

Ancient Revival

by L.E. Maxwell

The sermon calls for a revival by addressing the moral and spiritual decline within the church, emphasizing the need for repentance and God's transformative power.

Duration: 54:53

Topics: "Moral Decline", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by highlighting the decline in morals and the immorality within the house of God, specifically in the story of Child Samuel and the corrupt priesthood. The sermon then focuses on the concept of making crooked things straight. The preacher describes delivering this sermon to a restless audience, with some appearing angry and ready to leave. The sermon concludes with the mention of the Philistines being in power and Israel being without God and guidance, leading to their defeat in battle.

Transcript

Now, as I was looking to God about this, I feel that God would have us take an ancient revival, an ancient Old Testament revival. The period we wish to consider is in 1 Samuel. 1 Samuel.

I want us to notice especially the 7th chapter, but we're going to lead up to it by noticing the conditions of degeneration and decline, just scanning the first few chapters, the earlier chapters in 1 Samuel, noting the degeneration and decline which had taken place. It's well worth a study of your own, on your own, chapters 1 to 3 of 1 Samuel. If you'll notice them, we find the priests were corrupt, and morals were at a very low ebb.

How like the conditions that are coming upon us today, even in the Christian church. These situations are, oh, the minister's talking about a new morality, which is just the old immorality is all it is. But, you know, it's well to remember that it has been in times of decline and declension and degeneration and deterioration, those have been the times when God made an invasion.

Don't say that times are so bad that God can't revive us. That's when God does do His revival work. He comes with an invasion to the surprise and shock of everybody.

So let's not limit the Holy One of Israel. If you read Brady's history on this freedom whence, or some similar work that comes out under different names, concerning the Wesleyan revival and the recovery of

England from moral and spiritual and social bankruptcy, if you read those times, you'll find that the social decline and moral deterioration was not dissimilar to the present day. In fact, it was a little worse, if anything.

But God met that day with revival power, and we don't want to limit God. You know, a lot of people get to seeing the winds and the waves, and they sink, and they're sunk. So let us remember that in view of the conditions today, with morals at a very low ebb, we have something similar right here in 1 Samuel.

Now, I would pass over the first three chapters and child Samuel and the terrible decline in the priesthood and the immorality right in the house of God, and how the priests made themselves fat on the finest of things and old Eli didn't have backbone enough to stop it. But look, beginning 4.1, shall we take a glance here? The word of Samuel. The word of Samuel came to all Israel, but apparently without much effect as yet.

He's a young man. Maybe they despised his youth, but the Philistines were in power, and Israel now, without God, as we see in the next two verses, 4, 2, and 3, without God and without guidance, and unbidden, unbidden, uncommissioned to go to war at this time, and unrepentant for her sins, plunged into war with the Philistines. Look in 4.2. The Philistines put themselves in array against Israel, and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines, and they slew of the army in the field about 4,000 men.

At this first engagement, 4,000 corpses scattered over the fields of battle. What a chaotic condition. Then in 4.3, notice, the elders of Israel.

And when the people were coming to the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines? How come? Insensible, these elders, apparently, of any real need. These leaders in Israel, they had no sense of the sin in their midst, and they inquired, Who in the world is sinning around this place? What's the cause of defeat? What's wrong? How come? We're surprised. No real sense of the need in the congregation and in the nation.

Well, well, they seem not to have had the faintest notion that the cause of defeat lay in their own moral and religious apostasy, and the decline, the decay, the departure, the degeneracy that was rampant. Are you impressed that way as you read the reports across the country? Just keep a stiff upper lip. Things have always been bad, and people go along utterly insensible to where we are.

That condition is prevailing again, stupidity of the worst kind. It's like this whole sympathy with North Vietnam, insensible to the internal fifth column dry rot that is paralyzing this continent. And so the fifth column is spelling our doom, and it's about time for the barbarians to come down from the north on old Rome again.

We're right there. We're just walking right straight into it. Plenty of Christians today find themselves beaten by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and yet puzzled, they're puzzling their brains with all sorts of excuses for their being smitten and overthrown and why the churches are not growing.

The thing to do is to get us all together and put all these four churches on these four corners into one church so that we'd be better and we wouldn't be duplicating all this. Why not pray that God will fill the floor, and then you wouldn't have nearly room enough for the people anyway. But in the meantime, we seek for all sorts of panaceas and plasters and excuses and anything in the world but get down to the real

trouble.

Oh, that's a pity. Ministers seek to find the cause of defeat. They have to reorient their program.

They have to adapt it to the young people. We have to make it attractive. And oh, oh, oh, oh, isn't it pitiful? Scarcely dawns upon us that the cause is our departure from God's ways.

I was reminded again of my dear brother Wadsworth, who is-- I don't know how long ago he's--I'm sure he's gone to be with the Lord. Does anybody know? Wadsworth is a great commissioned pearl. He was here a number of years ago, and he wrote once on, What Will Bring Revival? And I well remember, he says, how this manpower problem came home to me at the commencement of my ministry.

This particular incident occurred in one of my early pastorates. It was a country church. I think it was back in New York.

Evangelistic enterprise seemed to me without the blessing of God. After deep heart-searching, I came to feel that the hindrance was not on God's side, but rather on my own. While there meditating, announcement of the annual state meeting of our denomination was received in the mail.

It enclosed a questionnaire which was being sent to 500 ministers. In the Presbyterian church it was. Each was asked to state what, in his opinion, was the chief hindrance to revival.

These hindrances were to be considered in the pastor's conference in connection with the state meeting. The writer filled out his questionnaire and then went to the state meeting expecting that the needed revival would be greatly promoted as the ministers faced up to the hindrances of the same. But I was in for a rude awakening.

At this particular pastor's conference, the chairman of evangelism gave a digest of the opinions of the ministers that he had gathered from their communications. I do not know, I do not exactly remember the figures, but as nearly as I can remember, about 60 percent expressed the belief the chief hindrance to revival was due to the non-cooperative spirit of the church officers. That's number one.

Sixty percent. Twenty percent believed the chief difficulty in the promoting of revival meetings was due to the indifference of the members of the churches. Not a few believed the blame could be laid to counteracting worldly programs which interfered with the local success of their evangelistic efforts.

You hear the same thing today. Something every night of the week can't get them together for anything. Some others thought that finances were the hindrance.

So you see, down, round, all, they just about exhausted all the silly impossibilities, or silly excuses, I mean. The writer, Mr. Wadsworth, had faced all these seeming hindrances in his time of heart-searching and meditation, and found they were all prevalent in maximum strength in the days of the apostles. Yet, in spite of all these so-called hindrances to revival, the word of God mightily prevailed, and the ministers of Christ back yonder were caused to triumph everywhere.

These revivals were not in villages and small towns, but in the most populous cities of that day. In Jerusalem, where anti-Christian opposition was at its height, and at a time when probably not less than two million people were celebrating their customary feasts, all of them were under the domination of anti-Christian leaders. Yet, by supernatural power, that little band on whom the Spirit came rested,

W-R-E-F-T-E-D, in a single day, from the grasp of these leaders, not less than three thousand souls.

And later, in connection with the revival at the Temple Gate, thousands more were recovered from the bonds of ecclesiasticism, which was then prevalent, and were turned to God by the ministry of the Spirit. In the same city a little later, another powerful season of prayer, we read that prayers for boldness in preaching of the word were astoundingly answered when multitude, both of men and women, were saved, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. The situation wasn't very conducive to revival.

It was just the opposite. Moreover, I also face the fact that sixteen revivals mentioned in the Book of Acts were not only in the larger cities at that time, but in cities where liberalism, paganism, commercialism, and vice were prevalent among the generality of mankind, yet these in no way barred the working of the Spirit of God. Well, I was interested, therefore, in what might be said for... Oh, yes, here it is.

Set forth in this particular meeting of ministers with about five hundred in attendance. If God can send an awakening in a group like that, He can do anything anywhere, can't He? After the chairman of the evangelistic committee had given the digest of the answers to his questionnaire, he said that he had one letter different from all the rest, which he wanted them all to hear. He then proceeded to say, This letter does not lay the blame upon the officary of the Church or upon local condition, but declares the ministry itself is the greatest hindrance to revival.

These words produced a what? A prolonged outburst of laughter that shook the building and caused the ministers to rot to and fro in their pews. He thought it should have produced repentance and tears and anger. My face turned red.

I wondered if all the ministers would be given the name of the writer of this letter. Fortunately, this was not done. However, the chairman read some excerpts from that letter, which, as I remember, were something like this, from his own letter.

After deep self-examination and humiliation before God, the writer was led into new consecration and devotion to Christ. He found that new power accompanied his ministry, and conversions began to occur in the congregation. Attention was called to the fact that when the Lord was with Samuel, he did let none of his words fall to the ground, and that the apostles were able to speak so that a great number believed.

God's presence was with Joseph and Moses and with the prophets and apostles was stressed, and the plea was made that each minister being newly consecrated to the Lord would become a channel of new blessing to his people. The meeting over, I made myself to the chairman of the committee, and after introducing myself, said, Dr. So-and-so, it was I who wrote that letter. Upon this, the chairman glared at me and, without a word, turned on his heel and walked briskly away.

At the close of the afternoon meeting, I hurried to my room to meditate and pray. Tears were abundant. Without taking food and with great weariness of mind and distress of heart, I fell back upon the bed, toward evening it was, as the bright autumn sun was casting his crimson light into the room.

Sleep relieved my troubled mind. When my eyes opened again, the room was full of light from the rising sun. I had spent the entire night sleeping in that one position, fully clothed upon the bed.

Given his beloved sleep, with the awakening thoughts, there came great peace and newness, heart and consecration. And then, right away, God gave him a new pastorate, a new place. Next month, a new

pastorate in a large town was begun.

And he said, I wanted a text. God was going to give me a text. And he said, I was like Spurgeon.

Young gentlemen, young gentlemen always select a text that is worth the while for your hearers getting up at five o'clock on a frosty morning to hear it read. That's the kind of a text you get. He said, God gave me a text like that.

Make the crooked places straight. And he dropped a couple of letters in the mailbox to make crooked things straight in his own life. One question that demanded a clear answer was, what's the purpose of this sermon? My answer was, the purpose of this sermon is to get people to make crooked things straight so the work of God can prosper.

Another question, have you any crooked things to make straight? Unless you straighten these crooked things out, I'll not be with you when you preach your famous sermon tomorrow. So late that Saturday night, two letters were written, put in stamped envelopes, dropped in the nearest mailbox to be collected Monday morning. After a good night's rest, partly due to consciousness that crooked things had been made straight, I arose early the next morning so as to have ample time for prayerful preparation.

The sermon, Making Crooked Things Straight, was delivered to a large but restless audience. Some seemed angry. Others appeared to be almost ready to leave their pews.

After the benediction, most of the people hurried out as quickly as possible. Only a few old saints stood by to say, God bless you. That was going in the mulberry trees once again for them.

That's the way they used to be down in good old Ontario in revival days. That's the way they talk about it out here. Upon returning home, my dear wife said to me with a look of reproof, You will hear from that sermon, but not in the way you expect.

Well, I said, dear wife, I believe I faithfully discharged my duty, and I'll leave the results to the Lord. That evening the service was poorly attended. Few of the hearers came to speak to the minister.

I had another good night's rest. Well, it just sounds like the Book of Acts. In the Book of Acts you find two things always went together, revival and riot.

Early the next morning when I was on the way to the post office, the proprietor of the hotel inquired if my phone were out of order. He said a number of people were trying to get me, among them the mayor. The mayor had left word for me to come to his office.

I went to the office of the mayor and was ushered into a private room. After I was seated, he said, I heard your sermon yesterday morning. Now, man to man, I want to know who's been telling you about me.

Mr. Mayor, I replied, I preached that sermon yesterday morning first of all to myself and got some crooked things straightened out before delivering it. I assure you I have not listened to any gospel about you. I do not know anything particularly against you.

He replied, I'm too well acquainted with people to take you with what you say without a grain of salt. I had to leave him without convincing him that I had only preached the truth as I found it in Scripture and as it had been experienced. The garage man was next to meet this preacher.

Shaking his fist at me, he said, you've done yourself a great damage in berating your people like you did yesterday morning. I want to tell you I'll never hear you again. In a fit of anger, he left me on the sidewalk.

I next visited our treasurer. He owned the department store. He received me coolly and beckoned me back into his private office.

Then he said, now, sir, I want to know the names of the people who sent you to preach against me yesterday morning. He stood before me shaking from head to foot, holding a stubby cigar between his fingers, evidently greatly perturbed. I tried to satisfy him that I merely preached the truth.

I found them in the word of God but failed to make any impression. Last of all, the undertaker sent for me. He's about ready to be buried.

It was getting serious. I had greater difficulty with him than all the others. I remember getting up at midnight and going over to see him in order that we might come to a better understanding.

He said he was glad to see me. He knew my conscience would trouble me for hurting him so deeply in telling his false to the members of the congregation. Nearly all the officials of the church decided to rid themselves of so disturbing a minister.

The salary was curtailed. Attendance fell off. People began to hear about that message and secretly sent money to support me.

One man gave me a sign check and asked me to draw on him for several hundred dollars. But I never had to use it. Up to that time, I'd never had a vacation, but friends who came to my rescue, I had a wonderful period of rest.

Upon return to the church, the Lord enabled me to reach a large number of men in the community. Meetings were--and by the way, he was no evangelist at all. He was a drab, dry speaker.

Dull, I would say. Didn't command at all. Just--he was what you'd call a formal, dead Presbyterian preacher.

Now, I don't mean that wrongly, but conservative is what I'm thinking about. Very, very conservative in his approach. Finally, it became necessary to rent the opera house.

Had to get out of the church. Revival was on. People were converted.

Evangelistic meetings were held in schoolhouses. Abandoned churches within a radius of many miles. I looked upon the revival to visit a New York state town with abiding thanks to God.

It stands the test of time for the praise of God. May I say that my last information received two years ago stated that one of the first of my converts in that town was still superintendent in the Sunday school. An interesting climax to that state convention came when the representative of the state board was asked to visit us and investigate the revival.

Hallelujah. The devil's got to investigate, hasn't he? He did so and reported his findings in our leading denominational paper that report blood blessing to many people. God manifested his power well.

That's just an instance of what real revival would do. But he got to the cause and located it and put his finger on it. But you notice the leaders, the elders in Israel, and the ministers, 500 of them, just had a rock and roll laughter to think that they might be to blame.

So stupid can we get as to the cause of defeat. Right at our own door. Look in 4.3 to 5 now.

Oh, these people had a remedy too? Ha ha. Really? They know. The cause of defeat? Ha ha.

Let's locate it. 4.3. When the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the Cherubims.

And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, I tell you, here's the remedy for defeat. We've got it.

Now Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. It'll do it. You know, we could probably stop here and ask, what in the world is the particular it that you think might be the remedy? Get Achan out of the camp.

That fellow over there has got sin in his life, and he hasn't confessed it, and therefore we can't have a revival until it is set right. And I was in a free Methodist camp once, and they were sure that the remedy was--and they had it from their forefathers. This is the way their forefathers did it.

They'd have all night a prayer. And so here it was in the early days here in a tent and some straw. And down at a little old plank altar, they went down and just pow-wowed and pounded and beat and howled.

And I managed to stay with them until four o'clock in the morning. But I went off to the grainery. It wasn't a house near the grainery.

Got in there and went to sleep. I think I slept a little. But they were still pow-wowing up there, and I learned later that they couldn't get along.

Two of them had pow-wowed and pounded the worst on the altar, but the two couldn't get along with one another. Like that. But listen.

What was the point? They had heard about how it had been done in years past, and it will do it if only we have it. A long night of prayer. God is bound to send revival.

Well, now, when the ark was taken around Jericho, the walls, at that time, just as in the case of the brazen serpent, it was right. It was the brazen serpent, uplifted. It signified substitution of Jehovah for the sinner.

And they looked and were healed. In the days of the ark, when it was carried around Jericho seven times, you know, the last day, that ark sort of gave focus, gave integration and focus to the faith of Israel in the Lord who dwelt between the cherubims of the ark. That was good.

That was all right. They had the Lord in view. But now here these people are going to imitate what was done then.

And in the days of Hezekiah, they were worshiping the brazen serpent. And here they're worshiping the ark, the ark, lost the God of the ark. Oh, how easy, how easy for those who regarded not, those who regarded not the God of the ark, thought themselves safe and happy alongside the ark, didn't know the God of the ark at all.

But when it comes, it'll save us. No wonder Jacob was told, go up to Beth-el, go up to Beth-el, back there, the house of God, where you met God once and God met you. And he went there and then he called the name of that place El Beth-el.

Why? God of the house of God. He finally met God of the house of God. He didn't just go to the house of God, but he met the God of the house of God.

And here they have only the ark of God. They don't have God of the ark of God. You see? They've missed Him entirely.

Well, I don't know what the it is, but excuses. For instance, beloved, let me give you one I got concerning the Christians of Armenia. Armenia.

I don't mean Armenians now. Some of these run. But I talk about the Christians of Armenia.

A-R-M-E-N-I-A. I heard of a fellow in Southern California once, a group of Baptists, and this fellow wanted to join. He said, where are you? He says, I'm an Armenian.

Get out of here! I don't want any Armenians here. Well, be that as it may. The Christians of Armenia.

One of them was asked this. Why is it you people do not make the advances your forefathers once made in spiritual things? Here was the first excuse. You know, we're not an educated people.

The answer was, what evidence have you that your fathers were an educated people? Oh, well, we're a poor people. We haven't any means and no money. Did your forefathers have any means or were they poor? Well, we do not have the means of travel and transportation of getting about.

What means had your forefathers? Finally, the man admitted the truth. Listen, man, our fathers had a relation with God the Holy Ghost that we don't have. Finally, cornered, cornered, cornered, and finally came out.

Here's the real trouble. Finally, the man admitted the truth. Brother Guesswine, good friend of ours and revival man, man of revival, he got a hold of dear brother Goforth of Chinawatts, and they were walking down together to the meeting in New Jersey.

And Brother Guesswine is a young fellow just getting started in the ministry. He said, Dr. Goforth, could you tell me what is the biggest, the greatest need of the Church of Christ? He looked down. My brother, the Church doesn't know the Holy Ghost.

That's in trouble. That was dear brother Goforth, and he knew. He had such mighty revivals in China as most of you have heard.

Now, do you notice that this it, what is the it with you and me? Education, influence, money, organization, reorientation, adapting the young people, giving us bright services or something. Oh, God save us from a lot of these it's. Relationship with God in heaven through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We think, let's not talk so much about advertising and efficient organization and a great singer and a high-pressure preacher. If we only had it, strong man, personality, power, giving us bright services or something. Oh, God save us from a lot of these it's.

Relationship with God in heaven through the power of the Holy Spirit. We think, let's not talk so much about advertising and efficient organization and a great singer and a high-pressure preacher. If we only had it, strong man, personality, power.

We exhaust all the possibilities of excuse-making and then finally come down until we have to say, it's God we need. Now listen, oh how orthodox we can be and still miss the boat. For instance, do you know that these men who brought the ark and there were the tables of stone in the ark written with the finger of God and they knew it.

They, believe me, they believed in absolute inspiration. No liberalism in this camp. They believed in absolute inspiration, verbal inspiration on those tablets.

But instead of this ark helping them, the law of God was a witness against them, wasn't it? And yet they're carrying it around as a fetish, going in circles. Not a helper of their feebleness at all. In fact, the dragging of that ark into the battle only pushed God away.

That's all it did, just push Him further away. And people, I've dealt with people, some fastidious fuss, a fuss budget of a lady that's fussing about that husband of hers. She's trying to manipulate the fellow.

Oh, if only, if only it, it, it, it, it, if only I could get him straightened out. If only I could manage him. If only I could arrange this.

If only I could, and of all the manipulating, managing, wire-pulling, pushing God away. And I sometimes say to a person like that, Listen, what you're doing, what you're doing in all your fussing and all that is putting the clock back. Well, I don't, maybe it isn't.

And they'll say, well, maybe it isn't helping much. I say, no, you're turning the clock the wrong way. Well, I don't want to turn the clock back.

Well, that's what you're doing. I'm sure, I don't, I'm sure this isn't helping much. Why don't you get convicted and call a halt and say, What I'm doing by all this, it is pushing God further away and keeping God from working.

Doing your best to hinder. Well, I don't mean that. I know you don't, but that's how stupid you can be.

That's just how stupid we can be, any one of us. You take very often, beloved, the external, listen, very often the externals of worship, the house of God, the singing, the prayer, or even the day of prayer, or as I told you, that tent meeting down south here where they prayed all night. Perfect framework and perfect form.

It was good to have an all-night prayer. Hallelujah. I'm not, I don't mean a thing against it.

But we've got to get our eyes on God. It is God that works it. And a new sense and touch of God.

God says, God says that even the table of the Lord can become a snare and a trap. Well, that's pretty bad, isn't it? Well, you get in a snare and a trap even at the table of the Lord. Pushing God away by saying that

it, even the Lord's table will do it.

Now, I would invite your attention to number five, and notice the stimulus of the ark. The people shouted, the earth rang. You know, nowadays they say, there's a great deal of talk about morale today.

Beloved, they had morale heaven high. Why, the ark rang. The earth rang.

And the poor Philistines are fading. The morale of Israel is heaven high. Victory certain.

Not a doubt about it. And the Philistines are melting. And God's people are shouting.

Therefore, and the morale is so high, not a note of discouragement. And the effect on the Philistines is paralyzing. They feared something real and terrible might happen.

And they recall Israel's past history when Israel's God had done marvels for them. Oh, we know why Israel is shouting. Why God did mighty things for them in days past.

Oh, you Philistines, put yourselves like men. Don't become servants of the Israelites. You see the situation? And in verses 6 to 9 in chapter 4, in these verses are revealed the thoughts and fears and the panic of the Philistines.

And then look in 4, 10, 11. We must hasten into the seventh chapter. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten.

And they fled every man into his tent. And there was a very great slaughter, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot men. And the ark of God was taken.

The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain. That was foretold through Samuel, you remember. And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes ramped, earth upon his head.

When he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching. He was staring, I would say, because his eyes were closed. He couldn't see anything, but he was sitting there.

Oh, I had a good ministerial friend, and he says, Oh God, save me from dying at the death of Eli. He said, Yes, I will. When he heard that the ark was taken, his heart trembled for the ark of God.

And when the man came into the city and told it all, the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old, and his eyes were dim that he could not see.

And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I have fled today out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons, also Hophni and Phinehas, are dead. And the ark of God is taken.

It came to pass when he had made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck break, and he died, for he was an old man and heavy, and he had judged Israel forty years. And then you know how Phinehas, his daughter-in-law Phinehas, his wife, gave birth to sons. She called him Ichabod.

The glory is departed from Israel. Poor old Eli fell off, paralyzed, stunned that the ark was taken. But his two sons, in whom God was supposed to dwell, that didn't bother him over much.

It's when the ark was taken. See that? His own sons had been sinning all the time, and he didn't reprove them, didn't restrain them. And God took him for that.

Now in 5 and 6, 5 and 6, I'm not going to go into that, except you know that everybody got sick wherever the ark was taken. In all the towns of the Philistines, everybody got sick. And 5 and 6, I often say, what God did, he conducted his own evangelistic tour that time.

He didn't have a singer or a speaker or anybody along with him. Every place he went, bang, bang, bang, bang, and the poor Philistines toppled everywhere. And 5 and 6, Philistines said, take that thing home.

All the time they're collecting taxes from Israel, remember that. Take that ark home. Put a sacrifice, an offering.

Take it home. Don't bring it here. Don't bring it here.

And so from city to city, over about 5 of them, finally they said, here we've got a bright idea. We'll just see whether this was a chance that happened to us or not. We'll take a couple of young shepherds, unbroken.

We'll make an ark, or we'll make a cart, put them on it, keep the calves here, and see if the cows go without the calves. It'll be a miracle, and it'll prove that this wasn't a chance God was in it. So if they take the ark home, we'll know it wasn't a chance.

I often think how those cows went bellowing and bawling, but they went. They had the mind of God in them. And so they went home.

Went home with the ark. And it was at Kurgis-Jerim. It was finally put at Kurgis-Jerim, and the Lord blessed the house of Kurgis-Jerim, or the folks at Kurgis-Jerim.

So the last of the six chapters. The last of the six chapters. Now in the seventh.

7-1. And the men of Kurgis-Jerim came and fetched up the ark of the Lord and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill and sanctified Eliezer, his son, to keep the ark of the Lord. Well, now here we come to a period, a strange period.

I want to note three things. Lamentation, or three words, lament, repent, and restore. Here's revival in its steps.

First, let us notice the lamentation. And it came to pass while the ark abode in Kurgis-Jerim that the time was long, for it was twenty years. Twenty years! The ark was there.

Samuel is growing up. He's getting to be--he was grown back there. But he's perhaps--I don't know what his years would be, but I suppose he's thirty-five, forty, forty-five by this time.

But he's watching Israel. He sees them. And the time is long.

And the ark, the Philistines can't handle it. It's come home. And Israel is under the heel of the Philistines.

What a conundrum. And he says, the time was long. And I want you to see the last phrase of verse two.

And all the house of Israel did what? Lamented after the Lord. I think that's one of the most illuminating sentences. The whole house of Israel for twenty years lamented after the Lord.

It was a period of disorganization and defeat, disgrace. And I can see Israel paying taxes. I could bring out the two things.

Israel paid taxes to the Philistines and paid tribute to the Lord with their lips. What a combination. Taxes to the devil's crowd and beautiful tribute.

They lamented after the Lord. Oh, Lord. Oh, Lord.

Oh, gracious good Lord. Oh, dearest Lord. Can you hear it? Huh? Lord, deliver us.

Oh, do hear us. Do emancipate us. Do, Lord.

Oh, who's this? Oh, that's the Philistines. It's the annual tax collection. Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Oh, Lord. Oh, Lord. Lovely Lord.

Thou art our God. We are not like the heathens. Thou art the God of all the earth.

Thy power is unlimited. Thou canst deliver thy people from anybody and everything. Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Twenty years, twenty years. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Lip service to God.

Taxes to the devil. Lip service to God. Taxes to the devil.

Lip service to God. Taxes to the devil. My, thank God for the patience of Samuel.

Man of God. He sees all this. I'm glad, though, that they began to feel the gall and the bitterness and the bondage.

And people, do you know what's a fact? And I shouldn't be surprised if it'll have to be repeated. Things will have to get worse with us before they ever get any better. Now, I'm not saying that God has to do it one way or another.

But, as a rule, you have to think, think, think, think until you're done before you really call. So often it's true with us. During this period of Israel, Israel's spirit was dull and stupid.

But, thank God, year by year while they're paying taxes, God's man, Samuel, sees it. Apparently says nothing is yet. I'm glad he waited.

He must have waited God's time. He must have been guided of God, right time, to hit this thing and hit hard. And pointedly, finally a bit of conscience begins to work.

He senses that Israel is wistful, sorrowing, seeking. He senses that it's a period of gradual conviction is taking hold of them. And so he says, he says, if you do return to the Lord with all your heart.

You seem to be. You seem that way. But I want to dwell just a little more, a little further on this weariness.

Beloved, the backslider must come to feel the folly of his wickedness. Thine own backsliding shall reprove thee, says the Lord. Thine own wickedness shall correct thee and thy backsliding shall reprove thee.

Jeremiah 2.19 The backslider must sigh and cry for the forfeited blessings of former days. How much longer? Here's a good thing to ask yourself. How much longer will we as God's people have to be weary? Christ says, I have a word in season.

To him that is. Weary. Have you worn out? Are you wearied? Is your church wearied? Are you weary? Are you weary of darkness? Are you weary of trying to hide up and paint up deformity? Are you sick and fed up with trying to hide your deformities and defects in spiritual life? Are you getting weary of the sham of it all? And you cry you long.

You no longer lament, but you want reality. Reality. You know, lepers cover and conceal a spot, don't they? Huh? Is that a characteristic of a leper? Lepers fear exposure of that which will sever them from society.

And we hide deformity, defects. We conceal them. We don't want to be ostracized on account of our sin.

We're afraid of it. Disgrace. Cut off.

Shut out. Do you have a deformity? Do you still plume on some specious semblance of decency and punctilious performance of beauty? Do you still plume on that a bit? You're getting by with it? Nobody can accuse you. What's wrong with me? Why so and so preaches as though he thinks something wrong with us.

What in the world does he think we are? Does he think we're that bad? Horrible. He's nasty. He's nasty when he accuses us like that.

I'd like to ask you, though. Are you weary of pretense and sham, formality and routine? Are you weary of self-deluding, self-righteousness, which you hold to? Are you weary of all attempts to take advantage? Are you weary of the attempt to take advantage of your unknown secret misconduct? Are you getting tired of it? Are you getting tired of it? Concealment. Are you weary of making evil look a little less evil? Are you getting weary of that program? Are you weary enough of making a show of good look like reality? Huh? You've got something good that you would like to palm off as reality.

But there may not be spiritual reality in it at all, but it's got all the form of it. And you plume on it, you borrow it, you paint up deformity, and it looks like decency. By the time you get it painted.

Shams and shadows. God wants to get us out into the daylight. Now, real repentance.

I could go longer on that a bit, but I forbid it. Israel, though, became so galled under the yoke of bondage and sham and pretense and lament. Lament is not repent.

And there's where a lot of us evangelicals are. We're full of lament. Oh, Lord, Lord, Lord, you promised revival, so you did.

Yes, you did. You did, too. How come you had to get that emphasis? You had to keep saying it, didn't you? Huh? Why? Because you don't believe it yourself.

And your lament is not repent. Now, notice what Samuel says. Verse 3. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, and ye look like it.

Why, the way I've heard you pray almost sounds as though you mean it. If you do return to the Lord with all your hearts, my, how explosive your prayers sound. Almost ring the bell in heaven, the way you explode and pray.

With all your hearts. Lord, hear us. Can't you hear them? Sounds like.

Sounds good. Then put away the strange gods. What? You mean to tell me there's any piece of consistency in my life? Why? You mean to say there's anything wrong with a few little things like this? What are you talking about? Oh, Samuel, you done quit preaching and gone to meddling.

You shouldn't, you shouldn't be so personal like that. You just pinpoint, name the gods like that. Oh.

Why? Haven't we people served the Lord and our own God for all these years? Haven't we, haven't we as Christians? Haven't we gone along all these many years in this materialism and all that? Why, the Lord wants us to use it for His glory. And oh, you'd be surprised how the Lord has blessed me over these years. Well, ha ha, I told you I'll loan you my Cadillacs any time.

But listen, people, you know there are all kinds of God's people who can just let the heathen go to hell while they worship their material gods. And not see any inconsistency in them. Unless some Samuel comes along and puts his finger on it and says, look here, bud, I heard, I had a friend, I had two friends, and one said to the other one, why, he says, I think so much of that missionary.

He says, I want you to give him, send him this five dollars. And my, my other friend said to him, he says, is that all you're going to send him? And he says, oh, ho, ho. And the man got so ashamed he pulled out fifty instead, which he should have done the first time.

But he had to take, he took somebody to pin his ears back. He'd say, well, I wouldn't want to say anything like that. They'd think I was after money.

Oh, well, let's not be so scared of what we're going to have as a reputation. It wouldn't hurt us. Just be sure we're not selfish ourselves.

That's the main thing. And see that we're not. Sometimes you'd better point out these gods.

If you do return to the Lord with all your heart, put away this, and this, and this, and this. Yes, Samuel, thank you for pointing it out. I feel better.

I've sinned. I'm like King Saul. I've sinned.

You're better than I am. Samuel, you're a good boy. You pointed me out my sins.

I admit, I'm right. I'm wrong, and you're right. Then he comes along, Samuel, and Asherah.

Oh, dear. You would meddle. And Asherah.

Why do you have to name that? Wasn't Asherah one of the strange gods? Why do you have to say, put away the strange gods, plus Asherah? Why do you have to say that? That's just another one that they would never have waken up to unless God pointed it out. Name it. And I'm sure that one of our chief

troubles anymore is we deal in generalities to dissipation, whereas we should be more specific very often.

Now, you have to be careful. Right here is a delicate point. But nevertheless, this is it.

Asherah. Put away Asherah. Dear darling Asherah, your lovely little feminine god that you like so well.

Get rid of it. Out it goes. And they put away the false gods and Asherah and served the Lord only.

Well, well, well. Revival's on. Amen.

And then, here's the thing, just to make it close up in a hurry here. Then I notice this. That immediately the Philistines hear about that.

What are these Israelites doing? Pouring out fastened cranes. Pouring out the soldiers. Hear, hear, hear, hear, hear.

You think our gods are on the fall? Amen. Ha, ha, ha. The fight is on, old Christian soldier.

Face to face in stern array. And then I notice poor Israel. Samuel, dear.

What are you doing? Samuel, hurry, hurry. Doesn't sound like it, huh? The Lord heard and answered and thundered. And the Philistines came no more into the land of Israel.

Heaven and earth hitherto has the Lord helped us lament, repent, restoration, and raising with Christ. Amen.

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