

Spiritual Vacuums Deut 6;21

by Harold Erickson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing spiritual vacuums in our lives, and surrendering to God's presence and power to experience the fullness of life that He intends for us.

Duration: 38:24

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:21, Matthew 12:43, John 10:10, Ephesians 5:18

Topics: "Spiritual Fulfillment", "Overcoming Emptiness"

Description

Harold Erickson emphasizes the concept of spiritual vacuums in his sermon, illustrating how God brings us out of bondage, as seen in Deuteronomy 6:21, to lead us into a fuller life in Christ. He explains that many Christians experience emptiness because they have not allowed God to fill every part of their lives, likening this to a vacuum that can be filled with negative influences if left unaddressed. Erickson encourages believers to recognize that God desires not only to save them but also to fill them with His Spirit and purpose, leading to a life of abundance and victory. He challenges the congregation to examine whether they have truly allowed God to take full residence in their hearts, urging them to open every room to His presence. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper understanding of the fullness of life that God intends for His people.

Transcript

Tonight we shall turn to an Old Testament passage. I'm sure you folks realize that the gospel is enfolded in the Old Testament, and that if we look into that we shall find some real gospel nuggets that will bless our souls. The sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, beginning at verse twenty-one, Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

And the Lord showed signs and wonders great and sore upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household before our eyes. And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. The topic that I want to deal with tonight reads as follows, dealing with spiritual vacuums.

And the text is here, he brought us out, that he might bring us in. We're going to think about that for a little while tonight. We're not going to preach long.

We appreciate you folks coming out on Monday night. We're not going to inflict a long service on you. We're going to let you go home early.

But the Lord is not limited to working in a long service. God can work in a short service, too. And you know, I like what the prophet says when he said that the thing was done suddenly.

When God works, when God comes down, he can come down in ten minutes, in five minutes, and do a great and glorious thing. Now, what is a spiritual vacuum? I'm going to give you an illustration. When I was a boy, I used to take a little magazine called Boy's Life.

It had a lot of good little stories in it. I don't even know if the magazine exists anymore. But in addition to the good stories it had, it had little projects.

Oh, some were scientific, some were carpentry projects, and this, that, and the other thing that a boy could do. And one of them, I remember, I tried out with a great deal of success. I never forgot it.

It said that one should procure a gallon can. You know, an old oil can. You could use a five-gallon can, either one.

And you were to take out the cork or the spout, whatever it was, and put just a little water into it. So I did. Set it on the stove, poured a few tablespoons full of water into it, and I remember distinctly this old can had a cork in it.

So I put the cork in good and tight, and I had first of all drilled a little hole in that cork, just enough so that when the water inside began to boil, the steam could escape. And then when I couldn't see any more steam coming out of there, I took one of these good-sized old wooden mattresses that we had in those days, and plugged the hole up good. And then the project said, Now take the can out and throw it into a snowdrift and see what happens.

And I tried it in the winter, so I just simply tossed the can out into the snowdrift. For ten seconds or maybe thirty, the can lay there perfectly motionless, and all of a sudden right in front of me it crumpled as if two great big hands had just pressed together on it. Now what happened? That can had become within a vacuum by the fact that the air had escaped or been driven out with the steam and with the heat.

And when it hit the snowdrift, then even the warm air inside contracted, and the atmospheric pressure of fifteen pounds to the square inch just simply crushed that thing. I've always understood what a vacuum was after that little experience. There are a great number of people in the world today that are being crushed because there is a vacuum in their life.

There is an emptiness, an utter and sheer emptiness within life. And yet God never intended that it should be so. You remember that remarkable story or parable, we might call it, that Jesus spoke of? He said that in the twelfth chapter of Matthew he likened a human heart to this.

He said there was a human heart that was cleansed. The evil spirit was driven out, the evil things were driven out. And later on the spirit came back and noticed that it was cleansed and empty, and he took seven other spirits with him, worse than himself, and they moved into the emptiness, and it says that the last state of that man was worse than the first.

It's a dangerous thing to live with emptiness. Dr. Redcraft at the Moody Church wrote some time ago, I forget just where I read this, but I copied it nevertheless. He said, Fundamentalism, and I find no fault with Fundamentalism, has too often presented the message of forgiveness of sins through the atonement of our Lord without presenting the message of deliverance from the principle of sin through the cross and by

the power of the indwelling spirit.

This, he says, is not merely half the gospel, it is no gospel at all. There is a great deal of truth in what Dr. Redcraft says. We need to keep in mind that this verse summarizes the whole gospel because it shows us the negative side of what God does as well as the positive.

He brought us out in order that he might bring us in. He took them out in Egypt not to keep them wandering in the desert for many, many years, but because their destiny was to live in the land of Canaan. And that is God's intention with each and every one of us, not merely to take us out of the world, not merely to give us the assurance that we have been received of God, but to fill our lives with a fullness that he himself has created and which he has intended should be our experience.

That is God's intention with us, and we ought to live up to God's intention. He brought them out of Egypt. There we have his action.

That was what he had done, that he might bring them into Canaan. That was his intention. Now the question, my friend, and I'm speaking to you who claim to be a Christian today, you can point to that action of God in your life whereby God redeemed you, saved you, took you unto himself.

But let me ask the question, has God's intention been fulfilled in your life? Has God's intention been fulfilled in our lives? There are three possibilities in God's intention. First, he wants to deliver us from the bondage of sin. Secondly, he wants to bring us into a life of freedom and victory.

And in the third place, he wants to fill our souls with that which is positive and divine, for God has chosen us to be his dwelling place. The book of Acts is very clear on that. God dwelleth not in temples made with hands today.

God is in this building tonight simply because we are here. And when we go out tonight, the Holy Spirit isn't going to dwell in this empty auditorium. He goes along with all the saints.

We are the temple of the Holy Ghost. Now, I am not denying whatever that every truly born-again Christian has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. That is absolutely a steadfast truth in the New Testament.

But it is also true that there are many of God's people who, though they have the Spirit dwelling in them, nevertheless do not know the fullness that God speaks of everywhere in the New Testament. Sometimes this fullness is a matter of apprehension. We are not filled because we have never grasped how God fills us.

We are not filled because we allow some other thing to take up a good deal of the room that God should have in us. So we may have been brought out of Egypt, but we have not been brought in. Now let's look at this matter of being brought out of Egypt for a little while.

First of all, the being brought out of Egypt was a deliverance from a slavery, a bondage. God has intended that the Christian life should be one of freedom. And very frequently God's people, yes I say God's people, are in bondage because of an imperfect understanding of what has really happened to them.

That's why we need the teaching concerning the word of God. Some people are still in bondage to the law when they shouldn't be, because the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The law was the mirror that showed us the blackness of our own heart.

But it is not in any sense the agent of cleansing any more than you wash your face with a mirror. The mirror is a good thing to look at in order to see whether your face needs washing. But it is the soap and the water that does the washing.

Now some people are under a slavish bondage to their own doings, even after they're saved. As if we are saved by grace, but we are kept by doing the law. Now that's not the way God operates.

You know, friend, I cannot live the Christian life. I've never been able to live the Christian life. You can't either.

Do you know there's only one person in all the world that can live the Christian life? That's Jesus Christ. The only one. So this matter of being a Christian and living the Christian life is simply letting the only one who can live it, live it from within me and through me.

That's God's way of victory. And as far as my flesh is concerned, that flesh is an utterly corrupt thing. God doesn't expect anything of the flesh.

God only expects that I as a personality shall be surrendered to the dominion of him who can live through this mortal flesh and show forth his glory and his praise. Therefore, it is very important that we are aware what the New Testament means when it speaks of the fullness of Jesus Christ. But let's go on a bit further about this bondage business in Egypt.

Notice how they were taken out of bondage. First of all, they were taken out of bondage by the protection of the blood and by the operation of the power of God. The blood was upon the doorposts and the lintels.

The angel of death, therefore, could not touch the homes of God's people. And when the time came for them to go out that night, God was with them in power. And when they came to the Red Sea and were encamped there and suddenly became aware that Pharaoh's hosts were behind them, God said unto Moses, Lift up thy rod over the sea.

And God divided the waters and they went through on dry land. That was the operation of the power of God. And that finished their bondage in Egypt.

They were not out of the bondage of Egypt until they were across the Red Sea. And by the blood and by his power, which is an illustration of the very thing in which we will be deeply interested during this Lenten season, not only standing and looking up at the cross, though the cross is utterly essential because of its atoning value, but you cannot have the cross without the resurrection. And every instructed Christian will always look at both the grave and the cross and the resurrection as one whole picture.

You have the blood in that picture and its atoning value. But let us not forget that if the blood had dripped down from the cross only and the Son of God had been put in a tomb and never come out of the tomb, there would have been no gospel to preach today. The resurrection coupled with the atonement, that is the gospel.

And Paul makes that eminently clear in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians. That is the gospel. Not only this, not only did they come out of this bondage by blood and by power, but their life moved in a definite direction after that.

You know, friend, you sometimes wonder what God wants you to do. You never know until you are in the hand of God as a Christian. The unsaved man cannot know what God would have him to do.

He must find Christ first. Because it is this deliverance experience that sets the direction of life. Notice, when they went out of Egypt, they did not go out aimlessly.

They went toward the Red Sea, because the Red Sea was in the direction of Canaan, the promised land. The land that had been given to Abraham long before the children of Israel went down into Egypt. The direction was set.

And when a man becomes a Christian, the direction of life becomes set. He sets his face toward heaven. That is true.

But more than that, he sets his face toward a full and glorious understanding and experience of Jesus Christ. The Christian life is not merely a kind of a bridge that takes us from Egypt into heaven. Now, I'm not implying that Canaan is a type of heaven.

I'm going to come to that in a minute. But some people look upon it that way. I am in the world.

I need to become a Christian. I need to be saved. And the reason I want to be saved is so I get to heaven.

And so we think in terms of a big bridge, with one of its pillars over here, where a man is in the world, and once he gets on the bridge and gets off of it, he's in heaven. Now, that is true in a sense. But look, we have a life to live, here and now.

And what is the supreme quest of life? Paul the Apostle made it very clear, not that I may get to heaven, that isn't what he says, but that I may know him and the power of his resurrection. That's the quest of life. That's the real purpose of life.

Every day ought to be put into that, that I may know him. Paul was a Christian when he said that. Paul was not talking as an unconverted man.

He had learned to know Christ as the Savior. He had gone into very deep and wonderful experiences of Christ. But all the while he was saying that I may know him.

And friend, you can say that down to the end of your days for the simple reason that every unfolding experience that you have had with the Lord Jesus Christ up to this moment doesn't begin to exhaust the infinite possibilities of knowing him more. Let that be the quest of life. Let that be the ambition.

So it sent a new direction in life. And not only that, but these people became a rejoicing people. There is a song in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus.

After they had gone through the Red Sea, there's a song. And David said the same thing. He took me up also out of a horrible pit.

He set my feet on the solid ground. He established my way and he put a song in my mouth. That's what the Lord does for his people.

The rejoicing of the Christian life. Now, I'm sure that I could find, perhaps even in this audience, though I feel that you're better instructed than this, but you can find a number of Christians who will say something

like this. Well, now preacher, that's my experience.

Thank God I'm out of Egypt. I crossed the Red Sea. The direction of life is toward Christ and toward heaven and toward everything that's spiritual.

And the Lord's given me a song in my mouth. And I'm satisfied. That's good.

But friend, God has more for you than that. Suppose Israel had said that. We're across the Red Sea now.

We've sung our song. Now we're satisfied. No.

There was a desert to cross. Now, geographically it was necessary to cross that desert. They got across it in record time, when you consider that they were possibly anywhere from two and a half million to three million people with cattle and all the appurtenances of their household and so forth.

Within two years they stood on the borders of the land of Canaan. But the one thing that was unnecessary was to wander in the desert for thirty-eight more years. That was not God's intention.

That was not God's intention. That was something that came upon them because of unbelief. Now, as I pointed out before, Canaan is not a picture of heaven, because they were to meet foes in Canaan.

And all your foes will be gone when you get to heaven. You won't meet them there. They had some terrific fighting to do in Canaan, and you're not going to do any fighting in heaven.

The conflict is over. The enemies are gone when we get to heaven. So Canaan doesn't qualify.

I want you to notice, however, that Canaan was a place of provision. God was taking them into a land which was very, very much different than the desert. It was a place that flowed with milk and honey.

There were fruits in abundance in that land. And as we press on in the Christian life, we find that its fruits grow sweeter and more abundant. The hungry Christian is the man that stays in the desert.

The people who begin to murmur against the gospel are those who have never gotten out of the desert. The people who have gotten into Canaan, they don't murmur. They thank God for the milk, and the honey, and the wine, and all the rest of it.

Then, furthermore, God's protection and success was unqualifiedly promised in Canaan. He said, I will give you rest. I will enable you to overcome your foes.

And they did. They drove out their foes, one after another. But as I said, the wilderness was a necessity.

They had to pass through it. Now, some have likened our Christian experience to this, by pointing out that every Christian, at least for a time, has the experience of the Apostle Paul and has to go through Romans 7. Now, I'm not going to raise the hornet's nest about that tonight, because you see, there are some of God's people that don't believe that any Christian lives in the seventh chapter of Romans, and I'm not going to answer that for you tonight. But the fact still remains that, practically, there are some of them that do it.

I'm ready to say most of them do it. The wilderness became a choice after Kaddish Barnea. Up to that point, it was not a choice.

It was a necessity. And so, because they would not face the giants of the land of Canaan, because they were fearful, they began to wander around in that land of the desert, and instead of progress, they began to walk around in circles. Sometimes they were a little closer to Egypt than they were.

At other times, sometimes they were closer to Canaan. But for thirty-eight years, they wandered in the desert. Now, God was watching over them.

He watched over them so that their shoes did not wear out, their garments did not wear out. How marvelous was the provision of God upon the very people whom he had said, ye shall not enter in. Yet he took care of them.

He thought to it that they had the flesh of quails and the manna fresh every morning, and yet they were his people. There's an interesting type there that we could pursue further. We shall not.

You will find, if you read 1 Corinthians, the tenth chapter, that God was not pleased with them, however. Read that whole chapter sometime. You will find that it became a place of lusting.

They lusted after Egypt while they were in the desert. It became a place of idolatry where they made a golden calf and worshipped it. It became a place of pleasure, for they had a great party while Moses was up there on the mountain, getting the law from the hand of God.

It was, as I pointed out a moment ago, a place of murmuring, and it became a place of death, for they all, all above twenty years of age, died in the desert. Only the wilderness and only the new generation got into the land of Canaan. Now, let me ask you tonight, my friend, just what kind of a Christian life have you lived since you became a Christian? Now, we need to be very, very honest, all of us.

I do not suppose any of us would dare to say that when the Lord Jesus saved us, we just simply pressed right on and obediently took every single step and God blended us in Canaan. I can't say that, because there were times when I was disobedient to the guidance of God and to the spur of my own discontent. But when we were obedient, when we broke before the Lord, when we let him have his way, we took great strides and new understanding and new experience came into our hearts.

That's always been true. Now, when we look into the New Testament, we find the word, fullness, used in many ways and in many places. The Lord Jesus put it this way, I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.

I have brought you out of the life of the world and out of the flesh in order that I might bring you into the fullness of life. That's God's intention. And if we allow God to bring us into the fullness of life, then the emptiness will disappear.

For when God has filled a thing, then it is full. The question that is before us tonight is this, can we say, as it says in the first chapter of John, of his fullness have we all received? Paul the Apostle spoke to the church in Ephesus, the best church in the entire range of churches to whom epistles were written. The church that seemed to have had a greater apprehension of truth, of Paul would never have written the deep truth he did to them, the Ephesian church, but to them also he said, be filled with the Spirit.

Be filled with the Spirit. God has a fullness. That's the answer to the emptiness.

Are you here tonight, my friend? You are an empty soul. Have you ever said to yourself, oh, I feel so empty? Many of God's people have said that. We need to be very honest about it.

Now, God doesn't intend that you should walk around in emptiness, because where there is an emptiness, the devil is liable to find a place of intrusion. God wants to fill with his Holy Spirit, with himself, with love to himself, with an occupation of mind upon himself. God wants to fill all of this.

He wants to fill the mental life. He wants to fill the emotional life, and he alone can do it to satisfaction. So we ask ourselves the question tonight, can we only say he has brought us out? Can we also say he has brought us in? Are we living tonight with spiritual vacuums, empty places in the light? Rooms sort of shut up to absolute emptiness within our souls, because we have the key, and we have shut those rooms against the full indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Now, when I go to live in a home, as a guest, I do not go snooping around in the rooms of that house. I have no business doing that. No matter how lovely the friends who invite me in, they will show me a room which will be mine while I am there.

A bedroom, a place where I can hang my clothes, where I can study and pray and so forth. And, they may say, as most hosts will do, will now feel perfectly free to come down and meet with us here in the living room, and be like one of the family. And yet I would be transgressing immeasurably if I did become like one of the family.

See what I mean? Because when you are one of the family, you feel a perfect freedom to go into every room in the house. You have some business there, you may be looking for something, but when you are a guest, you don't do that. Now, the question is, is the Lord Jesus at home in your heart, or is he merely a guest? Have you assigned certain areas of your life to him, and say, my Lord, I want you to feel perfectly at home in all of these areas, but you have some rooms, and you have the key to those rooms, and if the Lord should really take you up seriously, you would say, well now, wait a minute, Lord, we've closed that room off.

And I did mean that you should feel perfectly at home in my heart, but after all, there's a limit to this business of feeling at home, too. Is that what we've said? You've heard the oft-told story of F.B. Meyer. How his life was revolutionized by thinking this thought.

The Lord said, F.B. Meyer, there's one room in your life that you've never let me into. F.B. Meyer never seemed to say publicly what that was, but he said, I held the key. And the Lord said to me, Meyer, I've got to have that key.

Why? Because I cannot be Lord at all until I am Lord of all. Meyer says it was a great battle. But he says, I finally took that key and handed it over to the Lord, and the Lord walked into that room, and that revolutionized my life.

That's what we mean tonight, friend. Have all the rooms of our hearts been thrown open completely to the Lord so that he in his fullness may fill them. Is he at home in your heart? To vary the illustration a little bit, let me close with this.

Many years ago, when Hudson Taylor had taken up residence in China and was beginning to receive other missionaries, I don't remember if the name China Inland Mission had become used as yet, but it was in the early days of that organization. He had a little test that he applied to missionaries when they came

out. He would meet them.

He would take them to a little restaurant. They would sit down and eat together, and they would pour out a glass of water or a cup of tea, and Meyer would always pour it absolutely full so that it was just up to the brim. Then he'd leave it like that for a little while, while he was talking to this missionary about the experiences that he would be having, sort of orienting him to the whole missionary situation.

Then he would do this. He would say, My friend, you are going to get a lot of heavy jars out here. You're going to be stunned by some of the things that you see and experience.

But he said, The things that you are full of will determine whether you will be a good missionary or not. Then he would strike his hand to emphasize that, and as he struck his hand down, that cup full of tea would suddenly spill over because it was right up to the brim. And then he would point at the missionary.

He says, You see what I mean? He said, If you're full of self, every time you get a jar of some kind, self is going to spill over on these Chinese people, these heathen that don't know the Lord Jesus, and it isn't going to recommend Christ to them. But he said, If you're full of the love of Christ, every time you get a blow, he said, the love of Christ is going to flow over. David said, My cup runneth over.

Now, your cup is full tonight, my friend, of one or two things, Christ or self. What is it that spills over on other people? Spills over in your environment, spills over in your family. What is it? He brought us out that he might bring us in.

Sometimes he works a lifetime with us to bring us in, not into heaven, but into the fullness of that life.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10301.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/harold-erickson/spiritual-vacuums-deut-621/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

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

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

www.sermonindex.net