

Josiah's Reform

by Glenn Meldrum

Josiah's reform was a transformative movement that restored the truth of God's Word and transformed society, and it serves as a model for our own lives today.

Duration: 51:26

Scripture: Deuteronomy 28:15-30, 2 Kings 22:8-19

Topics: "Reform"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of King Josiah and his role in bringing about a revival in Israel. The preacher emphasizes the importance of the Word of God and how it can bring about conviction and change in our lives. King Josiah responded to God's message and acknowledged his sin, leading to a reformation in the nation. The preacher also highlights the need for us to listen to God's message without trying to change or minimize it, and to trust and obey Him in order to experience miracles in our lives.

Transcript

Father, we come before you now in the precious name of Jesus, and Lord, we ask for your blessing on this Word as we look at it. Lord, we pray that this simple message and the truths that will be presented here would pierce our hearts, would stir our hearts, would awaken us, dear God, that it would bring refreshing, dear God, that you might be exalted in our lives, that you might be unveiled in our lives. Sweet Jesus, we pray that you would speak to each of us and that you'd convict of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.

You know the needs in each of our lives. We pray you'd speak to those needs. In your precious name we ask.

This morning I want to look at King Josiah. And King Josiah saw revival. It's normally called Josiah's reform.

They call it a reformation, and I'll deal with the idea of reformation in a couple of minutes. We'll be looking at 2 Kings 22. And so as we take a little study of King Josiah and what brought about the move of God that happened in his time, just keep your Bibles open because we'll be looking at some various Scriptures in 2 Kings 22 and 23.

But let me just give you a little brief synopsis of his life. King Josiah came to the throne of Judah at age 8. When he reached 16 years old, he started to serve the Lord. And so whatever happened at age 16, I don't know, but that became the time when he made that conscious choice in his life to walk with Jesus.

He served as king of Judah for 31 years, and he died at 39 while he was fighting a war against Egypt. And Egypt and Assyria were kind of combining, and he went out to fight against them and was defeated by the king of Egypt. Afterwards, Egypt put a big tax and big levy upon the nation, brought Judah under control for a time being, and afflicted them with much sorrow.

And then some ungodly kings rose up after him. Josiah was a godly king. He was a man who did fall in love with Jesus when he didn't understand Him as Jesus at that time.

When he was 16 years old, like I said, he began serving the Lord. And he served the Lord the way that he understood and the way that the people understood. There was a little bit later that a radical reformation took place in Josiah's life and took place in the whole nation.

And that's what we're going to look at. It's what brought about this radical reformation in Josiah, in a king, and that changed his nation. You see, if we have a move of God, and if it's a real move of God, it's going to change not just our own lives, it's going to change our families, it's going to change our marriages, it'll change our children, and it'll change the community that we live in.

Genuine revival isn't just a good feeling. It is something that transforms society. If secular society has not been transformed, then revival has not come.

A real move of God hasn't come. And so often there's a dimension that's absent from what we think of moves of God. And I want to touch on that in why I wanted to look at Josiah's reform.

It's reformation. And let me just give you a little concept of what reformation is. Reformation would be the correcting of abuses or of wrongs.

And it would affect society, it would affect the church, it would affect every dimension of life. Reformation is the restoring of truths that have been lost. The Great Reformation of the 1500s, which we are all a by-product of.

Every single one of us in here that's a born-again Christian, we are a by-product of the Reformation that began in Germany in 1517. Every single one of us has our roots back in Martin Luther. God used this monk to bring about a reformation.

And what he did is God brought truths to Martin Luther that the church had abandoned. They allowed all kinds of extra things to get into their relationship between them and God until relationship was totally lost. And God brought back truths, restored truths that had been abandoned.

And the Reformation broke forth. Part of the challenge of that particular move of God, that revival, is we don't have accounts of how many were saved. Because they weren't doing it at that time.

This was a brand new thing that God was doing. But it was tremendous, it was profound effect that happened through all of Europe. Martin Luther went and the common way that you would give a notice for the town is if you wanted an issue to be dealt with or some information given to the town, you'd go to the church doors and you'd take your little notice and nail it to the church doors.

And Martin Luther went and took 95 statements of faith, 95 things that he wanted to debate with the church, nailed them on the church doors. And within weeks, people, young people had grabbed hold of those 95 statements, those cc's, and published them and sent them all over Europe. And in no time at all, something spread that Luther had no concept of.

Reformation was taking place. Truths were being restored. Lives were being changed.

And society was affected as a result. This is what happens with Josiah. Truths that were abandoned are restored.

And we're going to look at how that all came about. Turn with me to 2 Kings 22, beginning in the 8th verse. Well, let me, before we read, just state something that happened.

Josiah, after he became a man of God, after he gave his life to the Lord, he made some changes on his own. And I don't want to say he was on his own. They were very divinely appointed.

But one of the changes that he did was he called for the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem. And because there were many ungodly kings that were before him, his father, his grandfather, his great-grandfather, and so on down the line, they were ungodly men that did ungodly things in the nation. The temple came into disrepair.

They even used it for idolatrous practices. So it was falling apart, and Josiah called for it to be rebuilt. And it was a beautiful thing that went on here.

They brought in the money, and Josiah didn't even ask the men, the priests and those who would take care of the building of it, didn't ask them to give an account because he so trusted their character that they didn't even have to do the bookkeeping of all the money that came in. And while they're building and rebuilding the temple, they found a book. They found a book.

Let's look at the 8th verse. It says, Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, I have found the book of the law in the temple of the Lord. He gave it to Shaphan who read it.

Then Shaphan the secretary went to the king and reported to him, Your officials have paid out the money that was in the temple of the Lord and have entrusted it to the workers and supervisors at the temple. Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, Hilkiah the priest has given me a book. And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his robes. He gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Go, inquire of the Lord for me, for the people and for all Judah, about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the Lord's anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book.

They have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us. Josiah was having the temple rebuilt and they found that book. When you start looking back at what many of the ancient rabbis ended up saying about this particular account, they believed that the book that was found was the original that Moses wrote with his own hands.

And they believed that it was hid because Manasseh was a very ungodly king, a very wicked king. And he was out to destroy all the books of God and had a mass burning of them because he didn't want those to

erupt because he wanted to worship Baal and Asherah and many other gods and did not want the influence of Jehovah in the nation at all. And so the original was hid away in a place so that he could not find it, so he could not destroy it.

But the people who hid it, the priests who hid it, had died and nobody knew where it was and it was by accident that they found this thing or so they thought it was an accident. And they find this old scroll of the first five books of Moses. And the priest reads this and he's disturbed.

And I believe that they had the Word of God with them. They had it, but there was something about getting it new and afresh in a new way that God was breaking into their world. And the Word became real and relevant to them.

And they read it. And the secretary brings to the king the news about the building and in the midst of it he says, We have found the book. And it says that he began to read to them.

What he read was more than likely out of Deuteronomy 28-30. The secretary probably chose to read this section to the king because he felt it most important for the king to hear these exact words. That it was necessary for the king to know this.

In those three chapters, it brings about the renewal of a covenant between the people and God. They make new the covenant relationship that they were to have. And then it brings about in that section that the blessings and the cursings of those who walk with God are blessed those who forsake God are cursed of Him.

And the curse came upon the common people and also upon the princes and the kings of the land. And it says that when the king heard this, when these words were read to him, he ripped his robe and he wept and he mourned before God because he believed the Word to be true. He believed it to be true.

This becomes so important. You see, he believed God's Word. He had a relationship with God, but all of a sudden God was going to do something in his life new and afresh because the Word would find its right place in his life.

It would find the right place and authority that could speak to the man and move the man. Today in the American church, the authority of the Word of God is being lost. It's being undermined.

We live in a relativistic society that says truth is arbitrary and it's seeping into the American church, into the Pentecostal church where we question, does God really want me to do that? Does God really want me to live like that? Does He really want me to give up everything I have to Him? Does He really want me to walk a life abandoned to Him? Or can I do what I want and live my life the way that I want? Reformation came because the Word of God found its right place, its rightful place again. It was restored to where God desired it, where God wanted it. The king came to a point to read those verses and probably many others beside and says, if this is truth, then I will live it no matter what becomes of me, no matter what happens.

Today we approach it a little different. We say, well, if this is truth, it will work in my life. If it doesn't work in my life, no big deal.

I read a little bit ago a missionary story, a pioneer missionary, John Patton to the South Seas, a phenomenal man of God, in the later 1800s. And in the book he gave an account of these one group of cannibals that had come to Christ and swept through the island. And how they went and they labored and

they labored and they labored to save up all the money that they could.

They would take the best of their crops and sell it to other people. And they would eat the leftovers themselves so they could make as much money as they could. And they did this for many, many years that they might have the Bible, that they might have the Word of God given to them.

The tremendous sacrifice that went on in Europe over the desire of the Word of God and in England for people to obtain the Word of God. People laid their lives down to possess one of these books, to have the words of these books given to them. They laid their lives down.

Wycliffe was chased and persecuted because he desired to translate the Scriptures into English. Huss was martyred as a result of wanting the Word of God brought to the people. In the absence of it, there was such a desire for people saying, I want God's Word.

I yearn for the truth of it. I yearn for what it would say. And the willingness to follow it no matter what it would say.

To live it no matter what it would cost them. Families were sold in slavery. Men were thrown in jail or burned at the stake for teaching their children the Lord's Prayer.

The Word of God. People yearning, hungering for it. And there was a hunger in Israel at this time or in Judah at this time.

Wanting the Word of God. Desiring the Word of God. Wanting to serve God and not understanding fully how.

Do you know, in this situation, and we'll look at this a little bit further as we go on, but something had happened with the worship of Jehovah that it became tainted by the world. In the temple, even while Josiah was king, even while he was remodeling the temple, there were pagan idols in it. In the temple courts, there was an area for male prostitutes, for homosexual prostitutes.

The atrocities that went around it and everything else, but they became normal. It's what the people just thought. This is what goes on every day, so we just have to accept it.

And Josiah probably thought the same identical thing. Who am I? I can't change anything. So the idols are there and that's the way it is.

I'll worship Jehovah. Until the Word of God came and its reality and he was willing to listen to it. How many Bibles do you have in your home? Because you've got a Bible in your home doesn't mean you really believe it and doesn't mean you really live it.

You may have the Bible and you may read it once in a while. Still doesn't mean that you know what it says and more than that, doesn't mean that you live what it says. It's not enough to even go and pick it up once in a while and say, isn't that nice? Because how many times do we take the Word of God and do we read portions of it and we ignore what it says because it will cost us too much? It would change our lives.

It would upset everything around us. It would change our homes. It would change how we think.

It would change our pocketbooks. It would change our entertainment. It would change everything about us so we read over it and we'll gloss over it not really wanting to say, is this truth God? And if it's truth, help

me to live it no matter what it costs.

And so we serve God with stipulations. We serve God in ways that will work into our lifestyle rather than coming to the Word of God and saying, is it truth? And living it like it's truth. Josiah was a wise man.

He heard the Word. He believed the Word. He saw the reality of where he was at and where the children of Israel were at.

He could look right next door to Israel itself. When Josiah takes the reform, he even goes into the capital at that time which was Samaria and goes there and brings the reform to Israel because there was no king in Israel at that time. Israel was in captivity.

He went and looked at the sister nation Israel and says, look at their rebellion has brought them into captivity. God has done it with them. And He has said He'll do it with us.

He saw the reality of it. He was willing to follow it no matter what the price would be. And so he inquired of the Lord.

He goes to the priests and says, seek God. This is serious stuff, men. Seek God.

Let's hear what does God have to say. And these priests went to a godly woman, a prophetess, and the Lord had a word for him. And says, I will not bring judgment upon you.

But because of the sins of Manasseh, his great-grandfather, the sins of Manasseh were so great that God says I will still judge Israel and I will still judge Judah as a result of the sins of Manasseh. Let's look at this in the 22nd chapter in the 18th verse. This is the prophetess speaking.

He says, tell the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the Lord. This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard. Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people, that they would become accursed and laid waste.

And because you tore your robes and wept in My presence, I have heard you, declares the Lord. There's three things that God brings out in this prophecy and why He would bless Josiah. The first thing it says, because his heart was responsive.

That his heart was responsive. That means that when the word came to him, he would sit down and knock and say, well, I'm so glad. Well, I really think that message was for somebody else but not for me.

Do you know how many times as an evangelist I get that afterwards? I get somebody coming up to me and they'll say, well, brother, that was a good message. I wish so-and-so was here because they really need to hear it. The problem was God had them there and they didn't.

They didn't have ears to hear. They did not have a responsive heart. They ended up saying, I wish somebody else was here.

It would be good for somebody else. But they did not have a responsive heart themselves and say, what about me? What about my heart? The king could have said, I've served God for years since I was 16 years old. I'm a wonderful man.

I'm a good king to my people. I don't abuse Him. I judge righteously.

I serve God. I pray. Do you know how many people are not responsive to God because they've been a Christian or claim to be a Christian for so many years? I'm a good Christian.

I'm good. I've been around for a long time. I've done a lot of nice stuff.

I go to the church and I give money to the church and they become unresponsive to God because they trust in their own righteousness. They trust in their own abilities. They trust in what they've done in the past rather than coming to a place to say, God, if You would speak to me, whether it be reproof, whether it be encouragement, whatever Your Word would be, dear God, all I want is Your Word.

All I want You to do is speak to me. And whatever that Word is, I will deal with it. A responsive heart, a tender heart, a heart that will say, God, You can mold me, shape me.

I want to be shaped and molded. When we become unresponsive, in essence, we're saying, God, I want to go to heaven, but don't change me. Don't change me.

Don't change my life. There may be some of you that your marriage is miserable. It's a nightmare.

And if you're not responsive to God, in essence, you're saying, well, God, I don't like my marriage, but don't change it. Because to change it, You've got to change me and I don't want to change. To be responsive puts us in a place that says, God, You must change me.

You must change me. I do not want to stay the way I am. I don't want to continue the way I've been.

I don't want to act the way that I act. I don't want to say the things in my marriage the way I say them. I don't want to treat my kids this way.

Or I don't want to act like that in the world. God, You've got to change me. The second thing that he says is that Josiah humbled himself before God.

He humbled himself. The king humbled himself. I mean, if you think of this, if there was anybody in the nation who had a right in one sense to be proud, it was the king.

I mean, he was the king. Can you imagine to be a king how hard it would be to be humble? You walk along and people bow to you? If somebody displeases you, you go and say off with his head? No arguments? I mean, talk about feeding pride. Talk about making it, you know, just something that could just grow into some huge ugly beast.

But here the king went to a point and before the people in his court, he wept, he rimmed his robes because he knew the reality and it was more important for him to be responsive to God than what it was to retain his pride. Do you know how many times I've heard people after service walk up to me and say, you know, I really know I should have been at that altar, but, well, I didn't want to go. And what it came down to be they were too proud.

They didn't want to humble themselves. They knew they needed to be up there. They knew they needed to deal with issues in their life.

They knew it, but they weren't responsive. They heard it and they were not willing to respond. And they figured, well, maybe I'll just go home and take care of business alone.

But they've already missed the opportunity, the calling of God that says, humble yourself before Me. Deal with it in your life. Pride is more ugly than we can imagine.

Do you know all the sins of people, all the ugliness of them and the vileness of them draws them together. You go to a bar and people can sit around with arms around each other in comradery and be in a drunken stupor. But there's one sin that always divides.

It divides families. It divides friends. It divides people, period, and it's pride.

Pride is divisive because it always exalts itself against another. Pride always separates marriages because it makes a husband too proud to say, I'm sorry, or a wife too proud to say she's sorry. It harbors bitterness.

It exalts itself against others. It is always divisive. And ultimately, it is always divisive between us and God because we say, I will not respond to You, God.

I will not respond to You. I'm alright. I'm alright.

And then He says, You tore Your robes and wept in My presence. You know, the issue wasn't that He tore His robes in and of Himself. It was that He was under such conviction because He was responsive to the Word of God and He was allowing and willing to have the Spirit of God undo Him.

And so He wept in the presence of God. And you know, there's something about God that He cannot resist. Those who humble themselves and weep in His presence over their neediness, over their sin, that He will not resist.

He will not resist us. And so He was responsive. Do you understand this one little act of Josiah? This one act of Josiah held back the justice of God against a nation that deserved justice.

This one act. It wasn't some noble thing. It wasn't this great act of war or anything else that He did.

It was humbling Himself before God. It was seeing the sin in His life. In His life.

The compromise in His life. In the King's life. And He dealt with it rather than run from it.

He was responsive to God rather than resisting God. He dealt with it. If I face the raw truth of what I am sometimes and went before God and said, God, change me.

I can't be like this. It is better for me to deal with the pain of that time than to continue in the pain of rebellion and the sorrow that will inflict upon relationships and upon self and upon our own conscience and ultimately upon our relationship with God. I want to give you an account of revival.

We can pray for revival. We can sing about revival. But do we really want revival? Because in revival, God reveals Himself.

And when He reveals Himself, He's looking for hearts that will be responsive. Will I be responsive to a holy God when He shows up? Because you know what a holy God is going to show. He'll show His beauty and splendor, His majesty, His wonder.

And He will show us our sin. Do I want that? Do I really want a God that will show up? This is the Korean Revival. It took place in 1907.

They prepared years in advance. There was actually a doctor that prepared the way. A missionary doctor that was over there.

And all the labors that he was doing, hardly anything was happening. And then God took him into the prayer closet and he started seeing the tremors, the beginnings of revival as far back as 1903. Dr. Howard Johnson brought news to the missionaries in 1906 that revival had broke out in Wales and in India.

And the missionaries grew desperate for God. They heard the stories. And they understood something so important that God is no respecter of persons.

What He has done in one place in time and in history and what He's doing in other places in the world now, He can do again, because He does not prefer one people above another. So they began seeking. They began desiring.

They started praying every day. The missionaries got together every day and prayed at noon for revival to come. After a time, they grew weary.

And one of the missionaries went and suggested that they stop the prayer meetings. And as they discussed it, the missionaries actually said, no, we will not stop the prayer meetings. We will pray more.

And they pressed into deeper prayer, more desperate prayer, rather than giving up to discouragement, which would have let this phenomenal move pass by. They continued to press in. There again, holding to the Word of God, of what it said, not looking at whether it was convenient and easy and fit in their lifestyle, but saying, God, it's true.

You said you answered prayer. And I'll give you no rest until you answer. Be it a month, be it a year, be it ten years.

God visited Pyongyang, which is the present-day capital of North Korea. God visited Pyongyang on Monday night, January 17, 1907. Pastor Lee was leading the service and after a short sermon called for prayers.

The whole audience began to pray out loud with such force that it became a roar like the falling of many waters, captivating the whole congregation. The sound of weeping was heard as a spirit of heaviness and sorrowful sin broke out among the whole audience. Man after man would rise, confess his sins, break down and weep, and then throw himself to the floor and beat the floor with his fist in perfect agony of conviction.

Sometimes after confession, the whole audience would break out in audible prayer. And the effect of that audience praying together was indescribable. Then they would break out in uncontrollable weeping.

We would all weep. We could not help it. And so the meeting went on until two in the morning.

Do I really want God to show up? Do I really want Him to draw near? Do I really want Him to reveal Himself? You see, the Word of God came to Josiah and the light shined upon his soul. It shined upon the reality of where he was. He could have said, No! I don't want this.

I'm a good king. I'm a nice guy. He could have shut it down and all of Israel would have suffered under the weight of it because judgment would have come.

Instead, he was responsive to God and he says, God, I must deal with it. My sin is before me. The compromise that I have lived in is real, O God.

I must change. He dealt with it. A missionary named William Blair gives the account of the second night of revival.

I want you to hear this. This is disturbing. This is beautiful.

This is what my heart aches for. This is what I see as a prize put before the church. William Blair says, In agony of mind and body, guilty souls standing in the white light of their judgment saw themselves as God saw them.

Their sins rose up in all their vileness till shame and grief and self-loathing took complete possession. Pride was driven out. The face of man forgotten.

Looking up to heaven, to Jesus whom they had betrayed, they smote themselves and cried out in bitter wailing, Lord! Lord! Cast us not away forever. Everything else was forgotten. Nothing else mattered.

The scorns of men, the penalty of the law, even death itself seemed a small consequence if only God forgave. And in a short period of time, 80,000 were added to the church as a result. You see, the Word of God came and the confession was there.

They didn't care if jail was a result of it. They didn't care what. A holy God had revealed the reality of their unholiness, of their sin, revealed the reality of what they were.

And they had to confess. William Blair went on to explain. He says, I don't know what you think about public confession.

I had my opinions before. But now I know when God shows up, there will be confession and people cannot help it. They must! Because the reality of the Word of God piercing the heart, and they will either say, Yes, Lord, and be responsive to His presence, or they will rebel and run away from God.

Josiah was a wise man. And so the Radical Reformation begins. It began because a man had an encounter with the Word of God and the Spirit of God, and he said, Yes, Lord.

He said, Yes, Lord. Rather than saying, I'm alright. I'm okay.

Everything's fine. I'm not that bad. I'm a good person.

They began to see the reality of the need. And so the king, in the 23rd chapter, and I won't take the time to go there, in the 23rd chapter, he begins, he renews the covenant. Like he read in Deuteronomy, he renews the covenant with God.

And it says when he renews that covenant in the 23rd chapter, in verses 1-3, that he wholeheartedly gave himself to it. Wholeheartedly! No more reservation. No more toleration of evil in his life.

No more compromise. There was no more place for it. And then the people pledged themselves to God after the king pledged themselves to God.

In 2 Chronicles, where the story is repeated in that book, it brings out some other points, but it says the people followed the Lord all the days Josiah lived. When an ungodly king rose again, the people went after the false worship. It shows you the power of a leader.

And so the Reformation begins, and you look at the 44th verse of the 23rd chapter through the 20th verse, and Josiah goes throughout Israel, or Judah, excuse me, cleansing the land of idols. I mean, this man is on a relentless pursuit to get the false gods out of his nation. I want to say something here.

We live in a different age, and there are some different dimensions in our life. This was a nation that was to be God's peculiar people. The nation as a whole, not just the people within the nation, the nation as a whole.

They were to be worshipers of God and worshipers of God alone. He had every right to go through and take every idol out of that nation. Every right to do it as the king, but more than that, as the people of God.

There is no place for the idols. There's no place for it. Why did he have such zeal? Why is it all of a sudden this king was consumed with this zeal that he spent all of his time for a period cleansing the land of idolatry? Because the Word of God was restored to its rightful place.

Because all of a sudden the Word of God became the Word of God. And they said, if this is true, dear God, give me the power to live it. Leonard Ravenhill said, and I'll have to give it to you in my own words, he says, one of these days some simple soul will grab hold of the book of God, read it, and believe it, and then the rest of us will be ashamed.

God is waiting for a people that will grab hold of the Word and whatever it says, they will believe it and they will live it and they will practice it and the power of God has been promised. Christ based His very character and person upon the reality that signs and wonders would follow those that believe. It is a reality that He has promised.

We sit back and see few signs and wonders and we don't question it. We don't question why. We go and often blame God.

God says, well God, when you make your mind up, when you make your mind up, then we'll see something happen. Rather than understanding that He says, when you believe, when you believe, when you really believe the Word of God, not just say it, not ever patent little Pentecostal clichés, when we really believe it and we live it, He said signs and wonders would follow us. Do you know how this city needs signs and wonders? I mean, they've got all kinds of religion all over the place, all over, all kinds of claims, but you know, they're not seeing the power.

They're not seeing the power. Jesus time and again did signs and wonders so a perishing world could understand who He was. The signs do not save people, but the signs open the eyes to the reality of a living God, of a Messiah that can save.

Robert Coleman made a statement, he says, when God speaks we must listen. It is not our place to change or minimize the message, nor are we called to defend what God says. The Bible is not on trial.

We are. Our place is only to trust and obey. And it's in this place that miracles happen.

It's in this place that Josiah saw the reformation that swept his nation. Do you understand, as king before the reformation, he saw idolatry everywhere. It was all over.

It was even in the temple. And all of a sudden, something happened inside of him. He began to understand the commandments of God.

And I want to take a moment of looking at idolatry. What is idolatry? You know, idolatry is something we don't really think is in America. But I want to deal with the issue of idolatry in our lives as Christians.

And I guarantee you it is in every non-Christian's life. Every non-Christian in this planet is an idolatry. Every single one.

Let me quote Leonard Ravenhill again. Leonard Ravenhill says, America cannot fall because she has already fallen. This goes for Britain too.

She cannot go into slavery because her people are fettered at the moment in the chains of self-forged, self-chosen moral anarchy. Here are millions diseased morally who long for no healing. Here are men paying for shadows at the price of their immortal souls.

Are we disturbed at the bondage of our country? Are we disturbed of what's going on around about us? Let's look at idolatry for a moment. It begins with the first of the Ten Commandments. You shall have no other gods before Me.

Do you know what it means in that statement to have no other gods before Him? Pretend this is a huge throne room and there's this throne there of God. And He's seated upon it. And I come up to the throne.

And the concept that we have as Americans is well, before Me and God, there's no idols. There's a bunch back there, but between Me and Him, the concept of no other gods before Him is that nowhere, anywhere, anywhere in His presence will there be a false god of any sort. That means there's no place for little idols.

There's no place for little fetishes in our life. You know, you go to some other lands and even into the Native American culture and they've got their fetishes. They've got their little gods, their little stone gods they carve out.

And they'll keep them in their pockets just for good luck. And they'll take their little god out just a portion of their life. Just a little bit, but it's still an idol.

Something they trust in. That's what an idol is. It's not trusting in Him.

It's not trusting His entire ability to provide for us, to care for us. So we must take care of ourselves. He's not a good enough god.

He promised it, yes, but oh, I've got to do my part. Or it's the aspect of breaking Christ's greatest command, which is to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength. Martin Luther says that if the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength, then the greatest sin is not to.

It's a form of idolatry. Do we understand that idolatry is anything that I put between me and God or anything I put in with God? Jesus and fishing. Jesus and hunting.

Jesus and shoes. I mean, do you hear what I'm saying? Jesus and something else. Anything becomes an idol that I put anywhere in the presence of God.

If there's anything that I look for in this life to make me happy outside of Christ, then that thing is an idol in my life. That which is seemingly innocent, there's nothing wrong with golfing, but it becomes the idols of a tremendous amount of men and women. Idols that consume their time.

Nothing inherently wrong with fishing. But I'll tell you, there are so many men who will not be in church Sunday morning because an idol has rose up. A little fetish in their life that consumes them and dominates their life.

Maybe it's the fetish of possessions. I've got to have a bigger house, a bigger car. I have to have more.

A better job. I mean, I could go through a whole list of them if they're relevant to go through the list. But idolatry has seized the church and the Word of God wants to come forth and say, it's time.

It's time to tear down the idols. How can we tear down the idols in the world when we have fetishes in our pockets? How can we go and say, you must serve the Lord God and Him alone, and then we pull out a little chain of fetishes in our lives? Our little gods that we keep, those little things in our lives, those little sins that we don't think anybody sees or knows about. And so we lose the power.

We lose the signs and wonders because God is looking for people who will just believe. Just believe. Abandon themselves to this God that cares so perfectly for us.

Idolatry is placing our faith in something other than or in conjunction with God. It is compromise. Some things came out of 9-11 that are very interesting.

And I'm going to give you a little quote that comes out of the Pentecostal evangel in March 17, 2002. And in that particular evangel, they did an interview with some Christian Arabs. They asked the question of these former Muslims, Why do fundamentalist Muslims dislike or despise America? George responded like this, Fundamentalists dislike America because they see it as the source of most of the moral filth that goes out to the rest of the world.

Muslims see America as a Christian nation. Let me give you what another fundamentalist Muslim said. And he made a comment, Ladies, you know, take this in stride.

Hear what I'm saying. Pray about it. Here's what this fundamentalist Muslim said.

In America, your women dress like harlots. Young people, hear what I'm saying. If I were to take you to the streets of Detroit that I pastored in, and if I took you up along Cass Quarter where all the prostitutes are, how would they know you are not a prostitute? Would your dress be any different than that of a prostitute? It was at one time.

But let me give you a response that was said by this one precious brother in response to this statement. He says, These Islamic radicals would not be much more impressed with the standards of the American church than they are with the standards of our society at large. And what would these religious Muslims say if they heard that born-again Christians are more likely to go through a divorce than were non-Christians? Or that the divorce rate among atheists was lower than the divorce rate among evangelical Christians? The religious Muslim world does not look at Western Christianity as hypocritical as

much as it looks at it as proof that our religion is worthless.

As they compare the lifestyle of the average committed Muslim, they are convinced their faith is superior to ours. Do you hear what's being said there? Our little fetishes, our little idols, our little gods have gotten in the way. And so the power has been stripped from the church.

God's wanting the Word restored in that place that we thirst and we yearn for Him. And then he goes on, and I'll just read this verse in the 24th verse of the 23rd chapter. He says, Josiah got rid of the mediums and spiritists, the household gods, the idols, and all the other detestable things in Judah and in Jerusalem.

First, Josiah goes through and gets rid of the big idols, cleans out the temple, purifies it, makes it holy and right, purifies the land. Then he goes in and he's out after the little things in the hearts of men and women and children. And he cleanses the land.

He was getting out not just the outside sins, not just the big idols. He was getting to the secret sin. And then I want to close with this final point that begins in the 21st verse of the 23rd chapter.

And I'm not going to read it. I'm just going to lay this out before you. After Josiah goes through and he gets the idols out of the land, he restores the Passover.

Do you know what the Passover is? I'm not going to go through the whole thing of what the Passover is, but the Passover is the cross of Christ in the Old Testament. He restores the cross to the church in essence. He restores the power of a God that loved us so much that He purchased us with His own blood.

I just read something or heard something the other day. I can't remember off the top of my head where it came from. It was astounding facts on how many people.

It was like 93% of Episcopalian ministers do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God. And it was 80-something of with Methodists. And it went right on down these astounding statistics.

I wish that Pentecostals and Charismatics, that that number was there, because I guarantee you it would be a very high number. Because we have devalued the Word of God. When we devalue the Word of God, we devalue the cross and the wonder and the beauty of the cross.

It's only when we restore the Word of God to its rightful place that we begin to see the cross in its splendor and its beauty and its delivering power. Salvation does not come from good works because there's no good people. And only when we see the reality of our sin and the reality of a God who saw the steps of our sin and became the remedy Himself, which is what the Word of God is all about.

The Bible from cover to cover is God's self-disclosure to man and ultimately a revelation of Jesus Christ that He would die on the cross and rescue humanity. In the very first Passover in Egypt, they took hyssop and in the blood of a lamb and they put it over the doorposts of their house. And the statement was, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

The death angel would pass over them. There was life in the blood that was given. And there's life in Christ, but He died on the cross to save us.

And what does Christ do before His blood can cleanse? He must first reveal the idols in our lives. He must first confront us with our need. And we must be willing to listen.

We must be willing to say yes. We must be willing to respond. Smith Wigglesworth made this beautiful statement and then I'm going to close.

He said, To see Jesus is to see a new way. To see all things differently. It means a new life and new plans.

As we gaze at Him, we are satisfied. There is none like Him. Sin moves away.

You see, the prize of it all is Jesus Christ, this God who purchased us. The prize. Why should I deal with my sin? Why should I let this God break in my world? Why should I let Him deal with my fetishes? My little idols that are in my life? Why should I let Him do that? Because there's one prize.

There's one prize. It's not salvation. It's not going to heaven.

It's not streets of gold. It's not a mansion. It is Christ Himself.

He is the prize. Why should I deal with the issues? Why should I press in to gain the prize which is Christ Himself? Why should I grab hold of the Word of God and be willing to abandon myself to the truths of it? Because there's one prize. It's Christ.

There's one thing that's worth abandoning our lives for. There's a world aching for a reason to live and die for. There's young people yearning for a reason to live.

And the truth is right in our hands. And then we take it for granted and we don't live it and we don't apply it. We don't abandon ourselves to it.

And there's a world that what would happen is if we lived it. What would happen to them? What would happen to those young people that are aching for truth and they're just waiting for somebody to really live it that they can look at and say, That is what I have wanted. That is what I have yearned for.

That is what I want. There is an answer. Let's look to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we come before You now in the precious name of Jesus. Lord, Josiah saw a revival. He saw it sweep his nation because he heard Your Word and he responded to Your Word.

His heart was sensitive to You. And he humbled himself before You and he wept at Your feet and he pled for mercy. And oh God, how good You are.

You gave mercy. You freely gave mercy. And You held back Your justice that You might offer mercy, oh God.

And Lord, You offer it to us today. Today, Lord, You want to hold back justice from us. There's not a person in this room, dear God, that You want them to receive the justice that they deserve.

You didn't die on a cross to judge us, oh God. You died to rescue us. You died to deliver us from our idols, from our icons, from our fetishes, oh God, that You might present mercy, beautiful, sweet mercy.

Forgiveness when we deserve none. You desired to break into our lives, but Lord, You're calling us to look at Your Word and say, God, I don't understand how it all works, but Jesus, help me to abandon myself to the truths of Your Word. If it pierces my soul, God, let it pierce my soul, because it will also bring healing to the wounds that are inflicted.

Jesus, I pray that You would pierce hearts. God, that You would break through the most self-righteous, the blindest to their personal need and to their own sin. God, that You might bring times of refreshing like You promised us in Acts.

That when repentance comes, there will be times of refreshing. There is no other way. That is the way You have planned it.

That is the way You have designed it. That times of refreshing. I pray for responsive hearts in this room.

And Lord, I pray for anybody in this room that does not know You. Jesus, any in this room that aren't Christians, Lord, they're serving idols. They're serving idols.

That is what has dominated their life. It may be the idol of self, oh God. It may be the idol of some other false religion.

But whatever name it is, it's a false god that cannot save. It gives no peace. It gives no hope.

It cannot change us. Lord, I pray that You'd call those who don't know You to give up the idols and to grab hold of a living God that can save and deliver and heal and restore. Jesus, I pray You'd break into their hearts.

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