes, the wisdom of God, and they were afraid. I mean, they feared Solomon. I just told that to mention that when Solomon got old, his wives turned away his heart.

He built temples for the gods of his wives, and his heart became alienated from the true God, and he began to offer up to the idols of the heathen nations a man who had such tremendous visitation from God. It's almost inconceivable that such a thing could happen. I was told, and I haven't tried to verify it, I was told that in witchcraft they used some of Solomon's writings that he wrote after he went into idolatry.

The wisdom he had became so perverted that even false religions of this day derive their strength from it. I don't know it, but I was told. For Jesus says, If the light that is in you become darkness, how great is that darkness? These are awesome things.

I believe God wants to emphasize it's the time of the revelation of our hearts, and in our hearts being revealed, exposed to him, exposed to him, he can deal with those hearts. We be not a rebellious generation, a generation that set not their hearts aright, whose hearts were not prepared, but we'll be part of the continuing generation of the faithful who will continue to impart to this generation the ways of the Lord, the strength of the Lord, the wisdom of the Lord, the word of the Lord, to build it into this generation that when we're gone, there's still a generation that know the ways of God, and that they must know that they must prepare their hearts that as they minister to another generation, that the seed of God's truth will continue to be imparted to all succeeding generations. But invariably there's a falling away, and it has already come about in the church.

Two, three, four generations have not been able to impart. Oh, we thank God for the measure that's there, for God always does keep his word alive in the earth. And I was quite encouraged in reading the history of the church called the Pilgrim Church, and the author pointed out that there's evidence that all through the dark ages, what we call the dark ages, a thousand years where there was no light left in the earth, there's evidence there was a strong light there.

But the persecution was so intense that they burned everything they wrote. So he says we don't have any records actually of what went on, except that we know that God had a light in the dark ages. God is faithful to do that.

We know he does that, but we call it the dark ages because we have no record of any light there hardly. God is faithful. So I don't care how dark this day or how dark yesterday or the day before, and I know that there's been a lot of darkness creeping in in this last two or three generations, yet in the midst of it, God has a remnant who've always had a vision of the upward call, always knew there was something better, and who have been seeking God that their hearts might be prepared, that no matter what comes, we want the heart to be prepared for whatever God would do.

So it's not a case we're just looking for revival and I want to have a part in that revival. If the heart isn't prepared, you're bound to flow along in the revival, but if your heart isn't prepared, you won't see perhaps what God really wants to say. The things that I'm teaching, a lot of them, they were bringing forth in the early days of Pentecost.

Very few heard. They come out again in the middle of the century. Very few heard.

But people feel that they're in the Pentecostal revival now because they're talking in tongues. And so we don't have to come in like they did at Azusa Street, you know, falling on the floor and devastated, coming in proud of heart and falling on the floor, agonizing before God, and it was an unseemly sight that was presented in many of those early Pentecostal meetings. Very unseemly.

As God baptized his people with the Holy Ghost and with fire. A friend of mine who was in a big charismatic meeting, the leaders would say, don't talk about being baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire. He says, say we received the Spirit.

So that's not quite as devastating, is it? And don't look on the charismatic movement as a new move of God in the 60s. It was what God did in Pentecost and in the middle of the century when he began to send the rain. Just the broadened stream of that.

And you know very well that a broadened stream always gets more and more polluted the further it travels through the land. And so it has been with that movement. We've just come to the place.

We don't want any roots with Azusa. What's that? God's done something in the denominations. You received the Spirit.

Be a better Baptist and a better Episcopalian and a better Catholic. Keep your religion intact. I mentioned this before, but God's out to bring a people back to the glory of his fire and presence.

And yet often I say God's not taking us back. He's taken us back to first principles. He's taken us back to the altar.

Taken us back to the altar to take us on. It's always back to the altar. And so we get away from that.

And the children of Israel always got away from it. And they go into darkness. But we've been emphasizing that in every day of darkness, in every era of darkness, God is working, preparing for the day when once again he will say, light, shine forth out of the darkness.

So remember that. I know we see the darkness. We wonder, Lord, how long? How long? But God says when darkness covers the earth and grows darkness to the people, a light shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

He promised that in days of darkness. He promises that. And so that's the story of the book of Judges.

That they didn't completely drive out the enemy, even though they had possession of the land, because God says I must leave areas of resistance so that your younger ones will learn war. They didn't have to learn the war of the wilderness, but now they're in Canaan, a different kind of war. And every generation has a different kind of war.

But the principle is the same. And so therefore as God's principles of truth are established within us, no matter what he does, God's people are ready for it. And so God would raise up judges.

They'd go into darkness, cry unto God, God would bring a deliverer. We're not going through all the judges at this time. We're just mentioning these things, believing, I'm assured, that it's what God wants for this morning.

I'm not always positive, but I seek to know his direction. Because you all know these stories. You all know these stories.

And I trust I'm not just telling a story. Because when God said let there be light, light flooded the earth. But God said the same thing in the New Testament.

So it wasn't just a story that Paul was repeating, how God spoke and said there was light. But he says God spoke then and said let there be light, and God's speaking today and saying let there be light. We know.

We read in the Bible where God spoke and light came into being. I know, but if it is God's word then, it must be God's word today or it doesn't happen. And so be prepared.

Just to speak God's word, you say, well, George spoke on that yesterday. It doesn't matter. If God gives you the same word, speak it again.

Speak it again and again and again. If it's by the Spirit of God, each time it's spoken, light will come. Light will come.

We're not just telling you stories that you know about, I trust. But that God who said let there be light, God is saying again on this day, it's a dark day. Once again, God is saying let there be light.

God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, to shine in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So it's a different day. It's not now to bring light to this old world.

It's that we speaking let there be light. There'll be a shining forth of the light that glows from the face of Jesus. It's a higher dimension.

For in every new moving of God, there's a higher dimension of what he did before. A higher plane. It's not just the same old thing all over again.

It might look like that. The darkness settles in and God speaks again. But it's not to bring us back to something that they had there in the wilderness.

They're in Cana now. It's a different day. Remember that.

Because when the new day comes, people are inclined to not... I can't accept that. Because it's not like I knew. I was brought up in Methodism.

So I'm not speaking personally. I'm just saying what men say. I saw the power of God in Methodism and I can't go for this thing that's going on now.

Because it's in a new dimension. But you say if they saw what God was doing in the days of Methodism, when Pentecost came along, why didn't they see that? Weren't they hungry for God? Wasn't God moving in a mighty way in those old days of Methodism? He certainly was. Well then, why don't they see what God is doing now when God is pouring out his Spirit and there's tongues and prophecy and the fire of God moving? Because their hearts were not prepared.

They were clinging to some old experience that they had which was good, wonderful. But they wanted God to repeat that. If God would repeat that, I'll go along with it.

And there are many, many Christians in the different churches today who would go along with a certain move of God if it was like the one that we got a hundred years ago or two hundred years ago. At least they say they would. But if they would truly, if it is true what they say, that they would go along with it if it is Luther doing it.

I'm a Lutheran. If Luther was here, I'd receive it. I can't receive this nonsense you people are in.

But if Wesley was here, then I'd go along with Wesley. They wouldn't. Because Jesus said to the people, he said, we know about Moses.

We're absolutely convinced that Moses was the man of God. And we can't deny that. We know that God used Moses.

So let's be content with that. As for this man, it doesn't line up with what Moses taught. But Jesus said, if you believe Moses, you'd have to believe me.

Because he wrote of me. And in whatever God does, in any move of God, God plants seeds of truth that he will yet unfold in another move of God. It's there.

I know I've said these things before, even here, but the rain comes down from heaven today and tomorrow. And God's intention is that every time it comes, though it's the same old rain every, God's intention is that it will do a new work in our hearts. And so while they were singing those beautiful psalms, and we're singing some very beautiful songs, they didn't know what they were singing.

Because they were singing about something that God wanted to do. But at the time, when the psalm was presented by the prophets, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for me. David sang a song, Lord, thou delightest not in burnt offerings.

You don't delight in it, Lord. While they were singing those, they were slaying sheep and oxen and goats by the hundred, and blood was flowing on those altars while they were singing it. God's not delighting in that.

God has no delight in that. God isn't delighting in that. And they were carrying on with it.

And I believe rightly so. Because maybe the prophet himself didn't understand why he was saying it. And maybe the people heard it, but the music was so good.

They never stopped to let the words of the music penetrate their hearts. That can happen, you know. You don't delight in sacrifice anymore.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. That's what God was after.

He was always after that. He was after that then. But in God's purposes, the people were right in the place where they should be.

That thing that God would do in the course of time. Nevertheless, I don't want to go into this at great length right now. Nevertheless, if God sends forth the word, it's not just something, well, I guess I've got to wait for a hundred years.

God gives space, you can begin to enter into it right then when God gives it. David did. We make much of him dancing before the Lord, clothed with a linen ephod.

But he was doing something that only priests would do. He was a king. His wife despised him in his heart.

Not because he was dancing, but because he put off the garb of royalty and put on priestly garments. A great king in Israel, clothed in the homo garments of a priest. As David was beginning to enter into priestly ministry, back there in the Old Testament, when no king dared enter into priestly ministry.

Uzziah tried it and was smitten with leprosy the rest of his life. Why did God make a difference? He didn't really. He wants all people to be priests unto him.

He wanted all Israel to be priests unto him. Because of the hardness of their heart, they couldn't enter in. So God made a priestly tribe.

But David had a priestly heart. He couldn't help it. He just entered in to priestly ministry.

When the Ark of the Covenant came back, it wasn't to revive that old Catholic church or that old Episcopalian church or that old Presbyterian church or that old Pentecostal church, the Tabernacle of Moses, David pitched a tent right there at home and put the Ark in there. So that he could go in like a priest and sit before the Lord in the old Tabernacle of Mount Gibeon. He never saw that Ark again.

God continued to bless it. God sent a priest up there to bless them, to offer the sacrifices. A man by the name of Zadok sent him up to Gibeon to minister to the people there.

I know God is faithful in blessing all denominations, the people in it, I should say. It doesn't mean that God is pleased with the denominational structure. He wants a habitation for himself in the hearts of his people.

He's looking for that habitation for himself, not in the glory of the old temples, the old tabernacles. David prepared just a tent and that became the house of God to him. And there he could go in and talk to God.

He became a priest. He became a New Testament believer, way back there in the Old Testament. So here, once again, Israel was in great bondage and we're just going to deal a little with Judges 7. He had raised up judge after judge.

And it says, as long as God raised up a judge, a man from God, in other words, who knew how to judge righteously and had the power of God to do it, somehow the people of God rallied and God kept the people from their idolatry in the days of the judge. But when the judge died, they soon slipped back into the old ways. And that went on and on, all through the period of the judges.

But God was preferring something better, that there was no king in Israel. Every man did that which seemed good in his own eyesight. And things got pretty dark when a judge had died and God waited for a certain length of time.

God would wait sometimes too long, it would seem. Things got pretty dark, but God was always faithful to do a new thing because light shines out of darkness. We wonder why God would take so long.

But it says, God waits that he desires a people to be seeking him. When the answer isn't coming, it's then that God wants a people who will learn patience and continue to believe in God. The Midianites were threatening Israel, coming up and taking their cross.

Harvest time comes. Looking forward all spring and summer for harvest time. It's here, the Midianites come up and take it.

Isn't that the way it is? Expecting, looking, anticipating, the fruit coming forth in the midst of God's people, sudden devastation. Those times of devastation can do one of two things. Turn our hearts against God and into bitterness, or cause us to seek him more earnestly.

For that's how God proves the heart. He doesn't just prove the heart by answering your prayers. He proves the heart sometimes by not answering your prayers.

To test you if in that time you're going to say, alright God, you don't want to hear me? Fine, goodbye. Or to say, Lord you haven't heard me, I'm going to cry louder. I'm not going to give up.

I will not rest. I'm going to draw closer to you. You think you're driving me away from you? The more you chastise, the closer I will come to you.

I had one little daughter that some of them it was a challenge to beat them because legs were flying and hands were flying. You say you beat your kids? Yes, in a fatherly way. I want them to feel it.

The reason we got all the rebellion in the land these days is because you can't correct your kids. They don't know it. Because there's all these perverse men going around and abusing their wives and abusing their kids, and so you can't spank a kid.

And they grew up, the chances are, I'll guarantee 99 of those kids out of 100 grew up having their own way. Until they become violent and ugly and mean. And so no, we can't have any spanking, of course, because they might become abusive, you see.

And so you see, what's the hope for a society? None but judgment. None but judgment. God called Gideon to deliver the nation in the time of their great trouble.

And the Lord appeared to him and he was threshing grain in the winepress. Because if he was in the winepress, they'd never find him. Because there's no grapes coming in for another two or three months, you know, whatever.

And so they wouldn't look here. So he's hiding. He was hiding from the enemy.

And the angel of the Lord appeared and said, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. Mighty man of valor. And here he is, hiding from the enemy in the winepress.

And he says, If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befalling us? And where are all the miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us out of Egypt? And so forth. But the Lord's forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the Lord looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hands of the Midianites.

And not I sent thee? Go in this thy might, thou mighty man of valor. It baffled him. I'm the poorest in Manasseh, I'm the least in my father's house, and you call me a mighty man of valor? He says, You go and you'll smite the Midianites as one man.

We've got, God's preparing a mighty army. Just as Gideon was a mighty man. Because God saw that he could use a man who was poorest in Manasseh, poorest in his father's house.

We can help us. Hiding from the enemy, God says, Go in this thy might. We all have to learn, and we're all still learning.

And God is going to make every one of you who have vision, zeal, to serve the Lord. Come to the place where he weakens your strength. Where he dries up your strength.

I don't say, it's got to take 50 years. You can do it, I suppose, in a month or a week. I don't know.

But he must weaken our strength. And God chooses those whose strength has been weakened. Whether it is Moses, who said, I can't, Lord.

I can hardly talk. I can hardly express what I have to say. And Lord, choose anybody else but me.

So that those whom God chooses as leaders are not those out following an Adonijah, who think if I follow Adonijah, he's declared himself king. And it looks like he's going to make it. I better get in there.

God's men and women are not opportunists. Looking for a place of advancement, success. There are people whom God has devastated.

To the place where they know in their heart, I can't do it. And God says, I found a mighty man of valor. He wrestled with Jacob till the break of day.

I used to wonder, why couldn't God have defeated poor Jacob before then? Because it wasn't Jacob that attacked the angels. It was the angel that attacked Jacob, that wrestled a man with Jacob. He came on the scene.

He started to attack and wrestle. Because in our wrestlings with God, sure, he could put us out of commission very quickly. But he wants to change.

He wanted to change Jacob. He didn't want to destroy him. And so, till the break of the day, Jacob struggled and struggled.

And finally, the angel touched him in the place of his strength and crippled him. He says, God is changing your name. No longer will it be Jacob the supplanter, the crook, the conniver, the schemer.

Israel shall your name be, Prince of God. When God is able to defeat you, then he can say, rise up now. Go on your way, but you'll never walk the same again.

He walked as a cripple, but his name became Israel. Now, has he seen the face of God? No longer the bargainer like he was 20 years before. God now, I thank you for this vision of the house of God.

He'll bless me. He'll look after me. He'll give me food to eat.

He'll provide everything I need. I'll give you the tent. God did bless him.

I'm sure he kept his word, but no longer was he bargaining with God. He's seen the face of God. He was crippled.

As far as his own strength was concerned. But now, God says, you'll have power with. Because you have power with God, you'll have power with men.

Power with God? In being weakened, he received power with God. And because God put a new name upon him, he would have power with men. Anyway, Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord.

As he was confirming the commission God had given him, he built an altar unto the Lord. He called it Jehovah Shalom, Jehovah of Peace. And the Lord said to him, I want you to throw down the altar of Baal.

That's been brought forth here. It's brought forth a few days ago. God wants an altar from his people.

And since that day, I'm thinking a little upon the altar of God. Just what it is that God requires of each one of us to rebuild that altar. And I think we should all think along that line of building the altar of God.

But I noticed in this story that before he could build the altar of the Lord, he had to throw down the altar of Baal. Though that is not the case of two altars. Yeah, we got those altars of our own, but God wants an altar, so I'll prepare him an altar.

It's going to take the casting down of the altars of Baal before we can truly make a sacrifice acceptable unto him. And in fact, they're so intertwined that the one becomes the other. Two days ago, I was reading Leviticus chapter 1 concerning the burnt offering.

How that the sacrifice that was brought, it had to be cut in pieces and all the pieces exposed to the Lord. Then the priest would take wood and lay it on the altar and take the pieces and lay it on the wood. So that the wood became the fuel that would cause the sacrifice to burn.

The wood would become the fuel. Then as I read this this morning, I saw that as they built the altar unto the Lord, they had to take the wood of the idols of Baal to burn the sacrifice of the Lord. The grove, it says, the Asherah, which is part of Baal worship.

And build an altar unto the Lord, thy God upon the top of this rock in the ordered place and take the second bullet and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove, which thou shall cut down. Cut down that altar, make that to be fuel for your altar. So may God continue to give us a little understanding in this.

It's not just a case, Lord, I erect my altar this morning and I lay myself on it. And I know God sees the desire of our hearts and he will show us where to get the fuel. And I don't know.

I don't know what it is in your life. I'm not sure if I know what it is in mine. But there's that in our life that we have to use in order to offer a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing unto him.

He tells us clearly in one way, and in another way perhaps we don't know the specifics of what's involved. But he tells us to be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind that we might prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. So he tells us that we are to present ourselves, present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto him, which is your reasonable service.

And so though, you know, we might, there might be some things that we have or something that we're desiring or some ambition we have that could be the fuel. But in the ultimate, it's laying ourselves on the altar. But then God might say, you really mean it? You're laying yourself on the altar? Yes, well then, okay, give me this and this and this.

God doesn't want it for himself. He wants it as fuel for the fire. And he's testing your heart.

Are you willing to lay this on the altar? You know, he's just testing your heart. He just wants you. That's all he wants.

Your business, your job, your desire for ministry, your zeal for ministry. Oh, but you say that, that couldn't be it, because after all, I would be doing that for God, totally for God. Maybe so.

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